Julie Gough is an artist, writer and curator based in Hobart, Tasmania, whose research and art practice focuses on uncovering and re-presenting conflicting and subsumed histories, many referring to her family’s experiences as Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Her recent work in installation, sound and video explores ephemerality and absence. Since 1994 Gough’s output incorporates a broad range of materials and techniques where she establishes new relationships between images/film, text and ‘natural’ and found objects. She often reconfigures wood, stone, kelp, bark and shell into narratives to connect place and people, past and present. She invites viewers to a closer understanding of our continuing roles in unresolved narratives of memory, time, and location.

Gough holds a PhD and BA Hons, Visual Arts (University of Tasmania), MA (Goldsmiths College, University of London), BA (Curtin University), BA (Prehistory/English Literature, University of Western Australia). Since 1994 Gough has exhibited in over 130 exhibitions, including With Secrecy and Despatch, Campbelltown Art Centre, 2016; Mildura Palimpsest, 2015; UNdisclosed, National Gallery of Australia, 2012; Clemenger Award, National Gallery of Victoria, 2010; Sydney Biennial, 2006; Liverpool Biennial, UK, 2000; and Perspecta 1995, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Gough is represented by BETT Gallery, Hobart and her work is in many collections including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, National Museum of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Gallery of West Australia and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.
Fugitive History
The Art of Julie Gough
Contents

Essays

Julie Gough 3
Brigita Ozolins 67
James Boyce 76
Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll 81

Work

Dark Secrets 87
The Impossible Return 111
Fugitive History 145
Film Work 227

Appendices

I List of Works 246
II Curriculum Vitae 304
III Bibliography 327
Tense Past – making my way back through time

Julie Gough

Inheritance is something we all have in common. We inherit things. I grew up knowing hardly anything about my family; I was even confused about who I was named after. Until my early thirties I thought my namesake was Julie Andrews, star of the movie *The Sound of Music*, released in the year of my birth. I even made an artwork about Andrews in a series about seminal childhood influences: *Psycho, Julie, Luna* (1994). Shortly afterwards my mother told me I wasn’t named after Julie Andrews, that she had always liked Julie Anthony more. Again and again I find myself questioning what we are given, or imagine, as our histories.

Identity, a common denominator for all people, is the principal structure by which we socialise, make sense of the world and direct our behaviour. I was born in St Kilda, Melbourne, in 1965, the eldest child of a Scottish-born father and a rural Victorian-born mother. Both sides of my family beyond immediate aunts, cousins and grandparents were absent and distant. Scotland and Tasmania were the places I grew up hearing about but not visiting. I felt we were exiled in Melbourne, in part by war. Post World War II my grandfather relocated his family from Glasgow to Melbourne; six years in the heat of India and Burma had made his Scottish homeland too cold to bear. In another way war had also resulted, eventually, in the movement of my mother’s mother from her Tasmanian homeland to Victoria.

The Van Diemen’s Land “Black War” of the 1820s forcibly removed most Tasmanian Aboriginal people from their country into exile by the 1830s, on Bass Strait Islands or isolated across Tasmania as servants for the newcomer British – these were the experiences of my maternal Aboriginal family. The desire to understand the lives of my ancestors, all of them, is what brought me to art. Art is not only a visual outcome; making each artwork is my way of proceeding through the quagmire of the past. Each piece is the result of thinking, collecting, travelling, rebuilding stories from the fragmented history I have inherited. Together the works accumulate and reveal the fraught path of encounter and response with events and people. My art is a chronology of my own life and a parallel charting of the times before me. When I formally started making art in the early 1990s the subject was

In 1989 I returned to Australia after two years in Europe, where I had worked in a poultry factory and a music shop in Hereford, a sandwich shop in Sheffield, a games shop in London and as a nanny in Brescia, Italy. Although I had previously completed a BA degree in 1986 in Prehistory at the University of Western Australia, I didn’t feel comfortable interpreting or digging up other people’s Country in Western Australia, so the degree was shelved and I found work in an Army Surplus shop in Perth.

Most of my life I have felt unsettled, mobile and open to follow unexpected routes. I hadn’t studied art at high school. My main memory of attending four primary schools was playing alone, making cubbies inside large bushes or on the grassy bank of the defunct St Kilda rail line. I thought I would perhaps become an archaeologist or librarian. All I was certain about was that I was a collector and I knew it from a young age.

I enjoyed working in the surplus store; perhaps I would still be there but for a critical collision in 1990 in the far north-west of the state. Riding pillion on the back of a motorcycle, I was leaning out to look on a large eagle at a carcass on the side of the road when it flew directly into my face. Both the bird and I were shocked, neither critically. We left him stunned and blinking, but otherwise sound, under a small tree and continued the journey.

When I returned from the long weekend away, things were different; I too had woken up, blinking. What was I doing? Why was I in Western Australia? I enrolled in TAFE to study drawing and worked part time in the surplus shop. Unplanned but on the advice of the drawing lecturer, I attended an interview session at Curtin University with the folio of my work. I was so impressed with his passion and expertise that I enrolled in the BA degree in 1991. I began my second BA degree, this time in visual arts.

Increasingly my art focused on Tasmania and my family history, with forays into pieces dating from the era of my own birth, with the resulting objects, collations and installations constructed from objects in mediums from that same period. Only after exhausting the possibilities for exploring that era did I move back in time, to when my ancestors faced the colonisers. From that point, in which I have since been enmeshed, I now intermittently move back and forth between then and now, largely due to the potential of the medium of video.

Between 1994 and 1999 I created more than fifteen works from found, indoor, second-hand objects in conjunction with the inclusion of timber, textiles, paints, inks and varnishes. Most consisted of multiple objects in rhythmically balanced formations and referred visually and historically to Australia around the time of my birth. All these works related the pressure inherent then and now on Aboriginal people and culture to be managed, controlled and portrayed by mainstream ideologies. The space I was now working in was internal. Psychologically and also physically I was recreating scenarios of encounter between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people within institutions; the programs and policy that formed the people before me – my parents, grandparents and their parents. I inhabited that space for almost a decade before I was ready to move outdoors in Tasmania and start understanding the places my ancestors inherited before being displaced by colonial events.

My artist statement in 1995 reveals the focus of the narratives then driving my work, dating from the era of my own birth, with the resulting objects, collations and installations constructed from objects in mediums from that same period. Only after exhausting the possibilities for exploring that era did I move back in time, to when my ancestors faced the colonisers. From that point, in which I have since been enmeshed, I now intermittently move back and forth between then and now, largely due to the potential of the medium of video.
The nature of my work is to raise questions in the guise of giving or searching for answers. My interest lies in locating the ‘real’ stories within the documented ‘Western’-given version of a past that hasn’t allowed for the perspective of any ‘Others’ involved. James Baldwin proposed: ‘People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them’ (Black Masks, White Magic, 1956). Forty years later this stage informs much of my art practice. I look to recent history for the stories and materials to recontextualise within an alternative (visual) mode of representation. One primary intention within this reworking of history is to embark on a personal translation of events from a between-the-lines viewpoint. My position comes from invoking nearhistory within my own family for the re-recognition and acceptance of our (Tasmanian) Aboriginality to surface. The narrative-based works I create are reminiscent of museum or hospital visits, of places bordering our set-home-realities, my aim is to stretch their immediate connotations, to speculate on ties-that-bind within the home and between the home and other institutions. My interest is focused on re-imagining the supposed truths of scientific and historical research with the physical evidence of general existence, the familiar and therefore safe, non-threatening visual materials of discarded household items, childhood artefacts, cleaning goods, schoolbooks, souvenirs. The usage and manipulation of these materials within my work allows for a sense of enticement and humorous relief to develop as a by-line within the serious and often confrontational aspect of my version of a past occurrence. These sometimes parallel readings of my work never entirely merge, and this lends an intentionally disturbing inability for closure within many of the pieces of installations I construct.

History isn’t static; it is recorded, maintained and changed by its interaction with time and what we all bring to it. I hope that by engaging with a work a viewer will apply their own cultural baggage to the comprehension of a piece and then perhaps realise their own proximity to or complicity in the fictionalising, concealing and controlling nature of the documentation and transmission of a nation’s past. My work is based on the fact that there are always more clues about the construction of identity to investigate, always more questions than answers.

Artist statement, 1995

In 1996 I exhibited a cacophony of kitsch Aboriginalia in my first solo exhibition Dark Secrets/Home Truths, held at Gallery Gabrielle Piizzi, Melbourne. 2 I am indebted to Gabrielle and subsequently her daughter Samantha for my first (and ongoing) opportunity of commercial gallery representation. Their support gave me the resolve to continue as an ‘artist’. The statement I then wrote about the works and my impetus to make them still holds true.


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In the recreation of western history within fictional film, ‘authentic’ documentary and written representations, non-western participation has been portrayed as inconsiderate of ‘natives’ caught in an intangible landscape, not urban, enacting some kind of ritual with plant or animal – not planning, deliberating, or appearing coherently ‘involved’ in an ongoing existence.

My interest lies in combating, or at least questioning the single-viewpoint or perspective of history maintained by fixing Indigenous peoples in a landscape, as unmoving, unchanging, undeveloping, non-participating, singular and two-dimensional. My work centres on recontextualising historical stories and the cultural meanings of objects by retelling documented events from an alternate and differing perspective than that of the western historical record. My intent is to challenge the recorded past by subversively reworking it from my personal viewpoint as an ‘invisible Aboriginal’. Through using ‘familiar’ – and therefore safe/non-threatening visual materials such as domestic, schoolroom, medical, holiday/souvenir icons, I hope to invoke an air of recognition, of a momentarily returned nostalgia interwoven with my unexpected and often disturbing version of the times or events in question and on view.

As I work with rediscovered episodes in the newspaper or archives, I realise that they become an almost replica artform, a singular format as in their previous written life; in a sense they cannot lay to rest nor naturally adjourn with neighbouring stories. This action of reuse of a narrative, as with incorporation of used materials in my practice, is somehow linked to the perhaps dissatisfying notion within my work and myself that there can be no closure of the past; it is among and within us, there are no absolutes, and the sense of discovery which impels me does not lead to the satisfaction of being able to locate the ‘real’, the ‘truth’, the ‘facts’ – only another approximation of them – my own. Integral to my work is the knowledge that the stories I wish to unravel are usually only documented in the language, the tongue, and therefore the inferences, opinions and bias of the non-Aboriginal onlooker. My reasons for often using the English language within my work are several and include taking issue with the position of this language as the main means of representation of people’s stories within Australia. My suggestion is not that any other written language can fill this void; rather, the use of alternative visual/vocal language forms can assist by offering other interpretations of stories without the inherent historical/cultural boundaries of the English language, and that if utilised within these possibilities the English language will appear the interloper rather than the omniscient inventor. I wish to draw attention to the confines of this language in serving only to categorise,
locate and describe when applied to Aboriginal peoples; language as a means of control and placement, to render safe, to understand, to name and thus to ‘know’. I believe a reuse at a point of language-fracture is a means of drawing out the terrny wrongly, of beliefs blatantly biased, of practices so appalling as to be ludicrous or thankfully sometimes, eventually, humorous.

These books are the history we are made of, yet they are on the verge of being discarded — to allow the system to be absolved, because they are now ‘outdated’. These books ‘gave over’ the data for the Medical series I constructed during 1994 — they spoke of tests on Aboriginal people from the 1930s, as the Czechoslovakian research team in the late 1950s who, testing for ‘Physiological Adaptation to Cold’ in the Central Desert ‘placed’ Aboriginal people overnight in refrigerated meat-vans.

Other volumes construct difference and an accompanying inferred inferiority around comparative studies of people’s earvaxes, teeth, body odour, eyeball weights, hair, fingerprints, skull dimensions; I, past the point of burning and finally, the Porteous Intelligence Test — based on pencil/paper and an imported time/space logic — all unintelligible to the Aboriginal people of the Kimberley region in the 1950s, and contrived to be so.

I also reconfigure non-Indigenous accounts that have impacted on me during childhood — from films including The Sound of Music, Psycho, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, places including Luna Park in Melbourne (next to which I spent my early years), or the original Kung Fu TV series, but my compulsion is to retrieve and rework depictions of Aboriginal people by those who profess to ‘know’ about us.

One persona I have borrowed from popular culture to shape my investigative means of uncovering information is that of the detective figure in fiction and in 1970s TV drama — such as Darren McGavin, who was Kolchak in The Night Stalker. Usually working alone, in the borderline zone of the night and the alleys, this figure solved a puzzle by living within it, never completing his task because the following week the next scenario awaited his particular way of perceiving the clues, of seeing details that eluded others.

The crimes were really so integral to the people of those times that they actually represented them, the same way I believe that the fragments within documents-meets-memory hold the behavioural clues necessary to reassess the displaced past. The texts for information I become an investigator, a detective of sorts; searching for the underbelly of meaning, my aim is to dissloge the evidence no one thought to remove, or even knew was there. As Slavoj Žižek said, ‘The detective’s domain is the domain of meaning, not facts — thus the scene of a crime is structured like a language (and...the detective is not only capable of grasping the significance of insignificant details, but in the apprehending of absence itself as significant)’.

Abuse is rife in the historical record — the version of the colonised or the documented is physically not recorded and non-existent through regular channels of research. Similarly, I no longer see the historical record as factual; rather it is a ledger making attitudes which often reveal more than scrawled names and dates. These are the details that bring meaning to my work; by discovering and adding these to taxonomic references and groupings, then enlisting myself as failible and visible narrator I hope to open up history to fresh contention.

The detective is a suitable part-description of my process-persona because it suggests the danger of discovery, the lack of any connections between the absolutes, the clues that lead to nowhere — the red herrings, the knowledge that no solutions will lead to more ‘crimes’ to solve. Physically, I also work ‘undercover’ collecting information by unintentionally eavesdropping into Aboriginal life, acknowledging the self I shouldn’t be aware of — if government assimilation policies had worked.

At the University of Tasmania library in Hobart, the BLISS classificatory system of books lies segregated. They are the daemons of historians, of scientists, the blatant evidence of language-fracture, the terms of drawing out the terrny wrongly, of beliefs blatantly biased, of practices so appalling as to be ludicrous or thankfully sometimes, eventually, humorous.

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My intention is to combine the mythical with the factual, the familiar object with the alien viewpoint, science with household, to evoke a sense of the unexpected of disturbance, a continuation of the unsettled blurring of the truths/fictions of identity, authenticity and historical facts.

Partially, I envisage my art practice as a type of comparative study, examining the means by which history is recorded, maintained and changed by its interaction with time and what we all bring to it. Thus, in my work, the final factor necessary for a renegotiation of history to occur is to invite a viewer, an audience, to bring their own cultural baggage to a story. I believe by this means the past becomes the present at that juncture when a viewer may enter into a recognition of part or all of what I have made, to momentarily fix themselves and the work into a point in time.

Artist statement, Hobart, 1996

timeline of return

Until 1999 I had hardly been outdoors in Tasmania. Since my childhood in apartments and above a shop in Melbourne, my comfort zone had been interiors and interior worlds found in books that I had eagerly devoured since pre-school. A precursor to later work that emerged in 2000, notable by the use of natural found materials: wood, shells, bone, cuttlefish, coal, plants, was the 1997 piece Shadow of the Spear, which was a response to spending time camping in the far north-east of Tasmania and standing on the coast of Tebrikunna (Cape Portland), where countless ancestors had stood before me looking across to Swan Island.

That place is also highly significant because it resonates with the making of an unkept promise by the government-appointed ‘Conciliator of the Aborigines’, George Augustus Robinson (1791–1866), who, on 6 August 1831, said to Mannalargenna, one of my superiors and a leader of the Plangermairener Nation of north-eastern Tasmania, that if his people would lay down their spears they could remain in their respective districts, unharmed. But Mannalargenna was banished along with most of the remaining Aboriginal people to Flinders Island in Bass Strait where he soon after died in exile. In the first four years of British occupation of Van Diemen’s Land the number of Tasmanian Aboriginal people fell from about 5,000 to less than fifty people.

Ebb Tide (The Whispering Sands) also aimed to reconnect unresolved pasts with place and was created during studies for a Master’s degree in Visual Art at Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 1997–98, thanks to a Samstag scholarship from the University of Melbourne and Goldsmiths College. The work was a response to spending many landed on Belgian shores, coincidentally the homeland of my then future husband. The work was shown at Goldsmiths College London as my major MA graduate work. A four-metre span of super 8 film travelled across a room that simulated an ocean, almost like a stray piece of seaweed, before it looped through the projector to be shown above the floating bobbing forms of the ‘collectors’.

I travelled with Perdita Phillips, an Australian artist then also in London, to Dorset – the corresponding place to the duplicated Portland Dorset of my maternal Traditional Country Neck, southern Tasmania, variable drawings. It was created during studies for a Master’s degree in Visual Art at Goldsmiths College I had not as successfully managed indoors in London. The action of the tides replicated the floating bobbing forms of the ‘collectors’.

Uncannily, at this time (1998) I received an invitation from gallerist Dick Bett to propose a work for the inaugural Tasmanian Sculpture by the Sea exhibition. This provided the opportunity to reinstall the work in a ‘real’ seascape rather than an imagined watery realm. I posted the figures back to Tasmania, the artist fee exactly covering their British mail transportation, and installed them in the tidal flats at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasman Peninsula. Finally, at that site, daily covered and uncovered by the waves, the work revealed the idea I had not as successfully managed indoors in London. The action of the tides replicated how memory works by physically revealing and then concealing the relentless presence of these people, through their collecting work, on Tasmanian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people’s psyche. The action of collecting bottles, adding messages and throwing them one by one into the sea both tested and revealed another key component of my work – repetition as a way of working through complex stories. This working through was physical

London establishments of gentlemen’s pursuits and with likenesses in hand proceeded to reproduce their visages onto signs. They included Lady Jane Franklin, Sir John Franklin, George Augustus Robinson, Henry Ling Roth, James Bonwick, Dr James Barnard and James Calder. I pyrographically inscribed their portraits onto marine plywood while developing a second phase for the project, a performative plan to release small bottles into the ocean at Portland in England containing messages requesting that all museum-held objects be returned to their respective cultures.

I turned my focus to the collectors of our displaced objects of culture, not only objects but in some cases living children and our ancestors’ remains. Most had returned to the UK with their loot. I located where they had spent their lives and deaths, the homes and headstones of the principal purveyors of our objects. I found their cartes de visites in...
My major work formed from multiple elements was *Medical series* (1994). This piece consisted of nine dimensioned ‘stories’ about how the ‘Other’ was until recently considered biologically and psychologically identifiable by factors such as racial consistency, brain weight, physiological adaptation to cold, eyeball weight, skull dimensions, body odour and intelligence testing. Research towards the making of this work revealed more than thirty traits or parts of the body by which scientists thought they could determine race. Undertaking the research and making the work became a cathartic act. It was much later, in 2000, that I heard someone else express what the *Medical series* physically engendered. Thomas Alozie at an Indigenous Fire Symposium in Hobart said with great insight that ‘race is a distraction’, that we are all indigenous to somewhere. Many have forgotten that somewhere is.

Genetic memory is ancestry. If people don’t know their own origins, the context and purpose of their genetic memories are unclear, even frightening. Can one work well and with a world for which there is felt no clear sense of understanding, inheritance and responsibility? Having a place, a homeland or multiple homelands brings with it a felt sense of that place, its seasons and needs, and provisions we who live in these places and the places themselves with a future – the place inhabits us as we inhabit it. Art-making eventually brought me back to Country, but it took a long time for me to be ready for each other. I had a lot of learning to do before I was comfortable to stay on my Traditional homeland. I was so dislocated from Tasmania in space and time that I had to bring back a place via the geography of a university art school and ‘safety’ of a capital and with a world for which there is felt no clear sense of understanding, inheritance and purpose of their genetic memories are unclear, even frightening. Can one work well in such an outside. ’7 Again I see this as something of my situation – I feel distanced in a western world where I walk seeking clues and directions from what has been omitted from the history. Working with particular events that my ancestors experienced offers a sense of return. Making art about the promise to my ancestress Marnarlaragenna by George Augustus Robinson, following my stay at the place where the promise occurred, was critical to the direction my work has taken. I reabsorb history on the run. The art is both the result and production of critical research about ancestors, often with no clear beginning or ending, which in any non-art fields of research or output could not be productively or credibly made public. My process of art-making about the underbelly of Australian history necessitates learning about and visually combining multiple strands of enquiry from oral history, anthropology, archaeology, genealogy, religion and health and education policy and records.

*matriarchs, family, survivors*

Parts of the life of one ancestor, Woretemoeteyen (c. 1790–1847), is revealed by journals and records only recently being brought together to better understand her experiences and times. Born in the far northeast of Tasmania, by her early teens she lived with a Bedfordshire-born sealer, George Briggs, on various islands across Bass Strait. In 1815 she first featured in an official account, as a ‘wife’ of Briggs, when her father Marnarlaragenna attempted an agreement with James Kelly, who was then circumnavigating Van Diemen’s Land, with Briggs, in a whale boat, to support Marnarlaragenna’s position in his then-warring relationship with his brother. My ancestor, Dalrymple Briggs, Woretemoeteyen’s eldest surviving daughter, had been baptised the previous year by Chaplain Robert Knopman in Launceston.8 It is likely that Dalrymple was born in Bass Strait, perhaps a Little Kangaroo Island as her newspaper obituary stated, or perhaps Preservation Island. She lived post-baptism with Dr Jacob Mountgarrett and his wife Bridget in Launceston, and later Longford, in northern Tasmania. The Mountgarretts were notorious drunkards, dead by 1828, soon after which Dalrymple lived on the colonial frontier at Stocker’s Hut, near Quamby Bluff, with two children and a convict partner.

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My slow return to place, to Tasmania, was often a solitary process. My immediate family is small and until 2012 they lived on mainland Australia. Without the support of more distant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relatives in Tasmania and the arts community I would have been very much a lonermaker. From the 1990s, particularly once I understood from where in Tasmania and from exactly whom I came, I began piecing together people with place and stories of their lives; this is an ongoing process. Until very recently this repopulation of place with ancestors was completely focused on my known Aboriginal forebears who lived in the 1800s, whose lives could each fill decades of my research and contemplation. Working with particular events that my ancestors experienced offers a sense of return. Making art about the promise to my ancestor Marnarlaragenna by George Augustus Robinson, following my stay at the place where the promise occurred, was critical to the direction my work has taken. I reabsorb history on the run. The art is both the result and production of critical research about ancestors, often with no clear beginning or ending, which in any non-art fields of research or output could not be productively or credibly made public. My process of art-making about the underbelly of Australian history necessitates learning about and visually combining multiple strands of enquiry from oral history, anthropology, archaeology, genealogy, religion and health and education policy and records.

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8 Slavoj Zizek calls this position ‘psychotic’: ‘The detective is someone who must maintain a psychotic position – i.e., to be deceived by the symbolic order and to maintain a distance from it’. Zizek, *Looking away*, p. 135.


10 Visiting Port Dalrymple from Hobart, 19 March 1814.
By the commencement of the epic sea journey in 1825, John Briggs, the last of Woretemoeteyenner’s five known children, was born. He returned to enter the historical record intermittently throughout his life, as did his three sisters. John eventually moved to Victoria and married a Bunorong woman, Louise Esme Strugnell, who, with her mother, had been kidnapped by sealers decades earlier from Point Nepean in Victoria and taken to Bass Strait. John and Louisa founded one of the extended Briggs families of Victoria. His sister, my ancestor, Dalrymple Briggs, married convict Thomas Johnson in 1831 in Longford, Tasmania, and they had thirteen children in northern Tasmania, where Dalrymple died in 1864. The sealer George Briggs, father to many Aboriginal children including John, Dalrymple, Eliza and Mary Briggs, had meanwhile sold Woretemoeteyenner for 1 guinea to another sealer, John Thomas, and disappeared from the historical record. He was last seen on Clarke Island in 1837. In 2007 I made She was sold for one guinea, a book sealed shut with a funeral black beaded cover.

Several artworks specifically reference Woretemoeteyenner’s life. The first, Brown Sugar (1995), was the result of locating archival material in the mid-1990s about a two-year voyage she undertook from King Island in 1825 in company with four other Tasmanian Aboriginal women, three children, three sealers and numerous dogs. The passengers expected to be set on St Pauls Island to hunt seal but the ship missed the necessary seasonal currents and winds, and instead headed for Rodrigues Island between Mauritius and Western Australia, where the captain moored briefly and left the Van Diemian party stranded with their whaleboat for five months. In a later enquiry the captain declared that it was a benevolent decision driven by the practices of sugar plantation slavery that the women would find themselves potentially enmeshed in if he had taken them to Mauritius. Eventually a passing ship took the women and one sealer – the other two travelled in their whaleboat – to Mauritius where one woman and one child died and another child stayed with his sealer father, Tyack. After two years and three more ships, the remaining women and children and dogs returned to Van Diemen’s Land via St Georges Sound (Albany, Western Australia) and Sydney to be held in Launceston gaol ‘for their own safety’; the Black War was in full flight. Meanwhile the New South Wales government pressured the newly independent Van Diemen’s Land government to foot the bill for the Aboriginal women’s return to Tasmania, their consumption of meat and other goods carefully listed and provided by the ship’s captain. It appears costs were never met. The artwork was a meditation on fact and surmise. It responded to the material uncovered in the archives by representing their journey as a sinister giant board ‘game’ of luck and chance. Quoits and sugar bags could be thrown at and through the work, maps and sea shanties plotted and revealed the accidental journey that defines my family’s past. In 2001 I travelled to Mauritius and Rodrigues where I stayed for five months and six weeks respectively, and voluntarily worked with various local institutions and organisations and created a body of work for a solo exhibition: passages, held early in 2002 at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute at Moka.

Mannalargenna was one of the group of Tasmanian Aboriginal people who walked around Tasmania with George Augustus Robinson, then employed as a government conciliator of the Aborigines in Van Diemen’s Land and subsequently in Port Phillip (Victoria). The shifting envoy of up to twelve Aboriginal people accompanying Robinson between 1829 and 1834 became cross-cultural negotiators. Travelling with Robinson provided some security but, eventually, for Mannalargenna it brought great personal unrest from the deception in which he was implicated. It is likely that Mannalargenna initially believed Robinson’s word that Tasmanian Aboriginal people, if peaceable, would be allowed to stay on their Country, but this promise was not kept. Mannalargenna cut off his hair on board a ship bound for Flinders Island to join his banished people. He died soon after from what was medically termed pneumonia.
The Bass Strait islands for me and perhaps for many in my extended family is not the Tasmanian Aboriginal homeland that the media projects. The island story of our family, the descendants of Dalrymple Briggs, is different to that of the families whose Aboriginal matriarchs stayed with their ex-sealing trade “partners” on the Bass Strait Islands, particularly Cape Barren Island, for multiple generations, until very recent times. The isolation of these families was not as solitary as it seems; dozens of families were in proximity, intermarried and shared celebrations and activities, including the mutton birding season each year. My female Aboriginal ancestors I know most about from those early times are Dalrymple Briggs and her mother Woratemalaennner. Since Worateaucteennnner joined Robinson’s so-called ‘Friendly Mission’ for a brief period, when she was relinquished by sealers, along with many other women, upon government order and placed on a holding camp on Penguin Island. It was from Penguin Island that she had seen the ship The Margaret relinquished by sealers and this provided Robinson with a ‘new’ name for her: Margaret Briggs. Another name by which she was known was Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Johnson’s father.

Worateaucteennnner joined Robinson’s so-called ‘Friendly Mission’ for a brief period, when she was relinquished by sealers, along with many other women, upon government order and placed on a holding camp on Penguin Island. It was from Penguin Island that she had seen the ship The Margaret relinquished by sealers and this provided Robinson with a ‘new’ name for her: Margaret Briggs. Another name by which she was known was Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Johnson’s father. When Margaret Briggs was taken from Penguin Island, her daughter, my great-grandmother, Worateaucteennnner, was left behind. She was shipwrecked on Flinders Island, where her father Mannalargenna died in 1835.

On 28 June 1841 a letter was sent to the Commandant at Flinders Island by the Colonial Secretary ordering Mrs Briggs’s removal.

D. Johnson to Col. Secretary:

I believe Mrs. Johnson is well able to support her mother and that no possible injury can occur from her being permitted to reside with her. Mrs. Briggs was not one of the wild aborigines but always lived with Briggs, Mrs. Johnson’s father.

8 May 1841

You will no doubt recollect my speaking to you yesterday about my mother who is at Flinders Island and who name is Mrs. Briggs. As it is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing her and as my situation and circumstance in life would enable me to help her live with me in comfort may I respectfully beg leave to solicit your interposition through the proper channels of getting an order for the removal of my mother from Flinders Island to my residence in this township of Perth. Any expenses attending her conveyance to this place I shall be most willing to pay.

(signed) Dalrymple Johnstone

Moriarty to Col. Secretary:

You will no doubt recollect my speaking to you yesterday about my mother who is at Flinders Island and who name is Mrs. Briggs. As it is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing her and as my situation and circumstance in life would enable me to help her live with me in comfort may I respectfully beg leave to solicit your interposition through the proper channels of getting an order for the removal of my mother from Flinders Island to my residence in this township of Perth. Any expenses attending her conveyance to this place I shall be most willing to pay.

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On 8 May 1841, Mrs. Woretemoeteyenner joined Robinson’s so-called ‘Friendly Mission’ for a brief period, when she was relinquished by sealers, along with many other women, upon government order and placed on a holding camp on Penguin Island. It was from Penguin Island that she had seen the ship The Margaret relinquished by sealers and this provided Robinson with a ‘new’ name for her: Margaret Briggs. Another name by which she was known was Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Johnson’s father.

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On the far north-east coast of Tasmania is where I feel most comfortable, and that makes some sense given that for thousands of years, at least 500 generations before me, many of my maternal ancestors lived in Tasmania, and my most recent tribal ancestors called the north-east home. To restore my health, perception and outlook I return to the north-east. I can distinctly recall my first trips there, when it felt like an extra valve had opened and I could breathe and sleep properly for the first time ever. That feeling doesn’t go away.

Ironically, in a benign adaptation of our women ancestors being kidnapped from Tasmanian shores by sealers, I find myself hiding in north-eastern coastal dunes to avoid eco-tourists on their daily Bay of Fires walk. One friend suggested I set up a passport control station on the beach and charge a fee to these daily interlopers who cross our Country and leave their myriad of prints along our most special beaches. Instead, I made a video work called *Observance* (2012) for which I filmed from the dunes and coastal scrub the daily incursion of eco-tourists, whose relentless passage along my ancestral Country creates a growing unease in the film where they appear to be erasing and replacing history and our incursion of eco-tourists, whose relentless passage along my ancestral Country creates a growing unease in the film where they appear to be erasing and replacing history and our possession of Aboriginal people. Camping in the north-east was critical to my realisation that I needed time to be a component of my art repertoire, and that I needed to add moving image to my toolkit to express reiterative ideas pondering consequence, then and now.

*Most of my recent artwork is split, like my life, between the city and archives and the outdoor world across Tasmania. In the north-east the art finds me; the materials present themselves and I make otherwise unplanned work determined by the resources and my skills.*

*Transmitting Device* (2005), *Time capsules (bitter pills)* (2001) and *Night sky journey* (2001) were all made from materials found on coastal north-east Tasmania and from ideas that arrived with the materials. *Transmitting Device* consists of sag grass or Lomandra longifolia, limpet shells and two pieces of driftwood. The limpet shells were found on one beach with their mid-section missing. When I stood on the beach where they had amassed I realised there were enough to make a rounded form, perhaps a kind of container. Nearby grew the lomandra and I recognised this was the material that could join the shells together, that these materials already knew each other. What I feel and sometimes hear on these beach zones is the past, the closeness of ancestors. They seem just over there, close, calling, but indistinct. This work comes from the sometimes almost unbearable desire to communicate, to move across from now to the old times. So I made headgear, a device that could magically work to enable one to communicate across generations if worn properly. That is the key and the driver, not how to make it, but to learn how to use it properly, which I don’t yet fully know.

*Time capsules (bitter pills)* originated from the same desire of *Transmitting Device* – to be in contact with people and the past in the north-east of Tasmania. I was sitting in 2000 on a beach near Eddystone Lighthouse, at what has since been renamed Larapuna (Aboriginal name for Bay of Fires). I picked up some cuttlefish bones and began to draw circles on them. I had no clear idea in mind. I made a whole handful of capsule-pill forms, which was perplexing. I then wondered if I swallowed one whether I could go back in time to the same place, having absorbed something of its essence. I then wondered if I would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like what I found and if those I found, my ancestors, would like.

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*A troubling thought, bitter pills.*

*Night sky journey* was one result of the production of stone artefacts from rocks I collected on the journey to my north-east Traditional Country. I had a substantial pile of rocks beside my car on St Peters Pass on the Midlands Highway before I realised that in my excitement at seeing such great sharp stones emerging from fresh road works I had locked my keys in the car. Luckily my mobile phone was in my pocket. It was a bemused RAC mechanic who turned up near nightfall from Oatlands to reopen my car for me, trying to move across from now to the old times. So I made headgear, a device that could magically work to enable one to communicate across generations if worn properly. That is the key and the driver, not how to make it, but to learn how to use it properly, which I don’t yet fully know.

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not to ask me about the sizeable pyramid of stones by then accumulated. I learned a lot from these rocks in the coming weeks while I stayed at a lighthouse cottage solo art residency at Eddystone Point. I learned how the rocks split and sing, become an extension of the body. As they scattered across the wallaby lawns, my perception shifted and I saw them as a constellation of night stars. Collecting kelp by day I made climbing shoes to be installed on the temporary rock wall. This work moves between meanings: it is a simulated star map–meets–indoor rock-climbing wall.

in exile

In 2002 I worked in Launceston as a lecturer at Riawunna, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, at the University of Tasmania, but I missed living in Hobart. When the opportunity arose to work as a Curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, I moved to Melbourne, which strangely seemed as far from Hobart as Launceston. For the next five years I would only intermittently, for days or weeks, go back to Tasmania, and during this absence my art changed. Living in Melbourne revealed to me how Victoria (Port Phillip) was created in the 1830s as an outpost of northern Tasmania, by Van Diemenian anglo colonists, in part-defiance of their government in Hobart, and how that northern migration story has all but been forgotten. What happened to Aboriginal people in Victoria was a variation on and response to what had already been imposed on Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the thirty years prior, re-enacted in large part by the same colonists’ families with the same shameless ‘conciliator’ of the Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson. More solidarity can be formed between Victorian and Tasmanian Aboriginal people when we recognise we suffered under and survived the same extended regime.

Although I grew up in Victoria, and many family members still live there, the Victoria I knew then and still know is very much inner Melbourne. When I was offered the possibility to create an outdoor work for a group exhibition curated by Andrea and Peter Hylands at Chewton near Castlemaine, I felt unexpectedly disturbed in a way I hadn’t since studying archaeology in Western Australia and not wanting to participate in ‘digs’. What could I do outdoors at Chewton that would be there but not there? Presenting but not imposing? Walking around the place beyond the gallery, into the sparse forest that was once the terrain of intensive gold mining, I recognised the entire place was disturbed; layer upon layer of living in the fairly recent past had modified the region. My response as a visitor to the site was to collect some exposed disturbed quartz of the area, surfaced by historic mining traffic, and outline a giant eucalypt leaf on a still distinct track used by the miners. The work *Regeneration* shows how a place acknowledges people as part of its life cycle. Young trees are now pushing up and reclaiming the land, one growing up strong in the middle of my quartz leaf design. I was concerned to not introduce new materials or discordant designs. I wanted to make something that I could leave to be reclaimed and perhaps disappear, determined by the place. The name of my ancestor Woretemoeteyenner means a eucalypt, and in that forest all I could see were eucalypts. So, in a cross-generational endeavour, I denoted my visit by a leaf. The quartz provided strong contrast with the earth ground, so much so that it appeared to be an emerging bone or skeletal form, emanating from the place itself.

In 2005 I took up a lecturing position in visual arts at James Cook University in Townsville, Queensland. Although we lived near the coast, it was a very different place to Tasmania. Everything seemed desperate and not a little frightening. The history of violence in the region – Palm Island, military presence, mining activity – plus the Dengue fever and Ross River virus-carrying mosquitos, the lethal jellyfish and man-eating crocodiles were palpable. Not surprising then that I started making work about returning to Tasmania. Instead of works made in Tasmania that focused on trying to travel back to the old times, the art made on mainland Australia during this period manifested the desire to get back to any Tasmania at any time. *Craft for floating home* (2005) and *Lifebearer, Seam, Drift* (2005) were all very physical renditions of this desire. *Craft for floating home* consisted of collections of cuttlefish bones, coconuts, driftwood and sea pumice I had found along Townsville and region beaches that I had packed into transparent vacuum-sealed storage bags and, with bound driftwood sides and ends, created ‘rafts’ or ‘crafts’ for floating home – literally. Testing these in the sea at Townsville, the coconut-filled raft presented a similar coralline structure, but not a quarter of the scale. The lifespan of these floating structures is limited, disintegrating under the impact of wind, waves and storms. The eucalypt and cuttlebone rafts were more permanent, lasting for weeks, and therefore more powerfully spectacular. They could be seen from Townsville’s剃头岩灯塔, and I was pleased by this distance as a metaphor for how a distance of space or time can be traversed.
showed the best potential to transport me, much to the amusement of local early morning fishermen. The raft was eventually suspended in Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts in St Kilda, along with a photograph of a briefly successful voyage, the craft seemingly directed for Port Phillip Heads and Tasmania beyond. This gallery was the perfect setting for my artwork; it was located in Acland Street, where my parents ran a milk bar when I was a baby in the mid-sixties.

