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Partially Proclaimed: Pictographic Law in the 1830 Tasmanian Picture Boards, an Exhibition History

Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll

Abstract: An exhibition history of the Tasmanian proclamation boards registers the shifts and continuities in British discourse on colonial justice. The article begins by describing the historical production process of these paintings, as well as the larger context in which they were presented in colonial exhibitions. More recently, curators, artists and historians including Julie Gough, Gordon Bennett, and Gaye Sculthorpe have used the proclamation boards as evidence of colonial injustices. Contrary to their initial purpose, therefore, in the contemporary art context these objects support interventions which seek to decolonize the accounts set out by representative national museum displays. In tracing the boards' multifaceted histories, the paper analyses the different claims that have been ascribed to them: as legal proclamations of colonial justice; as signs of failed communication between settler colony and indigenous Tasmanians; as designs that paint over the violence in British policy; and as evidence of colonial injustice in contemporary art installations.

1. Introduction

In the early years of the British colony in Tasmania the colonial government produced a series of verisimilar paintings (Fig. 1). They were painted by convict artists incarcerated in the island penal colony off the southern tip of the mainland of Australia for the governor, who claimed to be planning to nail a hundred of them to trees around Tasmania in order to pictographically explain the principle of the rule of law (see Manderson 224).

The settlement of Tasmania is renowned for its violent colonial history and genocide of Indigenous people (see Lehman 111); in a perverse way, the Governor's Proclamation rendered this violence visible when the corpses of criminals were painted on pine boards to impart ideas of equality. After the Black War of 1828 to 1832, these boards began to circulate globally. At different moments in the nineteenth century they appeared at world's fairs and were reproduced as prints. In the twentieth century they joined the displays of Australia in international anthropology collections, while in the twenty-first century the picture boards have become a favourite in curatorial arguments that use them to show the duplicitousness of British colonial rule. These exhibitions include the ongoing installation *Partial Proclamations* at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (2012); the British Museum's *Enduring Civilization*, a temporary blockbuster of Aboriginal collections by indigenous Tasmanian curator Gaye Sculthorpe (2015); Tate Britain's *Artist and Empire* exhibition (2015) to which I will return in section three; *Frontier Shores: Collection, Entanglement and the Manufacture of Identity in Oceania* at the Bard Graduate Center Gallery NYC (2016). One board has gone back on display in Museum Victoria's Aboriginal gallery Bun-

jilaka in Melbourne, and has most recently become the basis for contemporary artwork by Megan Cope.

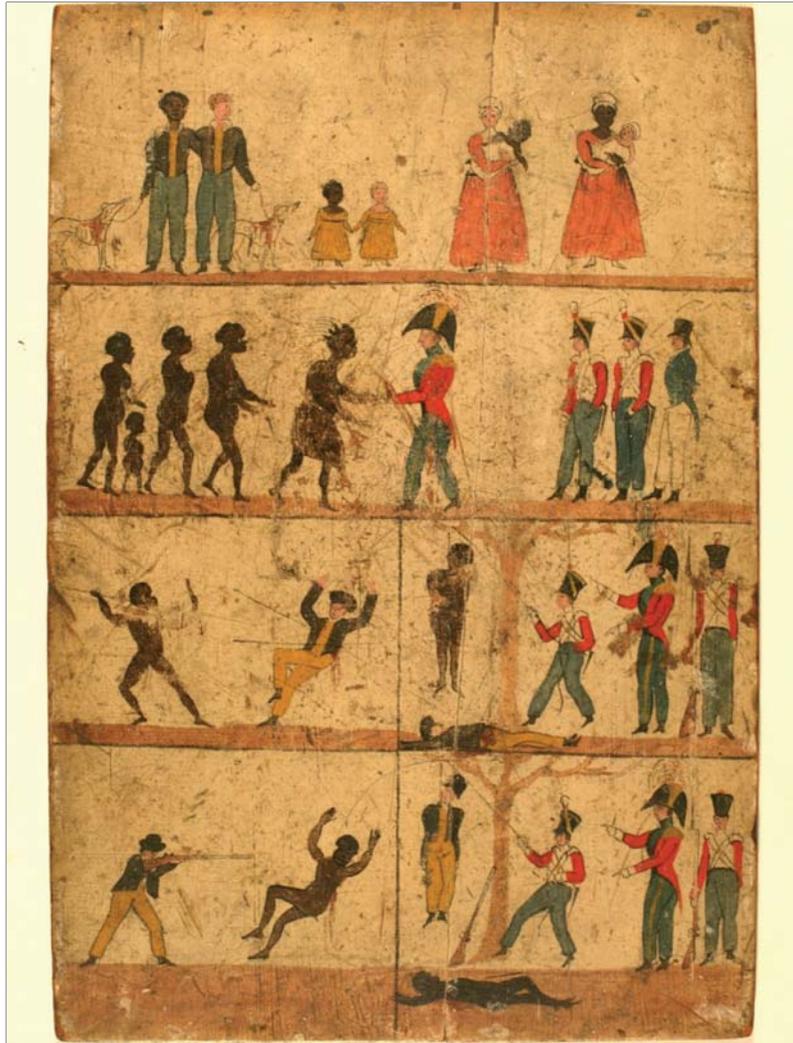


Fig. 1: George Frankland. "Proclamation to the Indigenous Tasmanians", 1830, tempera on Huon Pine board, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge

In the almost two hundred years since their design, the paintings have thus come to represent changing understandings about British encounters with Indigenous subjects. My objective is to perform a reading of these boards that shows how, historically, they were not produced with the Tasmanian reality in mind, but rather as a mere show of just governmental practices for a British audience at home. While traces of this older reading continue to be rehearsed up to the present-day in displays such the *Artist and Empire* exhibition discussed below, it is the discrepancy between the board's historical message of conciliation and the violent reality of Tasmanian colonial history that has led to their present-day traction as indices of colonial injustice.

2. Conservation Methods and Materiality

The closer I looked at the material and painting of the boards, which I first encountered in the Peabody Museum at Harvard University in 2006 and then traced to six multiples in the UK and Australia, the more layered their history became. I came to read the Governor's Proclamation variously: as a parafictional means of conciliation, as borrowed directly from Aboriginal bark paintings, as an artist's idea for effecting a ceasefire in the Black War waged by guerrilla warriors on the settlements, and used as a ruse of civilization in the face of genocide (see Carroll 2014).

Originally, according to conservator Erica Burgess, the 36 x 23 x 1 cm wide pine boards on which the paintings were produced were likely part of packing cases,¹ and thus the material remainders of a process that saw the large scale transportation of people and things. As the story of these paintings unfolds it will become clear that the pine board proclamations were to become envoys, sent to Britain to exhibit inventive attempts to civilize Australia.

The Proclamation's cartoon drawings were mass-produced by a number of anonymous convict artists through a technique called pouncing (or *spolvero* as the Italian Renaissance named the invention): a technique of pricking the contours of a drawing with a pin, then dusting charcoal onto the drawing and, using a device resembling a large soft hammer, pounding the charcoal through the pinholes onto the surface below. To this day, the pinprick design remains visible to the eye on the Tasmanian huon pine (*Dacrydium frankinii*) boards.²

In an effort to discover more about the circumstances of their production I undertook an analysis of the boards' materials with Narayan Khandekar, the conservation scientist at the Straus Center at the Harvard Art Museums, to find out which paints were used and where they were from. He noted that the small holes that this Renaissance technique leaves behind can be confused with the fly excrement that is unavoidable

1 Author's interview with Erica Burgess, conservator, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, August 13, 2007.

2 The attribution of *Dacrydium frankinii* comes from Morris 86.

while painting outdoors in Australia. A number of proclamation paintings that were made later are lacking this patina of fly excrement, and these marks are used today to assess the authenticity of newly discovered proclamation paintings as originals. In the boards' exhibition history, however, it was the technique of pouncing which became regarded as demonstrating the authenticity of the original proclamations. The poster made for the 1866 Melbourne International Exhibition, for instance, even has the holes *painted* in as dots: no longer side effects of the pierced surface, these dots then served as referents to the painting's historical origin.

In my work as an artist, I am interested in the complexity of such historical afterlives, as material layering folded into political instrumentation. The boards embody multiple lives, generating copies and memories which separate from the objects themselves and travel through time.