Ideas of the familiar, the transformative being or object, compel me. Since 2005 I have formed giant necklaces from found materials that are about the presence and the weight of history and cultural practices, and sometimes also about the desire for return. The urge to create the monumental about the little-spoken cross-cultural past of Tasmania has seen these forms recently change in purpose more than in material. While in Townsville in 2005 I created three giant necklaces, Lifebearer, Seam and Drift, from beach-found sea coal, driftwood and pumice. These necklaces were made as memory pieces about the sea and as my then primary psychological conduit back to Tasmania.

object memory

I embarked on making a series of giant coal necklaces from local materials when I relocated back to Tasmania in 2008. While the first coal necklace was made from lumps found on beaches just north of Townsville, encrusted with sea growths, the Tasmanian coal was sourced from the Fingal Valley coal company, in the middle of the island. Whereas earlier necklaces were suspended from driftwood hooks, these are suspended from deer antlers provided by Tasmanian farmers whose ancestry on the island stems from early colonial times. The antlers and the coal are unlikely partners bound together in a difficult, relentless conversation representative of the displacement of the original people and our relationship with those incoming. These objects are material witnesses to the battles fought for Country between the invaders and original people of this island. My affiliation with coal comes from both sides of my family – my Scottish father’s mother’s family were Lararkshire coal miners, and Dairymple Johnston (nee Briggs) and her husband operated a coal mine, Alfred Colliery, near Latrobe in the mid-1800s, which I located, helped by locals, in 2008. The first two necklaces were named after the most proximate large colonial landholdings – Malahide and Killymoon – originally owned by Irish Protestant gentry, the Talbot and Von Steiglitz families. Drilling and stringing coal takes one back to some fundamental source, the deepest darkest earth. The resulting necklaces are also primal reminders about the immovable dark side of human nature. They stand as a kind of memorial to the Tasmanian shell necklace tradition, its historic loss within my own immediate family, now recently awoken.

Since returning to live permanently in Tasmania I have been a full-time independent artist, curator, writer and historian. Finding a balance between living to make and making to live, or making to invitation, is a challenge. Each artwork has a different, and uncertain, gestation period, and multiple overlapping exhibition deadlines are not conducive to best outcomes. On the other hand, having constantly upcoming exhibitions encourages consideration of new ways to make work and greater reflection on why I make what I do.

I would have been unable to make many artworks in the past decade without invitational or commissioning exhibitions in which artist and material fees enabled my purchase of, access to and experimentation with materials, techniques and fabrication. My first major invitation came from Tony Bond (Art Gallery of New South Wales) to create a piece for the inaugural Liverpool (UK) Biennial ‘Trace’. The resulting work, HOME sweet HOME (1999), consisted of six miniature ‘beds’ filled with many kilograms of pins spelling out the names, ages and death dates of Liverpool orphans of the 1700s and 1800s. While undertaking a research residency in Liverpool for this project I unexpectedly found the tombstones of Liverpool Orphan Asylums in the grounds of the Anglican Cathedral, and the records of various orphan asylums that described what work was forced upon the children. One task was ‘making pins’, from which the idea for the work came. I requested to exhibit in the Bluecoat Arts Centre, a former asylum or orphanage. Back in Tasmania four women and I got to work infilling, over some weeks, the children’s names with pins pressed into the lettering on the mattresses, which I made from graphite rubbings on cotton placed over the actual tombstones. It was a very moving experience to return to Liverpool and install the work, to hear visitors reading aloud the names of those long dead children, in the place where they had once lived. The scale of the work meant I had to engage others in its manufacture – the first time I had done so – and communal making was integral to
Another instance of international invitation was equally as unexpected and challenging. In 2002 I was one of seven Australian women installation artists invited by Campbell Gray, Director of Brigham Young University Gallery, Provo, Utah, to undertake a brief residency in Utah, then return to Australia and propose a work in response to our visit, and return a year later to Utah to install our works.11 This was a welcome challenge, much as was the opportunity to create new work for the Liverpool Biennale, because both exhibitions didn’t expect an ‘Indigenous’ response or artwork. I felt liberated from Australia’s culturally traumatised terrain and my self-imposed responsibility to continually work on that theme. The resulting work, Transmutation (2003), incorporated an early video work of me running near a riverbank with a pillowcase over my head that was sprouting hair. The video was shown on a monitor at the end of a hospital bed in the far right corner of a large gallery dedicated to this work. At the head of the bed was an ECG heart monitor showing elevated heart rate, and the bedding was awry as though the patient had ‘escaped’. In the centre of the room was a large tripod formation of steps made from small handmade pillows that reached up towards a light. The pillows were also sprouting hair at their seams, their fabric either locally popular floral prints or white cotton on which were reproduced images of desert insects of Utah. Under the tripod formation was a paperbark cocoon–like object which had wires running to and from it and that quivered intermittently. On an adjacent wall was a lace curtain, the fabric frozen stiff as though an uncanny wind had stopped time in the space. This work was referring simultaneously to notions of visitation and difference, extraterrestrial and my own, to the alien environment both physically and sociologically that Utah presented to me.

In 2000 I was commissioned to make a work for the new National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Australian wing at Federation Square. I worked with NGV curator Jennifer Phipps in the development of the work, and its realisation was in no small part thanks to NGV designer Megan Atkins. The resulting piece, Chase, consisted of more than 200 suspended Tasmanian tea-tree sticks that hovered between an earlier work of mine, Imperial Leather

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Chase himself into the scrub. He is about to enter the morass that became Australia from that symbolic moment of uninvited arrival. The colour red is very evident in both works. The Landing of Captain Cook and Imperial Leather, and re-emphasised within the forest of Chase by pieces of red woollen flannel and cotton, affixed as if torn during flight and fight between cultures. Imperial Leather is constructed from red tie-dye tallowing. It is a kind of shadow of the Union Jack flag covered with cast wax heads aligned to the flags’ design. I made the casts from an aluminium positive mould of an Aboriginal boy’s face, which was a 1950s wall ornament that I purchased from a market occupying an empty Chinese restaurant in Acland Street, St Kilda, while my mother looked on, bemused. Appearing to be soap-on-ropes, these suspended head forms are collected, managed, and captured by the flag. The flag represents and replicates the regime of control enforced on Aboriginal people since Cook’s landing. The forest of tea-trees, the sticks from which Tasmanian spears are/were made, seem waiting. Suspended, they represent cross-cultural encounters which continue unresolved, hence these spears are unprepared. Tea tree is materially one of the most important components of my art practice. Our women and men both made and threw spears in the old times in Tasmania, for me unprepared. Tea tree is materially one of the most important components of my art practice. Since my Honours year, 1994, I have regularly exhibited in Australia. The reasons for this cannot only be traced to my good fortune to meet and exhibit with Gabrielle Pizzi since 1995, but also to a precursor meeting and opportunity while studying at the University of Tasmania School of Art in 1994. Judy Annear, curator for an upcoming exhibition, Perspecta at the Art Gallery of NSW, visited Tasmania looking for potential exhibiting artists. While touring student studios in the art school she stopped at my space. I introduced Judy to the Medical series work underway, we discussed that and she left. An invitation arrived to exhibit the completed series at Perspecta (1995), which was subsequently purchased by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery by curator David Hansen.

In 1998, returning from the UK and a completed Master in Visual Art from Goldsmiths College, I recommenced a PhD in visual arts at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). Having punctuated the UTAS degree with an overseas MA saw the cessation of my Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship hunting towards me. I needed to find employment to continue my research and degree. I became the Aboriginal Interpretation Officer for the World Heritage Area in Tasmania, working for the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS). World Heritage funding provided the position, and to this day there has never been adequate funding for Aboriginal interpretation outside the World Heritage Area. Aboriginal people and history seem absent from the everyday terrain of Tasmania. Tourists leave with a notion that Tucanini (c. 1812–1876) was indeed the last of our people. The huge impact of that PWS position on me, which I held until I took up three artist residencies over two years in 2001–02, continues.

Suspended in front of the sleepwalking captain, the tea-tree forest appears ominous. This employment took me outdoors around Tasmania, out of the surrealistic separatist zone of the archives where I had been unhealthily immersed for five years. It encouraged me to reconnect place with people and story through art derived from more active research. I want to repopulate Tasmania with histories still so hidden they seem untraceable. Working in interpretation also offered me insights into message and medium. I have never been fixed to one skill or medium, concept and content matter more to me than mastering a technique. The broad approach and cross-dimensionality of interpretation gave me training in finding the best medium on a case-by-case, work-by-work basis. In turn, this investigation of medium and messages as often as sculpture, and to seek work in the interpretation, museum and education sector, and with cross-disciplinary colleagues who also seek new ways to broach old, little known or avoided histories. This ‘artaeology’ work can feel like a race against time to reinstate the past for fresh consideration. This is because the past I am interested in is light years from the mainstream agenda. Aboriginal stories are constantly overlooked by mainstream focus on other histories - such as the ‘Great War’ or the convict past, or are mined by academics who claim our stories as their own, to write them before we are ready to.

While working for the Parks and Wildlife Service I connected places on maps with actual places I was driving past. I started photographing the signs and scanning maps, and produced a series of fifteen postcards for the Biennale d’art contemporain de Noumea. The series was called Driving Black Home (2000), my first video work. As with much of my work since graduating in 2001, the piece was created in response to a group exhibition invitation. In 2009 Noel Frankham curated TRUST at the Georgian World Heritage Area in Tasmania, working for the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS). World Heritage funding provided the position, and to this day there has never been adequate funding for Aboriginal interpretation outside the World Heritage Area. Aboriginal people and history seem absent from the everyday terrain of Tasmania. Tourists leave with a notion that Tucanini (c. 1812–1876) was indeed the last of our people. The huge impact of that PWS position on me, which I held until I took up three artist residencies over two years in 2001–02, continues.

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the land tells our story / the archival outdoors

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home, Clarendon House, in northern Tasmania. Their land grant was not inhabited by the original Mrs Cox, the wife of James Cox, for some years after their arrival to Van Diemen’s Land in 1814, due to her fear of ‘Blacks and Bushrangers’.12 I asked if I could borrow UTAS video equipment and was handed an archaic video tape camera, probably because I divulged I would be filming from a kayak. I filmed with this equipment for two artworks, edited back to back: *Driving Black Home* and *Rivers Run*. From that point I have been enchanted by the medium of video, particularly once I, shortly after making these artworks, invested in a digital video camera.

*Driving Black Home* (2009) was filmed over three days through the windscreen of a car driven by my partner in history-crime and husband, Koenraad. I plotted the journey to take us through the Tasmania of Van Diemian counties and colonist’s land grants, whose names populate the footage as subtitles for 3 hours and 43 minutes. That is how long it takes for the name and acreage details of 3,125 land grantees between 1804 and 1832 to be coupled with the landscape which was taken up, and from which Aboriginal people were removed. The video is about implied absence from the overwhelming presence in the footage of the incoming ‘settlers’.

The audience and reception and reading of this work was subverted before me in its first installation in the basement of the grand colonial homestead of Clarendon. Context is incredibly important and the idea of countering the expectations of the colonist gaze in such a space was my very hopeful position. Without adequate explanation and in this space, the visitors to the homestead, I was informed, were sitting for long lengths of time, hoping to see the emigrant success of their ancestor in early Tasmania, rather than demonstrating any guilt or grief at their ancestor’s complicity in our dispossession. Their position, as in so many history books, was to see their ancestors’ taking up of the land as a positive, laudable step.

If I include this work in an exhibition about Aboriginal history and culture or at a conference about the same, the audience reads it the opposite way, as dispossession.

In 1995 Gabrielle Pizzi nominated me for a space in the Forderprogram at Cologne Art Fair, Germany, and I was invited to exhibit work the following year as an emerging artist. I installed the following works:
realised. The piece comprises two ‘arms’ of children’s leather school shoes into which were fitted small lights beneath each extended shoe tongue that held an illuminated education department slide about child behaviour. In the middle of the work was a set of children’s stilts between which were a series of images of Aboriginal children in the mid-1960s on the rotor ride at Sydney Luna Park. Taken there for a big day out, they were excessively documented ‘having fun’ throughout the day by government authorities. The German audience read this work, and mOTHER (1995), Boxing Boys (1995) and She loves me, she loves me not ... (1995), as their own history. They saw the shoes as referring to the Holocaust. They were tearful before I could intercept and explain all the pieces were about important Aboriginal history and not their own history. This was perplexing. I wish Australian mainstream audiences would feel this strongly and understand the power of art to reflect aspects of histories in powerful ways by circumnavigating text. Without a descriptive label artworks trigger private meanings for each viewer overriding the artist’s own meaning for the work. Similarly, My Tools Today brought an intense reaction with many viewers insistent that the museum was in their various hometowns and not the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart. I had to relinquish the work’s meaning in Germany, but nonetheless was satisfied by the palpable emotion expressed by the audience; their willingness to engage with art at this level was something I had not seen before or since. This was an art fair so the audience was art literate, and also possibly seeking art of difference, with much of the other work exhibited not about social history.

**Leeawuleena**, 2001 (detail). Driftwood, wax, eucalyptus branch, 375.5 x 12.0 x 19.0 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

This was my first experience of testing contexts and realising how people read art through the lens of their own lives and knowledge. It was also a lesson in the value of spending time in one’s exhibition to experience the public’s response. My Tools Today (1996) was about the lasting legacy of museum representations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the other four works were about the purpose and consequences of removal of Aboriginal children from their families. At Cologne Art Fair many visitors spoke English, despite the majority being German. It quickly seemed the public ‘owned’ the stories and hence misread them. Many visitors cried in front of my work. This is something I had not encountered in Australia. Pedagogical (Inner Soul) Pressure (1996) was read visually before close approach, its meaning determined before its actual Australian content was
Exhibitions parallel my personal experiences and become chronological markers, reminders of my life as it unfolds. My solo exhibitions at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi between 1996 and 2014 track aspects of my life through choice of subject, materials and techniques. "Leewooleena" (2001) was exhibited in my third of six solo exhibitions with Gabrielle Pizzi: "Heartland" (2001). The work comprises a series of primeval twig-like forms practically marching up a tree branch. These were made by combining driftwood pieces from Leewooleena (Lake St Clair) with a eucalyptus branch from my north-east homeland, Tebrikunna. The work came about while employed as Aboriginal Interpretation Officer, developing and managing a project with three Tasmanian Aboriginal women artists who created work and provided interpretation for Leewooleena (Lake St Clair) National Park.13 Finding the driftwood was calming. At the time, gathering it had no purpose beyond being a memory work about that time in my life, relationships with those women and that place and with my own Country – always carried, in the present at the Lake. The piece is now a memory work about that time in my life, created work and provided interpretation for Leewooleena (Lake St Clair) National Park.13

Traditionally the region where I undertook the artist residency was known as Tebrikunna, and the nearby Bay of Fires as Larapuna. Today the lighthouse cottages and lands are known as Larapuna and are managed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation through the Aboriginal Land Council Tasmania. But in 2000, in winter, the residency was remote and I had only one visitor, a lost stranger in the rain seeking to use my phone. Under those circumstances I found myself relying on the place for inspiration, along with journals and books I had brought for strange company, which included "Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Aboriginal Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson". This text persists in affecting my life, being the five-year journal of the lay-missionary who managed, by the early 1830s, to convince most of the remaining Aboriginal people at large to leave Flinders Island. This journal describes innumerable situations, meetings, accounts and attitudes, and mentions ancestors of most of the contemporary Aboriginal community.

While "Friendly Mission" is valuable and emotionally charged, it is always permanently frustrating given it is from the hand of a pompous self-serving representative of the colonial government. The tension between this man's account, a substantial part of which took place in my Country, northeast Tasmania, where the art residency was undertaken, with the natural and cultural world beyond the lighthouse cottages – where I walked and collected and pondered each day – encapsulates my artist-life since – one of walking two paths. I live not only as an Aboriginal person of mixed heritage, but as someone who is trying to understand the past by historic texts of those times, produced only by the hand of colonists, and by Walking Country today, trying to read not only the past traces of my ancestors across the island, but to see the Country by awakening my Aboriginal eyes to watch, feel and make my own history and stories.

Re-collection (1997) was my last solo exhibition that consisted almost entirely of indoor found objects and a kitsch aesthetic. This body of work contrasted wildly with my next solo exhibition in the same gallery – "Heartland" held in 2001. The works in "Heartland" were the result of a three-month Arts Tasmania residency at Eddystone Lighthouse, Mt-William National Park in north-east Tasmania – my maternal Country or homeland. I had recently completed the position as Aboriginal Interpretation Officer with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service in Hobart, for which I had consulted widely and produced brochures and interpretation panels for an Indigenous walking trail, "Larnarmetemere Tabelti" and a display of contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal fibre work for the Lake St Clair visitors' centre. The position at PWS changed my life. It forced me to revise my process of working indoors, in isolation, with manufactured objects. While I had experienced how some places provided intangible wellbeing benefits to recharge my spirit I had not yet approached Country as a source of direct inspiration or for materials for my artworks.

In 2000 I was awarded three art residencies for 2001 – in Mauritius (Commonwealth Arts and Craft Award), New York (Green street, Australia Council for the Arts) and Eddystone Lighthouse (Arts Tasmania). These saw me leave the position at the Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania and embark on a new phase of self-reliant mobility that has marked my life decisions since.

The opportunity to explore new materials and directions was liberating. Not constrained by university expectations and deadlines, nor forced to logically continue lines of enquiry, techniques and processes in finite projects, I began to explore with different mediums. In New York I worked with clay, found timber and paper, and in Mauritius it was cement, sugarcane, house paint and discarded tin. I realised that changing the context of audience, available materials and location of making created widely varying outcomes, while the same underpinning basis for the works, demarcated by mapping and multiples, did reveal my authorship.

In 2002 I returned to Tasmania as a lecturer at Riawunna, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, at UTAS in Launceston, then relocated to Victoria to take up the role of Curator, Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria alongside Judith Ryan and Nazareth Alfred. When Nazareth departed and Sana Balai arrived in the department. The next two years were challenging as an artist, I accrued useful experience in this curatorial role and enjoyed liaising with artists and the research required, skills later utilized when I curated the exhibitions: "Cross Currents" (2005) and "The Haunted and the Bad" (2008). In 2004 I was appointed as Curator, Centre of Contemporary Art, Tayenebe: Tasmanian Aboriginal women's fibre work (2005), Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; and TESTING GROUND (2012), Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart. From 2004 to 2006 I was a lecturer at James Cook University, School of Art, Townsville. Coordinating the Sculpture Department and professional practice course, I was excited and terrified by the responsibility. At the time of my arrival, the School commenced vast departmental changes, with art-making streams being replaced by digital and virtual realms, and this rebranding continued after I departed for Tasmania. Fortunately, in terms
of maintaining my art practice, while lecturing I was asked to make new work for four exhibitions in St Kilda (Craft for floating home, Linden), Tamworth (Navigator, Tamworth Textile Biennale 2008) curated by Vivonne Thwaites, Sydney (Sydney Biennale 2008) curated by Charles Merewether) and Canberra (A blanket return, National Museum of Australian Art).

I was approached by Lindan Centre for Contemporary Art in 2004 to curate an exhibition in 2005 and although stretched and stressed by the proposition, I took it up. The result was Cross Currents. This project brought together Aboriginal women from Victoria and Tasmania to co-exhibit – an exciting historic undertaking. The Lindan rooms enabled each artist to present their work as a solo concept with the benefits of a group thematic exhibition. Jan Duffy with Amy Barrett-Lennard and the team at Lindan were very supportive, which led to me also curating a subsequent exhibition at Lindan in 2008. Their program of offering an Aboriginal curator an exhibition in their annual calendar, along with in-house support, is one of the most useful national professional development opportunities for Aboriginal curators.

Locus was made en sit on Pier 2/5 for the 2006 Sydney Biennale. I made a life-sized single-person cuttlefish bone canoe on a tree-frame that rested high on a tree-frame that rested high on a platform in a tea-tree forest. In early 2009 and late 2017 I moved from this film work to the framework as a natural progression, amid maintaining sculptural work and still photography. Film has increased my representational toolkit for new exhibiting and art residency opportunities. Another place was an Irish/Tasmanian artist exhibition about place while the curator, Sean Kelly, who had for some years been director at the National Sculpture Factory in Cork, returned to Tasmania and created an artist residency opportunity in Cork for which I applied and was successful, living in Cork from August to September 2010 and making the split-screen video work Shadowland.

Shadowland presented Ireland and Tasmania projected side by side, their visual relationship determined by shared place names such as Ross: Ross, Longford: Longford, and so on. The ridiculous Van Diemonian dream to make a place anew in the image of the ‘old country’, was revealed by the footage contrast between the dry harshness of a Tasmanian summer and the fecundity of an Irish spring.

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In 2007 at the School of Art Gallery, Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, I was invited to contribute to three of the exhibitions as such as whether people in the tree-frame makes me question everything, coming at versions of events from all angles, not allowing them or me to be fixed in perspective. We placed the cuttlefish bone canoe on an acute angle on the framework, fixed still while racing down an incline towards the ‘forest’ floor. Upon the lower limbs of selected tea-tree were impaled leaves from Henry Reynolds’ 1995 book, Fate of a Free People. His text convincingly argues that the understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the nineteenth century was that an agreement had been made between the colonial government and the locals that the land near Lombok in 1825 they witnessed Dalrymple they should be able to return to Country and believed that Country had not been relinquished in perpetuity to the Crown in exchange for our ancestors’ surrender. This ‘mist’ of book leaves represented for Mountgarrett, when questioned by the passersby, retorted ‘he could do what he liked with his black servant’. This unpublished account goes into detail about the event, and Dalrymple was responsible for the case being dropped after she claimed that Mountgarrett shot her accidentally, for which she applied and was successful, living in Cork from August to September 2010 and making the split-screen video work Shadowland.

The Ranger was a real person. She was a (likely Tasmanian) Aboriginal woman who lived on King Island in the 1830s and 1840s. During an art residency on King Island in 2006 I was introduced by local, Christian Robinson, to her story. This is also the story of her contemporaries, Aboriginal women Mary and Maria, and Maria’s children with John Scot, a sealer, and his eventual death by drowning, and the children’s relocation to wealthy pastoralists, Anne Drysdale and Caroline Newcomb near Geelong.

These people are known due largely to the journal that Scot kept until his death, which mentions an elusive woman who left traces of her life around King Island for more than a decade. The Ranger is a project close to my heart because understanding The Ranger and her associates’ lives and times and legacies is something that will never be ‘completed’, and that project gave me some kind of ‘permission’ to continue to make in this exploratory, outcome-resistant way. This way of working allows project/research to continue beyond art-world confines, and for future renditions, informed by new experiences or information, to be produced. This serial way of working has been most recently realised in the solo exhibitions and video works The Lost World (Part 1) and The Lost World (Part 2), both in 2013, held in Contemporary Art Tasmania, part 2 was also simultaneously installed in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge University, UK.

Following a frenetic 2007 I was able to focus on making new work for the solo exhibition Fugitive History that was held at Bett Gallery in early 2008. Since 1996 I have regularly exhibited in commercial and non-commercial spaces, outdoors and in group exhibitions, extant work has been curated into exhibitions, and commissions have arrived for new work. These various opportunities expose my work to very different audiences and in these diverse contexts test content and techniques. Amid this chaotic slipstream of the arts I attempt to make a living as an artist. A key difficulty is that I don’t have a principal art form or skill, particularly one that is easily transportable, sought and transacted. Remarkable opportunities have arisen from working as an installation artist, but working this way also means living on the edge. This lifestyle seems deliberate, given I haven’t managed to modify it over almost two decades. I now wonder if I have maintained an effectively unprosperous practice due to an inherent tension between the subject of my work: traumatic histories, and the idea of benefiting from these. Funds,
When achieved, have been reinvested into subsequent projects. *Fugitive History* was an exciting opportunity to commence Tasmanian gallery representation, close to home, by Bett Gallery in Hobart, and to test ideas in my first solo exhibition of multiple works in Tasmania, about my PhD exhibition at UTAS in 2011. I am very grateful to gallerist Dick Bett, sadly missed, and his family for inviting me to exhibit with them, and our relationship continues.

**mererlopetar / to tell a story**

During this period (2007 – 2008) multiple ongoing lines of historic enquiry emerged in my work:

- Hidden histories, buried within colonial walls *(Norme Sakas, 2008)*
- The complicity of the people of Van Diemen’s Land in the concerted effort of the Black Line campaign of 1830 to remove Aboriginal people to offshore exile on Finders Island *(The Simultaneous Effort, 2008)*
- The last new (Aboriginal) words before English was the enforced language *(Some words for change, 2008)*
- Cross-cultural transformed or mutated objects *(Spear/oar, 2008)*

These works from 2007 to 2008 affirmed I was still an ‘artist’, after having primarily focused on being a curator and lecturer since 2001. By the end of 2008 I realised I could return entirely to art, albeit with accompanying financial uncertainty, because I had managed to make a lot of work spanning broader ground than I had produced to date for intermittent group exhibitions, while employed full-time.

During this period, in 2006 and 2008 I was invited to create new work en site at the Friendly Beaches, on the Freycinet Peninsula on the east coast of Tasmania. The two exhibitions were curated and invitational and were viewed by a select audience at the Friendly Beaches Lodge owned by Joan and George Masterman. Although the elitism of the controlled audience was disturbing and went against my exhibiting aims and instincts I agreed to take part to meet new people and install and test my work outdoors, and in an unfamiliar region of Tasmania.

The 2008 work *Some words for change* incorporated elements from two previous works, the 2007 triptych series of the same name in which I embedded black crow shells into cuttlefish to spell out important words in (Aboriginal) language: *Some words for change* *(2008), Some words for women, Some words for Country, Some words for change was shown in the exhibit Musselrose Bay at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi. The 2008 installation also referred to the 2006 work *Locus* *(Sydney Biennale)* by its identical impaling of book leaves through tea-tree sticks. In this instance, however, the sticks were completed spears that were in turn impaled into a forest floor, whereas in the Biennale work the tea-tree was still in its ‘raw’ state, with foliage, and it was impaled in Pier 2/3 into a false floor above the waters of Sydney Harbour. Interestingly, Pier 2/3 was saved from destruction years earlier in part by Joan Masterman’s work with the National Trust. The book utilised in the 2008 work was Clive Turnbull’s 1948 *Black War*, a commendably damning early account, for the twentieth century, of the concerted attempts by colonists to “remove” Tasmanian Aboriginal people from their island in the first half of the nineteenth century. I circled the English version of each of the thirty-six ‘final’, new Tasmanian Aboriginal language words, found in this publication, that were incorporated into Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, before English was enforced. These ‘words for change’ are:

*mooagara (dog), boosoo (cattle), bar (sheep), parkutetener (horse), parrenner (axe), vetseppenner (fence), ponedin (England), tabaranna (blanket), leeuvunnar (cloth), mutenner (cap), kuloggerner (shoes), pannenbaathi (flour), parterper (pipe), pyagurner (tobacco), perrinye (brushanger), teebunmarker (soldier), kinglynear (fire a gun/scourge/flagellate), hillaar (gun), lightshy (gunpowder), warknermer (musket), parkutelennner (horseman), lurgunthawa (kangaroo), teebrucker (soldier), noormernar (white man), noommeran (devil), white man (nongamerekay), ugly head (nongeulerarty).* 19

The spears appear to be chasing away the newcomers and what they represent – irreversible change.

Think about this. You and your parents and their parents and their parents and so on had been living on this island a long time, as good as forever. We know what happened because it happened to us, here. Something unbelievable, an attempted erasure in a span of thirty years. Any Tasmanians whose ancestors were here pre-1831 were involved somehow, with varying degrees of separation, with the removal of Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples from this island to Bass Strait. From that period of contact and conflict remain clues, in language and in print, of Aboriginal efforts to understand and incorporate what had arrived, and non-Aboriginal unwillingness to accommodate.

These words for change reveal not only what kind of new things were arriving here, but also, in our haunted state of retrospect, they outline what was promised for those observing. Place is tenacious; it always eventually reveals its history.

This work is a kind of land poem about change and the irony of how silence can become its opposite.

Artist statement, 2008

Artist Simon Cuthbert documented this installation *Some words for change* (2008). His images are some of the most important of my art to date, given his fine work and the installation’s unreproducibility in those exact conditions. This piece was one of four outdoor installations produced to date; the others were Return (2006, Friendly Beaches), Regeneration (2005, Chevron) and Ebb Tide (The whispering sands) (1998, Eaglehawk Neck).

The significance of independent curators across Australia cannot be overestimated; they manage to keep the heart in art going strong by believing in artists who otherwise might have few opportunities. They include us in relevant exhibitions that support our research and thematic and technical enquiries far from the maddening din of trends at the centre of the art world. They kick start our professional art life. Freelance curators, many also artists, continue to push the possibilities and trajectory of art, in ways eventually also picked up by the mainstream. In 2009 I was invited by independent Adelaide-based curator Vivonne Thwaites to participate in a group exhibition about the landing of the French in Australian waters. Titled *Littoral*, the work of six contemporary artists was installed above the Tasmanian Maritime Museum, in the old quarters of Hobart’s original Carnegie library. I explored the extent by which a work can transform between its genesis and exhibition. An image of the work in creation being consumed by flames featured in the catalogue, while I presented the charred aftermath as the completed piece *Manifestation*. I had previously shown work in three exhibitions curated by Thwaites: *Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial: in the world* (2006), *Home is where the heart is* (2001) and *Handbag* (1996).

In 2010 at Cairns Regional Gallery and 2011 at Devonport Regional Gallery I exhibited *Rivers Run*, a solo exhibition that consisted of new and older works testing themselves in installation dialogues not previously attempted. For the first time both *Driving Black Home* (2000) and *Driving Black Home 2* (2009) were installed together. I also created two different ‘huts’ called *Trespass*, one at each venue, using found materials, with the extensive help of gallery staff. *Rivers Run* at Cairns Regional Gallery consisted of five works and a catalogue of essays, images and art statements, designed by Jess Atkinson, while at Devonport Regional Gallery the exhibition expanded to ten works. In Cairns *Trespass* was more a raft/hut with a roof, while the Devonport *Trespass* was a tiny fenced ‘paddock’
with a roof. The film Rivers Run was a central feature in both exhibitions, revealing through text, sourced from the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office manuscript series CSO 1/1016/302/76/78 (vols. 1–17). "The Depredations" the many cross-cultural colonial 'skirmishes' that took place along Tasmanian river courses. Transcribed accounts scroll down footage made while kayaking through colonial properties. Infiltratory artworks reveal the many forms, mediums and techniques were wide ranging and exploratory; shells in part due to the not always commensurable expectations of organisations and first-growth work gangs and various animals, including the extinct emu and thylacine, visually relate to Salamanca Arts Centre to curate an exhibition, which opened that exhibition comprised works that push boundaries of 'art' experience.

In 2008–09 I was employed as a full-time curator for twelve months by the National Museum of Australia (NMA) and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) to develop an exhibition of Tasmanian Aboriginal women's fibre work, following a series of successful weaving workshops held by Arts Tasmania. Lola Greeno, Arts Tasmania Aboriginal arts officer, had instigated the project. Lola saw the exhibition outcome potential and managed the pre-project's viability and, eventually, with the assistance of Visions Australia, a national tour for the resulting exhibition Tayenebe: Tasmania Aboriginal women's fibre work.22 This project was immensely rewarding but also challenging and stressful in part due to the not always commensurable expectations of organisations and first-time exhibitors. The works produced by more than twenty-five women were outstanding. The many forms, mediums and techniques were wide ranging and exploratory; shells and quilts were incorporated with woven land and sea plants. The exhibition honoured our ancestors and those recently passed, as well as committing the artists to making video and its exhibition in conjunction with other elements, a continuing methodology. In 2011 I held my second solo exhibition at Bett Gallery in Hobart, Wurrawina / the shadow land. In 2011 I held my second solo exhibition at Bett Gallery in Hobart. The Missing (June – July 2011), the concept came from my long-standing unease with the fabricated metal silhouettes placed along the Midlands Highway in Tasmania that represent colonial Tasmania absent of Aboriginal people – convicts, stagecoaches, highwaymen, vagabonds, women’s fibre work, The Missing (September 2015) at Milidura Arts Centre for the 10th Palimpsest exhibition, curated by Jonathan Kimberley. I first undertook an exploration of shadow in 2010 in the Philippines thanks to the project was one of the most exciting opportunities to date because it was about testing myself, my work and ability to negotiate a new place and culture, with new ideas, materials and techniques I had hardly touched before, let alone mastered. I produced my first sound piece and my first shadow work for the exhibition, and also chose to exhibit The Promise, in which the figures from the Proclamation panels are released from the unceasing expectations of colonial figures, and submerged with the tides, ever present even if subsumed, in the repetitive mode of river courses. Transcribed accounts scroll down footage made while kayaking through colonial properties. Infiltratory artworks reveal the many forms, mediums and techniques were wide ranging and exploratory; shells in part due to the not always commensurable expectations of organisations and first-time exhibitors. The works produced by more than twenty-five women were outstanding. The many forms, mediums and techniques were wide ranging and exploratory; shells and quilts were incorporated with woven land and sea plants. The exhibition honoured our ancestors and those recently passed, as well as committing the artists to making future, with youngsters also participating in the exhibition. This opportunity confirmed my interest in continuing to curate exhibitions and ventured in my proposal, in 2012, to Salamanca Arts Centre to curate an exhibition TESTING GROUND, which opened in 2013 and toured until 2015. That exhibition comprised works that push boundaries of subject, materiality, audience and culture, made by fourteen artists and collectives from eight nations, including Aboriginal Countries.


23 TESTING GROUND artists: The MIXx, Old Byronpixels, Trudi Bridgeman, Darren Cook, Rebecca Dargad, Sue Frankel, Nancy Malara Pudle, Jerome Offenran, Perdita Phillips, etc. at Paper Bulles, Christian Thompson, Martin Whicker and Eving Zhou.

Other works in The Missing exhibition similarly approached various stories of erasure and absence and the figures in the installation artworks are released from the unceasing expectations of colonial figures, and submerged with the tides, even present even if subsumed, in the repetitive mode of imagined and submerged with the tides, ever present even if subsumed, in the repetitive mode of
Eland was a great mentor, and his and PeeWee’s (Norberto Roldan) co-curatorial attitude of ‘test it and see’ resulted in not only an extraordinary exhibition but also strong relationships between the artists and arts volunteers involved in the project.24 In the Philippines I was assisted by local artist and film archivist Eros Arbilon in reconstructing the sound work I had produced in Ireland; Eros edited the work, and Manila was its first installation. I also brought in luggage my tools, pieces of transparent plastic, marker pens, cutting tools and embarked on sketching and cutting out shadow elements while I listened to the sound piece in the space. This direct, raw process – a central, site-specific and immediate way of response-working – is exhilarating and challenging. Undertaking an annual project in this format would be ideal. The Ranger (UNISA, 2007) was a previous project along similar lines.

The interconnectivity experience of the Immemorial project saw me realise, for the first time, that I am a member of a global arts grassroots community, all obsessed with finding creative solutions to communicating with audiences, regardless of culture and location. In the Philippines we were far from any prima donna pampered art experience, hosted in a real-world way with warmth and hospitality I have rarely encountered elsewhere.

The following year I was included in the subsequent rendition of the Immemorial project at the Chan Centre, Darwin. This invitation enabled me to extend the ideas installed in the Philippines by arriving with a tent sewn, thanks to Pink at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, where I had undertaken a brief artist residency. In Darwin I sourced cardboard behind electrical shops and cut out the Proclamation figures to test how they might interact when confined in a colonial wall tent. The sound work was again installed, consisting of the voices of eight Cork residents who participated in the preliminary recording of the work in 2010, when local sound engineer Duncan O’Cleirigh edited the piece. I scripted what might appear as a conversation between various transported and otherwise Irish ancestors, most of whom didn’t know each other in actuality. The slippage between the voices, across time, was exciting as they intermittently reminisced about their lives. The words were not in conversation, as it first seemed, but were, as with the work’s inspiration, Dylan Thomas’s Under Milk Wood, musings perhaps from the afterworld and beyond. When the work was installed in Darwin I sent images to curators at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and the tent was subsequently acquired, minus the sound component, for the new Colonial Frontier Gallery of the museum, on the third floor of the Bond Store.