3. The Patron Portrayed

George Arthur, Lieutenant Governor of Tasmania, is the only named individual portrayed in Figure 1. By the time he came to Tasmania, George Arthur (1784–1854) had a long career that epitomises service in the English colonial administration. Beginning his military service fighting Napoleon in Calabria and Egypt, in sieges on Rosetta and Flushing, Arthur served as a soldier. His second career was as a public servant for thirty years in the colonies – beginning as a superintendent in British Honduras, then as a lieutenant governor in Tasmania, as well as in Upper Canada, and finally as governor general in Bombay, India.

The image's narrative reads from bottom to top. The bottom two registers depict the crime and punishment of murder. Looming above the punishment tableau is an ideal reconciliation, epitomized by Governor Arthur's handshake with a tribal elder. The handshake is a fictitious uniting of two sides that meet in the centre of the painting. Figure 2 details the way the Indigenous leader's black hand slots into the white hand of the governor. This handshake supposedly seals the way for the perfect assimilation of Indigenous people into the Tasmanian colony, which is depicted in the upper register. Of all the highly expressive hand gestures in the painting, which include reticent hands in pockets, the governor's hands pointing to direct the hangman's pull on the noose, and a hungry hand reaching out, the leader's handshake of conciliation attempts to proclaim Arthur's ostensibly good intentions.

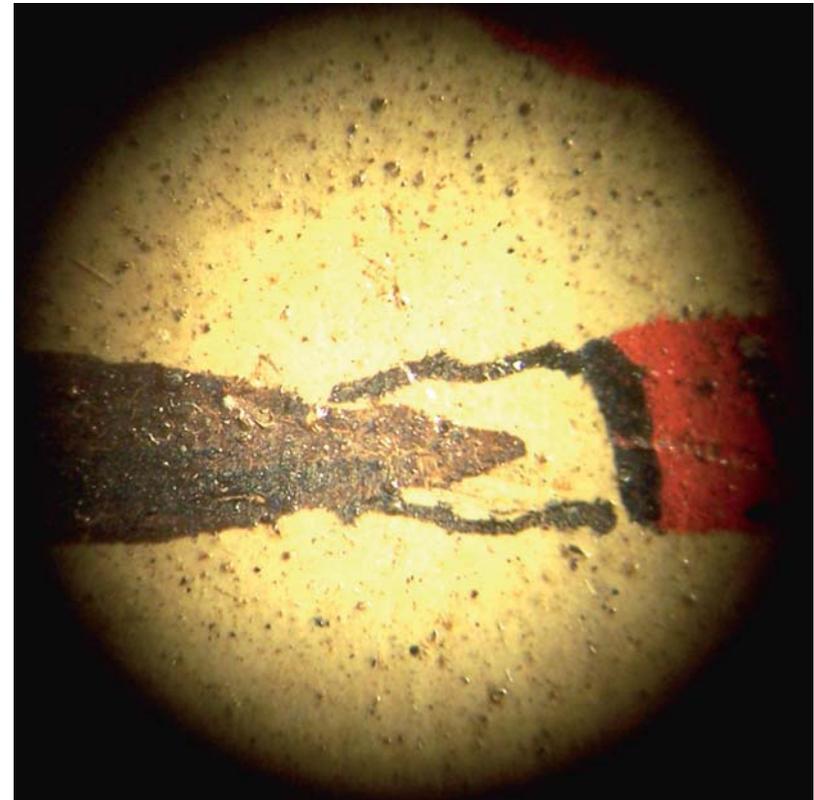


Fig. 2: Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll. "Partial Proclamations", 2006, video still. Detail of Governor Arthur's desired handshake on the Peabody Museum's Proclamation Board.

At the time of the board's production, this ideal of assimilation was pure fantasy. By 1830, the guerrilla-style Black War waged by the Indigenous Tasmanians had besieged the British colonial settlement in Tasmania for over 26 years. The paintings were an integral part of Governor Arthur's attempts to bring restive Van Diemen's Land to order. They legitimized his actions to audiences both in Tasmania and at home by supplementing the martial law he had passed in November 1828 with a propaganda campaign. The paintings – ostensibly addressed to Indigenous combatants in the Black War but in fact primarily produced for a metropolitan audience – became an ersatz language, a performance of communication in lieu of understanding.

In bringing about the paintings, Arthur relied on several men in his administration to help him, chiefly his surveyor general George Frankland (1800–1838). Frankland was an aristocrat with eclectic interests, a keen student of geography, languages, drawing and architecture. It was likely Frankland who thought of coupling military strategy with a fine arts propaganda campaign. In 1829, he proposed to Arthur that they design and hang proclamations on the trees, as though the very fact of locating the proclamations in arboreal settings would make the laws more legible to Indigenous people. Frankland remarked that:

I have lately had an opportunity of ascertaining that the Aboriginal Natives of Van Diemen's Land are in the habit of representing events by drawings on the bark of trees, and that the march of a certain party of Europeans, over a country before unfrequented by us was found a short time afterwards drawn with charcoal on a piece of bark, by a tribe of natives who have been observed attentively watching their movements – the carts, the Bullocks, the men were distinctly represented, according to the exact number that really existed. In the absence of all successful communication with these unfortunate people, with whose language we are totally unacquainted, it has occurred to me that it might be possible through the Medium of this newly discovered faculty, to impart to them to a certain extent, the real wishes of the Government towards them, and I have accordingly sketched a series of groups of figures, in which I have endeavoured to represent in a manner as simple and as well adapted to their supposed ideas, as possible, the actual state of things or rather the origin of the present state and the desired termination of Hostilities. The proposal which I venture to make is that if your Excellency approves of the drawings, they should be multiplied, and being made on more durable materials, should be fastened to trees in those remote Situations where the Natives are most likely to see them. It is, at best but an experiment, but as it will be attested by neither expense, nor inconvenience, your Excellency may perhaps consider it worth trying (23).

Although no following document of authorization has survived, Arthur, in following Frankland's advice, is said to have ordered the painting of a set of one hundred copies of the proclamation board (Proclamation Board Object File).³

4. Communicating Conciliation

Scrawled in pencil on the back of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) picture board, an inscription reads: "this board was painted to communicate first principles of moral treatment to the Aborigines of Tasmania [...]. Their language being different, it was found impossible to communicate with them orally".⁴ In fact, the versos of all the proclamation boards are marked, in two cases with undecipherable calculations in grey lead pencil. These marks and scratches give some indication of their multiple afterlives.

³ The *Colonial Times* of 5 March 1830 reports: 'We are informed that the Government have given directions for the painting of a large number of pictures to be placed in the bush for the contemplation of the Aboriginal inhabitants' ("Hobart Town"). And on 14 January 1831 the paper further reported: 'Our risible muscles were extended to their utmost when we were seriously told that the pictures were being painted by an eminent artist in Hobart town' ("Editorial").

⁴ The handwriting is possibly that of Skinner Prout.

On the Museum of Victoria's board an *ex libris* of sorts is written in black ink: "G. A. Robinson Esq". Known as the 'Conciliator' (who eventually betrayed the Tasmanian Aboriginal leaders to end the Black War), George Arthur Robinson was clearly attached to the proclamation pictures, no doubt as an articulation of his self-proclaimed "friendly mission" (see Plomley 1966) to improve communication with Tasmania's Aboriginal people. Robinson's diary from 24 December 1829 reports an account of his visit to Government House in Hobart. It may have been Christmas Eve, but Governor Arthur wanted to show him "some hieroglyphics to be used as a means of facilitating a friendly communication with the Aborigines in the interior" (Plomley 1966, 92). While Robinson would later realize that he would better succeed in his relocation missions by learning the Indigenous languages, he also kept several of the proclamation boards with him during and after the conciliation process.

Other colonial officials were also advised to use the boards to communicate with Tasmanian Aboriginals. As Major Abbott, Commandant at Launceston later reported to the Colonial Secretary: "I endeavoured to explain to the natives the figures on the boards, which you forwarded to me; and shook hands with them on parting; they appeared all well disposed and friendly" (in Dutton 154).