Tasmania is slowly facing its brutal colonial past, evidenced by the renovated, reinterpreted Bond Store gallery in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and the newly opened First Tasmanians gallery at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston. In 2011 Tasmanian Aboriginal artists and writers Lola Greeno, Vicki West, Phyllis Pitchford and I made new work responding to The Bothwell Cup for the exhibition of the same name held at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. This Cup was formally presented in 1835 in thanks to G.A. Robinson, for his work as government-appointed conciliator of the Aborigines, by the people of Bothwell, Tasmania. This silver trophy of empire travelled back with Robinson to Bath in England, upon his retirement in 1851, eventually acquired from Robinson’s youngest son in the 1930s it was uncannily returned to Australia, the scene of the crime, in the 1940s.
The video work *The Grounds of Surrender* (2011) documents my approach and circumnavigation of the same town of Bothwell, Tasmania, today a sleepy hamlet, to seek any clue or residue of the horrors of the local past. My video camera incongruously met with fire, flood and snowscapes during the visit. The kraken seemed awakened. The film is interspersed with colonial text from newspapers of the times, and correspondence revealing anglo-panic to the colonial government about the ‘blacks’.

THAT the thing must be done there is no doubt, or the best part of our island must be deserted – our farms, the labour, nay we would say the creation of our hands to this our adopted land must be forsaken – the cottage and fields endowed to us and our children with a thousand fond recollections, sweetly powerful as the regrets of early infancy, passed over again with an entirely new impressive round of circumstances in this remote, and till we peopled it, trackless island – all, all must be abandoned, for safety will no more be found in them unless this great, but fortunately only drawback to the advancement of the colony, be at once removed.

Hobart Town Courier
11 September 1830

The mystery of how Robinson effected the surrender of the last roaming tribe at large – the combined members of the Oyster Bay and Big River peoples – remains a mystery. This work is split-screen, like a previous work *Shadowland*. The screen operates almost like two eyes or windows into parallel activities or zones, driving and recalling the colonial name-list responsible for dispossession of Aborigines, the night sky and snow.

the impossible return

At this time I was approached by curators Fulvia Mantelli and Renee Johnson to develop a concept for the group exhibition Deadly – In-Between Heaven and Hell, to be held early in 2012 at Tandanya - National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide. When I considered what might be both heaven and hell, I instantly saw it was Tebrikunna, my maternal Traditional Country in north-east Tasmania. During two decades of intermittent camping at Tebrikunna, I have been constantly disturbed by tourists and, lately, eco-tourists on their exclusive, expensive two-night walk along the expanse of the littoral zone of this special place. In 2007 I created a body of work for the exhibition Musselroe Bay, expressing with materials and stories connected with that place my anxiety and frustration for its protection. Finally, in January 2014 a wind farm consisting of fifty-six turbines was completed, and a $185 million dollar tourist resort was approved for construction, ‘with an international standard golf course, a five-star resort, with 100 suites and eighty apartments, a visitor and interpretation centre, an air-strip and terminal for a forty-seater plane, a guest house, holiday units and waterbird viewing platforms’.

Places hold memories of those who lived there, for themselves and for those who come after. Musselroe Bay on the tip of north-east Tasmania is part of my Traditional Country, my memory. Mt William National Park adjacent to Musselroe Bay is my retreat, a place where even a mobile phone won’t work and where layers of time peel away … only interrupted by the summer intrusion of an eco-tourism venture. Daily, like clockwork, ten visitors walk along these Bay of Fires beaches for a ‘wilderness experience’; there is also

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the likelihood of their aeroplanes landing regularly. The local Dorset Council has approved 1,900 hectares of Musselroe Bay to be developed into an eco-tourist resort. Many dozens of Aboriginal women, our forebears, were kidnapped from this coast by sealers during the first thirty years of the 1800s, including one of my ancestors and many relatives.

Today the region beyond the National Park is fairly barren, due to overgrazing for several generations. Musselroe Bay also has a sleepy fishing-shack town, with a phone box and no shop, so it is now being bought up by those who can afford a weekender.

Musselroe Bay, a solo exhibition held at Gallery Gabrielle Pizz in 2007 required I spend considerable time in the north-east where I developed, in different mediums, stories of disturbance, removal and return. This prepared me for a subsequent project when I filmed for three weeks over four visits successive streams of eco-tourists walking along my Country — my coastline. I diligently stalked the eco-tourists, watching them quasi-steepwalking in their efforts to wind down from their probably manic mainland lives. The by-the-clock way their arrival and walking punctuates the day in that place is alarming. Their regularity interrupts more than time. Previously I had always retreated into the dunes to hide until they passed, perhaps behaving the same as my ancestors did when strangers arrived on this same shore. Following tourists was more interesting, then filming became a kind of hunting and shooting exercise. Even so, they were and are a disturbance, a ripple upon the place, the birds and other creatures, the waters, the winds. Their relentless daily passage seems to be steadily erasing and replacing the essence of those tens of thousands of Aboriginal people who lived there before these. These visitors trek and trek and trek on this Country, without proper permission or understanding.

The video work Observation was installed at Tandanya on a plyboard backing wall, the timber grain showing through the footage. In front a tea-tree forest was embedded in the ply floor, referring to the 2006 work Locus in the ply floor, describing the 2006 work Locus in the ply floor, referring to the 2006 work Locus in the ply floor. Christoph photographed the MAA-held stone artefacts I chose as items I could virtually ‘return’ across Tasmania as their two-dimensional photo representations. These artefacts had their original locations, from where they had been lost/stolen, inscribed in ink on their surfaces, thus enabling me to imagine, research and undertake their ‘return’ in 2013. The project was called The Lost World (Part 2).

Walking in Tasmania my heart leaps when I see objects handmade by our Old People, resting where they put them; I am then walking on their path. But these are rare to find today unless you go right off the beaten track. Others beat me there, collectors, to ship more than 15,000 Tasmanian stone tools to museums around the world. Producing this filmed response to our exiled objects reconnected me with Country.

The first trip, during the artist residency in Cork, enabled me to explore the collections at MAA, meet with expatriate Australian Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll and discuss ideas for a solo exhibition that Khadija would later curate. The Tasmanian stone artefacts appeared the likely focus objects, and during my 2012 visit Khadija invited Berlin photographer and artist Christoph Balzar, who hence collaborated on the project as designer and photographer. Christoph photographed the MAA-held stone artefacts I chose as items I could virtually ‘return’ across Tasmania as their two-dimensional photo representations. These artefacts had their original locations, from where they had been lost/taken, inscribed in ink on their surfaces, thus enabling me to imagine, research and undertake their ‘return’ in 2013. The project was called The Lost World (Part 2).

During visits to the UK in 2010, 2012 and 2013 I visited and revisited Tasmanian objects, including at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA). The first trip, during the artist residency in Cork, enabled me to explore the collections at MAA, meet with expatriate Australian Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll and discuss ideas for a solo exhibition that Khadija would later curate. The Tasmanian stone artefacts appeared the likely focus objects, and during my 2012 visit Khadija invited Berlin photographer and artist Christoph Balzar, who hence collaborated on the project as designer and photographer. Christoph photographed the MAA-held stone artefacts I chose as items I could virtually ‘return’ across Tasmania as their two-dimensional photo representations. These artefacts had their original locations, from where they had been lost/stolen, inscribed in ink on their surfaces, thus enabling me to imagine, research and undertake their ‘return’ in 2013. The project was called ‘The Lost World’ (Part 2).

Walking in Tasmania my heart leaps when I see objects handmade by our Old People, resting where they put them; I am then walking on their path. But these are rare to find today unless you go right off the beaten track. Others beat me there, collectors, to ship more than 15,000 Tasmanian stone tools to museums around the world. Producing this filmed response to our exiled objects reconnected me with Country. The Lost World (Part 2) reunited Tasmania with the shadow of its lost objects, and explored their absence from their original people and context. The project also highlighted the colonisers’ conquest of place and suppression of history by their renaming of my maternal homelands. The work articulated the continued dispossession of Aboriginal people from our misnamed territories:

- Kitchen, Maddens, Rialdon, Lindaferne, Frederick Henry Bay, Ralph’s Bay, Cambridge, Dodges Ferry, Melton Mowbray, Lambton, Elphin Farm, Newstead, Newnham, Lake Leake, Ross, Oyster Cove, Bruny Island, Hermitsage, Early Risers, Loddon, Bicheno, Seymour, Long Point, Fingal, Falmouth, East Coast, St Helens, North East Coast, Pipes River, West Point.

The ‘return’ of thirty-five Tasmanian Aboriginal stone artefacts to their original places...
across Tasmania was filmed with two cameras over several weeks, while my husband, Koenraad, co-filmed on two days. The artefacts shown in the footage were installed in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology gallery plus sent back to the Contemporary Art Tasmania (CAT) Gallery in Tasmania from live webcam feed of their cabinet. A second surveillance camera sent to MAA the webcam feed of a photograph of one artefact weathereing outdoors in Tasmania. The exhibition was held from 23 October to 30 November 2013.

An extra element in the UK exhibition was that the stone tools were placed adjacent to the video projection of their photographs being returned, and thus these artefacts could ‘hear’ sounds of the places today from which they were removed generations ago. This was an uncanny and sad reuniting, in lieu of an actual repatriation.

The project continued the ongoing series that commenced with the solo exhibition The Lost World (Part 1) held in Contemporary Art Tasmania (then CAST) earlier, in April–May 2013. That exhibition articulated time/place shifts by four recent video works being projected on different walls facing a rock cairn compass, Haunted (2013) commandeering the centre of the space. The compass needle moved erratically, unsuccessfully trying to find true north. Three of the videos were produced early in 2013: Traveller, Oblivion and The Lost World (Part 1). The fourth, Observance, was completed a year earlier.

The video work Traveller is an exploration of how time and place fold upon each other in Tasmania. It is a kind of outlandish demonstration of how the legacy of the colonial past is carried, inherited by those whose forebears lived in Van Diemen’s Land during the early nineteenth century. I am obsessed/possessed by that past. In Traveller I carry portable (screw together) secret spears and case, a kangaroo fur pillow and blanket, and the giant tome or text that has featured in my work for almost two decades. This book channels the past as an unwieldy and repeatedly unsatisfying set of circumstances facilitated by its writer, colonial ‘Pacificator of the Aborigines’ George Augustus Robinson. His diaries, first published in 1966 as Friendly Mission, direct in part the action for this video work, whereby I, ‘seeking out other times and carrying a cultural tool-kit to equip (my) journey, head to a hotspot for unresolved colonial encounters between Aboriginal Tasmanians and colonists on the North West coast. Walking to Highfield House, I seek insight into the past while haunting the path of Edward Curr, the notorious agent for the Van Diemen’s Land Company.’

The actions in Traveller are undertaken as if in a private dream. That is the state of living then with now, trying to piece together the story of our frontier history from the words of the Colonising Other.

Walking, hitchhiking, sleeping, stalking on the ground across Tasmania ostensibly producing various art projects enables me to better understand place, time and interconnections that being bound to the archives did not previously offer. In the conjunction of visitation and research, day and night, trilling activities in various weather conditions and carrying assorted culturally laden objects, I am reconfiguring history while on the run, sharing this undertaking in the form of art.

The intention of the exhibition The Lost World (Part 1) was to demonstrate the cultural vortex I experience as I inhabit past and present simultaneously. Testing my obsession with the diary of the corrupt lay missionary George Augustus Robinson, I work to make my way out of the text and into the present by undertaking a series of ‘tasks of encounter’ while moving through Tasmanian time and space. The resulting filmic episodes made up this exhibition.

The Lost World (Part 1) (2013) discloses an initial attempt by myself and my brother, David, to reach an important destination, while thwarted by a roadside troll, gates, fences, herbicides and an anticipated return time. The sounds in the film are of encounters – phone calls and roadblocks – that delayed and ultimately prevented us reaching the destination. This was the first film where I employed two cameras, GoPro camera and hand-held Sony, and incorporated multiple means of movement – driving, walking, and river rafting.

Making the film with my brother in a real and live attempt to undertake an actual expedition to a place lost in time (early 1830s) made the work less about art as outcome, and more about art as documentation of life. The work records activities, motivations and relationships in real and recent time to show how the past is truly alive for Aboriginal people, that places and stories await our return, and this video communicates our committed need to reunite with them.

Oblivion (2013) is the film documentation of the aftermath of releasing six leeches on the ground near my legs while reading Friendly Mission. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate how obsessed/possessed one can become by Robinson’s tome. The book consists of hundreds of pages of details about our ancestors, their cultural practices, relationships and deaths. It is hard to put down, until it is too late and contamination by content has occurred. Non-Aboriginal people quote from this book as though it contains the Originary Truths about Aboriginal culture and history. Describing the process of undertaking this piece I wrote: ‘I’m thinking of Oblivion as the title... hardcore – it’s about being stuck in a place, not of this world, and not in a ‘real’ place, while immersed in Friendly Mission. Friendly Mission doesn’t allow for a future, just despair’.

Observance (2012), as previously discussed, is a film about trespass. It is a meditation about history, memory and ancestry set amid the ongoing globalisation of my ancestral coastlands. The film is my frustrated response in trying to get back to the essence of things, while being constantly interrupted by groups of intruding eco-tourists. Taking up the region for their continuous walks, they remind and re-enact the original invasion of our Country. Witnessing their arrival, avoiding contact, I feel a multigenerational anxiety of knowing what happens next in the parallel world of that same place not so long ago.

Haunted (2013) comprised bluestone spalls and an electronic directional needle. It appeared to be a wayfinder – both cairn and compass. The work operated as a spectre of the past as well as witness to my disoriented quest to understand place across time in Tasmania.
In 2013, after returning from a residency in Liverpool, UK (funded by Australia Council for the Arts), I made another film with installation elements: TAHO LC347, installed in the University of Tasmania P lhmsoll Gallery called THE Z FACTOR, commemorating the retirement of Paul Zika, who had been my supervisor for both my PhD and BA Honours degrees between 1994 and 2001. TAHO LC347 consists of self- filmed footage of me transcribing original but as yet individually uncatalogued colonial police reports from the 1820s to the 1850s held in the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO). The viewer absorbs with immediacy the words appearing on screen at the moment I was seeing and transcribing them – murder, missing, madness. The footage was projected on the insiders of a stitched sheepskin screen facing a barricade of ted- together Tasmanian Bennett’s Wallaby skins. This presented a cross-cultural stand-off, while the emerging typed records show interconnected Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories awaiting release from the archives, situated less than one kilometre from the P lhmsoll Gallery. This work demonstrated the urgency and passion that history can produce in its converts, regardless of a government building setting, fluorescent tube lighting and hushed tones. The texts of the past can become immediate links to places and descendants today if only they can reach beyond the walls.

During 2013 I travelled with a group of ten other artists to a place today called Skullbone Plains in Central Tasmania, near Lake St Clair. We spent four days at an artist camp, gathering ideas towards a group exhibition called The Skullbone Project, held in 2014 at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, and College of Fine Arts Gallery at the University of New South Wales.

Ode was interesting, and challenging to undertake, in that it was brought to and hosted at a place I would not ordinarily be able to visit: private property, 4WD-only access, remote, and in a group project with mostly strangers. I suspect I was invited as the token Aboriginal artist but I went along because of the opportunity that it offered. I felt a bit estranged and alone – also in an art context, given that I am not an artist of nature, unless it is human nature. Unsurprisingly, rather than finding plants and animals to work with, I found rubble, the remains of a stockkeeper’s hut near Kenneth Lagoon, of indeterminate age, layers of occupation from perhaps the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. Amid the rubble I found an old shoe. I was beset by flies, giant angry biting flies, for the duration of the entire stay, such that when I returned to Hobart flies continued buzzing in my brain for almost three days. In this environment, in a place with a frightening name that the Nomenclature Board tentatively raise questions, relate what seems to have gone before. The companion to the film was a giant necklace shaped like Tasmania formed from threaded reed stems, those tools and my voiceover, reveals the cause and effect of removal of Aboriginal people from land / land from people. I intend, without didacticism, to lyrically represent the groundstone foundation of this nation is the colonial spoils of war. This dreamlike excursion to and delivered. All I had was a shoe and a story, some dodgy video footage, family members who were tired of me asking their advice for what I should do, can it be art? and some dead reeds I had collected near the hut site. I didn’t know what was the “town,” or who were the people. Whenever I asked around about this place it was assumed that I was asking about Aboriginal people. This was interesting for me to contemplate. Should I care for this woman, this potentially missing, potentially murdered woman, only if she was Aboriginal? Have I allowed myself to be categorised to the degree that I am legitimately able to pursue only an Aboriginal ‘field of enquiry’?

Film editor Jemma Rea and I embarked on editing my twelfth video work in five years. Though only five minutes long, Ode expresses well the perpetual frustration of wanting to know more about the past but having only remnant clues and supposition as a constant companion. My brother and mother were cooped into the work; as narrators they tried to tentatively raise questions, relate what seems to have gone before. The companion to the film was a giant necklace shaped like Tasmania formed from threaded reed stems, those tools and my voiceover, reveals the cause and effect of removal of Aboriginal people from land / land from people. I intend, without didacticism, to lyrically represent the groundstone foundation of this nation is the colonial spoils of war. This dreamlike excursion to and between empty BBQ areas is my soft representation of this collective amnesia. My sound-byte utterances are interspersed between footage and audio recorded at

Ode, 2014 (film still)
the BBQ area huts, combined with my voiceover, and images of dislocated Tasmanian Aboriginal stone artefacts, held in a Tasmanian museum, sitting on flannelette shirt fabrics. In Tasmanian Aboriginal language I speak the few phrases transcribed in historic times of Aboriginal stone artefacts, held in a Tasmanian museum, sitting on flannelette shirt fabrics. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

My switch between original language and English creates the arena for these BBQ areas to appear as I recognise them, insidious continuances of colonial frontier huts and hence emblematic of the uncoordinated yet attempted genocide of my ancestors. I retrieve cultural snippets from the brink, the language, the stone tools, to reconnect places with myself through time. This film relates my inheritance of fragments without out of place, place out of people, and haunted places and their missing objects. These punctuate and make an episodic logic of the footage from around Tasmania. The English translations of what I speak in Aboriginal language appear on black screen, halting the encyclopaedic cataloguing of BBQ area footage:

Give me a stone
The moon has risen
Give me some bread
Go down from the hill
We will not give you a stick
The water is very warm
Sleep many nights away
Throw large stones
When the warm weather has come
When I returned to my country I went hunting but did not kill one head of game. The white man make their dogs wander and kill all the game, and they only want the skins.

My switch between original language and English creates the arena for these BBQ groupings present the contemporary everyday (BBQ area) with the purposefully erased/removed (Aboriginal culture/objects) provoking a conceptual reset from assuming stories, places, objects and histories don’t culturally overlap. These were installed around the perimeter of the gallery, in the centre of which was the work Hunting Party (2014), a circular ‘night camp’ consisting of six canvases flannelette ‘tartan’-lined ‘swags’ in the round, with an image of a Tasmanian stone artefact centred on each. In the middle of these swags were six Tasmanian Oak (eucalyptus) rifle-blank forms with actual stone flintlocks, standing upright ready for action, as though in a colonial or military encampment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The second exploration in the solo exhibition expanded the reading potential of the ‘Proclamation to the Aborigines’ (1830), wooden pictograph panels commissioned by Van Diemen’s Land government that were placed on trees to communicate with the ‘natives’ during a heightened period of the Black War in Van Diemen’s Land (c. 1824–1830). The works Shadowland (Configurations) (2014), Shadowland (Time Keepers) (2014), and Hunting Party (Barbeque Area) (2014) all remodel the bounded, small pictorials from the Proclamation panels in scale and materiality. Two Shadowland works include footage of the figures from the Proclamation panels cut from translucent vellum. These were suspended on thread, each work in a different interactive configuration. Casting shadows on the floor, their slight movements indicated this video not still image, and highlighted the process-purpose of my art practice, which is to modify the lens by which fixed histories are sought/favoured/expected by moving beyond set renditions of culturally contested terrain.

Hunting Party (Barbeque Area) (2014) consists of a wall triptych of three used stainless steel public BBQ plates, as found in ninety-nine per cent of public BBQ areas. These were attended to, as witness objects for the exhibition, in my claim that innocuous public BBQ areas are miniature examples of stolen land with erased histories. My premise is that a tiny parcel of land can present as an example of a broader national story. Altered 1960s Australian history comic book stories of the Black War in Van Diemen’s Land were hand-engraved onto the BBQ plate surfaces. These sketches reveal the Proclamation panels were interlocutors, translating devices in 1830 in lieu of colonists who didn’t try to learn Aboriginal languages. These stainless steel BBQ plates were shot in Tasmania with .308 and 45-70 calibre rifles. The marks of gunfire simulate the drainage hole in the centre of each BBQ plate, demonstrating that the distance between ‘normal’ and ‘genocidal’ behaviour is not so great.

The third line of enquiry in this solo exhibition was to trial new representational narratives, within an art exhibition context, for historic Tasmanian Aboriginal stone artefacts. The eight framed diptych works, outlined earlier, and the central night camp installation Hunting Party (2014) were exhibited in league with two pairs of timber lightboxes, Hunting Ground (Richmond Park 1) (2014) and Hunting Ground (Badger Head 2) (2014), whose presence offered a pseudo-science-retail-education element to the exhibition. Casting light on the gallery floor, the lightboxes dimensionally expanded the exhibition, along with three video works, the floor night-camp piece and window lightbox, to offer no escape or sanctuary from light, sound, movement, floor, wall, distraction and unease of the space.

Was this exhibition art or education, science or history? Was the gallery a shop or museum, a campsite, BBQ area or a bedroom? Fluctuating meanings reveal my uncertainty and fluid response to how best to navigate and explore the past. This reveals strategic willingness to subject an audience to the same processes of detours, false leads and dead-ends in order to rethink set stories and identify embedded agendas.

Lost Ground (2014) was created from vellum pieces, as were the suspended figures in the Shadowland works. Instead of human forms, Tasmanian stone artefacts were painted in gouache. The materiality of this work in part alludes to the lack of reverential treatment afforded our artefacts and their meaning, regard that is provided to other peoples’
cultural icons presented on vellum. These artefacts can stand in for our ancestors, the missing, mapped and brought together on these vellum fragments and in the video and photographic works in this exhibition.

The Gathering (2015) continued my process of travelling to meet/learn/know Country and create an artwork as part motivation, part outcome, part explanation (if interrogated while filming at the gates of a ‘private’ property) and intrinsically part of my own cultural learning. A cataloguing-compilation-journey in Tasmania was undertaken to seek and disclose Van Diemen’s Land among us / in the present. This drive-by work reveals that colonial homesteads proudly retain their names from the 1920s and 1830s. Does this nomenclature designate their current inhabitants willingness to own their colonial owner’s deeds, including the destruction of Aboriginal people? Or are they unaware of their own past? Places disclose people’s histories, altogether and overlapping, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

The Gathering footage consists of slow drive-bys past colonial property gates, filming down driveways, as well as events captured during the journey – dead animals, paddock fires, etc. – interspersed with texts from colonial letters to the Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen’s Land, and newspaper reports from the 1820s and 1830s about the threat to convicts’ safety and land values by hostile Aboriginal people still at large. The film concludes with a roll call of the names of land grantees from various Van Diemen’s Land counties who signed the letters of thanks to Lieutenant Governor George Arthur for his removal or purposed conciliation of the Aborigines. The video was first projected in Ballarat in January 2015, at the Art Gallery in April–May 2015 in the GUIRGUIS new art prize exhibition, curated by Shelley Hinton. Its next iteration was in The National 2017, curated by Blair French, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Sydney, from March–June 2017. In front of the projection was situated a large four leaf colonial table, fully extended, on which sat four rows of seven stones or rocks I collected at the entrance ways to twenty-eight colonial properties. These were placed on Tasmanian oak timber crosses onto which I had spray-stencilled the property name. This griding of place on the table created an intertextual dialogue for the work whereby the video projection became the window to the world, to the unsettled past/present dynamic that delineates Tasmania. The stones are mnemonic devices, mementos about death, absence and forgetting, and they also stand in for stone artefacts on these properties that I cannot access. The work aggregates and quantifies the anxiety of absence, the notion of trespass, perimeters and boundary lines, all emphasised by the road journey. The stones seem innocuous but are evidential, notational means to accumulate experiential data about the colonial crime scene that is Tasmania.

Curator Shelley Hinton wrote for the exhibition catalogue:

Reconstructing the past from withheld and dispersed fragments the artist reveals her trials and attempts, through various means of production and arrangement. The resulting work is a taxonomy about Gough’s perpetual pursuit of the elusive past – a quest that she terms ‘The Impossible Return’. This desire to know and embody, even temporarily, what was wrought from her Aboriginal ancestors, is as Gough acknowledges, not only impossible but intolerable. Art offers both outlet and exposure for an otherwise transfixed state of recollection.

Four other recent works consist of video projections exhibited in league with modified found materials/objects: Timeline (August 2015), Holding Pattern (September 2015), Ode (October 2015), Tomalah and Timekeeper (November 2015). Timeline was created for the invitational exhibition Counting Tidelines, curated by Amy Jackett and Sarah Pirte at Charles Darwin University. I travelled to my maternal homeland, Tebikurnna in far north-eastern Tasmania, about four and a half hours from my house in Hobart, where I filmed my ancestors’ mostly shellfish middens. At home I twined a plant rope from sag grass or Lomandra longifolia onto which I strung warrener shells, about 20 cm apart, the large turbo shellfish that are common in our middens. These were collected intermittently over the years and some were provided by relatives. The video Timeline was projected on the gallery wall with the shell rope presented almost like a necklace or lasso, circular, adjacent on the wall. The video work, much as in the film Hunting Ground Incorporating Barbeque Area (2014) consists of footage combined with my voiceover speaking in Aboriginal language, while the English translation text is onscreen. Timeline presents a lost story, where I am speaking to my family. Brief statements suggest what I am doing, or intending, or where we are. Places, phrases seem missing, perhaps in the wind, perhaps lost.

Mother … I will go that way … go home … now … today …
Brother … I will go … go well … that way
Grandmother … I will go … this way … long time ago … long time since …
yesterday
Family … wait … let us go … stop here … tomorrow

The possibility of modifying or augmenting an existing work for an invitational exhibition about crime scenes was welcomed late in 2015. Curator Carrie Miller invited me to exhibit in EXHIBIT A at the Lockup Gallery in Newcastle. Given I had overcommitted to participate in fourteen group exhibitions in 2015, the potential to show a work for a second time, rarely offered, seemed not only wise but an opportunity to test the potential on-life for

Hinton, S., ‘The EXHIBIT A New Art Prize: Julie Gough’, in Office Gallery, Arts Academy, Federation University, Ballarat, 2016, p. 17
a work in a completely different context. The work Ode, discussed earlier, was created to respond to a ‘nature’ artist camp residency at Skullbone Plains in Central Tasmania in March 2014. Despite being surrounded by an incredible array of plants, animals, birds and insects at the camp, I somehow stumbled onto the rubble of a long abandoned shepherd’s or stockman’s hut site where I found a badly degraded women’s leather boot. My video camera mysteriously directed me to film the abandoned campsite in portrait mode at the camp, and when I suspended the camera in a tree, it began to swing in an ominous manner. Taking the boot back to camp I was informed that there was a story about the hut site, that a couple had lived there and the wife had ‘walked off’, disappeared. I felt strongly when I first held the boot that a woman had been murdered, but to date have not found the identity of the occupants of the hut, nor any further details. The video depicts the area at Skullbone Plains intercut with footage of my brother and mother separately venturing their ideas about what might have happened out there and their impression of the shoe as evidence. For EXHIBIT A I created a double-sided flag of the shoe, photographs of its sole and upper. The video on USB, the flag and extendable flagpole were posted to the exhibition. The flagpole was inserted into a rock cairn created at Newcastle for this increasingly memorialising work about an uncertain crime, unknown victim and criminal. The shoe, at this time, ‘stands in’ for the missing woman.

The works Ode (2015), Timeline (2015) and The Gathering (2015) were each posted to galleries in large Australia Post boxes. Portable works shipped by mainstream mail have become an interesting, unintentional outcome of merging video with small paired elements. Combining video with objects as an installation is a development I am interested in continuing to test in terms of coherence, scale, audience interaction and movement. The precursor to this mode of working emerged during 2010-2011 while planning and installing multiple works, including two video works. The solo exhibition RIVERS RUN, a quasi-retrospective, combined multiple video and sculptural works in Devonport Regional Gallery (2011) and Cairns Regional Gallery (2010). The different artworks inhabiting one space were able to quiver as colluding companions in resetting normative history. I recognise this as a prolific phase in my practice.

The more of the world I visit the more I want to visit. The addiction to the inexplicable and unplanned moments of travel pushes against the desire to fully be somewhere. The condition of the traveller is channel flipper. Being a visitor is a ticket to oblivion, not a care in the world, auto pilot, sensory overload, input without responsibility. Except, eventually comes the return home, memory laden, somewhat confused, ungrounded. How to process the voyeuristic privilege, how to make sense of the gift?

Artist statement, September 2015

My most challenging exhibition invitation to date occurred in 2015. I was one of fourteen artists invited to participate in a thirty-day and night group travel endeavour, our art responses to which would be exhibited together in the Mildura Palimpsest 2015 exhibition. The project, Unmapping the End of the World, curated by Jonathan Kimberley, saw us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, visual, sound, video artists and writers walking together at three World Heritage sites. We then reconvened to install our works in Mildura Arts Centre four months later. We walked firstly at Lake Mungo in New South Wales, then the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage walk in Japan, and then Valcamonica, a valley in northern Italy that contains thousands of petroglyphs (rock carvings), many with mysterious, undeciphered meanings. The final leg of the journey in Italy coincided with the opening of the Venice Biennale, which we were very fortunate to attend.31

The project premise remains as cryptic to me as when it was first presented to us. It inspired much conversation – we constantly debated how to visually articulate what this might mean, while privileged to stay back to back at these extraordinary places. After nearly four weeks together at World Heritage cultural sites of great significance, the concluding visit to the Venice Biennale interestingly served to further confuse my perspective about what art might mean, look like and achieve in the modern world. The opening week of the Venice Biennale exemplified the worst aspects of crass elitism, and nebulous thoughts began to arise about the impossibility of making art-sense, or sense in art, of the world we had experienced together: three continents, four weeks, most of us previously strangers, constant mobility, physical challenges and an abundance of deep and diverse cross-cultural experiences.

My resulting artwork, Holding Pattern, consists of a video montage of moments I experienced, mostly following our group walking trip together, of the outdoors, walking, filming out of windows at night in cityscapes, general observations, a conglomeration of extracts, visual clues about how I view the world since returning from the trip, as an undecipherable maze. Another example of recent works combining objects with film projection, Holding Pattern also included sixteen suspended large seashells, gastropods that amplified the gallery’s ambient sound when held to the ear. These shells were suspended at different heights to assist different audience/viewers to be able to hold the shells and hear the hum of a non-existent sea, an internalised imagined world. The idea for the inclusion of sea shells came only weeks before arriving in Mildura, on a beach on Bruny Island where I found one of the shell types and instinctively brought it to my ear and realised I wished to share in an artwork this trusting action of seeking something otherworldly, another dimensional escape. Beneath the shells were sitting, on the floor, zinc cones, painted white with a red horizontal stripe mid-way. These are unserviceability markers, placed adjacent to non-operational runways. Together the film, the cones and the seashells present my attempt to move an audience, literally between viewing the film and holding an object at the same time. The seashells and cones present the opportunity for an audience to ‘unmap the end of the world’, to find something meaningful, a sense of place, a meaning in the otherworldly, another dimensional escape. Beneath the shells were sitting, on the floor, zinc cones, painted white with a red horizontal stripe mid-way. These are unserviceability markers, placed adjacent to non-operational runways. Together the film, the cones and the seashells present my attempt to move an audience, literally between viewing the film and holding an object at the same time. The seashells and cones present the opportunity for an audience to ‘unmap the end of the world’, to find something meaningful, a sense of place, a meaning in the otherworldly, another dimensional escape. Beneath the shells were sitting, on the floor, zinc cones, painted white with a red horizontal stripe mid-way. These are unserviceability markers, placed adjacent to non-operational runways. Together the film, the cones and the seashells present my attempt to move an audience, literally between viewing the film and holding an object at the same time. The seashells and cones present the opportunity for an audience to ‘unmap the end of the world’, to find something meaningful, a sense of place, a meaning in the otherworldly, another dimensional escape.

31 Participants were Daniel Browning (Bunyip/Talaburr), Catherine Cousins (Australia), Carolle Fannin (Carnarvon/ Hard!), Jonathan Kimberley (Australia), Vicky Carington (UK), Sasha Huber (New Zealand), paraiso monestato (Italy), Martin Weir (Perugia gunner), Ricky Mitchell (Papunya), Kumpi-Myrcia Liquep, Cheryl Papap Narritja (Australia), Kay Poul Liewar (Australia), Yherrre Sissy Sissy (Balaklaka/Nukurr), Lynne Yagi (Japan).
Reflecting on 2015, having exhibited in fourteen group exhibitions, I learned that being busy or saying yes to projects without considering how well-equipped I am with time, finances or space to think clearly can raise a real anxiety about the likelihood of creating a worthwhile work from a place of real enquiry and boundary pushing, and whether a project thematically is relevant to me. One invitation I felt I shouldn’t have accepted until the final weeks before the work was due was to exhibit in the University of Queensland invitational 2015 National Self Portrait Prize.

Self portrait, although an embedded concept in my work that often examines colonial Tasmania through the lens of my family and ancestors, is still not a term I have used for my art practice. Introspect is a frustrated digital (video) response to my current situation where perhaps eight per cent of my time is working as an artist, while the remainder is as the administrator of my art practice. The artwork didn’t include any associated objects; it was simply shown on a screen. It consists, as my artist statement attests, of a roll call, of my email inbox subject lines over a twelve-month period, with the resulting film almost 4 hours and 40 minutes long. The work offers an insight into my life, a genuine documentary of sorts, which fitted with the exhibition theme, Becoming, with a self-portraiture mode seeking an emerging, unfixed self.

During 2012 I undertook the ANU (Australian National University) Encounters artist fellowship. Encounters was part of a long-term exhibition project between the ANU and the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Judy Watson, Jonathan Jones, Elma Kris, Wukun Wanambi and I developed art proposals for the similar resulting exhibitions held at the BM: Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation (May 2015) and the NMA: Encounters (November 2015 - March 2016). We visited the British Museum collections to develop ideas for our art responses to this experience. In the British Museum exhibition some of our artworks were integrated with previously collected Aboriginal and Torres Strait objects. For the NMA exhibition Encounters, in the gallery adjacent to our group exhibition Unsettled, Timekeeper has a hole in its base, rendering it non-functional in its original sense. Below and within this carrier is sand, from Bruny Island, the sand with which its container form was created, and possibly the sand that formed the 1851 kelp water carrier that inspired the work. Below and within this carrier is sand, from Bruny Island, the sand with which its container form was created, and possibly the sand that formed the 1851 kelp water carrier that inspired the work. Below Timekeeper is a conical pile of sand, representing the expanse of time since the original object was home and functioning in its intended way.

The two interconnected works created for Unsettled were Tomalah and Timekeeper. Although these works are independent, they can also be read as a diptych work. Tomalah is a short film containing footage I made in 2012 when I visited Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural objects held in the British Museum storage facility. For one segment I filmed myself unwrapping the oldest known Tasmanian Aboriginal kelp water carrier, made in the nineteenth century. It was made by an unknown person, commissioned by Joseph Milligan, commandant at Oyster Cove Aboriginal settlement south of Hobart, for the 1851 Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in London. Recently in Tasmania I filmed and sound-recorded the kelp beds at low tide moving rhythmically at the southern end of Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. These kelp beds could well be the exact location where the kelp was collected to make the 1851 kelp water carrier. The film footage moves between me unwrapping/unpacking the kelp water carrier in the British museum, with the footage of the sight and sound of the kelp sea beds. I am linking the historic, lost overseas cultural object with the place it likely originated from, and the sounds of its long-lost homeland. Timekeeper, presented in a glass cabinet in front of the video projection Tomalah, is a sister kelp carrier to the 1851 original carrier. The 1851 original kelp carrier was brought to the NMA and installed in the exhibition Encounters, in the gallery adjacent to our group exhibition Unsettled. Timekeeper has a hole in its base, rendering it non-functional in its original sense. Below and within this carrier is sand, from Bruny Island, the sand with which its container form was created, and possibly the sand that formed the 1851 kelp water carrier that inspired the work. Below Timekeeper is a conical pile of sand, representing the expanse of time since the original object was home and functioning in its intended way.

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History is not past, but it has been corralled, managed and selectively disseminated by those across my island – provide the inspiration and obligation for current and future work. The archives of records, and the records on the land – the evidence of (particularly) Aboriginal occupation across my island – are a rich resource for my current and future work. The projects and possibilities that interest me are those that reveal and encourage human emotion, both in what inspired the work and how it is publicly received. I will continue to work indoors and outdoors, and express with whatever mediums, sculpture, installation, sound and video, best resolve journeys undertaken. Over time, more than two decades, art-making has become as immediate and raw in response as speaking, writing, thinking. There is editing and refining but what I increasingly aim for is to show the essence, the source, the cuts and grazes, the edge of history as it rubs against us.

Tomalah, 2015. 

Opposite page: The Promise, 2011. 
Found chair, shadow casting, LED light and kangaroo skin, c.92 x 37 x 56 cm plus projection. Photograph by Jack Bett.
Julie Gough: the art and culture of collecting

Brigita Ozolins

Much of my work is about collecting, compiling and reconfiguring objects of culture. I need to gather, shuffle and prod objects about. My process is to find the point of unease – where familiarity counters a general discomfort and leaves the work hovering between uncertain worlds.

Julie Gough


These are just some of the materials that Julie Gough uses in the creation of her artwork. An obsessive collector, sorter and investigator, she has a clear and unwavering sense of determination about the objects, information or artefacts she needs to find for each project she tackles. She will travel long distances by car, air, canoe, ferry or on foot to find a particular type of shell or plant, or to take photographs that will form the basis of an artwork. In her search she will camp on remote beaches, sleeping in a tent beneath the stars and cooking over a small fire. She will spend hours in libraries and state archives, trawling through documents and microfilm in search of clues about her Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage. She will transcribe historical records by hand over a period of weeks – word by word, page by page – until every piece of evidence has been absorbed through the re-recording process. She will fall asleep at 3 am, sitting upright over an artwork that demands to be finished. Gough is a driven artist – and she also has the fearless curiosity of a detective and the dedicated patience of an archivist.

Malahide 2008.
Fingal Valley coal necklace on draped Northern Midlands antlers, 200 x 130 x 35 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia. Photograph by Jack Bell.
The artwork Gough creates from the disparate materials she collects and combines is essentially concerned with the reinterpretation of the relationships between history, culture and identity. In particular, it challenges our understanding of officially recorded history and creates new ways of engaging with the past. Gough transforms the objects and other materials she collects into new artefacts that are both strange and familiar and test our reading of their original meaning. As such, Gough’s work is also about the nature of truth. It invites us to question our perceptions of the world and the stories that are important to our understanding of the origins of those perceptions.

While Gough tackles her art projects in a methodical manner, she conveys her ideas using a range of strategies that are not straightforward to categorise. A number of her works clearly fall under the label of installation, but many are more readily associated with sculpture, collage and the documentary practices of conceptual art. Gough is truly interdisciplinary – just as she collects materials from a wide range of sources, so she manipulates them in the studio, using strategies from whatever art or craft practice she deems most appropriate for the particular project she is working on at the time. This might range from laboriously burning text into timber surfaces using a pyrographic tool to producing digital prints and videos. Gough is not afraid to meld practices associated with amateur crafts with those of contemporary high art.

Work such as The Ranger (2007), which was shown in the South Australian School of Art Gallery, clearly uses the strategic devices of installation. It lures us into a dream-like world based on the diaries of John Scott, a sealer who lived on King Island, north-west of Tasmania, with his two Aboriginal wives and three children in the early 1800s. Gough creates the imagined living spaces of Scot and his family and those of ‘The Ranger’, an unknown Aboriginal woman who also lived on the island but led a solitary and furtive existence. The installation consists of carefully placed groupings of worn, second-hand furniture, including a desk and chair, an open wardrobe, a bed and side-table, and four chairs facing each other in a cross-shape on a square of old floral carpet. All these items have been modified in one way or another using, among other things, spindly branches of tea-tree, piles of seaweed, passages of text from Scot’s diaries, and large quantities of carefully stacked coal. Each grouping is also illuminated by a pool of light, creating the atmosphere of an elaborate theatrical set. We are invited to walk among the various scenarios that Gough has orchestrated so precisely. We stand before the sealer’s coal-packed desk and picture him recording evidence of the Ranger’s stealthy movements in his diary, or we gaze upon the Ranger’s bed, imagining the dreams she may have dreamt while sleeping on her seaweed mattress and fur pillow. As we move among these scenarios, we are urged to engage with the narrative embedded within each object and each piece of furniture; we become witnesses to the fragmented story of a group of people whose lives have been ignored by mainstream history. Gough has used the theatrical potential of installation to transport us both physically and psychologically into a world where a lost past has become a dream-like reality.

Return (2006) is another installation work by Gough that was created site-specifically for an outdoor exhibition at Invisible Lodge, Friendly Beaches, on the east coast of Tasmania. As we stroll along the beach and climb over the dunes, we come across an extraordinarily oversized necklace made from hundreds of abalone shells strung together on a massive rope. Our encounter with this enormous artefact reduces us to Lilliputians – we become the tiny discoverers of evidence of a culture that is far bigger than we could ever imagine. And that culture is immediate, embedded in the very land that we walk on. This same work was included in the 2006–2007 Asialink touring show, From an island south, where it was shown within the confines of a range of different gallery spaces. Although it loses none of its inherent power, our reading of the work is dramatically altered by its transformation...
from sandy beach to white-walled gallery. The hundreds of pearlescent abalone shells are now suspended vertically from two wall brackets to form a shape that symbolically represents a map of Tasmania. Once again, we become aware of the powerful relationship between culture, place and history, but in this setting we contemplate the work and the ideas it conveys from the objective distance of an observer within the gallery. On the beach, we are participants, our feet sinking into the very sand in which the giant necklace has been preserved.

*Ebbo tide* (The whispering sands), 1998, is another installation in which site plays a vital role in the way we engage with the ideas underpinning the work. Along the tidal flats at Eaglehawk Neck on the Tasman Peninsula, we encounter sixteen lifesize silhouettes of British colonials, fashioned from plywood. Emerging from the sea at differing heights depending on the time of the day, these figures are shadowy representations of individuals who were involved in the misappropriation of Aboriginal culture, anthropological data and human remains. They alternately sink below and rise above the sea level, caught in the endless rhythm of the tides. The figures have become part of the landscape in which they have been placed, producing an eerie visual reminder of an aspect of our nation’s history that refuses to be washed away, even by the continuous, powerful erosion of sand and sea.

Back within the gallery, Forcefield (2007) is an installation that invites us to obliterate the authority of officially printed text with our feet. Our goal is to reach a fireplace – the heart of the home – from which sprouts a large and ghostly apple tree, a reference to Tasmania as the Apple Isle but also a symbol of the beginning of its colonial history. The idea for the work was motivated by an original magistrate’s report from 1825 that records the shooting, by Dr Jacob Mountgarrett of Longford, of twelve-year-old Dalrymple Briggs, one of Gough’s Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors. Although the child survived, she appears to have lied in court about the circumstances of her shooting and contradicts the accounts of other witnesses, probably under pressure to protect her colonial master. The destructive markings of our shoes transform the meaning of the work, for without our active participation, our understanding of little Dalrymple’s fate remains in a state of limbo. Forcefield thus requires our physical engagement with the work to bring it to some form of resolution. Gough has used this installation strategy to encourage a literal, as well as conceptual, awareness of the paradoxical links between truth and history.

But many of Gough’s works are not installations and engage our attention using other formal approaches. For instance, in *We ran/I am* (2007), she combines photography and mixed media using a key strategy associated with conceptual art. In this work, a map of Tasmania, a series of black and white photographs and seven pairs of calico trousers are pinned to the gallery wall. The images are of Gough running desperately through the Tasmanian bushland. She is actually running through specific sites, all marked on the map of Tasmania, that were part of the notorious ‘Black Line’ of 1831. (The aim of this brutally devised military operation was to move from south to north along an imaginary line, systematically eradicating all the Indigenous inhabitants of Tasmania.) Beneath the images of Gough charging through the bush is an orderly row of the calico trousers she wore as she ran, each stained with remnants of mud, grass and dirt from the sheer physical effort of running as fast as possible. The trousers themselves are replicas of those distributed to the Aborigines in the 1830s by George Augustus Robinson in his role as conciliator of...
Aborigines in Van Diemen’s Land. He records in his journal: ‘The people all seem satisfied with their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run.’

Gough created We ran/I am in response to this remarkable statement but, rather than offering us the three-dimensional experience typical of installation, here she presents us with the literal documentation of the making of the work. This strategy harks back to the conceptual art movement of the 1960s and 1970s which was more concerned with concepts and processes than it was with visual aesthetics. We ran/am presents us with evidence – photographic and material evidence of the artist’s challenging performance – that demonstrates the ever-presence of the past and its persistent impact on current generations of Aboriginal Australia. As we stand before the images of Gough running, the dirty trousers and the map, we are able to piece together a disturbing narrative. While the documentary nature of the work insists that we maintain an objective distance from that narrative, the underlying message of the work is no less powerful than in installations such as The Range and Forcefield where our engagement is more experiential.

Many of Gough’s other works also use documentation in combination with sculpture, photography and mixed media to question and challenge issues about the complex relationships between truth, history, culture and identity. The Craft for floating home series (2005) makes a particularly powerful personal statement. At the time, Gough was, in her own words, ‘living in exile’ in Townsville in northern Queensland. Her longing to return to her Aboriginal homeland in Tasmania became the impetus for constructing four rafts from a range of found materials, including driftwood, coconuts, cuttlefish bones, sea pumice, rope and plastic. She launched these crudely fashioned crafts into the waters of northern Queensland and tried to paddle her way southwards. Of course, her efforts were a symbolic gesture, driven by an innate desire to navigate back to a place and a time she herself acknowledges will always be just out of reach. In the gallery, this gesture is presented in the form of documentation: the four rafts are suspended from the ceiling so that we can examine them from various angles, as if in a museum. Looking through the rafts, we see pinned to the wall a digitally enlarged print of Gough paddling into unknown waters – photographic proof of her attempt to float home.

Around the same time as the rafts were constructed, Gough also threaded giant necklaces from pumice, beach coal and driftwood. These necklaces, like the giant rope and abalone version entitled Return, are familiar yet strange, clunky yet also beautiful. They are weird, decorative objects that evoke a primordial relationship with the land and the sea and take us back to a time where history is inscribed within objects rather than with words. To Gough, the necklaces are imbued with magical properties and she refers to them as ‘life-preservers’ and ‘memory retainers’ that become symbolic emergency vehicles for bringing her home. ‘My sense is that if I drowned with these around me it would be in the arms of the sea and the maker of all necklaces…’. This series of works offers a deeply personal insight into the motivations that drive Gough’s artistic practice. One year later, in 2006, she created Locus for the Sydney Biennale, this time fashioning a canoe from hundreds of cuttlefish bones, most of them gathered from the beaches of north-eastern Tasmania. This magic, flying vehicle was suspended in a vast forest of tea-tree, as if about to make a crash landing. Not long after, Gough returned to live in Tasmania.

The body of work Gough has produced since the early 1990s reflects an extraordinary variety of materials, artistic strategies and meticulously researched ideas that examine the themes of truth, history, culture and identity. In the early stages of her career, Gough’s focus was on reclaiming and reconfiguring existing objects and artefacts that represent Aboriginal culture and history. The various items she obsessively collected during this period were dominated by a kitsch aesthetic and the resultant artwork often reflected a...
dark sense of humour, underscored by a typically disturbing sense of unease. For example, in *The Trouble with Rolf* (1996), Gough reinvented the musical notation for Rolf Harris’s song, ‘Tie me kangaroo down, sport’, to expose a lyrical arrangement in which Aborigines are referred to in the same breath as Australian fauna, and in *Imperial Leather* (1994), she made her own soap on a rope from found cast caricatures of an Australian Aboriginal boy and hung them on a Union Jack made from blood-red towelling. Gough has reworked, among many other items, old shoes, curtains, clothing, kitchen tools, postcards, pulp fiction – even a washing machine. Every object incorporated into an art project is carefully reworked and combined with other elements to create new narratives about our collective history.

In her more recent work, Gough demonstrates a much greater use of natural materials, a result that appears to come from a closer personal engagement with the land. She often camps on the north-east coast of Tasmania, walks great distances along stretches of beach and through tracts of bush, and dreams beneath the stars of the southern night sky. She collects shells, driftwood, beach coal, tea-tree, cuttlefish bones, kelp and naturally occurring oxides to create her personal artefacts that challenge our understanding of the links between history, culture and identity, but also fuel her own unquenchable desire to connect with and make sense of her fragmented past.

But Gough’s work is not always confined to themes associated with her Aboriginal heritage; she also tackles the issues of truth, history and culture in a broader context. For example, she has made work for the Liverpool Biennale that confronts the mistreatment of orphaned children who were forced to work in a pin factory in the 1800s, and in Utah, the headquarters of the Mormon Church; she created an installation that questions the links between truth, fiction, science and the supernatural. Gough is a fearless and unstoppable artist.
Bass Strait, so can be converted and civilised. They can be...
unable to create a convincing narrative of cause and effect, or to simply honour the unknown, we safely ‘debate’ peripheral matters of little import to the present.

But memory can’t be confined by history, especially when you live a place. Most folk didn’t read much more than they wrote, so historians never monopolised the past. Nor was it all down to people. I am too much a product of my culture and discipline to be able to discuss such matters as the history of genocide and mistreatment in a mature way, but even I know that the land remembers. How many rational white folk have I met who also acknowledge that they sense something here? People know that the past is not all safely dead and buried. Is this not one of the reasons that so many Tasmanians gaze with wonder on our old growth trees as living witnesses to the 200-year-old conquest, and grieve so deeply when they, too, are put to premature death?

Perhaps it is because of this non-rational sense that, defying modern homelessness, from the 1970s Tasmania became a global centre of environmental consciousness and people began proclaiming a new relationship with the land. There also occurred during this time a contemporaneous rejecting (something of a reality check to Green romanticism, especially in relation to the celebration of ‘wilderness’) from the Aboriginal descendants of those who had sustained their communities in the backblocks, proudly proclaiming their heritage and publicly announcing their inspiring stories of survival.

Since the 1970s, historians have struggled to catch up with this renaissance and still have but partially done so. By contrast, artists have been at the forefront of renewal, leading us beyond the constraints of the written word. Largely (although never completely) standing in a space beyond the petty squabbles and the packaged sound bites, Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists have explored relationship to land, culture and their own ancestors, and probed the imagination as to what it has meant, and still means, to live here. In this renaissance, the past has been rescued from its exile and our quiet sense of ‘something more’ has been breathed into nascent life.

Julie Gough has been at the forefront of the proclamation of memory. Julie’s art traverses the boundaries of time, culture and even race. I don’t mean by this that she ‘builds bridges’. This would be to trivialise the honesty, beauty and suffering embodied in her encounter with the land and her diverse ancestors. Rather, Julie’s work is earthed in the land and imbued within the totality of our history. No place or persons are quarantined, and past and present encounter each other, often mediated by tea-tree, she-oak, kelp and rocks. The land invades even the most sacrosanct of British cultural space, as was so memorably expressed when her work was brought into the colonial art gallery of the National Gallery of Victoria where it could reach out to its esteemed but homeless sisters. Nature erupted in a bed, rocks appeared in wardrobes, and tea-tree Nature also grieve so deeply when they, too, are put to premature death.

Julie’s work is important precisely because it does not reconcile or nuance the past. It has become fashionable in historical accounts to convey the ‘complexity’ of the frontier, and explore how resilient survivors adapted and changed in the context of a vigorous cross-cultural ‘encounter’. Sometimes it seems as if the victims of a horrific invasion were engaged in some sort of personal growth exercise. In such history, as in the popular politics of reconciliation, Aboriginal endurance becomes a qualification to suffering, and bridges are prematurely built to hide the true path that leads nowhere.

Julie’s art never takes a short cut. With passionate integrity, uncompromising honesty and spiritual maturity, the artist invites us to open our hearts wide and find life not through qualifying the pain of the past, but in walking more deeply into its wound. She invites us not to be dispassionate observers of ‘history’, but to cross the paper-thin line of consciousness which separates the past from the present. She is taking us beyond the empty choice of counting dead bodies or documenting ‘cross-cultural encounter’ into the place of terrible deeds and unimaginable horrors, and yet where new life was born. She is inviting us to look and question the meaning of real homemaking and mature reconciliation.

To gaze into Julie Gough’s art is to know courage and to receive strength to take our own next step on the journey. It is a path that for the realist, the pragmatist and the strict empiricist is a waste of time. Better to build practical roads that keep us warm and dry, they say. Never mind that such travellers go so fast that they miss the ancient paths. In their view, at least we are all getting along better, feeling happier and only talking about matters of which we are certain.

The easy road is as wide and tempting for historians as it is for politicians. It is a road which speeds past place and time to hide the reality of the victims of a horrific invasion. In such history, as in the popular politics of reconciliation, Aboriginal endurance becomes a qualification to suffering, and bridges are prematurely built to hide the true path that leads nowhere.

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Ready-mades for repatriation, poetic re-enactments and comic performances for the camera

Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.1

Derek Walcott, Nobel Prize Lecture 1992

Establishing shot: An English bathroom brimming with things collected from the beach. The sink is covered in sand and sludge washed from the artist’s fossicking. She’s stopped a moment and taken the camera to film the work of this weekend away. For whom, it is not clear, but the quasi-crime scene must be filmed. It’s as if the fragments are collected from the shores of the continent for which the archipelago is a synonym, in Walcott’s imagination, for ‘pieces broken off from the original continent’. Why use the camera and durational video to glue the fragments of history together? It is not the filmic outcome, but the documentation of assembling history from fragments that drives Julie Gough as an artist. The camera is the witness to her choreography of ready-mades. Preferably performed alone, her process is internalised and on film appears slow and banal, ludicrously edited in real time, the action so slow that it becomes tragically comic. Gough’s impossible acts of restoration of our shattered histories display an ironic, slapstick humour. In Traveler (2013) one sees a video of the artist stalking around the

countrywide, performing a historical re-enactment of her ancestor who was blocked from crossing the Tasmanian country by settler fences (see p. 237).

The time-based medium in Gough’s later work enables an absorbing cinematic duration. The repetition of actions ad absurdum could be choreographed without pauses, as the earlier We ran! Am photographic series of fence-ranger works were. The ready-mades of Tasmanian historical materials act as the score for Gough’s performances for the camera. It is a shift from an assemblage of ready-mades to a re-enactment of colonial history on camera that is significant in Gough’s video works. She began to make videos in 2009 and they have progressively become central to her late practice. Her choreography of ready-mades becomes ephemeral and time-based, rather than solely reliant on the resonant materiality of evidence, which other essays examine in this collection.

The medium of video holds particular potential for Gough and other artists who work on ‘the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars’. Gough suggests that video enables a certain going back and forth, ‘to the progenitor period – the onset of my ancestors being a colonized people. From that point, in which I have since been erremeshed, I now intermittently move back and forth between then and now, largely due to the potential of the medium of video’. What was once a private process, conducted over a weekend in a hotel bathroom, for example, can become a central part of the exhibited work. For an artist driven by a constant process of searching, the real-time medium of video accompanies the search.

Julie Gough’s presence is not a performance for the camera in the same way that it is for other performance artists, such as Yvonne Rainer, Martha Rosler or Andrea Fraser. Their works are characterised by institutional and feminist critiques that use their bodies as a central focus for the camera. While Gough appears in her own videos as protagonist, she never addresses, acknowledges or seems to control the camera. It is held for her by a family member who has to likewise suffer the trek through Tasmanian bush while Gough’s own hands are at work.

The Talking Stones

By Julie Gough

The Lost World (Part 2) was Gough’s first solo exhibition outside of Australia. Travelling to the UK to work on this exhibition over several years (2010–2013), she also explored her Scottish father’s family ties. She was confronted on one hand with the inherent racism of museum anthropology collections and a British public brimming with questions about mixed race and authenticity. On the other hand, the discourse of contemporary global art made identity repositioned the way she presented her trajectory from the Goldsmiths MFA program (1998). For The Lost World (Part 2) installation she decided to research the Tasmanian stone tools, which are, as one archaeologist reported, ‘very primitive’ surface archaeology. They were collected without much attendant textual archive in the late nineteenth and through the twentieth century.4

The absence of Aboriginal place and persons’ names in the archived collection at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge (MMA) incited Gough to remap these stone tools according to her knowledge of all the Indigenous place names in Tasmania. In her exhibition of the Tasmanian archaeology, Aboriginal names are presented, where known, and a blank label where they are not known. This is to contrast with the inadequate catalogue entry the museum archive offers. Gough was astounded, being in England, to see that parts of Tasmania were renamed after English counties. The arbitrariness of English names cut and pasted into the colony sit as abstractions that conceal themselves as ontological truths. Gough’s re-enactment of the social scientists’ processes of search, finding, collecting, naming and classifying reveals methods and structures of thinking through language.

The Lost World suspends the matter and language of the Tasmanian archive, partly as recovered and repatriated but mostly as impossible. Loss is reflected in the dark matter suspended in the lower half of the Victorian vitrines. One may recall The Tempest when viewing this exhibit: ‘Those were pearls that were his eyes, and those were Tasmanian shells that were her threading together, as women, shimmering’.5

Threaded shalws may not carry the iconography of political action, but as Edward Said wrote of the unique aesthetics of the invisible, because people and practices are invisible, any proof of them is a political action.6 Gough’s contemporary and thus anachronistic use of the archive presents an effective strategy for decolonisation by wrenching colonial artifacts from the terms in which they were once cast and let them unsettle the settler discourses about Australian art history7 For the materials in her work hold the quality of the settled natural object, the shell, the surf and the wind that bore them. Her use of the materials, resonant with the historical perceptions she seeks to subvert, reflects physical and conceptual entanglement.8 In The Lost World the ready-made protagonists are the stone tools representative of the stone-age culture standard in Australian archaeology collections.

The lost world videos

The Lost World (Part 2)

HDMI video, 2013, colour, sound, 1 hr 15 min 32 sec, edited by Jenny Rea.
Anthropologists following Nicholas Thomas are debating the terms of entanglement between Indigenous and modern.8 Shawn Rowlands, for instance, argues that to analyse entanglement, as Thomas did, as a synthesis of desire, is to omit a close analysis of material entanglements and to question what entanglement is beyond the physical phenomenon.9 Arguably it took the critics years to catch up and see that to deconstruct a mission blanket for thread rather than use it whole was a creative rather than ignorable act of the colonised. This slow change in the reception of ‘entangled objects’ follows what Gough has long been making in her remixes of material. In Imperial Leather (see p.103), for example, she sculpted soap, the very banal but insidious symbol of paternalistic civilization in the colonies.

By choosing a cast of outcast stone objects, The Lost World decolonised the MAAS archaeology archive through historical revision enacted as performance and visual representation. To take a stone tool, from the Tasmanian archaeology collection, and replace it in the form of a photograph, in the natural bush environment it was taken from, is Gough’s act of mimesis, or copying, returning or replacing, repatriating or resolving. Gough takes old stones and turns them into two-dimensional, distributable, contemporary representations of themselves. They left the museum collection storage in Cambridge to enter the circulation again of objects in the world.

This flick back and forth between forms of visual representation can be compared to other contemporary artists internationally, such as Thomas Demand, who constructs worlds in paper based on photographs from the newspaper. These are re-photographed and in turn exhibited as two-dimensional prints (the paper models are never seen except in the photograph). For instance Gate (2004) represents the surveillance devices at airport security, taking the perspective of a surveillance camera on the gate that Mohammed Atta passed through on September 11.

The Lost World’s physical stone is a digitised stone, a physical photograph of a stone replicates into the landscape. A stone, is a stone, is a stone. And then in reverse, through video, it is sent back again to Cambridge digitally, and it is screened together with a live video feed that shows the digital photo slowly disintegrating in Tasmania.

Live video feed

The Lost World is also a virtual world of projection and live video feed from Hobart to Cambridge. In this artwork, video is the spectral medium that communicates across space and time, enabling them to critically re-enact the absurd in Jorge Luis Borges’ 1:1, full-scale map of the world. Video enables Gough to document her movement through historical space and time, and she uses the absurdity of the 1:1 reproduction as a strategy to heighten the impact of the violence she finds in the colonial archive. This process is especially evident in the video: TAHO LC 246/1 (2013) where she films from a tripod over her shoulder the act of typing archival records, accompanied by the bureaucratic noises of the archive. As the everyday in the archives unfolds on film, the banality of evil in the violent encounters she transcribes is heightened by the mimicry in her gesture: the artist digitising a copy of a document that was produced in the same cool, deadly vein. Her list of artists’ materials may differ entirely from Auguste Renoir’s which Raymond Carver cites in his poem. But the most important ingredient for what you need to be such an artist remains the iron will.

What would be on such a list for Gough, who is such a voracious experimenter with materials, not to mention prolific list writer and blogger?11 To list her universe of materials here in this book would be to re-enact the absurd in Jorge Luis Borges’ 1:1, full-scale map of the world. Video enables Gough to document her movement through historical space and time, and she uses the absurdity of the 1:1 reproduction as a strategy to heighten the impact of the violence she finds in the colonial archive. This process is especially evident in the video: TAHO LC 246/1 (2013) where she films from a tripod over her shoulder the act of typing archival records, accompanied by the bureaucratic noises of the archive. As the everyday in the archives unfolds on film, the banality of evil in the violent encounters she transcribes is heightened by the mimicry in her gesture: the artist digitising a copy of a document that was produced in the same cool, deadly vein. Her list of artists’ materials may differ entirely from Auguste Renoir’s which Raymond Carver cites in his poem. But the most important ingredient for what you need to be such an artist remains the iron will.

8 1 Wanda Nanibush, Live video feed that shows the digital photo slowly disintegrating in Tasmania.
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11 11 How to Deconstruct a Mission Blanket
12 To find the poetry in the banal and to maintain a dogged will as an Aboriginal artist are qualities that the artists with whom Gough identifies have in common. It is what the American poet Raymond Carver put at the end of his laundry list of what you need to be a painter in his poem ‘What You Need for Painting from a letter by Renoir’:

Indifference to everything except your canvas.
The ability to work like a locomotive.
An iron will.

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Dark Secrets

We ran slops to all the fresh natives, gave them baubles and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could. The people all seemed satisfied with their clothes. Trousers are excellent things and confine their legs so they cannot run,” 2007 (detail).

Calico, 14 photographs on paper, earth pigments, c.2.00 x 7.50 x 0.05 m.
Photography by Craig Opie, map of the Black Line, 1819, courtesy of the Tasmaniana Library, State Library of Tasmania.

Collection of Devonport Regional Gallery.
Rifle and Boomerang, 1993. Oil on canvas, text on acrylic, nine Australian timbers. 1240 x 945 x 90 mm. Collection of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

Intelligence Testing – The Porteus Maze
Tin, plastic, sawdust, paint, shoreline, acrylic, 170.0 x 39.5 x 29.5 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Physical Characteristics – Body Odour,
Tin, oil, soap, wax, towelling, acrylic, 40 x 30 x 8 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Medical series, 1994.
Mixed media, variable dimensions.
Collection of Tasmanian museum and Art Gallery.


Earwax Consistency, 1994, Medical series, 1994 (detail). Tin, wax, plastic, acrylic, mixed media. 5.5 x 29.5 x 40.0 cm, cabinet 89 x 51 x 40 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Eyeball Weight, 1994, Medical series, 1994 (detail). Tin, plastic, found objects, acrylic. 30 x 26 x 22 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Hair Differentiation, 1994, Medical series, 1994 (detail). Tin, synthetic and human hair, wax, stainless steel, chrome, acrylic, 103.0 x 49.5 x 35.5 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Tooth Avulsion, 1994, Medical series, 1994 (detail). Tin, synthetic and plaster teeth, mixed media, chrome, acrylic, 103.0 x 49.5 x 28.0 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Hair Differentiation, 1994, Medical series, 1994 (detail). Tin, synthetic and human hair, wax, stainless steel, chrome, acrylic, 103.0 x 49.5 x 35.5 cm. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.
Bad Language, 1996. Paperback books, wood, plastic coated wire. 80 x 170 x 6 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia.
9998


The Trouble with Rolf, 1996. 
Fence posts, fencing wire, acrylic medium on plaster, vinyl lettering, 240 x 400 cm. Collection of the artist.

OTHER, 1997. 
Mixed media, variable dimensions. Collection of the artist.
Imperial Leather, 1994.
Cotton, wax, masonite, 149 x 204 x 15 cm. Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by Gabrielle Pizzi, Member, 1995. Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Moree – Genetic pool, 1996.
Mixed media, variable dimensions. Collection of the artist.
Pedagogical (Inner Soul) Pressure, 1996.
Forty pairs of second-hand shoes, lights, slides, found photos, stilts, shoe shine box, acrylic on wood, c.300 x 450 x 60 cm.
Collection of the artist.
She loves me, she loves me not... 1995.
Thirteen synthetic slippers, thirteen found photos, plastic magnification inserts, variable dimensions.
Collection of the Mildura Art Centre.

Folklore, 1997.
Vintage curtains, Tasmanian oak light box showing image of diorama in Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart. 180 x 300 x 15 cm.
Collection of the artist. Photograph courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi.
140 kitchen tools on nails through eyelets on fabric
print on fabric of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery c.1974,
220 x 360 x 12 cm. Exhibited at Adelaide Biennale 1998.
Collection of the artist. Photograph courtesy of Gallery
Gabrielle Pizzi.

Carpet, bathroom scales, oil on tin, variable dimensions.
Collection of the National Gallery of Australia.
The Impossible Return

Night sky journey, 2001 (detail)
Fine grained basalt and kelp, variable dimensions.
Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.
Transmitting Device, 2005.
Lomandra longifolia, limpets, 40 x 25 x 25 cm.
Private collection.
Leeawuleena, 2001
Driftwood, wax, 375.5 × 12.0 × 19.0 cm.
Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Leeawuleena, 2001 (detail)
Driftwood, wax, 375.5 × 12.0 × 19.0 cm.
Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.
Intertidal Zone, 2005 (detail).
Crushed cuttlefish, crushed beach-found charcoal, beach oxides, beach graphite, wax on nine pieces of timber. 220 × 300 × 130 cm.
Collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia.
Stand, 2000 (detail).
Tea-tree, lamp, wood, rope, 8 × 8 × 8 ft.
Collection of the artist.
Now and then, 2001.
Cowrie shells, lomandra, rocks, 40 × 12 × 7 cm.
Private collection.
Photography courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi.

Time capsules (bitter pills), 2001.
Carved cuttlefish, stones, 15 × 8 × 7 cm.
Private collection.
Photography courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi.
Intertidal, 2005 (detail).
Canberra earth, Canberra grass juice, Hyde Park Sydney ochre, St Kilda pier sea-washed charcoal, ground cuttlefish bone and chopped sea lettuce on board, 1,200 x 1,800 mm.
Collection of Australian National University.
Resignation, 2005.
Digital print on canvas, 87 × 115 cm.
Private collection.

Land and Sky from Sea I, 2005.
Oxides and ink on canvas, 81.4 × 41.4 cm.
Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Land and Sky from Sea I, 2005.
Digital print on canvas, 87 × 115 cm.
Private collection.
Regeneration, 2005.

Bronze, eucalypt branch c.200 × 8 × 20 cm.

Collection of the artist.
Some words for change, 2007.
Black crow (nerite) shells, cuttlefish and timber, 50 × 50 cm.
Private collection.
Photograph courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi.

Some words for country, 2007.
Black crow (nerite) shells, cuttlefish and timber, 50 × 50 cm.
Photograph courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi.

Some words for Tasmanian Aboriginal women, 2007.
Black crow (nerite) shells, cuttlefish and timber, 50 × 50 cm.
Photograph courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi.
Craft for floating Home (driftwood), 2005. Driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells, c. 40 × 80 × 150 cm. Exhibited at the Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne.

Craft for floating Home (pumice), 2005. Pumice, driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells, c. 40 × 80 × 150 cm. Exhibited at the Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne.

Craft for floating Home (cuttlefish), 2005. Cuttlefish, driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells, c. 40 × 80 × 150 cm. Exhibited at the Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne.

Craft for floating Home (coconuts), 2005 (detail). Coconuts, driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells, c. 40 × 80 × 150 cm. Exhibited at the Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne.

Craft for floating Home, 2005 (detail). Digital photograph on paper, 80 × 100 cm. Photography by Koenraad Goossens. Exhibited at the Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne.
The Impossible Return (revised), 2010–11.
Tea-tree, eucalyptus and kangaroo eel, 227 × 26 × 10 cm.
Collection of the artist. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Tasmanian oak, cuttlefish bones, black crow shells, nine panels: 46.0 × 73.4 × 5.0 cm each. Exhibited at Gallery 2, 24 H Art, Darwin, 1 August – 6 September 2008.
Collection of the artist. Photograph by Jack Bett.
We ran/I am, 2007. Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 3 November 1830, Swan Island, North East Tasmania — ‘issued slops to all the fresh natives. gave them buttons and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run’, 2007 [detail].

Digital photographs on paper, 10 × 15 cm. Photography by Craig Opie. Collection of Devonport Regional Gallery.


Photograph by Simon Cuthbert.
Fugitive History

THAT the blood of the wretched Aborigines of this adopted country, of whom hundreds were shot like native dogs by the white colonists, still cries for vengeance to heaven against the European inhablants of Van Diemen’s Land. We were actually shown a retired spot on the River Clyde in that island, where no fewer than seventeen of its miserable black natives were one day shot in cold blood by men of the settlers.

The Corporation

18 March 1830
Shadow of the Spear, 1997 (detail).

Tea-tree, slip cast ceramic urn, eggs, pyrographically inscribed Tasmanian oak strips, variable dimensions.

Collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia.
Ebb Tide (The whispering sands), 1998 (detail).
Sixteen pyrographically inscribed lifesize ply figures of British people who collected Tasmanian Aboriginal people and cultural material placed in tidal flat at Eaglehawk Neck, southern Tasmania, variable dimensions.
Collection of the artist. Photograph by Julie Gough.
... and how it’s been, 2000, How they got here, and how it’s been, vol. 2000 (detail). Bricks, cast iron, acrylic medium, abalone, wood, photograph, variable dimensions. Collection of the artist.
Bricks, cast iron, acrylic medium, abalone, soil, variable dimensions.
Fourteen postcards, each 10 × 15 cm, 100 boxed sets.
Tea-tree, kelp, linen, clay, acrylic medium, four parts, variable dimensions.
Collection of the artist.

Habitation de Pecheurs de Phoques
au port Western (Nouvelle Hollande),
[1833] Louis de Evans pinx.; Tastu, Editeur;
Lith. de Longlume; Guerard Lith.;
Figures par V. Adam., Lithograph, 21.5 x 31.0 cm.

A blanket return, 2004 Verso
Black crow shells, blanket, wood, wool, each 240 × 3 × 3 cm.
Collection of the National Museum of Australia.

Tea-tree, timber, string, possum fur, 229 × 240 × 130 cm.
Collection of the Flinders University Gallery, Adelaide.
Escape II, 2007. Embroidered cotton, timber and china, diptych, panel 1: 51 × 51 cm, panel 2: 52.5 × 52.5 cm. Private collection.

We ran/I am. Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 3 November 1830, Swan Island, North East Tasmania — I issued slops to all the fresh natives, gave them trinkets and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run. 2007. Calico, fourteen photographs on paper, earth pigments, c.2.00 × 7.50 × 0.05 m. Photography by Craig Opie; map of the Black Line: ‘Military operations against the Aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land: No. 9 field plan of movements of the military’ courtesy of the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office; trousers by #49 CWA Hobart.

Military operations against the aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land [cartographic material], 1831. G. Frankland, surveyor general. 54 × 45 cm. Courtesy of the Tasmania Archives and Heritage Office.
We ran slops. Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 3 November 1830, Swan Island, North East Tasmania – “I issued slops to all the fresh natives, gave them bawbels and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs as they cannot run.”

Calico, fourteen photographs on paper, earth pigments, c. 2.00 × 7.50 × 0.05 m. Photography by Craig Opie; map of the Black Line: “military operations against the aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land: No. 5 Field plan of movements of the military” courtesy of the Tasmania Archives and Heritage Office; trousers by #49 CWA Hobart. Collection of Devonport Regional Gallery.
Dead apple tree, bricks, copy of 1825 magistrate’s report, book, pages from The Fabrication of Aboriginal History. Exhibited at “Thresholds of Tolerance” of the Australian National University, School of Art Gallery.

Forcefield, 2010.
Dead apple tree, Tasmanian oak, book, pages. 0.8 x 3.5 x 7 m
Exhibited in the Clemenger Award, National Gallery of Victoria, Sept 2009 – Feb 2010.
Found chair, wood, papers with ink on goat vellum, c.180 × 350 × 35 cm. Collection of the artist.

She was sold for one guinea, 2007.
Found beaded decoration, cloth, book, wooden shelf, 20.0 × 13.5 × 3.5 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia.
Ink on leather, lead shot and wooden box on shelf,
23 × 25 × 17 cm. Private collection.

Karunta (Ancestor), 2007.
Wood, pyrography, soap, 41 × 39 × 4 cm, thirteen pieces.
Collection of Artbank.
179178

Some of our women kidnapped by sealers 2007 (series).

Book, paper, beads, fabric, acrylic on canvas, wood, cord, gunshot, leather, ink, variable dimensions.

Collection of the artist.


Wood, canvas, acrylic paint, 198 × 190 × 200 cm.

Collection of the artist.
**THE AUSTRALIAN**

*“ABORIGINES MUST LEARN ENGLISH”*
March 1934

**ELIZABETH RIVER, VOL**

*I’ll give you paper*

**SHANNON RIVER, VOL**

*“Fire you white buggers – go away, go away”*

**POODLE RIVER, VOL**

*I will put you in the bloody river, ma’am*

**BROWN MOUNTAIN, VOL**

*“You white bugger, give me some more bread, and try some molten for us”*

**CRESCENT LAKE, VOL**

*“We will settle you and all the white men”*

**OCOTILLO VALLEY, VOL**

*“Oh you white bugger”*

**SOUTH FORK RIVER, VOL**

“You white bugger, your piece no good”
The Ranger, 2007
Mixed media, variable dimensions. Installation at South Australian School of Art Gallery, University of South Australia, curator Mary Knights, 12 September – 2 October 2007. Photographs by Nici Cumpston, Michael Kluvanek, Michelle Rodgens.
Some words for change, 2008.
The consequence of chance. 2010 (Philippines). Four-track sound work and shadow projection, variable dimensions. Exhibited at the Centre for Contemporary Art and Green Papaya Art Projects in cooperation with the Vargas Museum and the Australian Embassy in Manila, October 2010. Images by Steve Eland, including installation images.
The Promise, 2011.
Found chair, shadow-casting LED light and kangaroo skin,
c.92 × 37 × 56 cm plus projection.
Private collection. Photograph by Jack Bett.