While the boards thus appear to have been employed in some instances of attempted communication between the colonial government and Tasmania's Indigenous people, they always had greater traction with metropolitan audiences, who came to regard them as prime examples of Governor Arthur's humanitarian intentions. J. S. Prout, a British artist who was working in Tasmania at the time, received one of the boards from Robinson himself (see Plomley 1962). He writes:

The painted board is of great interest, it was given to me by Mr. Robinson the person who was mainly instrumental in ordering the various tribes (at a period when there existed so hostile a feeling between them and the Colonists and which lead to such fearful results) to come in and submit to the authority of the Colonial Government.

It was found difficult to address them in the different dialects of the various tribes and to make known to them the humane wishes and promises of the Governor, and consequently it was determined to effect this purpose, by employing the universally understood language of painting – and the board I now forward was prepared for the purpose, illustrating as you will see the Governor[s] intentions which were, to distribute equal rights, privileges and punishments to Blacks as well as Whites (in Plomley 1962, 5).

For Prout and those who reiterated the colonial authority's official line in Tasmania, the "universally understood language of painting" had a clearly defined purpose: the distribution of knowledge about the "equal rights" of different populations in the colony. At the same time, Prout suggests the painting was "instrumental in ordering the various tribes" – a conception of the paintings' function which appears less concerned with an equal legal system than with the colony's right to rule the Indigenous population of Tasmania with force. In line with this understanding and acknowledging the brutality that characterised the Tasmanian colonial frontier, the lower registers in the painting depict shootings and hangings and represent the violent way in which conflicts were being dealt with in the colony. The way this violence is simultaneously rep-

resented and then hedged in by the peaceful outcome depicted at the top reinforces this desired colonial teleology, hierarchy and authority. Arthur's picture boards thus could claim to introduce equality for all subjects, black and white, under his governance and within the jurisdictional framework of the colony, while at the same time disavowing his complicity with the violence unfolding in the Black War.

5. Painting over Violence

The remarkable persistence of readings that treat the boards as exemplars of Governor Arthur's just intentions was recently made evident in Tate Britain's *Artist and Empire* exhibition (November 2015 – April 2016). Introducing the Proclamation as depicting the “real wishes” of the colonial government, the exhibition wall text explained that “[t]hey were intended to show that the benefits of friendship and punishment for crimes were equally available to Aboriginals and settlers – the ‘real wishes’ of the colonial government” (Tate Britain). Ironically, the target audience of the proclamation boards' propagandistic message appears not to have changed much in two centuries. In addition, as this wall text evidences, the board is still read in line with a paternalistic sentiment of good moral deeds, while the contemporaneous war and torture in Tasmania remain near invisible.

The Tate's exhibition remains ignorant of how, along with their role in some attempts at communicating the administration's laws to Tasmania's Indigenous people, the boards primarily functioned as ruse to conceal the British authority's administrative strategy for the colony. In distracting from the violence, the boards form part of a particular tradition of colonial art that “endorses a sense of peripheral alienation” with “the visual trappings of ornamentalism” rather than functioning as a legal proclamation (Eaton).

In fact, there is no physical evidence on the boards that they were ever nailed to the trees or that the promises of equal treatment made by them had any chance of ever being put into practice. Instead, on 15 April 1828 – 10 months before the letter in which Frankland pitched the idea for the paintings – Arthur had written a proclamation completely contrary to the nascent utopia of racial cohabitation presented in the picture boards:

And Whereas, with a view to the attainment of those ends, a negotiation with certain chiefs of Aboriginal Tribes has been planned, but some prompt & temporary measure is instantly called for, not merely to correct the march, but entirely to cut off the causes and occasions of plunder and crime, and to save the further waste of property and blood; and it is therefore become indispensably necessary to bring about a temporary separation of the coloured from the British population of this Territory, and that therefore, the coloured Inhabitants should be induced by peaceful means to depart, or should otherwise be expelled by force from all the settled districts therein (in Bonwick 79).

The distrust between Indigenous people and the colonial authority that resulted from this and earlier administrative practices made each official attempt to communicate or

illustrate equality more difficult than the last. Importantly, an examination of government policies at the time proves that many of the promises of equal treatment made in the proclamation illustrations were simply false. Governor Arthur could not, for example, hang a settler for shooting an Aboriginal, as shown in one of the proclamations – to do so was beyond his power (see Robertson 228). The governor was constrained by London's prescribed legal regime at the time, under which different juridical sanctions applied to the various groups in Tasmania. Thus, while Arthur was entitled to punish bushrangers (escaped convicts) harshly, he did not have the judicial power to convict free settlers.