The Missing (Midlands silhouettes), 2011.
Plywood and steel, four items,
c.278.0 × 420.0 × 16.5 cm.
Private collection.
Missing, 2011.
Enamel on found pewter and steel,
23 × 16 × 12 cm.
Private collection.

Calico, pine, cardboard, lights, c.2.4 × 1.5 × 2.4 m.

Stolen, 2011.
Enamel on silver plate, timber,
16 × 9.5 × 11 cm.
Private collection.

Stolen, 2011.
Enamel on found pewter and steel,
23 × 16 × 12 cm.
Private collection.
Malahide, 2008.
Near Llandilo, Tasmania.
Collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia.
Photograph by Jack Bett.

Alfred Colliery, 2008.
Near Latrobe, Tasmania.
Photograph by Julie Gough.
Time Keeper, 2011.
Tea-tree, brass, copper, found hay fork and graphite, 280 × 17.5 × 11.0 cm. Collection of Tasmanian Museum and Gallery.

Acrylic on board, 6 × 50 × 50 cm.
Collection of the artist.
Annihilation: Map of the settled districts of Van Diemen’s Land, 1826–1828, 2011

Paper and Tasmanian oak, 210 × 110 × 2 cm.
Collection of the artist. Photograph by Jack Bett.
Black Line Properties, 2011. Enamel spray paint on cotton wadding and eucalyptus timber. 223.0 × 211.0 × 34.5 cm. Collection of the artist. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Murder of Crows, 2011. Plywood and nails. 152.0 × 275.0 × 0.6 cm. Collection of the artist. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Tea-tree spears with paint on timber, 94 × 196 × 7 cm.
Private collection. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Tebrikunna (Cape Portland), Photograph by Julie Gough
in case of emergency, 2011.
Tea-tree, copper and kangaroo skins, 260 × 244 × 10 cm.
Collection of Ararat Regional Art Gallery. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Head Count, 2008.
Found chair with brass rods and black crow shells,
85.5 × 43.0 × 43.0 cm. Collection of Redlands School, NSW.
Photograph by Jack Bett.
The Simultaneous Effect, 2008.
Embroidered doiley on blackwood tray, 35.0 × 60.0 × 3.5 cm.
Private collection. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Incident reports, 2008.
Found Tasmanian oak bookshelf, tea-tree stocks, burnt Tasmanian oak, 240 × 90 × 19 cm.
Private collection. Photograph by Jack Bett.

HOME sweet HOME, 1999

Missed: Sydney Gazette, 2 September 1804, 2011.

Found trunk, Tasmanian oak, blanket, pins and rifle cleaning rod, 86 × 67.5 × 52 cm (open). Private collection. Photograph by Jack Bett.

Native.

A native male infant, whose age is supposed to be from two or three years, was lost by the parents at Risdon Cove, near the river, and a hostile attack made upon the borders of the settlement. The little captive was kindly received and cherished, and is at this time under the protection of the Governor of the Settlement, at Friendly Cove. The little creature was very fond of the kangaroo; it had been scorched upon the coals, if it had become more nice in the choice of food, and it has consequently resigned a preferred stock, and even handles a piece with surprising agility, and does not in any degree appear susceptible of fear or shyness. In the contrary, it appears with nimbleness every imagined danger. Against the attack of a dog, not only defends itself with a stick, but in turn becomes the assailant...
Namesakes, 2008.
Tasmanian oak shelves holding mystery objects wrapped in reproduced wallpaper patterns from 1850–80s with the names of corresponding colonial properties gold-leafed onto the shelves, 50 × 250 × 17.5 cm.
Collection of the artist. Photograph by Judy Betti.
The Persistence of Culture, 2009. Possum pelts, kangaroo skin, tea tree, pine and black crow shells, diptych; each 120.0 × 140.0 × 81.5 cm. Collection of the artist.
Some of our women kidnapped by sealers, 2007.

Leather, maireener shells, brass, cotton, timber.

Collision, 2012.

Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.
**Manifestation, (Bruny Island), 2010.**
Image 400 × 600 mm (paper 600 × 800 mm).

**Manifestation, 2010.**
Tea tree, soap, wax, black crow shells, fire surrounds, 2.4 × 1.9 × 2.4 m.
Photograph by Jack Bult.
Film Work
Driving Black Home, 2009 (video stills).


Rivers Run, 2009 (video stills).

4:3 video, silent, 40 min 55 sec, Edition by Nancy Mauro-Flude.
Shadowland, 2011 (video still).
16:9 HD1080i video, silent, 37 min 08 sec, edited by Nick Smithies.
Oblivion, 2013 (behind the scenes).
HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, edited by Jemma Rea.

Traveller, 2013 (video stills, details)

Observance, 2012 (video stills)
Lost World (Part 1), 2013 (video stills), HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 13 min 12 sec, edited by Jemma Rea.

Lost World (Part 2), 2013 (video stills), HDMI video, H264, 16:9, colour, sound, 1 hr 15 min 32 sec, edited by Jemma Rea.
Ode, 2014 (video still), HDMI video projection, HD24, 3000kbps, 46 sec, sound, colour, 5 min 00 sec, edited by Jemma Rea.

Hunting Ground Incorporating Barbeque Area, 2014 (video still), HDMI video HD24, 1500P, 18.1 sec, sound, colour, 10 min 17 sec, edited by Jemma Rea, ed of 5 (for projection or screen).

When I returned to my country I went hunting, but did not kill one head of game. The white man made their dogs wonder and kill all of the game, and they only want the skin.
Gathering, 2015 (video stills); installation with film projection.

Tomalah, 2015 (video stills); video, HDMI, mp4, 16:9, H264, 1080P, sound, 4 min 5 sec, edited by Mark Kuilenburg.
Holding Pattern, 2015–2015 (video stills), HDMI video projection, 4:3 UHS, 16:9, online, sound, 15 min 39 sec, edited by Jeff Blake.

Timeline, 2015 (video stills), video projection, HDMI, UHS, pal, 16:9, online, sound, 4 min 32 sec, edited by Mark Kuilenburg.

HUNTING GROUND (Haunted) Van Diemen’s Land. 2016–2017 (video stills), HDMI video projection, MP4, 16:9, online, sound, 12 min 26 sec, edited by Angus Ashton.
Appendix I: List of Works

From present day moving backwards in chronology

2016

Hunting Ground (Pastoral)
Van Diemen’s Land 2016
HDMI video projection, colour, silent, 12 min 26 sec, edited by Angus Ashton

Hunting Ground (Haunted)
Van Diemen’s Land 2016
HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 12 min 26 sec, edited by Angus Ashton
10 prints , 482 x 329 mm, etching and acrylic silkscreen on BFK Rives 280gsm, printed at Cidade Press, UNSW Art & Design, NSW,

Exhibited in With Secrecy And Despatch
Campbelltown Arts Centre, NSW, curators

Existed in

2015

Introspect 2015
single-channel digital video, 4hr 39 min 4 sec collection of the artist

Exhibited in National Self-Portrait Prize: Being and Becoming, University of Queensland Art Museum, curator Michael Desmond, 14 November 2015 – 13 March 2016

Timekeeper 2015
HDMI video, H264, 1080P colour, sound sculpture collection of the National Museum of Australia

Tomalah 2015
HDMI video, H264, 1080P 16:9, colour, sound, 4 min 50 sec, edited by Mark Kullenburg collection of the National Museum of Australia


Ode 2016
video on screen with new (flag/rock) installation collection of the artist

Exhibited in EXHIBIT A, Lock Up, Newcastle, curator Carrie Miller, 30 October – 8 December 2015
URL: http://www.thelockup.org.au/whats-on/exhibit-a

Holding Pattern 2015
installation and video projection collection of the artist

Exhibited Mildura Palmipese Biennale: Unmapping the End of the World, Mildura Arts Centre and Township, curator Jonathan Kimberley, 2-5 October 2015
URL: http://mildurapalmipesebiennale.com/program/unmapping-end-world/

Timeline 2015
video projection, HDMI, H264, pal, 16:9, colour, sound, 4.32 mins, edited by Mark Kullenburg Warrener shells on twined iomanadra rope collection of the artist

Exhibited in Counting Tidelines, Charles Darwin University, NT, curators Amy Jasket and Sarah Penne, 13-28 August 2015
URL: http://www.countingtidelines.com

The Lost World (Part 1) 2015
video projection, HDMI, 16:9, colour, sound, 13 min 12 sec, edited by Jemma Rea collection of the artist


The Gathering 2015
HDMI video, H264, 1080P colour, sound, 18 min 13 sec, edited by Jemma Rea table, enamel on Tasmanian oak, 28 found stones, variable dimensions collection of the artist


The Promise 2015
in the form of a table, 90 x 45 x 45 cm collection of the artist

Exhibited in National Self-Portrait Prize: Being and Becoming, University of Queensland Art Museum, curator Michael Desmond, 14 November 2015 – 13 March 2016

The Consequence of Chance 2015
in the form of a table, 180 x 90 x 45 cm collection of the artist

Exhibited in Inheritance 2015, British Museum, 23 April – 2 August 2015
URL: http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats-on/exhibitions/inheritance-2015

The Gathering reveals my attempts and trials to reconstruct the past from withheld and dispersed fragments through various means of production and arrangement. The result intimates an otherworldly assembly; an atmosphere of pseudo-paranormal channeling resonates in the work. Is this a diorama from the Victorian era or an abandoned laboratory? Does the work reference Conan Doyle or early modern archaeology? Is the artist genuinely undertaking fieldwork or critiquing it? The resulting piece is a taxonomy about my perpetual pursuit of the elusive past, a quest I term The Impossible Return. This desire to know and embody, even temporarily, what was wrought from my Aboriginal ancestors, is not only impossible but intolerable. Art offers both outlet and exposure for an otherwise transfixed state of recollection.

Inheritance 2015
found chair, vellum (shadow making figures) 90 x 45 x 45 cm collection of the artist

Exhibited in Indigenous Australia: Enduring civilisation, curator Gaye Sculthorpe, British Museum, 23 April – 2 August 2015
URL: http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats-on/exhibitions/indigenous-australia.aspx

Inheritance is one in a continuum of shadow works that includes Shadowland (Time Keepers) 2014, The Promise 2011, The Consequence of Chance 2011, and The Consequence of Chance 2010. The figures are copied from Governor Arthur’s Proclamation to the Aborigines (1839) – small huon pine panels on which figures of Aborigines and colonists are depicted interacting in sequences about crime and equal justice. Inheritance consists of five of the figures cut out of vellum, suspended inside a chair back that is suspended upside down. The work is about balance and the non-fixedness in potential readings of history; it is about the uncanny and what objects carry – the haunted past.

Inheritance 2015
in the form of a table, 180 x 90 x 45 cm collection of the artist

Exhibited in Inheritance 2015, British Museum, 23 April – 2 August 2015
URL: http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats-on/exhibitions/inheritance-2015

The Impossible Return
in the form of a table, 180 x 90 x 45 cm collection of the artist

Exhibited in Inheritance 2015, British Museum, 23 April – 2 August 2015
URL: http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats-on/exhibitions/inheritance-2015
### 2014

**Hunting Ground incorporating Barbeque Area**

Embodied/visible: the First Peoples

Hunting Ground incorporating Barbeque Area

Hunting Party incorporating Barbeque Area

Hunting Ground (Barry's Plains)

Hunting Ground (Richmond Park)

Hunting Ground (Rosedale)

Hunting Ground (Bay of Fires)

### 2013

**The Lost World**

Embodiment

### 2011

**Shadowland (Time Keepers)**

We Ran ‘I Am. Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 3 November 1980, Swan Island, North East Tasmania – ‘I issued slops to all the fresh natives, gave them baubles and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run’, 2007, calico trousers, earth pigment, photographs and canvas

**Release Date: History, Memory, Longford**

Nine video projections and eight screened video works group project, collection of the artists:

Noeline Lucas, Julie Gough, Liz Day, Anna Gibbs

Exhibited in Release Date: History, Memory, Longford (The Longford Project) 2013

Nine video projections and eight screened video works group project, collection of the artists: Noeline Lucas, Julie Gough, Liz Day, Anna Gibbs

**Exhibited in GroundTruthing, Foyer Gallery, Australian National University School of Art, curator Ursula Frederick, Canberra, 7 – 18 April 2015**

URL: http://soa.anu.edu.au/event/ground-truthing


Exhibited in Embodiment, Art Gallery of New South Wales, curator Emily McDaniels, 12 December 2014 – 22 March 2015


Exhibited in Colonial Afterlives, Tasmanian Arts Festival, Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, curator Sarah Thomas, 18 March – 27 April 2015

URL: http://www.tendays.org.au/event/colonial-afterlives/

**URL: http://soa.anu.edu.au/event/ground-truthing**

### 2010

**We Ran ‘I Am. Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 3 November 1980, Swan Island, North East Tasmania – ‘I issued slops to all the fresh natives, gave them baubles and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run’, 2007, calico trousers, earth pigment, photographs and canvas

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Exhibited in Embodiment, Art Gallery of New South Wales, curator Emily McDaniels, 12 December 2014 – 22 March 2015

The installation The Lost World (Part 2) consisted of a projection piece of me virtually ‘returning’, across Tasmania, photographs of thirty-five of the Tasmanian Aboriginal stone tools held in the Museum. The artefacts in the footage were installed in the gallery and sent virtually back to Tasmania from live web-camera feed of their cabinet. A second surveillance camera sent to the museum the photograph of one artefact that was weathering outdoors in Tasmania. My research and installation art practice often involves uncovering and re-presenting conflicting and subsumed histories, many referring to my own and my family’s experiences as Tasmanian Aboriginal people. This project explored the absence of objects from their original people and context. My filmic response to the missing artefacts reconnected me with Country while highlighting the coloniser’s conquest of place and suppression of history by the renaming of my maternal homelands. The work articulates the continued dispossession of Aboriginal people from our misnamed territories: Kitchen Middens, Risdon, Lindisfarne, Frederick Henry Bay, Ralph’s Bay, Cambridge, Dodges Ferry, Melton Mowbray, Lamont, Elphin Farm, Newstead, Newnham, Lake Leake, Ross, Oyster Cove, Bruny Island, Hermitage, Early Rises, Lisdillon, Bicheno, Seymour, Long Point, Fingal, Falmouth, East Coast, St Helens, North East Coast, Pipers River, West Point.

Walking in Tasmania my heart leaps when I see objects handmade by our Old People lying where they put them, I am then walking on their path. But these are rare to find today unless you go right off the beaten track. Others beat me there, collectors, to ship more than 15,000 Tasmanian stone tools to museums around the world. This exhibition has the purpose of reuniting Tasmania with the shadow of its lost objects, and making it has also unexpectedly reconnected me to these ever-waiting places.
The Lost World (Part 1), CAST (Contemporary Art Studios Tasmania), Hobart, 24 April – 26 May 2013 (solo exhibition)

URL: http://www.contemporaryarttasmania.org/program/the-lost-world-part-1


Exhibition images by Jan Dalas

Recent video artworks Oblivion, Traveller, The Lost World (Part 1), The Lost World (Part 2), TAHO LC247, Ode (2013-2014) explore the power of storytelling through video footage of myself and family members recounting events or undertaking journeys. These investigative pieces take a viewer, and its protagonists, through or to place across time, with the object/motivation for the works often drawn from the colonial past. The resulting projection/screened footage is sometimes installed with an object(s) associated with the narrative, as a kind of evidential residue of the activity or the time it took for the last leech to fall off: 45 minutes. The film enacts the literal hold the text has on me, the duration of the film is the time it took for the last leech to fall off: 45 minutes. The film enacts the literal hold the text has on me, given it is full of accounts about my ancestors between 1830 and 1835.

Traveller 2013
HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 8 min 43 sec, edited by Jemma Rea
URL: http://vimeo.com/102400227

Seeking out other times and carrying a cultural tool-kit to equip my journey, in Traveller I head to a hotspot for unresolved colonial encounters between Aboriginal Tasmanians and colonists on the north-west coast. Walking to Highfield House I seek insight into the past while haunting the path of Edward Currie, the notorious agent for the Van Diemen’s Land Company.

Haunted 2013
Grey stone spalls, electronic compass needle c. 90 x 80 x 80 cm electronics: Jason Jamesstonework: Rob O’Connor

Haunted was composed of bluestone spalls and an electronic directional needle. Both cairn and compass, the intention of the exhibition The Lost World (Part 1) 2013 was to demonstrate the cultural vortex I experience daily, inhabiting past and present simultaneously. Testing my obsession with the diary of the corrupt lay missionary George Augustus Robinson, I work to make my way out of the text and diary of the north-west coast. Walking to Highfield House I seek insight into the past while haunting the path of Edward Curri, the notorious agent for the Van Diemen’s Land Company.

The Lost World (Part 1) 2013
HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 13 min 12 sec, edited by Jemma Rea
URL: http://vimeo.com/102400227

The film Lost World (Part 1) 2013 reveals an initial attempt by my brother and myself to reach an important destination while thwarted by a roadside troll, gates, fences, herbicides and an anticipated early return time. The otherwise silent film is punctuated by message banked phone calls received during our ten-hour failed odyssey to relocate an important cultural place. The work is mostly about the tension between desire and the demands of the modern world.

Oblivion 2013
HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 45 mins, edited by Jemma Rea

Oblivion is hard-core – it’s about being stuck in a place, not of this world, and not in a ‘real’ place, while immersed in Friendly Mission. Friendly Mission doesn’t allow for a future, just despair. Oblivion consists of footage of me reading Friendly Mission on a rock, by a pond, after releasing five leeches at my feet. The duration of the film is the time it took for the last leech to fall off: 45 minutes. The film enacts the literal hold the text has on me, given it is full of accounts about my ancestors between 1830 and 1835.

The Lost World (Part 1)
A kind of evidential residue of the activity or the time it took for the last leech to fall off: 45 minutes. The film enacts the literal hold the text has on me, given it is full of accounts about my ancestors between 1830 and 1835. The intention of the exhibition The Lost World (Part 1) 2013 was to demonstrate the cultural vortex I experience daily, inhabiting past and present simultaneously. Testing my obsession with the diary of the corrupt lay missionary George Augustus Robinson, I work to make my way out of the text and diary of the north-west coast. Walking to Highfield House I seek insight into the past while haunting the path of Edward Curri, the notorious agent for the Van Diemen’s Land Company.

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Traveller 2013
HDMI video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 8 min 43 sec, edited by Jemma Rea
URL: http://vimeo.com/102400227

Seeking out other times and carrying a cultural tool-kit to equip my journey, in Traveller I head to a hotspot for unresolved colonial encounters between Aboriginal Tasmanians and colonists on the north-west coast. Walking to Highfield House I seek insight into the past while haunting the path of Edward Curri, the notorious agent for the Van Diemen’s Land Company.

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horizon, around the next bend, through that locked farm gate. Testing how I recognise my island and if it still recognises me six generations since my tribal past, each piece is a fragment of the desire to recall and understand what happened in lethal frontier Van Diemen’s Land before it became amnesiac Tasmania. My process involves uncovering and representing historical stories to evaluate the impact of the past on our present lives. Combining found human-made and natural materials from indoor and outdoor sites, I manifest places that are anywhere and nowhere, internal worlds through which we might engage with our conflicting and subsumed histories.

Trespass 2011

timber, tarp, camp bed, kangaroo fur and coat, lamp, stencil painted boards
variable dimensions

Rivers Run 2009

16:9 video, silent, 40 min 55 sec
edited by Nancy Mauro-Flude

We ran/I am. Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 3 November 1830, Swan Island, North-east Tasmania – ‘I issued slops to all the people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Each man received a pair of shoes, a shirt, a pair of drawers, a blanket, two blankets and a blanket for the child. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. I issued them a flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could.

North-east Tasmania – ‘I issued slops to all the people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Each man received a pair of shoes, a shirt, a pair of drawers, a blanket, two blankets and a blanket for the child. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. I issued them a flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could.

Most of my works incorporate ideas of movement or stasis either technically or in the story that they may be partially relating to the viewer. This suggestion of waiting or of motion intends to summon an onlooker to enter into the work as a timekeeper. This is an anxious position where many materials inviting curiosity, initially implying the humorous, accrue a sinister edge as a viewer reaches a point of understanding his/her caged predicament within the work.

These artworks are investigations evolving from personal considerations of the place of memory, forgetting, loss, denial and the potency of the past within my own family. Increasingly evident is the use of open narrative to decipher self in the process of relating the past. Each work has been built from the outcomes of the last, and represents a claiming within a larger consideration of ways to personally invoke and involve nation, viewer and self in acknowledging our entangled histories.

process move their position back and forth, flickering between past and present, and hopefully, personal and national memory.

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**2010**

**The Consequence of Chance** 2010

Two-track sound work and shadow projection, variable dimensions

Edited by Eros Arbilón and Duncan O Cléirigh. Spoken by Gráinne Creed, Elme O'Donovan, Nuala O'Donovan, Mollie Anna King, Joy McLellen, Sean MacCarthy, Donal Dilworth, Brendan Byrne. Julie Gough would like to thank David Dobz and Jack Brien, the National Sculpture Factory, Cork, the speakers, Deirdre Murphy, Sean Kelly, Eros Arbilón, Duncan O Cléirigh Blackwater Studios Fermoy, Norbert Roldan, Green Papaya Art Projects Quezon City, Steve Eland, 24 Hr Art Darwin, University of Tasmania, Arts Tasmania, Australia Council for the Arts 24 hr art Darwin and Vergas Museum, University of the Philippines, curators Steve Eland and Norberto Roldan

Exhibited in Immemorial, Vergas Museum, University of the Philippines, October–November 2010 (group exhibition)

I started, about four years ago, seriously seeking knowledge about my foreign ancestors, meaning my non-Aboriginal ancestors – who seemed like strangers to me in my night. Each day for the past year I have added more to at least one of the ancestor’s files. There are so many now, too many to keep track of each of them. You go back and back and back, a compulsion. Many, it emerged, were Transported Ancestors. Were they bad to the bone, or victims of circumstance? How much was their one-way journey south, as felons, toward ‘Mr Archer’s’ residence for help, crying out ‘murder’. The witnesses to this version were local residents riding past, Mr William Brumby, James Brumby Jr and Mr James Thornloe. Dalrymple survived to give evidence on 8 August, three days after the above witnesses gave their account, to Magistrate Mulgrave in Launceston.

Dalrymple insisted that Mountgarrett had shot her by accident, stating in the above witnesses report that ‘the moon was out’, there was a tree in proximity, Mountgarrett was aiming at a possum whose body a ‘black boy’ removed just prior to the witnesses arrival – and hence their apparent misunderstanding of the event. The irony and art potential for the work rests in the fact that the non-Aboriginal witnesses present with some clarity their case against Mountgarrett for shooting Dalrymple, while a wounded Dalrymple herself manages to get charges against Mountgarrett dropped. The Aboriginal voice, so silenced in history, is here very fortunately heard; but ironically it relates a version that seems quite impossible, and appears in order to defend her master, though surely to protect herself.

In 2007 I was directed to this account. It is bound within nine volumes of Van Diemen’s Land records from the 1820s to 1861, held in the manuscripts section in the National Library of Australia. In 2009 I spent eight weeks in Canberra transcribing the volumes – 382,000 words from 3,300 pages. Dalrymple Briggs (c. 1806–1864) is my great-great-great-grandmother.

This artwork is also informed in part by ongoing research about the history and ‘property’ I pass when driving around Tasmania. The fence in this work relates the names of some of the most prominent early colonial Van Diemen’s Land properties that witnessed the removal of Aboriginal people from this island. More than fifty had the same name in 1830 when their owners took part in the ‘Black Line’ campaign to forcibly remove Aboriginal people, initially to the Tasman Peninsula. Two of my Aboriginal ancestors were exiled to Wybalenna on Flinders Island, while Dalrymple became a servant on what was later Brickendon near Longford—a major site of colonial tourism. This fence forms a room, the scale of which is typical of the bush hut of the period that Dalrymple ran from when shot. The original hut today stands on Woolmers Estate near Longford.

Walking through the work’s entrance the viewer/patient enters a rectangular room, inhabited with actual pages from the book The Fabrication of Aboriginal History. This text is shocking in its version of a Tasmanian history in which Aboriginal people were doomed due to negligible fault of the incoming British. A few steps further forward brings the viewer to a brick fireplace and wooden...
remarked:

young emigrant to his father on 11 September 1825

different. Even so, this case was 'dismissed'.

within the 'settled' districts was surrounded by

suggests why accounts involving Aboriginal people

between 1803 and 1830? This magistrate's report

did 5,000+ Tasmanian Aboriginal people disappear

leave evidence for this. How and to where then

because the written records (surprisingly?!) do not

in any significant number in Van Diemen's Land –

is uncertain. This published 'history book' offers a

agendas inevitably at work. Dalrymple, I believe,

reading between the lines to realise the hidden

of the past.

and determination to work with the obscurity and

nuance particular to time, place and authorship.

Rather they are slippery layers of meaning and

nuance particular to time, place and authorship.

Globalisation, whether colonial or post-colonial,

Today the Tasmanian apple industry is in crisis.

destroys the local. The dead apple tree emerging

from the cold hearth signifies in part the missing

dozens of Tasmanian Aboriginal children isolated as

servants in 1820s and 1830s Van Diemen's Land. To

date I can only find descendants from one of these – Dalrymple Briggs.

The title Forcefield denotes the public pressure to accept written histories as singular and factual. Rather they are slippery layers of meaning and nuance particular to time, place and authorship. Deliberate recordings sublimate and they shine a light on power and culpability, or lack of. What rests in the gaps between words is often our most useful history. Dalrymple's words do not ring true, but did she have any other choice than absolving her 'master' of her shooting? Many thanks to Hilton Redgrove for making the fireplace, Rob and Peter Clark of Ranelagh for this work that explores what ends and what begins.

Bothwell study 2010
embroidery and various found objects
six items: 111 × 160 cm (approx. installation area)
Exhibited in Preview 2010, Bett Gallery, Hobart, January 2010 (group exhibition)

Mine 2009
photograph of ancestor's coal mine, Alfred Collery, Sherwood Tasmania, coal necklace from floor: 170 × 0.10 cm
Exhibited in Coal, clay, water, wood, Mori Gallery, Sydney, curator Toni Warburton, July 2009 (group exhibition)

The Persistence of Culture 2009
possum pelts, kangaroo skin, eucalyptus, tea-tree, pine, black crow shells
collection of the artist
Exhibited in Returning, The Barn, Rosny, Tasmania, curator Gwen Egg, May 2009 and touring (group exhibition)

2009

Rivers Run 2009
16:9 video, silent, 40 min 55 sec
edited by Nancy Mauro-Flude
Exhibited in 5th BIENAL de Artes VENTOSUL, Curitiba, Brazil, August-November 2009 (group exhibition); River Effects: the waterways of Tasmania, Academy Gallery, Academy of the Arts, Launceston and Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, March–April 2011 (group exhibition)

Forcefield 2, 2010
bricks, apple tree, Tasmanian oak, book pages c. 2.9 x 2.5 x 7 m
Exhibited in Clemenger Award, National Gallery of Victoria, September 2009 – February 2010 (group exhibition)

Dark Valley, Van Diemen's Land 2009
Tasmanian coal on nylon on antlers on Tasmanian oak c.120 × 100 × 30 cm
collection of the Art Gallery of NSW

Also exhibited in Marcher sur la pelouse (Walk on the Grass), Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, curator Leigh Hobba, July–August 2009 (group exhibition)

What are the materials I should know about? What are the words I should speak? How do I work with what I know now and with what were once everyday? When such objects come together what do they register? The Persistence of Culture is a work that explores what ends and what begins when cultures come together. Tasmanian Aboriginal people named what newcomers brought. These words for change in the early 1800s included:

calamity (cat), parkutetenner (horse), parkutelenner (cat), parkunthawa (kangaroo dog), pleeerlar (dog), booooo (cattle), bar (sheep), leewunnar (clothes), mutenner (cap), leewumner (clothes), rattenner (shoes), parnter (pipe), piaaugum (cigarette), moogaga (dog), booooc (cat), bar (sheep), marcilhallerin (goat), kaetta (spaniel), legunthawa (kangaroo dog), pleerlar (cat), parkutetenner (horse), parkutelenner (horse)

a possum fur rug
an axe with shells
words for change
a boundary fence

To accept written history as it is presented, Uncritical 'reading' of records or histories provides
between the, in this case, obvious lines, is too easy. What are the materials I should know about? What do they register? The Persistence of Culture is a work that explores what ends and what begins when cultures come together. Tasmanian Aboriginal people named what newcomers brought. These words for change in the early 1800s included:

parnter (pipe), piaaugum (cigarette), moogaga (dog), booooc (cat), bar (sheep), marcilhallerin (goat), kaetta (spaniel), legunthawa (kangaroo dog), pleerlar (cat), parkutetenner (horse), parkutelenner (horse)
In July 1830, a raid on a Tasmanian Aboriginal campsite…

...Aboriginal people quickly took up new tools from flour, some bags of Ruddle, and a small quantity of waddies, and… a Drawing knife, pans of black 'Seventeen dogs, eighteen spears and as many... 


Kidnap Co-ordinates 2008
Tasmanian oak, cuttlefish bones, black crow shells, nine panels each measuring 46 × 73.4 × 5 cm collection of the artist

This work is about forced dislocation and relocation of Aboriginal women around the southern seaboard of Australia, and presents the latitude and longitude co-ordinates of nine places from or to where they were taken by sealers from the 1790s to the 1830s.

35°78′88.6″S 132°08′93.5″E Antechamber Bay, Kangaroo Island, South Australia

38°18′07″S 144°29′07″E Point Nepean, Victoria

34°53′40.6″S 118°20′2.3″E Robbins Island, Tasmania

40°27′S 148°04′E Preservation Island, Tasmania

Driving Black Home 2 2009
4.3 video, colour, silent, 3 hr 43 min 55 sec edited by Nancy Mauro-Flude edition of 10

Tasmanian Aboriginal people in 1804: approx. 5,000
Tasmanian Aboriginal people in 1832: approx. 250

This work is the result of transcribing the grantee and quantity of acreage in county locations of all... 

3,125 land grants distributed in Van Diemen's Land after 1842. I then filmed while driving through the various counties in which these grants are located. The time these grants take to scroll across the footage determined the length of the film, hence twelve hours of footage was edited to match the number of grants that move across the screen at c. 5 seconds: 3 hours, 43 minutes and 55 seconds in total.

Exhibited in TRUST, Clandendon House, Evandale, Tasmania, March 2009 (group exhibition)

2008

Aftermath
24 Hr Art Gallery, Darwin, 1 August – 5 September 2008 (solo exhibition)

Aftermath 2008
mixed media: tea-tree, timber, chairs, cuttlefish bones, soap, black crow shells, maps, charcoal c.2 × 2 × 4.3 cm

Bind 2008
Lomandra longifolia, black crow shells, antlers on Tasmanian oak 140 × 190 × 30 cm collection of Art Gallery of New South Wales

Dark Valley, Van Diemen's Land 2008
Tasmanian coal on nylon on antlers on Tasmanian oak c.120 × 100 × 30 cm collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales

The Wait 2008
Tasmanian black crow and king maireeners shells on brass on timber c.90 × 40 × 40 cm

Ransom 2008
Tasmanian coal on nylon on antlers on Tasmanian oak c.120 × 100 × 30 cm

Recount 2008
Tasmanian warrener shells and THRA (Tasmanian Historical Research Association) journals on fencin wire on fence c.144 × 430 × 15 cm

Fugitive History
Bett Gallery, Hobart, 11 March – 8 April 2008 (solo exhibition)

Exhibition images by Jack Bett
Fugitive History presents recent artworks about historic Tasmanian places and associated stories that are often obscured from the mainstream or everyday. These works gather together as trace evidence of what came before, what happened here. My aim is to offer for fresh reconsideration aspects of cryptic or unresolved histories that bring us to this point of dim memory. These objects and the repetitive actions that created them aim to trigger a rhythmic form of remembering of this island’s colonial-contact inheritance.

Collections of objects – spears, shelves, chairs, pins, coal, shells, wallpapers, people and place names – manifest in multiple my entrapment in the challengingly elusive past. The objects that make this exhibition – spears, straw wigs on wigs, coal on ropes, names, books – represent my own and my family’s, our waiting for our different, darker, Indigenous past to be rendered.

The works stir between the absences in the records and our presence in places and with people from the early 1800s that were not only tribal or remote. They consider different aspects of the impact of colonisation on the island – and by implication for my family: the change and loss of Indigenous language (Some words for change, 2008) and their Indigenous histories – here metaphorically concealed in the wrapped renderings of colonial wallpapers (Name Sakes, 2008). The coal necklaces Malahide (2008) and Kilkyloon (2008) originate from the Tasmanian shell necklace tradition, my own gap in missing the inheritance of that tradition in my immediate family, and how the provenance of colonisation – farming, hunting, mining – are in part responsible for this gap. Shells strung on wires present as abscusses to missing people and lost time (The Missing, 2008). The Wait, 2008, Head Count 2008, record fearful accounts of some incidents against Aboriginal people to 1831 are burnt into Tasmanian oak ‘books’ (Incident reports, 2008), and woodworking artefacts – tree sticks; they are not scraped of their nameplates at their gate posts provide us with all with a geographic key to reinterpret today the movements and alterations of our 1810–1835 ancestors, Indigenous or otherwise.

The purpose of an exhibition facilitates and quickens my ongoing research of difficult histories. None of the works present finite or fully comprehended stories; instead they offer me a means to register my own sitting at this moment in the search, the unravelling and slow comprehension of colonial contact. Tea-tree, coals and shells of the outdoor world are placed in this exhibition amid indoor furnishings to provide a key or coda to deciphering our furtive histories in the real. Our shared pasts linger as accessible amid hills and along old roadways of this island as in the texts of the library and archive. To read either well the other is required.

Acknowledgements: This project was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. The exhibition at the Australian National Gallery to: Koennaad G; Dean Chatwin; Ben B; Luke Wagner; Lola and Rex; Allan D; D & C Hennassey; Tony Marshall; and the Tasmaniana Library. The Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of NSW and Michael Leich; Frank V; Bea Chapman and Woolmers Estate; Bev Roberts and Entally House; Cornwall Wall; Irene S; Sean Kelly; Ad Art; Len L

Name Sakes 2008
Tasmanian oak shelves holding mystery objects wrapped in reproduced wallpaper patterns from 1850-80s with the names of corresponding colonial properties gold-leafed onto the shell, 50 x 250 x 175 cm collection of the artist

The Simultaneous Effort 2008
embroidered doiley on blackwood tray 36 x 60 x 3.5 cm private collection

...But it is in vain to expect that the country can be freed from the incursions of the savage tribes which now infest it, unless the settlers themselves come forward and zealously unite their best energies with those of the government in making such a general and simultaneous effort as the occasion demands.

Enclosure No. 4
Govt. Order # 9
Colonial Secretary’s Office
Van Diemen’s Land
September 9, 1830

URL: http://www.law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial_case_law/tas/cases/case_index/1830/notices_concerning_aborigines/notice_4_1830

The Wait 2008
found chair, brass rods with black crow and minaire shells 85.5 x 42 x 43 cm private collection

Also exhibited in unDisclosed – 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, curator Carly Lane, May–July 2012 (group exhibition); Redlands Prize, Mosman Gallery, New South Wales, November–December 2009 (group exhibition)

Head Count 2008
found chair with brass rods and black crow shells 85.5 x 42 x 43 cm private collection

Some words for change 2008
tea-tree sticks, paper, plastic and wax installed c.288 x 60 x 50 cm collection of the artist

Some Tasmanian Aboriginal children living with non-Aboriginal people before 1840 2008
found chair with burnt tea-tree sticks installed c.288 x 60 x 50 cm collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Also exhibited in unDisclosed – 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, curator Carly Lane, May–July 2012 (group exhibition)

This artwork contains part of me and my family. We come from Aboriginal people removed from Country and family in Van Diemen’s Land from the early 1800s. This isolation is a difficult feeling to represent. It is also difficult to overcome in terms of reuniting with other Aboriginal families and communities who were not separated from each other. Lately it is becoming more bearable by renegotiating those times to try to find what happened to all of the missing Aboriginal children who were living with non-Aboriginal people in Tasmania up to 1840. I compiled over the past decade a list of 209 children, including one of my ancestors and her two sisters. I am now trying to piece together their lives, their locations, their longevity. Some of these children are perpetually aged ten and I fear that they never did grow up, while others over the time of research have grown up, moved to other parts of Australia and raised families, only in the last generation conversing about what became of them, and what happened to them since the 1820s. This artwork consists of unfinished tea-tree ‘spears’ held within the framework of an old chair, whose legs are burnt. The chair is fastened, uncannily, halfway up a wall-face. The chair holds the children captive, but together, united. The chair might represent home for some, but is here present as a space with almost lion-taming in its desperate rendition of domestication, of control. When Aboriginal children and women were taken in the first few years post-colonisation of Van Diemen’s Land, family and parents returned to burn stockkeeper’s huts. Fire was the weapon, the marker of fury and retribution. Things did not end well. These spears are raw tea-tree sticks; they are not scraped of bark, their ends are not burnt nor honed to a fine point. They are not mature, but they promise that possibility. They are the children in the promise of becoming. These spears each have a section peeled away to reveal...
the bare wood into each of which I have burnt the name of one of these lost children. This work holds the shadow of about one-third of the children I am seeking. Little is recorded about them; more is traceable about where they lived and who they lived with. Current work of mapping their locations and dates provides some little comfort in realising that although these children were far from family and Country, they were often mile after mile after mile in proximity to each other, on adjacent ‘properties’. So perhaps then, at least, they had contact with each other. The unofficial underground network of news-bringing across colonial Tasmania, by which convicts, stockmen and sealers passed information, may have also been accessed by and for these children. I have some evidence for this and seek more.

Also exhibited in undisclosed – 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, curator Carly Lane, May–July 2012 (group exhibition); Redlands Prize, Mosman Gallery, New South Wales, November–December 2009 (group exhibition)

Kidnapped 2007 ink on plaster lead shot and wooden box on shelf 23 x 25 x 17 cm private collection

Black-line properties 2008 tea-tree spears with paint on timber 94 x 196 x 7 cm collection of Janet Holmes à Court

Malahide 2008 Fingal Valley coal necklace on dropped Northern Midlands antlers 200 x 133 x 35 cm collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia

My making of strung coal necklaces refers in part to the Tasmanian shell necklace tradition, of not only the Aboriginal dead, but the lost, those unnamed, those who were not able to be born – following the arrival of ever-increasing numbers of newcomers from mostly England, Scotland, and Ireland. What is missing is then not only people, but stories and connections that in some cases can be rebuilt, to places and skills, to knowledge. But can a sense of safety be rebuilt on this island homeland that protected us from the outside world for 10,000 years, and then entrapped us with those that wanted us gone, and worked at it, one by one, ten by ten, until we were, for a while, silent or gone?

Witness 2007 found chair, wood, papers with ink on goat veilum installation c.180 x 350 x 35 cm collection of the artist

Incident reports 2008 commissioned Tasmanian oak bookshelf, tea-tree sticks, burnt Tasmanian oak 240 x 90 x 19 cm private collection

The Missing 2008 burnt tea-tree stick ladder with steel rods and warrenner shells 190 x 48 x 35 cm private collection

Sometime between the 1790s and the 1830s, over only forty years, most Tasmanian Aboriginal people, perhaps 5,000, mysteriously disappeared. That is the way that the historical reports and the school books present our story of being reduced to a few families, mostly living in exile in Bass Strait islands. Some writers even blame us for our demise. ‘Doomed to extinction’ is a common way for the users to think about, face and manage the aftermath. This artwork is about the missing, not only the Aboriginal dead, but the lost, those unnamed, those who were not able to be born – following the arrival of ever-increasing numbers of newcomers from mostly England, Scotland, and Ireland. What is missing is then not only people, but stories and connections that in some cases can be rebuilt, to places and skills, to knowledge. But can a sense of safety be rebuilt on this island homeland that protected us from the outside world for 10,000 years, and then entrapped us with those that wanted us gone, and worked at it, one by one, ten by ten, until we were, for a while, silent or gone?

The Chase 2008 found leatherette chase lounge, steel pins, burnt tea-tree 97 x 182 x 53 cm collection of the National Gallery of Australia

This work is a well-worn chase impressed with a text made from tens of thousands of pins. Each word took twelve to fifteen minutes to make. The text reads:

The Hobart Town Courier, Saturday 27 November 1800.

Two of the aborigines who have been living so long at Mr Robinson’s on the North Road absconded this morning, after divesting themselves entirely of the clothing given to them and which they had so long worn. They were apparently getting accustomed to the mode of living of the white people and could speak English. Many of the inhabitants of New Town were in the habit of stopping at the door and talking to them. They were encountered in the bush by two bough makers, one a cripple, who succeeded in taking them. The blacks made every effort to escape. Several persons at work in the bush fled at the sight of them. Nothing can tame them.

The chase is a common item in Hobart antique stores and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery usually exhibits at least one of its famed colonial chaises, as does the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston. This furniture item represents the gambit comfort of the upper classes ‘settling’ into an anticipated colonised Van Diemen’s Land. This chase is modified with burnt tea-tree
She was sold for one guinea to sealer John Thomas by her ‘partner’ of seventeen years, George Briggs. Apparently in England until about the 1830s wives could be sold at market, especially if both the wife and husband wanted this. This practice was frowned upon from the late 1700s, but sealers’ lives were separate in time and space than the guinea. The guinea had been replaced from the major unit of currency in 1816 in the ‘Great Recoinage’ by the pound and by a coin called a sovereign. But in Bass Strait the guinea was still tendered, to the end of the 1820s or even later. The guinea most likely to have been used to buy Woretemoeteyenner would be the George the Third spade guinea of c. 1795, minted on about the year of her birth. This artwork is about the frustration, anxiety and anger that I carry about those times. I am like this closed book; this story is in me, but it is hard to comprehend and interpret those frontier times when information today is so scarce and cryptic.

Some words for change 2007

Think about this. You and your parents and their parents and so on had been living on this island a long time, as good as forever. We know what happened because it happened to us, here: something unbelievable, an attempted erasure in a span of thirty years. Any Tasmanians whose ancestors were here pre-1831 were involved somehow, with varying degrees (or not) of separation, with removal of Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples from this island to Bass Strait. From that period of contact and conflict remain clues in language and in print of Aboriginal efforts to understand and incorporate what had arrived, and non-Aboriginal unwillingness to accommodate. These words for change reveal not only what kind of new things were arriving here, but also, in our haunted state of retrospect, they outline what was promised for those observing. Place is tenacious; it always eventually reveals its history. This work is a kind of land poem about change and the irony of how silence can become its opposite.

untitled 2008

This work is a collaboration of two artists. The book is fixed shut by the words printed on paper tape. SHE WAS SOLD FOR ONE GUINEA. This brief sentence refers to an event in the life of one of my ancestors, Woretemoeteyenner, daughter of Mannalargenna, a significant leader of the Oyster Bay people, was born around 1765 and died in 1847 at Dunorlan in north Tasmania. A tribal Trawlwoolway woman from Cape Portland, north-east Tasmania, Woretemoeteyenner spent the last six years of her life with her daughter, Dalrymple Johnson (née Briggs) and family after spent the last six years of her life with her daughter, Portland, north-east Tasmania, Woretemoeteyenner. A tribal Trawlwoolway woman from Cape Portland, north-east Tasmania, Woretemoeteyenner was born around 1795 and died in 1847 at Dunorlan in north Tasmania. Some words for change 2007

Think about this. You and your parents and their parents and so on had been living on this island a long time, as good as forever. We know what happened because it happened to us, here: something unbelievable, an attempted erasure in a span of thirty years. Any Tasmanians whose ancestors were here pre-1831 were involved somehow, with varying degrees (or not) of separation, with removal of Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples from this island to Bass Strait. From that period of contact and conflict remain clues in language and in print of Aboriginal efforts to understand and incorporate what had arrived, and non-Aboriginal unwillingness to accommodate. These words for change reveal not only what kind of new things were arriving here, but also, in our haunted state of retrospect, they outline what was promised for those observing. Place is tenacious; it always eventually reveals its history. This work is a kind of land poem about change and the irony of how silence can become its opposite.
A work with others in a gallery domain – a location today, more often than not, bound to challenge and question the routine status quo.

Archives and libraries, on the other hand, discourage interaction, discussion, debate. Most insist on silence in a domain of sanctity. Rows of microfilm machines become intimate spaces where the unspoken rule is not to perceive the histories that others are unearthing from their reals. There the past stays more a private than a ‘foreign country’, as Lowenthal described it. In this seclusion, given histories maintain the power and status that inscribed them into text in the first place.

People come to rely on particular versions of the past on which to graft their own story. They have a stake in its maintenance. It is nurtured. If cracks appear, invaders become conquerors – finding other myths more difficult to dispel or dispute to replay as their national story. The past then becomes the only companion of the majority. Hence the authorised version of Australian history has often been the only accessible one. Written until recently by the victors – the invaders and conquerors – the interpretation of Indigenous history in Australia is dogged by the lack of Indigenous voices from which to draw fresh or fairer conclusions about frontier life.

My aim is to review cross-cultural interactions from often almost two centuries ago. I want to understand what happened to my family then, which brought us all, nationally, now to this point of dysfunction. To do so I must become detective, archaeologist and conversationalist. Understanding human behaviour is more relevant where barriers, force, force structures, or artists, to chart their way through to new, mobile strategies of exchange. With scant evidence comes the need to broaden areas of investigation and processes, towards often unexpected outcome. Comparative analysis, site visits, recognising and observing parallel episodes repeated in the present offers worthwhile perspective.

The fresh approach of investigative arts about time-gone results in work about narrative, site, inheritance, individual culpability. Such inquiry aims to respect what is usually omitted or erased and can increase the field of historical research by revealing how gaps are not in fact silent after all. Working with fragmentary pasts reveals as much about the researcher/artist as those under scrutiny. The artist discloses by each decision and corresponding fiction on their closeness to the edge of invention – an uneasy proximity that many historians conceal about their process. The slippery path of re-enactment is fragile in terms of ethical responsibility towards previous generations unable to present their own case.

Negotiation of cryptic, unresolved and even dissatisfyingly truncated histories can, once re-imagined into art, yield fresh light about individuals, interactions and episodes often avoided once past. Historical fragments are clues greater than the sum of their parts. While fractured, reconstructed histories raise potential for unstable and self-aware versions of our histories to be given ground. The roles of histories and changing history and its dissemination are afforded recognition in contemporary cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary investigations. Unresolved stories don’t provide the gist needed for nationalistic myth-building but they do provide the freedom to consider beyond the expected parameters of current nation construction. Despite mainstream conventions, many one-track histories plaguing Australian school texts are revisited and scrutinised in the creative arts. These are accounts taken back, revisited often by descendants of original participants and perpetrators, then given a place back: in time, site, motion, dimension, cultural interconnection. Art is ideal for this task; for the artist has been historically expected and allocated the role to undertake, illustrate, interrogate what others can’t or won’t face and articulate.

The artist is often a collector, of materials, narratives and techniques that require endless replication: of brushstrokes, etched lines, fastening, tying, forming from pieces to sections, towards an entire scope that echoes the ‘real’. Installation art sometimes works to intercept a story and revive it in a simulated space always avoiding its life in time, and taken me to encounter with an audience. Repetition of motion, objects, words can reflect a kind of desire to stay with something, to not leave it behind. There is coming and confinement in endlessly replaying the past. Repetition of a material or technique in an installation also replicates and mirrors how a story emerges from scant source to work on an artist’s mind until picked up and reworked. The past is a loose thread to tug at, pull forth and perhaps [almost, best leaving the trail of visitation evident. Art becomes a shadow version; challenging but not life-threatening.

The process of making the artwork The Ranger is sensorial and responsive to elements as they present themselves and work with each other. Space, materials, techniques and sequencing will together form a structure reminiscent of The Ranger’s Hut. The composition is about position; viewing through time the almost imperceptible, navigating terrain without the appropriate maps, keeping mobile, looking about in all directions. Both maker and viewer are to be cast into this site as occupant and voyeur, hidden and hunted. Each step of the making/viewing process should factor a considered apprehension of our various histories.

The site of art is never benign but brings its own past, its alliances and audience. Working within a university gallery setting offers interaction with departments and individuals otherwise not easily available to an independent artist or art gallery space. The aura of authority that prevails in an institution is useful in terms of an artist being able to challenge or critique the centre from within, rather than from the margins.

King Island in Bass Strait, situated between Tasmania and Victoria, provided, during three visits over the past two years, many fragmentary stories adding to a most compelling site of Australian history – that of interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. As a descendant of frontier ‘conquest’, my process is to work back and forth from them to me, reviewing events, settings, human behaviour and the seemingly incidental events that still mark present lives.

Generosity of people in the present opens the widest door to the past. Christian and Robyn especially, among many others on King Island, have provided stories, insights into its places I would not have visited alone. Previously, King Island was known to me only from maps as an island from which an ancestor from Tasmania, Woretemoeteyenner, was taken in 1825 on a sealing expedition that lasted two years and reached as far as Mauritius. Today this island has become a daily site for my reflection, perhaps more so in my absence. The distance of time and space can work as the same thing, creating a form of longing where destination becomes irrevocably distant, and memory works to repetitively reconstruct sites as navigable.

King Island has hosted events of national significance. The French and British argued there politely about conquest and colonisation, extinct megafauna surfaces from dry swamp beds, the more recently extinguished King Island emu emerges to haunt islanders, reminding of fragile ecosystems. More than sixty shipwrecks, including many during King Island, washing to shore evidence of human endeavours and frailty:


These wrecks raise no doubt of the potential for the past to return, periodically, to incrementally increase the material and conceptual ability to understand what has gone before. King Island history has made most manifest to me the significance of the sea highways, currently redundant but once an everyday part of historical consciousness. The paths of human movement, settlement, patterns of interaction, trade and lifestyle in Australia today are, in many instances, consequences of the legacies of those ancestral journeys.

One of the most elusive and interesting stories offered to me on King Island this past year was that


of The Ranger. The Ranger was an Aboriginal woman, most likely a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman, who lived alone on King Island during the 1830s and 1840s and possibly earlier. John Scot, a sealer who also lived concurrently on the island from at least 1826 to his death by drowning in 1843, named her ‘The Ranger’. No other name or history is clearly recorded for this woman, yet many of the sealers’ identities endure, many surnames still inherited include:

Allen, Anderson, Bailey, Baket, Bates, Beedon, Bligh, Briggs, Brown, Cooper, Day, Dodson, Dumbus, Foster, Gamble, Harrington, Hapthev, Hapthev, Howell, Johnson, Kirby, McKenzie, McMillan, Marcel, Maynard, Meredith, Mia, Morgan, Morrison, Munro, Myer, Parish, Peterson, Proctor, Raw, Riddle, Robinson, Scott, Scott, Slack, Smith, Starke, Sturgellen, Thomas, Thompson, Tomlin, Tucker, Williams...

The Ranger was taken at an unknown time, from an unknown place (likely north-west or east Tasmania) by an unknown sealer to King Island where, for possibly longer than a decade, she lived alone strenuously avoiding the company of Scot and other men, and it appears people in general. This behaviour was wise. In June 1831 a sealer named Robert Gamble told George Augustus Robinson, the government-appointed conciliator of the sealers, that the sealer Robert Knight had been murdered on King Island by a blow to the head by a tomahawk in order to obtain his two Tasmanian Aboriginal women recently or currently seeking rapidly diminishing seals. However, by the passages with sealers between rocky island shores and sometimes their dogs – often never returning holding firm, avoiding contact, which might describe the mobility of The Ranger on land in the late three decades of the nineteenth century, across the entire southern seaboard of Australian waters, of the hundreds of Aboriginal women captured by mostly British sealers and taken across to their Country and families. The Ranger is managed the Palawa Karni language program.

1830, George Augustus Robinson managed the Palawa Karni language program.

8 These names were collated from Plomley and Henley, ‘The sealers of Bass Strait and the Cape Barren Island community’. Please note the spelling of these names is however they were first written by George Augustus Robinson and his contemporaries upon meeting these women in the early 1830s. Palawa Karni, the contemporary grammar and spelling of Tasmanian Aboriginal language words, presents these names in entirely different letters. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre manages the Palawa Karni language program.


8 Plomley, F. A. M. and Henley, K. A., ‘The sealers of Bass Strait and the Cape Barren Island community’. Please note the spelling of these names is however they were first written by George Augustus Robinson and his contemporaries upon meeting these women in the early 1830s. Palawa Karni, the contemporary grammar and spelling of Tasmanian Aboriginal language words, presents these names in entirely different letters. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre manages the Palawa Karni language program.

Some of our women kidnapped by sealers

interrupted – renditions of unresolved accounts

Turner Galleries, Perth, Western Australia

August 2007

interrupted – renditions of unresolved accounts

a. she was sold for one guinea
b. shard (king island 2006)
c. paddle/ spear
d. hide
e. kangaroo island sealing camps
f. some of our women kidnapped by sealers
g. king island sealing camps

witness 2007

chair, timber, paper, goat hide, ink

variable dimensions

collection of the artist

unintended interventions 2007

wood, canvas, acrylic paint

198 × 190 × 200 cm

collection of the artist

bad language 2 2007

series of nine screen prints, each 594 × 420 mm

printer: James Bryans, Perth, Western Australia

edition of 10

this work is based on 25 May 2007 when the day bill (advertising poster) for the Australian newspaper, then plastered across Melbourne, announced: ‘Aborigines must learn English’. entirely disturbed, i responded by collating accounts of Tasmanian Aboriginal people calling out / speaking back at non-Aboriginal people in English, not in 2003, but in the 1820s in Van Diemen’s land. upon arriving in Perth in July 2007, i determined to print this series about how English has successfully been used by Tasmanian Aboriginal people through time to communicate with clarity.

also exhibited in evolving identities: contemporary Indigenous art, John Curtin Gallery, 13 May – 6 July 2011 (group exhibition)

sentence (ancestor) 2007

wood (dismantled chair), pyrography, soap

41 × 391 × 4 cm (x, y, z), 13 pieces

collection of artpark

sentence (ancestor) 2007

was created to present some of the life story of one of my maternal ancestors, Woretemoeteyenner, who was born in about 1795 in north-eastern Tasmania. She passed away in 1847. I keep finding more and more partial information about her life that seems increasingly shocking and also shows this woman’s great resilience. These stories are embedded within much longer accounts held in archives and libraries from journals of missionaries, birth, death, baptism and shipping records, magistrate’s reports, and commander’s reports from Flinders Island.

i determined to draw out some of these passages, inscribing them pyrographically, burning them into pieces of a disarticulated chair. The pieces, separated, still promise the potential to be rebuilt. The fragments remind me of furniture that, regularly and quasi-s skeletal, was washed into shores in southern waters throughout the nineteenth century, warning people of fresh shipwrecks. This work is a rendition of my own attempted reading across this distance of time, of the life of someone important to me. Embedded into the chair’s texts is soap, in part a material that links Woretemoeteyenner’s daughter, Dalrymple, to my own grandmother – remembering how hard Aboriginal women have worked over many generations in service to non-Aboriginal people, amidst situations of loss, violence and secrecy.

i am slowly, over my own lifetime, increasingly understanding Woretemoeteyenner’s life. Each fragment of information augments with time spent in her and my traditional Country, Tebrikunna, in north-east Tasmania. Visiting her places is giving me limited, valued insight, not only into this person and her children’s lives, but also frontier conflict and contact in the early and mid-1800s in Van Diemen’s land. Woretemoeteyenner lived necessarily across two cultures. two of her children managed – perhaps with skills and insights inherited from their mother – to not only survive, but to give us, their descendants six or more generations later, great pride in our heritage and a determined responsibility to not forget them. The statements burnt into the furniture are:

she was sold for one guinea

she was taken more than 10 thousand miles over 2 years on at least 5 vessels

she witnessed the sinking of ‘the margaret’

she was then renamed margaret by a government agent

she was incarcerated by the government for 11 years for no crime

she had already been captive for 20 years to men beyond the law

her daughter had been a servant since baptism

her daughter was shot at aged 12 by her ‘master’ – apparently mistaken for a possum

her daughter, when herself a mother, wrote to the government requesting her mother’s release from internment to her

her ancestors had lived in australia for thousands of generations

she died aged about 50 having lived most of her life in enforced exile from her children, family and her own country

Musselroe Bay

Gallery Gabrielle Pipizi, Melbourne, Victoria, 6–31 March 2007 (solo exhibition)

places hold memories of who has lived there, in themselves and for those who come after. Musselroe Bay on the tip of north-east Tasmania is part of my traditional Country. Mt William National Park adjacent to Musselroe Bay is my retreat – a place where even a mobile phone won’t work and where layers of time peel away...only interrupted by the summer intrusion of an eco-tourism venture, daily, like clockwork, walking ten visitors along these Bay of Fires beaches for a ‘wilderness experience’ plus the likelihood of aeroplanes landing regularly. Last year the local Dorset Council approved 1,900 hectares of Musselroe Bay to be developed into an eco-tourist resort comprising a ‘100-room resort, 320 accommodation units, eco-tourism activities,
conference facilities, airstrip and an 18-hole links-style golf course. Many dozens of Aboriginal women, our forebears, were kidnapped from this coast by sealers during the first thirty years of the 1800s, including one of my ancestors and many relatives. Today the region beyond the National Park is fairly barren, overgrazed for several generations. Musselroe Bay is not only a region, but also a sleepy fishing shack town, with a phone box and no shop, now being bought up by those who can afford a weekender. This exhibition brings together, in different mediums, stories that interrelate for me, particularly in terms of north-east Tasmania – disturbance, removal, and return.

2007

Some words for change – moogara (dog), boooo (cattle), bar (sheep), parkutetenner (horse), parrenner (axe), wetuppenner (fence)

private collection

50 × 50 cm

timber

black crow (nerite) shells in cuttlefish bones on timber

private collection

50 × 50 cm

timber

black crow (nerite) shells in cuttlefish bones on timber

private collection

50 × 50 cm

canvas

kelp and whale bone on canvas

private collection

91 × 198 cm

canvas

graphite and carbon on calico, bull kelp, linen thread

private collection

46 × 46 cm

canvas

Evil Dead 2007

inkjet print, edition of 10, framed in Tasmanian oak

1/10, collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania

Song 1845 2007

shells and linen thread on Tasmanian oak

52 × 54 cm

private collection

Time keepers 2007

found, ground santhorrhiza (blackboy) gum resin, japan stain, shellac, floor seal on Tasmanian oak, bull kelp on tea-tree spindles, playing card

variable dimensions

collection of the artist

Power tool 1 2007

ground oxides and charcoal on ground cuttlefish bone on canvas

112 × 86.5 cm

private collection

Kelp water carrier – My country is out of my price range 2007

Eucalyptus from burnt ground, bull kelp, tea-tree shavings, real estate adverts

202 × 60 cm

variable dimensions

collection of the artist

Black and Blue (Her Master’s Voice) 2007

carbon on calico, bull kelp, linen thread

91 × 198 cm

collection of the artist

Cried all the day 2007

graphite and carbon on dyed calico

91 × 198 cm

collection of the artist

Some of our women kidnapped by sealers 2007

inkjet print, edition of 10, framed in Tasmanian oak

83 × 119 cm

1/10, collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania

Lost ground 2007

acrylic polymer on digital print on canvas, tea-tree wood

110 × 210 cm

variable dimensions

collection of the artist

The weeping song 2007

oil and oil pencil on paper, canvas, found ground beach oxides on tea-tree sticks

117 × 150 cm – paper size

variable dimensions

collection of the artist

Dirty dozer 2007

oil, pastel, Lomandra, black crows (nerites) on Tasmanian oak

56 × 56 cm

private collection

The soothing song 2007

oil and oil pencil on canvas, tea-tree wood

110 × 210 cm

private collection

We ran/ I am 2007

Bad Language 2 2007


Forcefield 2007

dead apple tree, bricks, copy of 1825 magistrate’s report (NLA ms3251), timber, pages from The Fabrication of Aboriginal History

Exhibited in Thresholds of Tolerance, Australian National University, School of Art Gallery, Canberra, curators David Williams and Caroline Turner, 2007 (group exhibition)

It has been a great challenge to arrive and create a new installation artwork in nine days, stay at Australian National University (ANU), I arrived with a vision of a dead tree in a fireplace, the anomaly of the cold heart of a home instead of what a fireplace should be: warmth, comfort, memories, security. I also had in mind to present a history book. I personally detest in another manner than the accreditation a bookstore or bookshelf accrords.

During this trip to Canberra I had a strong desire to visit the Manuscripts section in the National Library of Australia (NLA) in order to view an original magistrate’s report from 1825, having only previously seen the transcribed version. This report presents two witnesses’ accounts to the aftermath of an attack, and the later version of the casualty. The seven-page handwritten document reveals that one of my Aboriginal ancestors in Tasmania, Dalrymple Briggs, was shot at by the fairly notorious Dr Jacob Mountgarrett when she was twelve years of age and a ‘native’ servant to him. Dalrymple survived and, two weeks after the event, was summoned to Launceston to present her account to a magistrate. There she stated that her “master” was shooting at a possum and mistakenly shot her, directly contradicting the witnesses’ account. I don’t believe her version; I think she was under pressure from Mountgarrett to clear him of this charge.

I have fixed copies of the original magistrate’s report onto the wooden mantelpiece above the cold brick fireplace. It is smaller than real size and hence difficult to read, but it is possible to be read by those who really wish to and can spend the time – a commitment to understanding; hidden history. I haven’t provided the typed version; it seems too easy to offer it verbatim to anyone. It is close and personal for me and my family, a link across ever-lengthening time to Dalrymple. To reach the mantelpiece the viewer has to cross the floor papered with the ‘history’ book, The Fabrication of Aboriginal History, that targets Tasmanian Aborigines as makers of their own demise, and not, in any significant number (whatever that might mean), deliberately removed, poisoned, shot, or otherwise purposefully harmed by the incoming British through the first half of the nineteenth century. This version is fanciful, relying only on written evidence that, of course, paints those who really wish to and can spend the time –...
on the floor. By walking to the fireplace the viewer will blacken and erase this text on the floor that so desperately misinterprets my history and culture. The space made by the book pages closely approximates the scale of the main room in the cottage from which Dalrymple fled ten months after she was shot. The papers were glued to the floor with clag – flour and water paste. Flour is also significant to Aboriginal people in Tasmania, for flour was known to have been laced with poison on occasion, and flour drums held traps.

The tree in the fireplace is an old apple tree from Pelliago, one of sixty that was about to be shipped to make way for native plants. Tasmania was marketed as The Apple Isle, a delightful holiday destination for generations of Australians before overseas flights. For me the apple tree is also emblematic for the onset of colonisation. Captain Bligh, who transported breadfruit around the globe, also planted the first apple tree in Tasmania, on Bruny Island. Bruny D’Entrecasteaux’s expedition planted and gifted to Tasmanian Aborigines an entire French vegetable garden in D’Entrecasteaux Channel, southern Tasmania – it failed. By their next expedition they could hardly find it.

The title Forcefield notes the pressure to accept written history as singular and factual, when it rather holds layers of meaning and nuance particular to time, place and authorship. Deliberate recordings are about substantiation, power and culpability, or lack of Dalrymple’s words do not ring true – but did she have any other option than absolving her master of her shooting?

A shadow walked past me when I was gluing the pages onto the floor through the night just before the exhibition opening. It was a possum, live and curious. It walked calmly into the ANU gallery at 11.30 pm past me and stopped near the beginning of the book. I looked at me, up at the tree, at the pages, and it did a kind of quiet turn on the pages of the book. It looked at me, up at the tree, at the Tasmanian History Readers – the trousers, the running. Issued to Aboriginal people in the early 1800s, the clothing is a visual reminder of the removal of people from their environment. Wearing the seven trousers and embedding them with the earths of those places they became joint witnesses to my present and our past experiences of trying to live in our Country post-invasion. Current frustrations with tourism and eco-expansion across north-east Tasmania encouraged me to undertake this, expressing the emotion of being compressed into event/inner ‘land parcels’. The stress of hiding in dunes to avoid daily eco-tourists in summer on traditional Country is the shadow Other piece within this work. The run, part performative, was reclamation of place, a realisation of history on the run. Heavy breathing and achy muscles made me feel more alive than ever.

**First exhibited in An Other Place, Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, curator Stan Kelly, 2007 (group exhibition); New Acquisitions, Devonport Regional Gallery, Tasmania, 2007 (group exhibition)**

Conjunction and disruption of place through time inspired this work that connects past and present by the action of me running at seven self-selected places from the innumerable sites where the 1830 ‘Black Line’ ‘military operations against the Natives of Van Dieman’s Land’ took place across Tasmania: Bothwell, Lake Sorell, Campbell Town, Richmond, Prosser Bay (Orford), Waterloo Point (Swanseae) and St Patrick’s Head. The ‘Black Line’ was officially designed unsuccessful because only a purported two Aboriginal people were captured. However, the result of the campaign, alongside the preceding thirty years of attempted eradication of my ancestors, resulted in the vagaries of my extended family and myself. Distrustful of any one version of the past, survival has come from an ability to sinue or defiantly accommodate change; mobilisation prevented capture or erasure of identity. Humour, double entendre and codified meanings are everyday means of interacting with the world, finding those like-minded, like-cultured with whom to make meaning afresh.

By running at these places, an overlay was attempted whereby various historical captures and escapes were replayed and reprocessed. Robinson's journal entry delivered the medium and momentum of the work – the trousers, the running. Issued to Aboriginal people in the early 1800s, the clothing is a visual reminder of the removal of people from their environment. Wearing the seven trousers and embedding them with the earths of those places they became joint witnesses to my present and our past experiences of trying to live in our Country post-invasion. Current frustrations with tourism and eco-expansion across north-east Tasmania encouraged me to undertake this, expressing the emotion of being compressed into event/inner ‘land parcels’. The stress of hiding in dunes to avoid daily eco-tourists in summer on traditional Country is the shadow Other piece within this work. The run, part performative, was reclamation of place, a realisation of history on the run. Heavy breathing and achy muscles made me feel more alive than ever.

**Strait-on-Share, March–April 2007**

Ex-haberdashery and clothes store installation, Currie, King Island Community Art Project with the King Island Community.

**Exhibited in Strait on Share, collaborative art project with King Island Community, 10 Days on the Island Festival – Tasmania, Currie shop, King Island, 2007, co-ordinated by Sally Marsden (group exhibition)**

**Urban ArboREAL, City Hall Gallery Town Hall, Melbourne, curator David Hansen, 2007 (group exhibition)**

See: **Regeneration 2005**


**A Half Hour Hidden History Reader 2007**

alttered book (The Tasmanian History Readers 4, Royal School Series, Education Department, Hobart): collage and hand writing on white paint over existing text 21.3 x 15.7 x 2 cm collection of the State Library of Queensland

Exhibited in Lessons in History: Volume 1, Grahame Gallery, Brisbane, curator Noreen Grahame, 2007 (group exhibition); Library – Altered Books, Artspace Mackay, curator Michael Wardell, 4 September – 25 October 2009 and touring 2010 (group exhibition)

**Indigenous Responses to Colonialism: Another Story, Adelaide Festival Centre, 2007 (group exhibition)**

Font, Central TAFE Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, 2007 (group exhibition)

For images see: see: **The Greens auction. Helen Maxwell Gallery, Canberra, 2007 (group exhibition)**

**70% Urban, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2007 (group exhibition)**

**Locus 2006**

Tasmanian tea-tree, cuttlefish bone, paper 4 x 5 x 5 m Biennale of Sydney 2006

Commissioned by Biennale of Sydney, Pier 2/3, Walsh’s Bay, Sydney, curator Charles Merewether, 2006 (group exhibition)

Images by Adrian Lander

**Locus was constructed from a conglomerate of materials and forms that have shaped me. A forest of tea-tree sticks, a roller coaster, a giant slide formation, a mound of cuttlefish, a saw, a midden, a coastline, the sea currents and star systems, the blink of an eye. These elements merged to represent the places and stories that impact on my everyday.**

The point of juncture, especially between past/present, offered me practical ways to inculcate and
make sense of my childhood raised beside a noisy amusement park, and of my maternal Indigenous ancestors. I draw ancestry on coastal north-eastern Tasmania, amid tea-tree and she-oak and brilliant night skies.

The wooden slide rose up from the thicket, providing impromptu entry for the canoe that is fixed in time in its slope. The canoe is me, the slide my life journey, and on it I am transfixed at this point in life heading into the tea-tree coastal scrub of my past and future, Tasmania. I have constructed myself into this work, on some kind of surreal ride that, in turn, has also formed me; my childhood spent near Luna Park St Kilda ensured my peculiar sense of humour.

Incidents provided by Luna Park have contributed to the construction of a new life, caused by my great-grandmother breaking both legs on the wooden slide, brings more sense of sorts to the instinctively accumulated bones of cuttlefish mounted beneath the slide reconstruction. Making physical renditions of how we create ourselves from our own and inherited stories interests me; figuring ways to render distinct sometimes blurred and disassociated personal and public memories is an ongoing process. Regular motifs in my work include a sense of transition, mobility, unease, living between various personal and public memories is an ongoing process. Materials incorporated are often ‘natural’ outdoor found objects combined with household domestic goods; in this instance, tea-tree and cuttlefish with book pages. I am excited to connect often dry texts with intuitive physical transitions, mobility, unease, living between various personal and public memories is an ongoing process.

Senses of Place, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 2006 (group exhibition)
Me-bay 2005
digital print on canvas
77 × 106 cm
private collection

Raft 2005
driftwood, Lomandra longifolia
185 × 63 × 15 cm
private collection

Transmitting Device 2005
Lomandra longifolia, limpets
40 × 25 × 25 cm
private collection

Lifebearer 2005
beach found pumice, brass wire, driftwood
100 × 60 × 34 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Drift 2005
driftwood, nylon
130 × 90 × 20 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Seam 2005
beach found coal, nylon, driftwood
130 × 90 × 15 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

I like to think about what it means for me to make
necklaces that are bigger-than-me – that are not
necessary beautiful and not clearly necklaces either.
I ask is the traditional shell necklace today
a carefully maintained sign of cultural continuity,
connectivity, authenticity and authority and so very
different to what it was 200 years + ago? (I don't
know if this was)

The use of macro land maybe future micro-
scale works are about that navigation of myself in
my work – physically challenging myself, my arms,
lifting, my body – around traditional practice,
place, materiality and cultural expectation of what
something is used for/ is supposed to 'DO'.

These floating medium necklace forms work
for me as life preservers, i.e. operating perhaps
as memory retainers for people on the edge of
me, the whole interstitial 'bit'.

The wood and the pumice neckaces, Drift and
Lifebearer, seem very much to me about returning
home (to Tasmania) sometime. They are my evidence to me that I have an emergency means –
a facility – to make a craft to bring me home in the
form of a necklace – a magical necklace. I feel I can
(in my mind's eye) walk into Townsville beach with
these wrapped around me and float into the sea and
wash up back in north-east Tasmania.

I feel that when I am collecting these materials –
that is I lose almost everything of myself – even the
possibility of asking for help to return, if I cannot
articulate my need in cogent language to explain
my need to return, that I could still, if I can stay
near a beach, make the means of my return with
these necklaces or a raft. I feel that if I drown
with these around me, it would be in the arms of
the sea and the maker of all necklaces and would
be peaceful. I was rescued off a rock, I was stranded
off Rodrigues Island in 2002, after near-drowning –
so nearly drowned, was embraced by the dark,
waft drift downwards – that I don't fear or question
the sea's ability to decide when to take someone.

The pumice necklace has come out of land into
fire (volcano) and into water (sea) to float back to
land and be built into a floating land – a kind of
island – that could take me away.

The coal necklace (Seam) is also a bit elemental in material – there is a lot of coal mined
in Queensland – but I am unsure where this coal
(covered with barnacles and other sea life) has come
from. I found it up here north of Townsville at lowest tide like black spots that seem/seam at first to
be a mirage of poor vision (black spot) yet announce
a possibility of home and hearth to me. They are a source of warmth from fire and in the water they are
the firestick doused and 'OUT' – I collect them and
think about how my ancestors' firesticks have not
yet been entirely relit by us, their descendants.

I feel afraid to light my coal necklace at this point
in my life; I am unsure of the spirits of the dark and
night that I would have to encounter to be able
to walk properly and cross into the two worlds that I
have trained myself to tightrope 'between'. The coal
necklace – the 'Seam' – is like the weighty libido
of ancestry, the coal black materiality of the earth
that I haven't answered or perhaps recognised
the call of. The coal coming to me from the sea is a
bit like a reminder to face the land and remember
responsibility to all sides of self – land and waters.

The necklace-like works operate as my
imaginations of how to merge and move myself
around (kind of like with time and tide) back from
where I come. The necklaces are elemental ways of
re-joining myself back to traditions that seem lost
in their recognisable, popularised makings in my
immediate family.

I think the necklace and multiple object in my
art forms (over a decade) articulate my connection
to a culture that did collect (and still does collect to
survive). Through repetition in my work a language
of understanding place and being-ness is articulated
and presented to outsiders to hopefully enable
viewings of the ways that forms such as necklaces
and materials provided by nature impact on me, and
seem to urge me to spell out myself through them.