It is no wonder, then, that the other strategies of control that Governor Arthur sought to instate, such as his scheme to introduce passports for ‘nomads’, did not get further than the pages of his proclamations. What was, in effect, a plan for a system of reservations was clearly a problem, even to the British who had implemented other drastic policies in the colony. In the aforementioned proclamation from 1828 Arthur thus had to concede that:

Nothing herein contained shall prevent the Aborigines from traveling annually (according to their custom) until their habits shall have been more regular and settled, through the cultivated or occupied parts of the Island to the Sea-coast, in the quest of shell-fish for sustenance, on condition of their respective Leaders being provided with a General Passport under my Hand and Seal (in Bonwick 80–81).

James Bonwick, an early historian of Tasmania, writes with severe cynicism about how unlikely it would have been that the Indigenous people would “venture amongst their enemies to apply for this permit, and that the gentle shepherds of the interior would respect the parchment and seal” (77). The “gentle shepherds” referred to here are the European pastoralists who had committed atrocities against the indigenous Tasmanians with impunity since settlement in 1803. Commentators during the 1820s were already asserting that the hostility was justified in light of the acts of rape, torture and murder allegedly perpetrated by Indigenous Tasmanians. One story of inhumanity, lodged in Norman Plomley's account, is of an Indigenous woman who was forced to watch her husband's murder and then wear his severed hands around her neck while becoming a slave chained to a tree by the same settler (see Plomley 1990-91). Again, the Governor did not have the judicial power to prosecute free settlers for these crimes. The incommensurability between crime and punishment in the Tasmanian colony is evidenced in these examples of brutality perpetrated on indigenous people in Arthur's jurisdiction and the light punishments received for them (see Arthur 1830, 426).

The euphemisms found in Arthur's proclamations – written and pictorial – were obviously in contradiction to actual government policy, yet there was also sympathy among the settlers for Indigenous Tasmanians, with a growing sense that violent dispossession and ignorance of Indigenous modes of knowledge and ownership were ultimately unjust. As one colonial magazine put it in 1828, “our claim to the country was not exclusive, as the blacks had prior possession” (Oldfield 115). Another writer justi-

fied Indigenous murder of settlers by saying they were actually just “following the example we have set them, and acting on the principle that *might is right*” (Lyon ix).

Nonetheless, it was illegal settler violence towards the Indigenous populations, rather than this nascent understanding of the roots of the conflict, which was encouraged in January 1829, when Arthur called forth “the most energetic measures on the part of the settlers themselves” (in Jones 2010, 120 ft. 87) to win the Black War. In this context, the picture boards’ representation of peaceful conviviality – the proffered measures of conciliation – could only ever try to gloss over the de facto reality of colonial expansion. They were never intended to change the dynamics of the war, which at that time pitted a five-thousand-man army against around a thousand remaining Indigenous Tasmanians.

6. Provenance and Display

The proclamations enjoyed several distinct afterlives, and the provenance of each board reflects a few of the many circuitous ways colonial collections were transported to European and American museums (see Carroll 2014, 94-99). In trying to reconstruct this history, the authentication of the proclamations has proven notoriously difficult. As has often been the case with art history, attributions have been made with great authority and frequent mistakes: Some proclamation boards were stickered with the title “Governor Davey’s Proclamation to the Aborigines” and a dialogue box pasted on the bottom: “‘Why – Massa Gubernor’ – said Black Jack – ‘You Proklamation all gammon, how blackfellow read him p–eh! He no read him book.’ ‘Read that then,’ said the Governor, pointing to a picture” (National Library of Australia). This attribution of the proclamation board to Governor Davey stuck, although Davey’s service from 1813 until 1823 does not correlate with the news reports in the *Colonial Times* and archival sources dating the paintings to 1829.