Lifebearer 2005
beach found pumice, brass wire, driftwood
100 × 60 × 34 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Drift 2005
driftwood, beach found pumice, brass wire, driftwood
100 × 60 × 34 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Seam 2005
beach found coal, nylon, driftwood
130 × 90 × 15 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Lifebearer 2005
beach found pumice, brass wire, driftwood
100 × 60 × 34 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Drift 2005
driftwood, nylon
130 × 90 × 20 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Seam 2005
beach found coal, nylon, driftwood
130 × 90 × 15 cm
collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Sleeping Mountain 2005
calico, lighting, pillows, oil aerosol on pillows, timber,
string, wax rubbings of tree stumps on paper

Exhibited in Habitus-Habitat, eight artists respond
to Wallaman Falls, Great Walks of Queensland Art
and Environment, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery.
Townsville, December 2005 – February 2006
(group exhibition)

Intertidal – Resignation 2005
Inkjet photo print on canvas with painting in
found ground cuttlefish, beached oxides, beached
charcoal, beached graphite, bought green oxide on
digital print on canvas
150 × 109 × 2 cm
private collection, Perth

Exhibited in National Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Art Award (NATSIAA), Museum and Art
Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, August–
November 2005 (group exhibition)

Craft for floating home 2005
driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells
130 × 90 × 150 cm

Craft for floating home (cuttlefish) 2005
cutterfish, driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells
c. 40 × 90 × 150 cm

Craft for floating home (pumice) 2005
pumice, driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells
c. 40 × 90 × 150 cm

Craft for floating home 2005
cocoanuts, driftwood, rope, plastic, timber, shells
c. 40 × 90 × 150 cm

Craft for floating home (coconuts) 2005
digital print

Exhibited in Cross Currents, Linden – St Kilda
Centre for Contemporary Art, Victoria,
2 July – 7 August 2006 (group exhibition)

Craft for floating home is a series of rafts that I
have recently made while in self-imposed exile
in Townsville, away from my ancestral homeland,
specifically from the far north-east of Tasmania,
Tebirruna. The place in far north-eastern Australia
that I find myself now living is coastal, perhaps
the extent of its familiarity. Making art is central
to my being, as central as the need to carry a
physical understanding of an immediate way home
from wherever I am in the world. The security
of keeping alive the flame of my potential means of
return to Tasmania is a meditative preoccupation for me.

Making these rafts real out of the dimension
of dream has been a cathartic experience of
renewal. These rafts, in the repetitive craft of beach
collecting, tying and knotting, take my weight
and help me move beyond the everyday. Thinking
through why we make things and how they operate
in the real and imagined worlds that our origins
provide us gives me an elemental pleasure of
connectedness. On these rafts I sense movement
from where I have been, both in art practice and in
a broader cultural sense, towards a quiet space for
further formations or transmissions about culture,
place, time to emerge. These rafts are voyagable
translations of what absence and isolation are and how they enable the traveller to experience anew.

2005

Regeneration 2005
local alluvial quartz
c.25 x 1.5 m

Regeneration 2005
Eucalypt branch, cast bronze leaves
c.3 x 0.1 x 2 m

Exhibited in Ware and Tear, Hylands Gallery,
Chevron, Victoria, 2005 (group exhibition); Isolation/Bolito pre, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, Tasmania, 2005 (group exhibition)

Promissory Note ~ Opposite Swan Island 2005
tea-tree, timber, string, fur
229 x 240 x 130 cm
Finders University Collection, Adelaide
Exhibited in On Island, Devonport Regional Gallery, Tasmania, 2005 (group exhibition)

2004

Southern Cross above Luna Park 2004
wood, Lomandra longifolia, Corinella lineolata shells
70 x 100 x 10 cm
private collection

A blanket return 2004
wool, shell, wood, wire
variable dimensions
collection of the National Museum of Australia
Exhibited in 120° of Separation, Linden – St Kilda Centre for Contemporary Art, Victoria, 2004 (group exhibition)

Climbing country 2000
sag grass (Lomandra longifolia)
collection of the artist

This artwork consists of three long ropes, each an inch in diameter and twelve feet in length. I made them by hand twining handfuls of continuous strands of Lomandra (a bulbous plant with long leaves ideal for creating string). Each rope has large knots tied at even intervals along its strand. These suggest an intention to remember; they interrupt each rope in a rhythmic recall to something feared forgotten. Installed in proximity, these three ropes present my wish to move beyond the physical realm, upwards and outwards to greater understanding of my Country, people, practices and culture as it was lived pre-invasion.

Blood Counts 2004
tea-tree, cotton, kelp, clay, acrylic
variable dimensions
collection of the artist

Exhibited in If only you knew, Melbourne City Hall, Victoria, curator Christian Thompson, 2004 (group exhibition)

Today just as I stepped ashore
I caught a glimpse of five
Tasmanian women who lived here with the sealers
Dumont D’Urville, 14 November 1828
Phillip Island (Victoria)

Tasmanian Aboriginal Women in Victoria the sea tide rush and flood slavery eyes and sealers whalers and huts tea-tree sticks specs chisels pepts pegging of skins organs John Batman syphilis interference rubbings white immigrants dates 1797 1833 1835 1841 and disruption sickness blood health death slavery assault buried bone children captivity dress 1841 and disruption sickness blood health death slavery assault buried bone children captivity dress

Promissory Note ~ Opposite Swan Island 2005

Blood Counts 2004
earth pigments, crushed cuttlefish, charcoal, grass juice on composition board
130 x 180 x 4 cm
exhibited Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, 2003 collection of Australian National University

Murmur 2003
Lomandra longifolia
variable dimensions
collection of the artist

Exhibited in <abstractions>, Drill Hall Gallery, ANU, Canberra; FUSIONS across the Arts – Centre for Cross Cultural Research, ANU and ANU School of Art, curators Howard Morphy and Nigel Lendon, 2003 (group exhibition)

Transmutation 2003
pillows, hair, laser print transfers, bark, motor, EKG monitor, video, bed, cotton
variable dimensions


In 2002 I was hosted by Brigham Young University and the Latter Day Saints community along with four other Australian women installation artists, in order to develop new work responding to our stay in their community. It is challenging to create liminal (in-between) spaces as well as inhabit them. Some are actual (corridors, airports, carports, shorelines, spaces of travel/transportation), while others are imagined (such as myth, folktale, memory, dreams, filmic, television, hyporic spaces). Transmutation generated an unsettled atmospheric space from the relationship between familiar materials installed in unusual configurations. The installation hovered, in materiality and meaning, between science, the inexplicable and home-handicraft. The work consisted of thirty-three pillows (the size of aeroplane passenger pillows). Each was made of white cotton (ex. Royal Hobart Hospital sheets) with postcard images of Utah desert places and Utah insects digitally printed (faded-out) on one surface. These pillows had real and fake human hair fringing, and were suspended by white cotton thread on each corner, rising from just above floor level to a height of approximately 1/4 distance from the ceiling to present as three staircases of a tripod structure. Each ‘staircase’ consisted of eleven pillows. These flights of ‘steps’ triangularly opposed each other, to meet at a spherical space (gap) of approximately 3 feet wide at the top. A very bright beam of light was directed from the ceiling through the space where the pillows hovered to illuminate a 30 cm golden bark ‘trembling’ cocoon. The motion was achieved by a concealed electrical device fitted inside the ‘cocoon’ and under the flooring. A blue and a red electrical wire were alligator-clipped to either end of this cocoon, and these led across to two old fashioned medical monitors placed adjacent on a medical trolley. One monitor depicted an irregular EKG heartbeat reading while the other showed a video of: (1) slightly fuzzy black and white (40 seconds) footage of someone (me) running towards then darting away from the camera in a lightly forested zone in riverside Melbourne wearing a pillowcase over my head. This footage then cut to (2) me lying on the forest floor with my hair emerging through tiny holes in the pillowcase (15 seconds), then (3) fuzzy TV waves (8 seconds), then (4) black and white dead-screen (15 seconds) then back to (1). Adjacent to these monitors was a hospital bed-trolley with one stainless steel side-arm in the down position. This bed appeared as though someone/something had just run off. Nearby this trolley, one wall was held transfixed by a spot-light tiny section of lacy curtain stuck solid, as if caught in a gust of wind from an alternative universe. Transmutation suggested that various realms of being and understanding coexist on this planet. This was not intended to be an ‘obvious’ work; its
meaning was understood differently by each viewer. Themes that I am interested in that I am obliquely approached to make a work a century after the Cook. That story, the result of Cook’s landing, the arrival of objects collected from Rodrigues beaches which I explored with my snorkel, mask and flippers. Objects that I also represented in this exhibition are donated by students at MGI. I recently travelled back to Mauritius on the MV Antar, looking forward into the future. I am the time traveller, afloat, looking for my own way in my own time. A time traveller not really steering the boat but being the time traveller, afloat, looking forward into the future. I am the time traveller, afloat, looking forward into the unknown. This is my journey. I am here in Mauritius and Rodrigues seeing things and looking into the future. The second component of this installation is a suspended raft. This seafaring vessel is made from driftwood of actual boats washed up on the shore and sitting upon this raft is a kind of sail, a paper sail made of bus tickets I have collected during my time here, most from my own travels and some kindly donated by students at MGI.

**Time Traveller**

This is a large suspended three-part work made from six layers of starched ecru fabric. It represents me sitting in a boat looking out across the ocean with a large octopus below me in the sea. I am sitting in a boat looking out across the ocean with a large octopus below me in the sea. I am the time traveller, afloat, looking forward into the unknown. This is my journey. I am here in Mauritius and Rodrigues seeing things and looking into the future. The second component of this installation is a suspended raft. This seafaring vessel is made from driftwood of actual boats washed up on the shore and sitting upon this raft is a kind of sail, a paper sail made of bus tickets I have collected during my time here, most from my own travels and some kindly donated by students at MGI.

**Mauritian Travels/Rodrigues Travels**

This is a work in two parts. Firstly, a clay bus sits on a mirrored floor accompanied by two electrical plugs also made from clay. These plugs are connected to the bus and each other by a plaited cord of sugarcane leaves. The bus and plugs are decorated with designs in tikkas. I have travelled mostly by bus around Mauritius and wanted to connect the idea of the importance of the bus system to the multicultural history of the island. One of the plugs is the two-pronged French plug, and the other is the three-pronged English plug, both of which vie for attention in homes around Mauritius. I believe that a continuing cultural battle is represented through the use of these two plugs in Mauritius. The clay is from this island, the earth, the basis for human existence.

The second component of this installation is a suspended raft. This seafaring vessel is made from driftwood of actual boats washed up on the shore and sitting upon this raft is a kind of sail, a paper sail made of bus tickets I have collected during my time here, most from my own travels and some kindly donated by students at MGI.
Where ever the winds may blow me

This is a work in four parts. A cement daypack sits on the floor (which represents the solidity of home and belongings). But I am adrift above this object. I am represented by my face peering out of a fabric aeroplane window and by the painted, mapped island of Rodrigues peering in at me from the other side of this window. Hovering suspended above me and ‘my window to the world’ is a copy of my passport and a map of the world – made from starched painted fabrics also.

The past is a foreign country

This work consists of a row of meandering bus stops made from sugarcane sticks painted in black and white sections like traditional Mauritian bus stops. They stand in pots of cement cast in the style of these bus stops is a metal plate with a word. These words spell out the sentence “THE ‘PAST’ IS ‘A FOREIGN’ COUNTRY”. This is a quote from a David Lowenthal book about history, which is how I find the history I am seeking of my family story on this island and Rodrigues. The past is foreign, but with some translation and imaginations it is understandable.

Some times I dream

This is a work about my ancestor, Woretemoe-tyenerner – a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman who came to Mauritius and Rodrigues in 1821 and 1827. When she returned to Tasmania, a Quaker missionary met her in 1832 and recorded that ‘She spoke a little French having been taken by a whaling vessel to the Isle of France. I always wanted to come to the Isle of France – a kind of dream. It is also a kind of dream to try and imagine what this island and Rodrigues were like at the time when they visited them, different from my perspective of 2001/2002. This work is about such dreaming. I have stitched a pillow with the quote about Woretemoe-tyenerner, and a pillow with a quote about me. Je parle un peu le français après avoir été a Rodrigue et a Maurice.

Heartland

This is a kind of meeting of works that manifest my musings on encountering and negotiating place. I have been thinking how place is a multiple entity – an exterior geographical space and an intangible area located, for some, within the heart. These pieces reflect some of the ways I have been tracking and tracing myself. They are also observations on passages of time undertaken in this pursuit – short reckonings in the ‘bush’, lifespans, multi-generational ways of walking and perhaps even finding place. Many of my past works have relocated an outdoor scenario to an indoors environment or repositioned objects into art and the merging of history, myth, memory. The use of many raw natural elements in that exhibition – kelp, shell, string, wood, timber, rocks – was my way of reducing things to original ingredients, substance, matter from which we came and will return. Stone tools made a beaconing constellation in Night Sky Journey; strings of shells ascended upwards in Heartland and plant string ropes (Climbing Country) offered another escape.

This work is a response to my time working at the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service where I learned a great deal about the range of ways that people, publicly and privately, consider place. This painting presents an enlargement of an Aboriginal Site Index Card that the Aboriginal Heritage Section of the Parks and Wildlife Department then completed to record each reported Aboriginal ‘site’. The categories on this card reflect inherent failures in the mainstream system to understand that places aren’t truncated from each other in this way. The 1976 Aboriginal Relics Act, on which these cards are based, deem...
Aboriginal sites as anything created or occupied by own people than any other work I have made. I am much more inner strength and understanding of my with plants, rocks, shells, kelp, wood has given me more much inner strength and understanding of my other than any other work I have made. It was very glad something directed me to create this way at this time.

Leeawuleena 2001 lake driftwood and eucalypt wood variable dimensions collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

This work was created between two places, Leeawuleena (Lake St Clair) in Central Tasmania and Eddystone Point, north-east Tasmania. This work is the result of staying at Leeawuleena with three Tasmanian Aboriginal artists who were creating fibre artwork during their artist residency program. I was drawn to the lakeshore and most astonished by the water’s action of constantly washing up these forms that strongly resemble the heads of ancient birds. Birds have always followed me and seem to speak to me in unexpected locations. I gathered these silent, bonelike twigs and put a head to each body. They became enlivened and surrounded the hut’s verandah wall where we stayed; they created shadows and watched us. It seemed they came through time, through the waters and decisions of the lake to wash them to near where we stayed. Something of the essence of how things were beyond my hands and yet came into my hands is become in its commodification of any natural elements. The first sign outside of both Launceston and Hobart was the familiar ‘ICE’ – as seen outside bottleshops across the nation.

Ice, earth, fire, earth, air, ice 2000
150 × 70 cm (six panels)
six signs placed on Midlands Hwy between Hobart and Launceston March 2001

Exhibited in 10 Days on the Island Festival, 2001
This drive-by work aimed to bring to people’s attention how extreme the western world has become in its commodification of any natural elements. The first sign outside of both Launceston and Hobart was the familiar ‘ICE’ – as seen outside bottleshops across the nation.

Tense Past PhD Examination
Plemss Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 2001 (solo exhibition)

Exhibited
Lying with the Land 1996
Bad Language 1996
mOTHER 1996
The Trouble with Rolf 1996
My Tools 1996
How they got here 2000
…and how it’s been 2000
Rail 2005
Magnum as Cook in the Time/Space continuum 1997

STAND 2001
tea-tree, lamp, wood, rope
8 x 8 x 8 ft
Midlands Highway installation, Tasmania, 10 Days on the Island Festival

STAND was a roofless tea-tree room constructed on a hill adjacent to the Midlands Highway at Lovely Banks farm during the inaugural 10 Days on the Island Festival 2001. This tea-tree room had a lamp perpetually lit for the entire ten days and ten nights of the festival in vigils/memory of the original Aboriginal inhabitants of that country, and to what that hill has ‘seen’ over time. The work is also a memorial to Kickerterpoller, who lived for a time as a child with the Birch family at this place before becoming a renowned Aboriginal warrior.

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There are fifty-six places publicly named after ‘Black’ people in Tasmania, which include: Black Mary’s Hill, Black George’s Marsh, Blackmans Lookout, Black Tommy’s Hill, Blackfellows Crossing and Black Phis Point. There are seventy-nine ‘Black’ places in Tasmania, which include: Black Beach, Black Creek, Black Gully, Black Marsh, Black Pinnacle, Black Reef, Black Sugarloaf and Black Swamp. There is one Abo Creek in Tasmania. There are three places named ‘Nigger’ in Tasmania: Nigger Head, Niggerhead Rock and Niggers Flat. There are sixteen places named for ‘Natives’ in Tasmania, which include: Native Hut, Native Lass Lagoon, Native Track Tier, Native Plans. These are 154 places. But really they become one big place, the entire island, Tasmania.

This is a journey of mapping and jotting the intersections that make up this place’s story and history. I see this big ongoing journey as an action of remembering. It is also my way of considering and disclosing the irony that although our original Indigenous place names were all but erased from their original spaces, they then consistently went about reinscribing ‘black’ presence across the island. Did these ‘settlers’ recognise the rights of occupancy of Aboriginal Tasmanians, evidenced by their ‘natural’ features across the entire island in the image of Black, Native, Nigger and Abo? The conception of this artwork was a direct bridge-walks sweeping the nation. I found this old plaque in a storeroom – it is a record of a mission from the Liverpool Female Orphan Asylum, The Liverpool Infant Orphan Asylum, 1846 – 1869.

It is about collecting, compiling and reconfiguring objects of culture. I gather, shuffle, and prod objects about my process is to find the point of unease – where familiarity counters a general discomfort, to leave the work to hover in uncertainty. I assemble a certain number of objects, a particular grouping, an almost normal delivery, but not quite, so that the apprehension and comprehension of my work are always immediate but requires a pace of reading that is akin to my own growing awareness while I created the work. Resonances of other things drive this series including my own dislocation from Tasmania. I was born and ‘grew up’ in St Kilda, in another state entirely. In ‘returning’ to this island as outsider I perceive things differently, askew and seemingly unquestioned. These signs that seem to be something else insistently plagued me to make this work.

The landscape of remembrance is always constructed. It is made of memory, a mix of recollection and imagination. It is all about the process of remembering. It is about facing the past. It is about concealment and act of remaking this wall with my mother and brother which I am constructed.

By the 1840s, a visit to the city was almost normal delivery, but not quite, so that the apprehension and comprehension of my work always immediate but requires a pace of reading that is akin to my own growing awareness while I created the work. Resonances of other things drive this series including my own dislocation from Tasmania. I was born and ‘grew up’ in St Kilda, in another state entirely. In ‘returning’ to this island as outsider I perceive things differently, askew and seemingly unquestioned. These signs that seem to be something else insistently plagued me to make this work.

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The Liverpool Archives holds diverse references to the Bluecoat Hospital, and also to the Ragged Schools and the Kirkdale House of Correction – brief tantalising glimpses into a short life of hard work. Children in the Ragged School, Southport, Liverpool ‘sorted senna and pig bristles’ while children in the Bluecoat late last century ‘made pins’. The orphan boys in the Bluecoat Hospital were expected to set sail on the Slave ships and Traders, which were run by several of the Bluecoat Board and Benefactors early last century. Girls were trained to be domestic servants; if they defied this expectation they weren’t provided street clothes when leaving the premises. Wandering the city, I stood searching the cityscape from the roof of the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and spotted the cemetery below. I walked through the stone-tunnelled entrance into the underground-like quarter of the city inhabited by the city’s pinnacles of culture. Stone after stone was inscribed with the names of ship captains and their ships, of dearly beloved children eulogised in terms of permanent angelic sleep.

In its midst I was stopped hard in my tracks by the sight of six stones in a row, damp and nettle fringed, which unemotionally named-as-lists 122 dead children from four Liverpool orphanages: The Bluecoat Hospital, The Liverpool Infant Orphan Asylum, The Liverpool Female Orphan Asylum, The Liverpool Boy’s Orphan Asylum. These stones seemed the answer, the reason for the extended walks in and around the city. I imagined them immediately as soft pillows, as mattresses, as a comfort that the children never had in reality. I returned to the headstones shortly after with a huge bundle of cotton fabric and a large graphite rock from the Liverpool Museum to rub and transfer
1998

Ebb Tide (The whispering sands) 1998
Sixteen pyrographically inscribed life-sized plywood figures of British people who collected Tasmanian Aboriginal people and cultural material placed in tidal flat at Eaglehawk Neck, southern Tasmania, 1998 (group exhibition)

This installation comprises sixteen life-sized portraits pyrographically (hand-burnt) onto plywood. These are British individuals who historically and subsequently impacted on Tasmanian Aboriginal people. I collected these ‘colonials’ while I was living in London undertaking my MA studies. These figures were placed in the tidal flats at Eaglehawk Neck, southern Tasmania, during November 1998 in the Sculpture by the sea Exhibition. These people were collectors; they accumulated material culture, stories, human remains, anthropological/medical information and even Aboriginal children in the names of science, education, history and power. I decided (as an exercise) to collect these people themselves (as images) and reduce them to a nameless conglomerate mass just as they had enacted on Aboriginal Tasmanians last century. Placed in the tidal flats at Eaglehawk Neck, southern Tasmania, during November 1998 in the Sculpture by the sea Exhibition. 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This installation was a response to awakening ideas about our coexistence with the past, and to questions arising from our avoidance and consignment of the past. The photo-study of my family in 1970 mirrors the triptych painting of Magnum PI on the adjacent wall. This work is framed by seafaring curtains, while floral dresses surround Magnum. Beneath us are three shelves, on which sit two coral lamps and, centred in a biblical tome-like manner, the 1970 Melbourne (Captain Cook Bicentenary of Discovery) Telephone Book. We are contained/captured and therefore suspended in this intimate space: one an ‘authentic’ Wedgwood commemorating Matthew Flinders, the other a plain ‘white’ ceramic plate I decalled with a 1940s Children’s Annual illustration depicting a ‘native’ woman: ‘Luluna, why are your people so sullen and antagonistic all of a sudden?’ This image epitomises the misunderstanding by the traveller and ‘explorer’ of the customs and culture of other
My Tools Today emerged from reading that my Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors required only twenty-two tools that comprised their entire subsistence toolkit. This information was taken as evidence of the primitive evolutionary level of my people. Today the West chooses to recognise that this reveals a deliberate attitude that less-is-more-than-enough – a sign of balance and equilibrium with one’s environment. I decided to focus on one institution which presented and today represents corrections of former perceptions about such data, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. I covered the image of the Museum with 173 tools to represent my overwhelming compulsion to ascertain what is happening in historical depictions, and to show my frustration that I have lost the ability to survive with a minimal toolkit, perhaps partially due to this quest for understanding.

Folklore 1997 vintage curtains, Tasmanian oak light box showing image of diorama in Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart 190 x 300 x 15 cm collection of the artist

The work Folklore is a large Tasmanian oak light box containing a duratrans plastic film inkjet image enlargement of an old postcard of a diorama until recently is: 10) existent in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; Fan colouring the light box is a pair of group 1950s curtains depicting gnomes in forest habitat. This bizarre diorama presented such a construction/production as folklore. The diorama literally constructs the myth that the Tasmanian Aboriginal family sits around a solitary campfire. This is neither past nor present truth. Additionally, these people are rendered facelessly and are not known to have had a child together. The diorama has invented its own time and place. The people depicted were not from the Hobart region painted behind them. After 1803 and white arrival, dogs were incorporated into Tasmanian Aboriginal life. One tribe in the north-east had a hundred dogs. Thus, if the diorama is depicting what White memory recalls, then the deliberate omission of one or several dogs is another fiction or folklore.

This artwork visually presents one key broken and unfulfilled promise made to Tasmanian Aboriginal people by an agent of the colonial government in the 1800s. This is a story which awaits, unsettled and unresolved to this day.

Journal of George Augustus Robinson 6 August 1827 Opposite Swan Island (north-east Tasmania)

This morning I developed my plans to the chief Mannalargenna and explained to him the benevolent views of the government towards him and people. He cordially acquitted and expressed his entire approbation of the salutary measure, and promised his utmost aid and assistance. I informed him in the presence of Kickertepoller that I was commissioned by the Governor to inform them that, if the natives would desist from their wanted outings upon the whites, they would be allowed to remain in their respective districts and would have flour, tea and sugar, clothes & C given them, that a good white man would dwell with them who would take care of them and would not possibly render in reality. This was a desperate lie to the people equally desperate to believe in their own survival.

Four years later, Mannalargenna cut off his hair aboard a ship just north of this location, near Swan Island, probably as an act of grieving when he finally lost all hope. He died of pneumonia shortly afterwards on 4 December 1835 on Flinders Island – one month after Robinson had transported him to Wybalena from mainland Tasmania and four years after he had first met and begun travelling with Robinson on his Friendly Mission! The quoted passage leaps from page 394 of 1,073 pages of incessant details of meals and climate which swamped and served...
to render this occurrence less distinct in the body of words that had consumed and subsumed it. This account was made personally potent by my time spent in the far north-east of Tasmania during the genesis of this work. I witnessed across the sea the same islands as did the people in the story seven generations ago. Mannaargenna is my great-great-great-grandfather.

The power of the physical presence of the site, and the overlapping seams of history connecting then and now, became apparent to me when at the location. I realised that a material conjunction between past and present can provide the dialogue and means for a story, apparently set within a closed book, to be reconsidered within a visual art practice. As a consequence, I made the materials described in the journal and placed them alongside the words from that time. They work together to speak of my awareness of the incomplete transaction, and they express the chance for a resolution to take place when memory is reactivated.

Re-collection (after Duterrau) 1997

Also exhibited in The Kate Challis RAKA Award Exhibition, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 1998 (group exhibition); Indigenous Cultures in an Interconnected World, Fukuib Symposium Exhibition, MAGNT, Darwin, 1997 (group exhibition); Unusual Treasures. La Trobe University Gallery at Misura Arts Centre, Victoria, 1997 (group exhibition);


oxides and medium on eight cushion land parcels, five agricultural land tools and fittings variable dimensions collection of the artist

Exhibited in Black Humour, CCAS (Caribb Contemporary Artspace), touring nationally to 1999, curator Neville John O’Neill, 1997 (group exhibition); Native Title Business, Museum and Gallery Services Queensland, national touring exhibition to 2001–2005 (group exhibition); Single Currency, Victoria College of the Arts, Melbourne, 2006 (group exhibition)

Pogography 2000 operates subversively within the colonial constructs of Australian land and spatiality as renderable in print and picture as divisible, nameable thus knowable, manageable and ownable by relative newcomers.

To challenge the notion of statehood and fixed borders, by which eight states and territories purportedly define the Country, I made the regions into packages or land parcels, commodities representing the vision and interests of the mining, pastoralist and government fraternities covered by the imperial Australian flag that supposedly defines and encompasses the people and place. My communicative act was, in my contemporary urban desperation, to employ the pogo stick as an ideal obiterative tool by which I could simultaneously critique and make my own Aboriginal mark. Because the applied ‘dot’ is not mine—that is, not a Tasmanian Aboriginal traditional motiff, I rendered this mark-off-reclamation using an implement into control of the outcome in placement of the acrylic dots. The size of my dots are as altered in scale to the acrylic-on-canvas tradition reference are as are the various states in relation to their real sizing. These parcels look malleable, easily re/moved, plundered, swapped, lost. Their ‘indorsiness’ is suggestive of the land power games, structures and debates undertaken entirely behind doors, also proposed by the unnatural materials and placements in this piece. Aboriginal people are in one corner with one tool, while other contenders have an entire army of tools at their disposal. A tool for jumping about

Country vs. tools for cutting, twisting, puncturing and removing land.

Bad Aboriginal Art 1997

five handcrafted dolls, one 1974 How to Make Aboriginal Art and Craft children’s book variable dimensions

Exhibited in NAIDOC exhibition, Moonah Arts Centre, July 1997

1996

Dark Secrets/Home Truths

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, 1996 (solo exhibition)

Lying with the land, 1 1996

photographs, wood, tin, buttons, ink print on cotton, plaster, light bulbs variable dimensions collection of the artist

Lying with the land, 2 1996

photographs, wood, tin, jars, tea, sugar, tobacco, flour, salt, variable dimensions collection of the artist

Lying with the Land, 1 is composed of sixteen photographs of long-term Midlands–Tasmania families, who were landholders from the mid-1810s to the present day. I took these images at 1995–96 Tasmanian Royal Agricultural Shows where I found the landowners with the bounty – the produce and livestock of ‘their’ lands.

Index cards beneath each photo consecutively list researched data of original ‘interactions’ between the Aboriginal people of those lands (circa 1820) and the current land-occupiers forebears, along with the present-day prize-winning agricultural entrants’ details. The picking jars contain the five main trade/bride items of: tobacco, flour, tea, salt and sugar.

The documented history of Aboriginal/Setter contact is written from the perspective of the latter and is inflammatory and accusatory towards the Aborigines – one-sided fiction rather than truth. ‘Lying’ in this instance represents deception rather than ‘burlu’ in the accompanying pairied piece, Lying with the Land, 2, that situates the Aboriginal people’s relocation to Wybalenna cemetery as a result of this settlement.

Moree – Genetic Pool 1995

washing machine, 1960s men’s bathers, postcards showing swimming pools as central scenic spot of rural townships, test tubes, timber rack variable dimensions collection of the artist

The elements in this piece combine to review the ridiculous ‘colour bar’ policy enforced in some rural townships’ swimming pools in Australia from the mid-1960s. In the mid-1960s Sydney University students joined Charles Perkins on a bus journey through rural New South Wales to protest this blatant form of racial discrimination. This event, which brought world attention to Australian inequalities, was named the Freedom Ride. Although the Freedom Ride focused on swimming pools, it highlighted internationally the overt discrimination evident across Australian society. The immediate target was Moree, where heated conflict took place between activists and locals. The students finally attained entry for Aboriginal children to the town pool after initial false promises of access were revoked.

This piece gained real momentum and inspiration after I viewed a documentary two years ago, directed by Charles’s daughter Rachel Perkins, about the ‘Freedom Ride’. One local protestor, a Moree resident, recounted the town’s white residents’ fear of allowing Aborigines to swim among them in the pool, it was believed that white women could become pregnant from bathing where Aboriginal men or youths had swum! Thus, this piece, with its test-tubes filled with a white milky substance and a dozen pairs of bathers spinning in a pseudo-scientific centrifugal disinfecting motion, part mirrors / part re-enacts the craziness of this proposition.
mOTHER 1995
mixed media, variable dimensions
collection of the artist
Also exhibited in NAIDOC Exhibition, Moonah Art Centre, Hobart, 1996 (group exhibition); Through Their Eyes – NAIDOC Exhibition, St Kilda Town Hall, Victoria, 1996 (group exhibition)

Boxing Boys 1995
found images, frames, puppets, ink print of names on cotton
variable dimensions
collection of the artist
She loves me, she loves me not... 1995
Thirteen plastic roses, thirteen synthetic slippers, thirteen found government photos c. 1962, plastic magnification
inserts variable dimensions
collection of Maitara Arts Centre
Also exhibited in Telling Tales, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, University of Sydney and Neue Galerie, am Landes Museum Joanneum, Graz, Austria, curators Jill Bennett and Jackie Dunn, 1998 (group exhibition)

This work is based upon the Australian Government’s former policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families. This virtually indiscriminate action resulted in the dislocation of many thousands of children. During the 1950s and 1960s fostered and adopted Aboriginal children were photographed and photographed documents ‘having a good day out’; the fourth verse probably refers to the ‘freeing’ of Aboriginal stockmen/musterers during the mid-1960s when the Equal Wages Bill was passed in Australia. Previously, Aboriginal workers were paid a pittance or with food/tobacco rations. This legislation resulted in thousands of rural Aboriginal people facing unemployment and being forced off their traditional lands where they had often-managed to continue living due to white ‘landowners’ allowing them to work on these properties. This forced relocation led to large numbers of Aboriginal people living as displaced persons on the outskirts of towns, where many remain to the present day.

The song ‘Tie me kangaroo down, sport’ is a troublesome lyrical arrangement because each verse except for the fourth has Australian fauna as its focus – kangaroos, koalas, platypuses. However, the fourth verse includes Aborigines as part of the ‘wildlife’ of the Australian landscape, and then even goes so far as to suggest that they can be ‘let loose’, released at the whim of a stockman/stockman, inferring that Aboriginal people are under the control of others. Yet this song is of its own time, as was Rolf in the mid-1960s. This song is supposedly the last words of a dying stockman, and in requesting that ‘his’ Abos be let loose as one dying wish, Rolf cannot be entirely castigated, as he was (probably) proposing a pseudo-freedom for the ‘captives’. My aim in utilising a ‘found’ song and ‘found’ Aboriginal (kitsch plaster wall ornament of an Aboriginal stockman), which I then reproduced in multiple, is to reclaim representations of Aboriginal people for ourselves. I believe that the only way to work with imagery, text, inferences that are already ‘out there’ performing their intended roles in society is to claim these forms of representation for ourselves, and reuse them subversively. I then redirect their power to damage and undermine into new performative roles, which can question the past and redefine our understanding of our country’s past, present and future.

Rolf changed this fourth verse in recent sheet-music reprints of the song, and he also no longer sings the fourth verse as it was originally intended. The trouble is that, like ‘Eeny meeny miny mo’, music and verse are one of the most pervasive ways to enter into the popular unconscious, and it will be some time before those familiar with the song can replace the original version with the new. I sense that Rolf was reflecting his times and a mind-frame of a majority of non-Aboriginal Australians in the mid-sixties, and have made this work in an effort to remember this fraught story.

Something to do with Ears, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania, 1996 (group exhibition)

New Music Tasmania, ‘Disturbed Nature’ installation, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 1996 (group exhibition)
Snow White 1996 mixed media, 70 × 35 × 15 cm collection of the artist
Black Beauty 1996 mixed media, 70 × 35 × 15 cm collection of the artist

Exhibited in Handbag, Festival Theatre Foyer, Adelaide, curator Vronne Thwaites, 1996 (group exhibition)

Significant Distinctions, Couch Culture Gallery, Hobart, 1995 (group exhibition)

Human Nature and Material Culture 1994 Carpet, bathroom scales, oil on tin, wool collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Exhibited in New Faces – New Directions, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, 1995 (group exhibition); Mapping our Countries, Djurum Gallery, Australian Museum, Sydney, curators Judy Watson and Paul Taçon, 1999 (group exhibition)

Imperial Leather 1994 wax and cotton rope and drawing pins on tie-dyed cotton on composition board 149 × 204 × 15 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

The work Imperial Leather addresses notions of imperialism, cleanliness/cleansing, whitening, the British Empire, loss of self, identity, policies of rendering indistinct.
The title is suggestive of the soap-brand name and its associative connotations of familiarity, due to the current availability of the product, which exacerbate the tension conveyed by the notions of ‘imperial’ invasion alongside ‘leather’, which suggests whipping, punishment and control.
The ‘heads’ are wax, cast from an original aluminium ‘positive’ of the kitsch plaster Aboriginal boy ‘head’ commonly suspended in Australian lounge room walls in the 1950s. The layout of mathematical regularity in the piece speaks of order, control and containment over Aboriginal people, formatted by the Union Jack pattern on the panel. Power is held by those whose flag is the control mechanism. The cross-motif also resembles a target, while the hanging and pinning aspect relates to the exploration and labelling of the ‘new’ worlds and their flora and fauna.
The sense of order, obsessiveness and repetition in this work reflects western fear of the Other and the Unknown which the British carried with their flag to Australia. This fear was channelled into state and federal control mechanisms that regulated the displacement of Indigenous peoples into state or church-operated ‘homes’ (without families) despite many transported British having arrived without their families and knowing this hardship. Removal and reorganisation was part of an ongoing ordeal imposed on Indigenous Australians with the intention that original identity be lost and the first peoples embrace an Imperial/Colonial identity.

Brown Sugar 1995/6 mixed media 180 × 300 × 15 cm Also exhibited in Mutiny on the Docks, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, curator Judy Watson, 1996 (group exhibition); People, Places, Pastimes, Global Arts Link, Ipswich, Queensland, curator Rodney James, 1999 (group exhibition)
The work Brown Sugar developed from the realisation that ‘knowing’ a complete and unabridged version of the past is an impossibility. It is based on the two-year journey of one of my Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors, Woretometaeteyenner, who travelled from Tasmania Bass Strait to mainland Australia and across to Rodrigues and Mauritius between 1825 and 1827.

Elements of chance and fragmentation are integral to the work due to the information about the journey fortuitously being recovered from the diary:

One aim of this work, in reading between the lines of history, is to deliver the story not only from the viewpoint of the invisible Other (how I see myself), but also from the twentieth-century Other who also cannot envisage the original event as it was and chooses to attempt an understanding of the voyage as a pictorial chain of thought: a picture puzzle.