My conclusion from a careful comparative study of the images is that different painters were responsible even for the five proclamation boards that have been considered ‘original’. The Indigenous boy in the Peabody board (Fig.1) is seen in profile, while the other proclamations have him facing the viewer full frontal, the same as the white body beside him. It is unlikely to be a mere sleight of the artist’s hand that, for instance, that the baby in the Australian copies has a raised arm, while on the Peabody board its arm is lowered. The treatment of women’s bonnets and the young boys in the MAA version and Peabody version also indicate a different artist’s hand. The variation in the colours and paints used between these ‘original copies’ further makes any distinction between original and later copies dubious.

After recent refurbishments, one of the proclamation boards and a copy of the military map of the Black War’s ‘Black Line’ were placed on permanent display in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery’s (TMAG) Tasmanian Aboriginal gallery Ningenneh Tunapry, curated by Tony Brown. There, the board is suspended in front of the map, a

gun and a large wall text titled *The Black Line*, with a small wall text about the proclamation above it. The red lines of the military map syncopate visually with the red of the uniforms. The painting’s stark outlines are highlighted by the visual juxtaposition with the map of the human chain which crossed Tasmania to catch any remaining guerrilla warriors (and failed). Yet the association of the proclamation board with the military manoeuvres is made in an all too abstract way, and thus the whole case is a missed opportunity, an example of how ethnographic museum curators often treat their material as they would a book, rather than considering them together with the three-dimensional spaces within which they are displayed. The TMAG display case works against any visual observations, and the text reiterates what is known about use, number and verity. “No white man was hanged for crimes against Aborigines”, the last line states, presumably in an effort not to mislead the museum visitor with the picture board’s ostensibly reconciliatory message. Despite careful balance, the vitrine as a whole lacks the power that both the image and its history hold. One of the difficulties is that the proclamation board is only the size of a book (36 x 23 cm) and is easily overshadowed by louder and larger displays. The question of how to exhibit such a painting begs to be asked, and may arguably be best tackled with the shift from didactic to artistic approaches to its display.

To commemorate the bicentenary of the British government’s 1807 act to abolish the transatlantic slave trade, the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) displayed its proclamation board (2008–2012) with a Gordon Bennett print from the *Notes to Basquiat* series, one of his *Suprematist Paintings* (1993) and a screening of his video *Performance with Object for the Expiation of Guilt (Violence and Grief Remix)* (2004). Placed in relation to drawings and videos of lynching by this contemporary Aboriginal artist, the MAA’s proclamation board acquired a contemporary and transnational resonance.

7. The Lost World and Partial Proclamation

Along with their afterlife as a curio and as a commodity within the international art and ethnological market, and as evidence in decolonial curatorial interventions and revisionist history, the proclamations are increasingly enjoying another important role: that of a source for recent contemporary art, by Trawlwoolway (Aboriginal Tasmanian) artist Julie Gough, Gordon Bennett and others. In describing this practice, Jessyca Hutchens has argued that “mining the image is itself an alluring fantasy of redemptive historical recovery.”