Medical series 1994 Ten case studies of medical and anthropological measurements for indicating racial difference mixed media, variable dimensions acquired Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 1995

Exhibited in Perspectives, Art Gallery of New South Wales, curator Judy Annear, New Faces – New Directions, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, 1995; Nuini – We have Survived, University of Tasmania Gallery, Launceston, curator Ros Langford, 1996; Permanent Collection Exhibition, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 1998, 2014

Components of Medical Series:

Brain Capacity 1994 Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, wax, found case, plastic, acrylic c. 45.0 × 25.0 × 25.0 cm collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Earwax Consistency 1994 Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, wax, plastic, acrylic, mixed media 5.5 × 29.5 × 40.0 cm; cabinet: 89.0 × 51.0 × 40.0 cm collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Eyeball Weight 1994 tin, plastic, found objects, acrylic 30.0 × 26.0 × 22.0 cm collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Fingerprint Patterning 1994 Medical series, 1994 (detail)
wax, maché, cardboard, tin, map c. 60.0 × 60.0 × 15.0 (open case) collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
Hair Differentiation 1994
Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, synthetic and human hair, wax, stainless steel, chrome, acrylic
103.0 × 49.5 × 35.5 cm
collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Intelligence Testing – The Porteus Maze Test 1994
Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, plastic, sawdust, paint, sawdust, chrome, acrylic
170.0 × 39.5 × 29.5 cm
collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

This case study is based on the 1950/60s anthropological text-on-paper given to Indigenous peoples (in this case in the Kimberley of north-west Australia) to determine IQ by the speed one traversed a maze on paper by pencil.

Physical Characteristics – Body Odour 1994
Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, oil, soap, wax, towelling, acrylic
40.0 × 30.0 × 8.0 cm
collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Physiological Adaptation to Cold 1994
Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, polystyrene, plastic, stainless steel, mercury, acrylic
270 × 19.0 × 15.0 cm
collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

A visual reconfiguration of the research of a 1960s Czechoslovakian research team who ‘placed’ Central-Desert Aborigines in refrigerated meat-vans overnight to determine their physiological adaptation to cold.

Skull Dimensions 1994
Medical series (detail), 1994
galvanised iron, soil, gravel, plastic, bone, chrome, acrylic
114.0 × 570 × 470 cm
collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Tooth Avulsion 1994
Medical series, 1994 (detail)
tin, synthetic and plastic teeth, mixed media, chrome, acrylic
103.0 × 49.5 × 28.0 cm
collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Medical series is a series of ten folded tin and galvanised iron cases containing mixed-media found and made objects, with silk-screened images and text on their transparent surfaces. These are ‘case studies’ depicting western means of supposedly determining racial difference, which is then aligned with inferiority.

These works represented texts from scientific books and journals silk-screened onto perspex which covered and enclosed the objects. This way of assembling objects was pivotal to the future development of works incorporating or eliminating the written word.

I sculpturally worked these case studies after accumulating ‘scientific’ texts about ‘identity’ at a time when I focused on learning about history of representation of my extended Indigenous family (and thus myself), by people both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in Tasmania. There was freedom in allowing different parts of the body to speak of the ways in which they had been tested and probed. It became a series about processes of collection, containment, control. The often familiar objects within the cases instigate a dialogue between the viewer and the work, prior to their texts being read. At this time I began to see the carrying-potential of object clusters.

Medical series was a key project in my Honours year (University of Tasmania, 1994) and was subsequently selected by curator Judy Arnett for the exhibition Perspecta 1995 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and acquired by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 1995.

Art From Trash, Monnoah Arts Centre, Tasmania, 1994 (group exhibition)

Presto, Honours Graduate Exhibition, Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart, 1994 (group exhibition)

Always more questions than answers 1993
mixed media installation

Exhibited in National Graduate Exhibition, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Western Australia, 1994 (group exhibition); 12 Days Stuck in a Hole, Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1994 (group exhibition); Superfictions, curator Peter Hill, National Touring Exhibition to 1996, 1994 (group exhibition)

God is Love 1991
mixed media
40x 40 × 70 cm
collection of the artist


End of First Year Exhibition, Curtin University, Western Australia, 1991 (group exhibition)

Rifle and Boomerang shows that the education system is one place from which formally sanctioned racism has spread throughout society. The text has been quoted from Arthur Mee’s Children’s Encyclopaedia (see entry: ‘Aborigines’, circa 1938) and the image utilised is from a children’s book, Rifle and Boomerang (‘for ages 8–12’).

Both layers offer prime examples of how Australian mainstream cultural attitudes emerged. The frame composed of different, interlinked native timbers that surround and enclose the work offer various readings. Perhaps Aboriginal communities had solidarity within despite the adversities of the various systems they negotiated – Education, Mission, Health, etc.

I hope this piece is a trigger (both reminding and warning) of the real danger of propagandist education. Designed to infiltrate and influence successive generations, the shadow of the Australian Government’s desperation to position Aboriginal people as an inferior race requiring total manipulation is part of every citizen’s shadow today.

Rifle and Boomerang
oil on canvas, text on acrylic, nine Australian timbers 1,240 × 945 × 90 cm
collection of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Exhibited in On a Mission, Boomalli Gallery, Sydney, 1996 (group exhibition)

1994

1993

1992

1991

302 303
Appendix II: Curriculum Vitae

Studies

2012  Certificate 4–Tour Guiding, Eco Guiding (AVANA) Australia (and Senior First Aid certificate)
1998  Masters of Visual Arts, Goldsmith’s College, University of London
1994  Bachelor of Visual Arts Honours, 1st Class, University of Tasmania
1993  Bachelor of Visual Arts, Curtin University, Western Australia
1986  Bachelor of Arts: Prehistory (Archaeology) / Anthropology and English Literature, University of Western Australia

Employment

2007 – present  Artist, independent curator, writer, historian, researcher. Lives and works in Hobart
2014  Casual lecturer, Sculpture Department College of the Arts, University of Tasmania, Hobart
2010-2013  Honorary Associate, College of the Arts, University of Tasmania, Hobart
2010-2011  Adjunct Lecturer (distance), School of Communication and Creative Industries, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales
2007-2013  Adjunct Principal Research Fellow, School of Creative Arts, James Cook University, Townsville
2010  Co-wrote Aboriginal Art unit with Dr Cath Bowdler, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga
2007-2008  Research leave to undertake various curatorial projects and fellowships:
Fellowship, State Library of Victoria, three months
Fellowship, State Library of Tasmania, three weeks
Residential Fellowship, Manning Clark House, Canberra. See Manuscript3251 project online: http://manuscript3251.wordpress.com/about/
2005-2008  Lecturer, Visual Arts, James Cook University, Townsville
2003-present  Postgraduate examiner (ongoing). Twenty examinations at various universities since 2003
2002-2003  Lecturer, Aboriginal studies. Riawunna – University of Tasmania, Launceston
2001-2002  Voluntary sculpture lecturer at Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka, Mauritius

2001-2002  Artist residencies: Eddystone Lighthouse Tasmania; Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka, Mauritius; Greene St, New York; Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris

Curator

2013  TESTING GROUND, Salamanca Arts Centre, Long Gallery, March 2013, toured to 2014
2010  INSIDE: Life in Children’s homes, curatorial team, National Museum of Australia, opened November 2011, toured to 2013
2008  The haunted and the bad: Nic Cumpston, Joel Binme, Tony Albert, Yhonnie Scarce, Andrea Fisher, Linden – Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, Victoria, July-August
2005  Cross Currents, Denise Ava Robinson, Lorraine Connelly-Northey, Julie Gough, Treahna Hamm, Lola Greeno, Lindun – Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, Victoria, July-August
2003-2005  Curator, Indigenous Art, National Gallery of Victoria

Collections (artwork locations)

Artbank, Sydney
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
City of Port Phillip, St Kilda, Victoria
Campbelltown Arts Centre, New South Wales
Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania
Devonport Regional Gallery, Tasmania
Flinders University collection, South Australia
Janet Holmes à Court collection, Western Australia
Margaret Leve & Robert D. Kaplan collection, Seattle
Mildura Arts Centre, Victoria
Murdock University collection, Western Australia
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
National Museum of Australia, Canberra
Parliament House collection, Canberra
Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
Redlands Grammar School, New South Wales
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston
State Library of Queensland, Brisbane
State Library of Tasmania, Hobart
Tamworth Regional Gallery, New South Wales
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
University of Western Australia, Cruthers Collection of Women’s Art
Solo exhibitions

2017
- Hunting Ground, Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Museum, University of Virginia, 8 September – 31 December 2017
- Julie Gough: Collisions, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia, curated by Gemma Weston, 30 April – 16 July 2016
- HUNTING GROUND incorporating Barbeque Area, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, 23 October – 16 November – 16 November.

2016
- Oblivion (remix) Ostradek space, Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, curated by Eleanor Socichito, October 2014.

2013
- The Missing Rivers Run, Devonport Regional Gallery, September

2010
- RIVERS RUN, Cairns Regional Gallery, 5 February – 14 March
- Aftermath, 24 Hr Art Gallery, Darwin, 1 August – 5 September
- The Ranger, South Australia School of Art Gallery, University of South Australia

2008
- Interrupted – Renditions of Unresolved Accounts, Turner Galleries, Perth, Western Australia
- Musselroe Bay, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Inter tidal, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

2002
- Chase, installation, Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, exhibited to 2004

2001
- Re-collection, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Dark Secrets/Home Truths, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Group exhibitions

2017
- Sculpture by the Sea, SKS, Bondi, October 19 – November 5, 2017
- Cicada Press, Art Gallery of South Australia, Tamarind Festival, Curator Tess Allas, October 2017
- Book Club, curator Meryl Ryan, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, NSW, 26 August – 15 October 2017
- Defying Empire: National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, curator Tina Baum, 8 June – 27 July 2017
- Colonial Afterlives, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, curator Sarah Thomas, March – April, and touring nationally 2015 – 2017

2016
- The Art of Science: Baudin’s Voyagers 1800 – 1804 (touring exhibition SA Maritime Museum), 7 January to 20 March 2017 QVMAG, TMAG: 7 April – 9 July 2017
- The Violence of Denial, curator Carly Lane, Art Gallery of West Australia, February 2017
- With Secrecy and Despatch, Campbelltown Gallery, New South Wales, curated by Tess Allas and Dave Gameau, 9 April – 12 June

2015
- Border Crossings, South Australian School of Art Gallery, Adelaide, curated by Mary Knights, 22 February – 18 March and Galway Arts Festival, July
- Everyone has a History, curator Carly Lane, Art Gallery of West Australia, February 2017
- Defying Empire: National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, curator Tina Baum, 26 May – 10 September 2017
- With Secrecy and Despatch, Campbelltown Gallery, New South Wales, curated by Tess Allas and Dave Gameau, 9 April – 12 June

2014
- Odradek space, Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, October – 16 November – 16 November
- Oblivion (remix) Ostradek space, Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, curated by Eleanor Socichito, October 2014.
- Shimmer, Moar, 5 December 2015 – 6 March 2016

2013
- Aftermath, 24 Hr Art Gallery, Darwin, 1 August – 5 September
- The Missing Rivers Run, Devonport Regional Gallery, September
- Interrupted – Renditions of Unresolved Accounts, Turner Galleries, Perth, Western Australia
- Musselroe Bay, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Inter tidal, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

2008
- Chase, installation, Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, exhibited to 2004
- Heartland, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Stand, Midlands Highway installation, Tasmania
- ice, earth, air, fire, water, ice, Midlands Highway, installation, Tasmania
- Tense Past, PhD Examination, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart

2002
- Re-collection, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Dark Secrets/Home Truths, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

2001
- RIVERS RUN, Cairns Regional Gallery, 5 February – 14 March
- Musselroe Bay, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Inter tidal, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Becoming, University of Queensland, curated by Michael Desmond, 13 November 2015 – 13 March 2016

EXHIBIT A, Lock Up, Newcastle, curated by Carrie Miller, 30 October – 6 December

Mildura Palimpsest: Unmapping the End of the World, curated by Jonathan Kimberley, 2 – 18 October

Counting Tidelines, Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory, curated by Arny Jackett and Sarah Pirie, 13 August – 28 August

Ghostly Nature – part 1, Adelaide Town Hall, curated by Polly Dance, 11 June – 12 July


GUURGUS new art prize, curated by Shelley Hinton, Ballarat Art Gallery, 11 April – 31 May


http://shsa.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects

Ground Truthing, ANU Foyer Gallery, curator Ursula Frederick, April

(in)visible: The First Peoples and War, Lake Macquarie Art Gallery, curated by Yvonnie Scarce and Meryl Ryan, March–May

Colonial Alteratives, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, curated by Sarah Thomas, March–April

The Longford Project, 10 Days on the Island, Longford township, Tasmania, March


The Skullbone Experiment, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 14 March – 18 May 2014, toured to COFA, New South Wales, 19 July – 30 August 2014

Yey Sussura, NAIDOC Exhibition, Joondalup City, Western Australia, July


2013

The Z Factor, Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian College of the Arts, University of Tasmania, Hunter Street, Hobart, 13 December – 31 January

Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards, Art Gallery of Western Australia, 23 August 2013 – 27 January 2014

2012

unDisclosed – 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, curated by Carly Lane, May–July

Deadly – In-between Heaven and Hell, Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide, 29 February – 25 March, Adelaide Festival 2012

2011

Immemorial – reaching back beyond memory, developed by 24 Hr Art in collaboration with artists from Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Chan Contemporary Art Space

Darwin, curated by Norberto Roldan, Director, Green Papaya Art Projects, Manila; Sudjat Darto, Independent Curator and Lecturer, Indonesia Institute of Art, Yogyakarta; Steve Elard, Director 24 Hr Art – NTCCA, Darwin, 27 October – 27 November

The Robinson Cup, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, curated by Damien Quilliam: September 2011 – February 2012

Journeys: through history, theory and practice, Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart, curated by Paul Zka, 29 July – 28 August

Evolving Identities: contemporary Indigenous Art, John Curtin Gallery, 13 May – 6 July

River Effects: the waterways of Tasmania, Academy Gallery, Academy of the Arts, Launceston and Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, March–April

Immemorial, Vargas Museum, University of the Philippines, October–November

Shifting Sands: Botany Bay Today, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, curators Ace Bourke and Anna Lawsonson, 20 August – 16 October

Littoral, Carnegie Gallery, Hobart, curator Yvonne Thwaites, 8 April – 16 May

Look Out, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, March–July

Preview 2010, Bett Gallery Hobart, January

Redlands Prize, Mosman Gallery, New South Wales, November–December

Clemenger Award, National Gallery of Victoria, September 2009 – February 2010


5th BIENAL de Artes VENTOSUL, Curitiba, Brazil, August–November

Recycled Library – Altered Books, Artspace Mackay, curator Michael Wardell, 4 September – 25 October and touring 2010

Marcher sur la pelouse (Walk on the Grass), Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, July–August

Coal, clay, water, wood, Mon Gallery, Sydney, curator Toni Warburton, July

Returning, Barn, Rosny, Tasmania, curator Gwen Egg. May and touring in 2010

Mute Relics, Counihan Gallery, Brunswick, Victoria, May

TRUST, Clarendon House, Evandale, Tasmania, March

The stuff of history, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, curator Jonathan Holmes, August

Parallel, Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, August, curator Brigita Oozlins, toured to 2010

Ephemeral Art at the Invisible Lodge, Friendly Beaches, Freycinet, Tasmania, February

Power and Beauty: Indigenous Art Now, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 11 July – 3 August

Thresholds of Tolerance, ANU, School of Art Gallery, Canberra
Hutchins Art Prize, Hobart, Tasmania

‘Captive’ and ‘Witness’, ESP Project, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania

What’s love got to do with it? Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne

Home is where the heart is, Country Arts SA, touring exhibition, curator Vivienne Whaites

Driving Black Home, 2000 by Julie Gough and Natives on the River Ouse, 1838 by John Glover, Australian Collection Focus, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Between Phenomena: The Panorama and Tasmania, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania

Response to the Island, Salamanca Arts Centre, Long Gallery, Hobart

Native Title Business, Museum and Gallery Services Queensland, national touring exhibition to 2005

2000 Biennale of Contemporary Art, Festival of Pacific Arts, Noumea

heart on your sleeve, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart

Australian Painting Now, Access Gallery, Curtin University, Western Australia

Shifting Axis, Bent Gallery, Hobart

National Gallery of Victoria, Russell Square

Mapping our Countries, Djan guna Gallery, Australian Museum, Sydney

TRACE–Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, England

Whispers, Lies and Text, Central Coast Gallery, New South Wales

NAIDOC Exhibition, Moonah Arts Centre, Tasmania

Whispers, Lies and Text, CAST, Hobart; University Gallery, Launceston

The Kate Challis RAKA Award Exhibition, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne

MA (Fine Arts) Exhibition, Goldsmiths College, University of London

‘Globalising Cultural Studies?’, Pacific Asia Cultural Studies Conference Exhibition, Goldsmiths College, London

Telling Tales, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, University of Sydney and Neue Galerie am Landes Museum Joanneum, Graz, Austria

All this and Heaven too, Adelaide Biennial, Art Gallery of South Australia

Permanent Collection Exhibition, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
1997
Indigenous Cultures in an Interconnected World, Fulbright Symposium Exhibition, MAGNT, Darwin
NAIDOC Exhibition, Moonah Arts Centre, Hobart
Extacts, Boonmali Aboriginal Artist’s Co-Operative, Sydney
Unusual Treasures, La Trobe University Gallery at Mildura Arts Centre, Victoria
Black Humour, Canberra Contemporary Artspace, toured nationally to 1999

1996
Cologne Art Fair, ‘Forderprogram’, Germany
Castlemaine Festival, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi
Australian Contemporary Art Fair #5, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
Multiples and Memories, Schoolhouse Gallery, Rosny Historic Centre, Tasmania
Through Their Eyes – NAIDOC Exhibition, St Kilda Town Hall, Victoria
NAIDOC Exhibition, Moonah Arts Centre, Hobart
Something to do with Ears, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania
Wijay Na? (Which way now?), 24 Hr Art, Darwin
New Music Tasmania, installation ‘Disturbed Nature’, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
Mutiny on the Docks, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
Handbag, Festival Theatre Foyer, Adelaide, curator Vivonne Thwaites

1995
On a Mission, Boonmali Gallery, Sydney
Significant Distractions, Couch Culture Gallery, Hobart
New Faces – New Directions, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
Nuini – We have Survived, University of Tasmania Gallery, Launceston
Perspecta 1995, Art Gallery of New South Wales

1994
Art From Trash, Moonah Arts Centre, Tasmania
Presto, Honours Graduate Exhibition, Pimlico Gallery, Hobart
National Graduate Exhibition, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Western Australia
12 Days Stuck in a Hole, Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania
Superfictions, toured nationally to 1996

1993
Curtin University BFA Graduate Show, Bentley, Western Australia

1992
A Matter of Degree Group Show, Craft Council Gallery, Perth

1991
End of First Year Exhibition, Curtin University, Western Australia

Awards / Grants / Residencies

2017
Helen Lempriere Scholarship, August 2017

2016
Musee de Quai Branly / Australia Council for the Arts Indigenous Curatorial Residency, Paris, 18 April – 18 July

2015
Development Grant, Australia Council for the Arts, self-directed research and residency in Chile (September–December) as part of Black Matter, a Chilean/Tasmanian project conceived and managed by independent curator Francisca Moenne

2014
ART Tasmanian college artist in residence, Guilford Young College, Arts Tasmania

2012
Creative Fellowship, Australian National University (ANU), One of five three-month fellowships offered to artist researchers as part of the ARC project collaborative research project Engaging Objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories. A joint project with the ANU, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Four-year linkage project funded by an Australian Research Council grant. The research team comprises Professor Howard Morphy (ANU), Dr Lissant Bolton (BM), Dr Ian Coates (NMA), Dr John Carty (ANU), Dr Maria Nugent (ANU), and Dr Michael Pickering (NMA). http://rsha.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects

2010
New Work – Established Grant, Arts and Craft Board, Australian Council for the Arts

2009

2008
Residential Fellowship, Manning Clark House / Copyright Agency Limited, eight weeks July(August/October) in Canberra for research at the National Library of Australia towards transcription and essays based on 19th-century VDL Magistrate’s reports. http://manuscript3251.wordpress.com/about/

2007–2008

2007
Creative Fellowship, Australian National University (ANU), Five of five three-month fellowships offered to artist researchers as part of the ARC project collaborative research project Engaging Objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories. A joint project with the ANU, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Four-year linkage project funded by an Australian Research Council grant. The research team comprises Professor Howard Morphy (ANU), Dr Lissant Bolton (BM), Dr Ian Coates (NMA), Dr John Carty (ANU), Dr Maria Nugent (ANU), and Dr Michael Pickering (NMA). http://rsha.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects

2006
Plomley Research Project Grant, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 2014–16

2005
Curatorial award. ‘Testing Ground’ awarded Bank SA Award for Best Visual Art & Design ($500) at the 2014 Adelaide Fringe Festival, 16 March

2004
Liverpool studio, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, September–November

2003
Le Havre Museum, France, October, two weeks

2002
Liverpool residency, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, August–November

2001
Creative Fellowship, Australian National University (ANU), One of five three-month fellowships offered to artist researchers as part of the ARC project collaborative research project Engaging Objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories. A joint project with the ANU, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Four-year linkage project funded by an Australian Research Council grant. The research team comprises Professor Howard Morphy (ANU), Dr Lissant Bolton (BM), Dr Ian Coates (NMA), Dr John Carty (ANU), and Dr Michael Pickering (NMA). http://rsha.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects

2000
AIR Tasmanian college artist in residence, Guilford Young College, Arts Tasmania

1999
Grant, New Work – Established, Australia Council for the Arts

1998
Project Grant, Regional Arts Tasmania

1997
Plomley Research Project Grant, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 2014–16

1996
Curatorial award. ‘Testing Ground’ awarded Bank SA Award for Best Visual Art & Design ($500) at the 2014 Adelaide Fringe Festival, 16 March

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1991
AIR Tasmanian college artist in residence, Guilford Young College, Arts Tasmania

1990
Grants, New Work – Established, Australia Council for the Arts

1989
Project Grant, Regional Arts Tasmania

1988
Plomley Research Project Grant, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 2014–16

1987
Curatorial award. ‘Testing Ground’ awarded Bank SA Award for Best Visual Art & Design ($500) at the 2014 Adelaide Fringe Festival, 16 March

1986
Liverpool studio, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, September–November

1985
Le Havre Museum, France, October, two weeks

1984
Liverpool residency, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, August–November

1983
Creative Fellowship, Australian National University (ANU), Five of five three-month fellowships offered to artist researchers as part of the ARC project collaborative research project Engaging Objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories. A joint project with the ANU, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Four-year linkage project funded by an Australian Research Council grant. The research team comprises Professor Howard Morphy (ANU), Dr Lissant Bolton (BM), Dr Ian Coates (NMA), Dr John Carty (ANU), and Dr Michael Pickering (NMA). http://rsha.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects

1982
AIR Tasmanian college artist in residence, Guilford Young College, Arts Tasmania

1981
Grants, New Work – Established, Australia Council for the Arts

1980
Project Grant, Regional Arts Tasmania

1979
Plomley Research Project Grant, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 2014–16

1978
Curatorial award. ‘Testing Ground’ awarded Bank SA Award for Best Visual Art & Design ($500) at the 2014 Adelaide Fringe Festival, 16 March

1977
Liverpool studio, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, September–November

1976
Le Havre Museum, France, October, two weeks

1975
Liverpool residency, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, August–November

1974
Creative Fellowship, Australian National University (ANU), Five of five three-month fellowships offered to artist researchers as part of the ARC project collaborative research project Engaging Objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories. A joint project with the ANU, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Four-year linkage project funded by an Australian Research Council grant. The research team comprises Professor Howard Morphy (ANU), Dr Lissant Bolton (BM), Dr Ian Coates (NMA), Dr John Carty (ANU), and Dr Michael Pickering (NMA). http://rsha.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects

1973
AIR Tasmanian college artist in residence, Guilford Young College, Arts Tasmania

1972
Grants, New Work – Established, Australia Council for the Arts

1971
Project Grant, Regional Arts Tasmania

1970
Plomley Research Project Grant, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 2014–16

1969
Curatorial award. ‘Testing Ground’ awarded Bank SA Award for Best Visual Art & Design ($500) at the 2014 Adelaide Fringe Festival, 16 March

1968
Liverpool studio, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, September–November

1967
Le Havre Museum, France, October, two weeks

1966
Liverpool residency, Australia Council for the Arts, UK, August–November

1965
Creative Fellowship, Australian National University (ANU), Five of five three-month fellowships offered to artist researchers as part of the ARC project collaborative research project Engaging Objects: Indigenous communities, museum collections and the representation of Indigenous histories. A joint project with the ANU, the British Museum (BM) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). Four-year linkage project funded by an Australian Research Council grant. The research team comprises Professor Howard Morphy (ANU), Dr Lissant Bolton (BM), Dr Ian Coates (NMA), Dr John Carty (ANU), and Dr Michael Pickering (NMA). http://rsha.anu.edu.au/engaging-objects
Creative Fellowship, State Library of Victoria. Three months. Strait crossings – Nineteenth century Indigenous relocation between Victoria and Van Diemen’s Land and beyond. The production of an annotated bibliography and a wall projection project about cross Bass Strait relationships between Aboriginal people and sealers/whalers c.1795–1850

South Australian School of Art Gallery, Artist in residence, Adelaide/Helpmann Academy Foundation, September


2006 State Library of Tasmania Fellowship, Tasmanian Library. Three weeks. Picturing our past: a narrative response to representations of Indigenous Tasmania, December

Regents Court Hotel, Potts Point, Sydney. Artist in residence for Sydney Biennale work, May–June

2002 Greene St, New York, Australia Council Residency, February–May

2001 Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Commonwealth Arts and Craft Award, London. Six-month residency, Mauritius and Rodrigues, 9 January – 2 February

Eddystone Lighthouse, Arts Tasmania Wilderness Residency, July–September

1999 Arts Tasmania/Qantas Artsbridge Grant to install work at Liverpool Biennial, UK


1996 Arts Tasmania Development Grant. Attend/install work at Cologne Art Fair, Germany

Awarded an installation space as one of twenty-five ‘Young, emerging artists’ by the Jurors of Art Cologne (as part of the Forder program, 1996)

1995 Arts Tasmania Development Grant to attend/install work at Perspecta 1995, Sydney

1994 First Class Honours. Awarded Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship

1993 Curtin University Graduate Sculpture Prize

Curtin University Graduate Drawing Prize

1991, 1993 Member, Vice-Chancellor’s List, Curtin University (academically highest 1% in university)

Membership

2015 – present Member, Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee member, Arts Tasmania http://www.arts.tas.gov.au/about_us/haab/aboriginal_arts_advisory_committee

Member, Tasmanian Aboriginal Advisory Council, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

2012–2016 Board, Art Monthly Australia, art journal, ACT

2010–2014 Member, PAC (Publication Committee), Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

2009–2016 Director Member, Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct – Code Administration Committee

2009–2010 Board member, Craft Australia

2007 – present Member, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Judging

2018 Woolmers estate artist residency, Tasmania, Arts Tasmania, 2018

2017 Co-judge (three) Inaugural Emerging Tasmanian Indigenous Writers Award, Tasmania, August 2017

2017 Co-judge (three), Hadley’s Art Prize, Hobart, July 2017

2015 Co-judge, Parliament Art Prize, New South Wales, August–September

2014 Co-Judge, Cossack Art Awards, Roebridge, Western Australia, July

2012 Fremantle Print Prize, Pre-selection team and co-judge (one of three), July–August

2010 NATSIAA pre-selection judging panel, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, April/May

2009 Indigenous Ceramic Art Award, solo judge, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria

2006 The Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Art Award, group judge, Queensland Art Gallery

2004–2008 The National Interpretation Australia Awards, group judge (annual)

2004 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, co-judge, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

Publications

Books


Book chapters


Conference proceedings

1997

Conference papers / art presentations

2017
Artist floor talk, NGA (National Gallery of Australia), 27 May 2017
Education sector talk: AGNSW (Art Gallery of New South Wales), 8 May 2017
Artist Floor talk: AGNSW (Art Gallery of New South Wales), 7 May 2017
Artist talk: (to staff) The National, MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art), 28 April 2017
Namuru: education talk, MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art), 27 April 2017
Artist talk: (to students) Potter Centre, University of Melbourne, 8 April 2017
Conference speaker, Parallel Histories: Nineteenth-Century Australian and American Landscape Painting, 7 April, Potter Centre, University of Melbourne, accompanying exhibition: Not as the songs of other lands
Artist floor talk: The National, MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art), 31 March
Panelist: The Politics of Identity, National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, 11 March
Artist talk: Science: Baudin’s Voyagers 1800 – 1804 (touring exhibition), 21 January 2017

2016

2015
Lecture: Professional Historians Association and the Tasmania Archives and Heritage Office Public Lecture Series, ‘An alternative to Governor Arthur’s official proclamation board, and other unfamiliar colonial representations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people’, Appleton Gallery and Museum of Fine Art, State Library of Tasmania, Thursday 6 August 2015

2014

Symposium speaker: Where are we? Visual cultures of place making in a precarious age, ‘Time Traveller – Julie Gough’, Humanities Research Centre, ANU. Convener Dr Melinda Hinkson, 6 November 2014
Curator floor talk: Testing Ground – exhibition, Broken Hill Regional Gallery, 17 June 2014
Symposium speaker: ‘Scottish artists and Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the 19th century’ 8-11 May, Exhibition: For Auld Land Syne: Images of Scottish Australia from First Fleet to Federation, Art Gallery of Ballarat, 10 May
Symposium speaker: Empire, Humanitarianism and Non-violence in the Colonies, Wednesday 23 April, Henry Jones and Co. Room, University of Tasmania, Hobart, convened by Penny Edmonds and Anna Johnston
Symposium speaker: INDIGENOUS PHOTOGRAPHIES, 3 April 2014, Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU School of Art and Aboriginal Studies Press AIATSIS. Re: publication Calling the shots: Indigenous photographs edited by Professor Jane Lydon (UWA)
Artist talk: Testing Ground and Tense Past – investigations and inherited histories, Yunggorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research, Flinders University, Adelaide, 21 February 2014
Artist talk: The Possessed Past, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge University, UK, Chair: Damian Skinner, 23 October
Artist talk: Museum of Natural History Le Havre, to staff and fellow artists, 10 October 2013, Pacifique project
Artist talk: Liverpool Biennial Office, Liverpool, 1 October 2013
Artist panel talk: Berlin Art Fair, c/- Artlink journal, 21 September 2013
Artist panel talk: Australian Embassy Berlin, c/- Artlink journal, 18 September 2013
Artist talk: Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford, 19 October 2012
Presentation: Contested terrain: space to experiment, National Art Educator’s Conference, National Gallery of Australia, 24 January
Symposium presentation: Traversing history, identity and place making on the grounds of art, Picturing the Wilderness symposium presentation, 5 January, University of Tasmania, Hobart
Artist talk: Charles Sturt University, School of Communication and Creative Industries, 21 September and 29 September
Presentation: Tasmanian Aboriginal fibre art, Wagga Art Gallery, 28 September
Artist floor talk: Devonport Regional Gallery, 3 September
2007


Symposium presentation: 'Shifting frontiers', Picturing the wilderness symposium, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 7 January


Public lecture: Tamworth Art Gallery, 13 November

Public lecture: National Sculpture Factory, Cork, Ireland, 31 August

Public lecture: National Gallery of Victoria, Federation Square, 16 January

Symposium presentation: Picturing the wilderness, 8 January, University of Tasmania


Guest presenter: Intensive ANU CCR: curating, 2–3 April 2009, Louise Hamby

Guest presentation: Tayerebe – Tasmanian Aboriginal women’s fibre work, joint presentation with Lola Greeno, Selling Yarns conference, NMA, Canberra, 7 March 2009

Opening talk: Attesting, Nici Cumpston, Gallerysmith, Collingwood, 30 January 2009


Artist talk: Esk Collection, Art Group, Longford, Tasmania, 17 February 2008

Artist talk: Big River Collection, Art Group, Hobart, 23 February 2008

Artist talk: with Briga Oozline, Living Writer’s Week, Tasmania, Hobart Penitentiary, 23 August 2008

Guest speaker: Desart Conference, Alice Springs, Arakanen Centre, 26 September 2008

2008

Artist exhibition floor talk: Mussehroe Bay, Gallery Gabriele Pizzi, 10 & 20 March 2007

Presentation: Strait Crossings, Women’s History month, State Library of Victoria, 28 March

Co-presentation: ‘We’re Here’ – collaborations between NMA and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, Amanda Reynolds NMA, Lola Greeno Arts Tasmania, Julie Gough JCU, Museums Australia conference, National Archives, 18 May, Canberra

Artist exhibition floor talk: Thresholds of Tolerance ANU School of Art, 9 May 2007

Artist presentation: Thresholds of Tolerance, CCR, ANU, 11 May 2007


Presentation: ‘ART AND RE-ENACTMENT’ Conference ANU, Force Field & other stories – making as moving on, Humanities Research Centre, 5–7 June 2007

Artist talks: Central TAFE, Perth, July 2007; Curtin University, Perth, August 2007; Edith Cowan University, August 2007; Albany, Western Australia, visiting artist, Albany Library August 2007; South Australian School of Art, September 2007


Presentation: People Identity & Place Seminar Series: ‘Making sense of place: the interdisciplinary potential of art, historic and contemporary, in reading Indigenous Tasmania’, JCU, Townsville, 6 October 2006

Paper/presentation: ‘Intruder alert! The meaningful layering of later history across Tasmanian place’, ‘Senses of Place Conference, University of Tasmania and National Museum of Australia, Hobart, 4–6 April

Presentation: ‘Regeneration: Moving places and art making about Tasmanian Aboriginal history’, Remembering Place/Dismembering Home, 9th WIP conference, University of Queensland, 30 September 2005


Presentation: ‘Past Tense/Present Tenable’, Creative Territories Conference, Noosa Regional Gallery, 18 June 2005


Paper/presentation: ‘Portrait by Place – land and language’, Portrait and Place Conference, University of Tasmania ANU, School of Art, Hobart, 1 September 2001

1997  

**Artist floor talk:** Black Humour Exhibition, CCAS (Canberra Contemporary Art Space), July 1997

1996  
**Paper/presentation:** 'Landscape and Memory', ACAFS Conference (Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne), Upside down at the bottom of the World, 5 October 1996

**Paper/presentation:** 'Dark Secrets/Home Truths continued. . .', Hobart Art Teachers Conference, School of Art, Hobart, 4 October 1996

**Paper/presentation:** 'Dark Secrets/Home Truths' read at Wijay Na . . .? Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Art and Artists Conference, NTMAG, 15–16 June 1996

### Resources

2007  

2015  

### Exhibition catalogues

2017  

2018  

2019  

2021  

2022  

Appendix III: Bibliography

Select Publications on Julie Gough's work

2014


2013


2012

2011


2010
Cubillo, Francesca and Caruana, Wally, 2010, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collection highlights, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, p. 229


2009
Crawford, Kate, ‘Clever application of metaphors wins art prize’, Mosman News,
1999

Reardon, Valerie, 'Trace – Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art', Art Monthly UK, November 1999, #231, pp. 34–35

1998

O’Riordan, Maurice, The Diversity of Practice, Artlink, vol. 20, no. 1, 2000, p. 65

Breynard, Shane, 'Global/Window – Latest Symptoms', Broadsheet, Summer 99/00, vol. 28, no.4, Contemporary Art Centre of SA, p. 22

University of Tasmania Research Report 1999, University of Tasmania, 2000, p. 20 (2 col. Images)

Flowers, Paul, Rich Creativity, Methodist Recorder, 14 October 1999, p. 13 (Illust.)


Nicholls, Andrew, ‘Unfolding from the Margins’, Kelly, Sean, June 1999, p. 43


Hansen, David, Artlink, vol.19, no.1, March 1999, pp. 18–21

Nicholls, Andrew, ‘Arts’, Westside Observer, 19 February 1999 (illust.)

1996


Bolton, Ken, ‘All this and heaven too – Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, 1996’, Art Monthly Australia, #109, March 1998, pp. 8–9 (Illust. p. 9)


Radok, Stephanie, ‘Black Humour’, ArtLink, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 80


1997

‘Julie Gough’ TASAPAC (Tasmanian Aboriginal Perspectives across the Curriculum), Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Unit, Hobart, p. 4.54 – 4.55 (Illust. p. 54–55)


Lewis, Felicity, A Case of Junk Art’, The Herald/Sun, 7 August 1997, p. 51 (Illust.).

‘Indigenous Cultures in an Interconnected World’, 1997 Fulbright Symposium – Pre-circulated papers (Coverpage Illust.)


Samstag Application visuals, Art Monthly Australia, # 97, March 1997, p. 9

Murray, Kevin, ‘Samstag award helps artist in PhD bid’, Unitas # 115, 10 March 1997, p. 5


Schneider, Bruno F., ‘Köln Art Fair’, Kolnische Rundschau, Köln, 12 November 1996


The Mercury, ‘State Grant to Artist’, Hobart, 18 September 1996, p. 9


Murray, Dawn, ‘Wjaj Na…?’, Art Monthly Australia, #92, August 1996, p. 27

Lancashire, Rebecca, ‘Cologne Selection’, The Age, 31 July 1996, p. 27


Foley, Fiona, ‘Where the Salt Water meets the Fresh Water’, Periphery, #27 May 1996, pp. 20–23

Colless, Edward, ‘Quietly Gothic’, Realtime, #12, April/May 1996, p. 38


Art and Australia, Exhibition Commentary, vol. 33 no. 1, Spring 1995, p. 107


McIntyre, Jo, ‘Insight into a Culture that is Flourishing’, *The Examiner*, 6 May 1995, p. 19


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