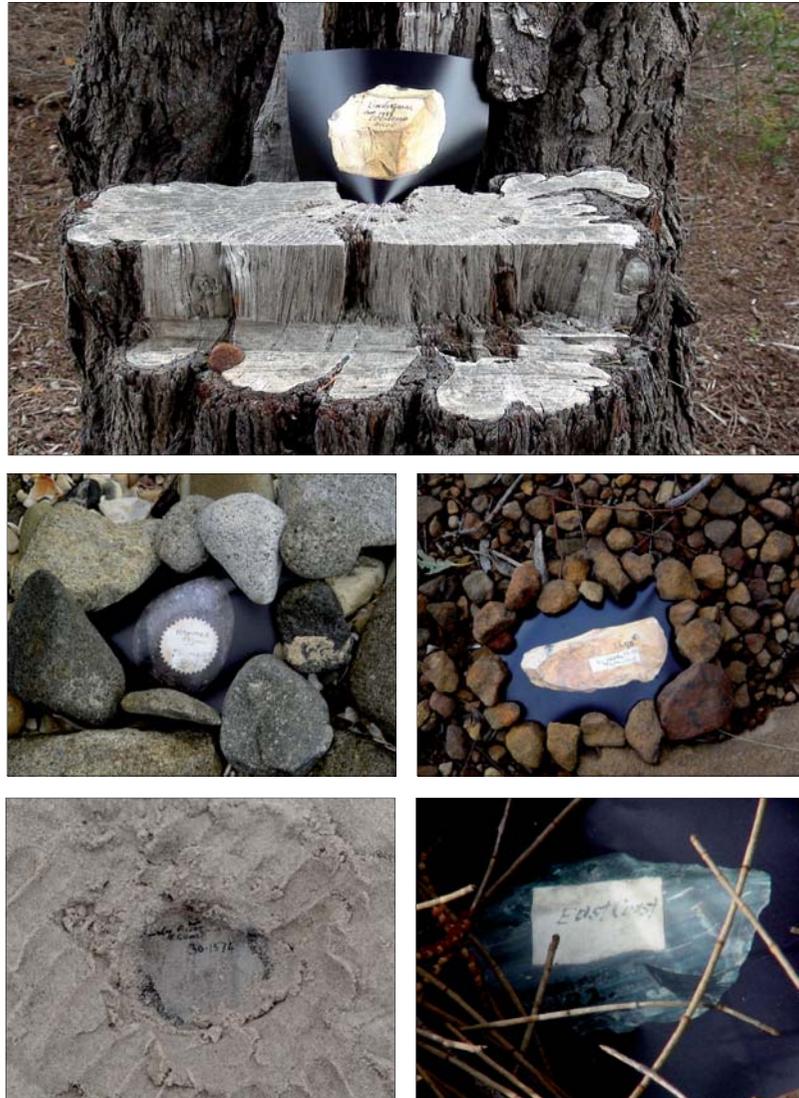


Fig. 3: Julie Gough. "The Lost World (Part 2)", 2013, HDMI video, H264, 16:9, 1:15:32, colour, sound edited by Jemma Rea, artefact photographs by Christoph Balzar. Installation: stone artefacts, shells, video projection, live web feed c. 3.5 x 7.0 x 2.6 m. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge 23 October – 30 November 2013.

The complex histories of objects like the proclamation boards create opportunities for museums to consult and learn from Indigenous people in the effort to better understand their collections. Julie Gough's work *The Lost World (Part 2)*, an artistic response to the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's collections from Tasmania, was first displayed in direct conversation with the MAA's proclamation board. In developing this work, Gough took surface archaeological finds from Tasmania, which had come into the MAA collection at the same time as the proclamation board (see Viego-Rose), as her point of departure. These had – at most – a collection location written directly onto the stone. This defacement, as well as the loss of ancestral tools and their cultural context that the collection represented, led to a six-year conversation between Gough and myself, as a curator, proposing a joint project to the Peabody and MAA museums. Together with the German artist Christoph Balzar, we photographed the entire MAA Tasmanian archaeology collection, and Gough placed a printed photograph of each object at the place the stone was taken from. She travelled around Tasmania in this performative repatriation and documented her journey in a video that became one element of the exhibition installed around the historical proclamation board at MAA (Fig. 3). A live video feed via webcam also captured the slow disintegration of the photographs on the Tasmanian sites, and was streamed in real time onto the street outside MAA. The museum audience could thereby see the archaeology collection as we redisplayed it, and watch a ghostly afterimage of its virtual repatriation.

The failure of digital repatriation to undo the erasure of Aboriginal history through these collection practices was poetically rendered in this temporary link between Tasmania and Cambridge (see Carroll 2017). Back in the museum, Gough attached the Aboriginal names of the sites to each stone on a long string. Shell necklaces indigenous to Tasmania were strung in the vitrine below, creating a delicate suspension of matter in museal darkness. Maps and drawings associated with the journey of return into a land over inscribed with British names complimented this melancholy installation (see Gough 2016).

Gough's *The Lost World (Part 2)* was exhibited opposite my own work *Partial Proclamations* (Fig. 4) which brought four elements together in a curatorial argument about the painted board that is the installation's centre. Above the proclamation board is a bark painting of the same size that illustrates the direct influence of Aboriginal painting on bark trunks upon George Frankland's idea for the wooden boards to be nailed to trees. Through the juxtaposition of bark painting and proclamation board, their ontological differences are expressed in the material. The machine-cut wood of the packing crate does not remember the shape of the tree the way the bark that is removed without harming the whole does.

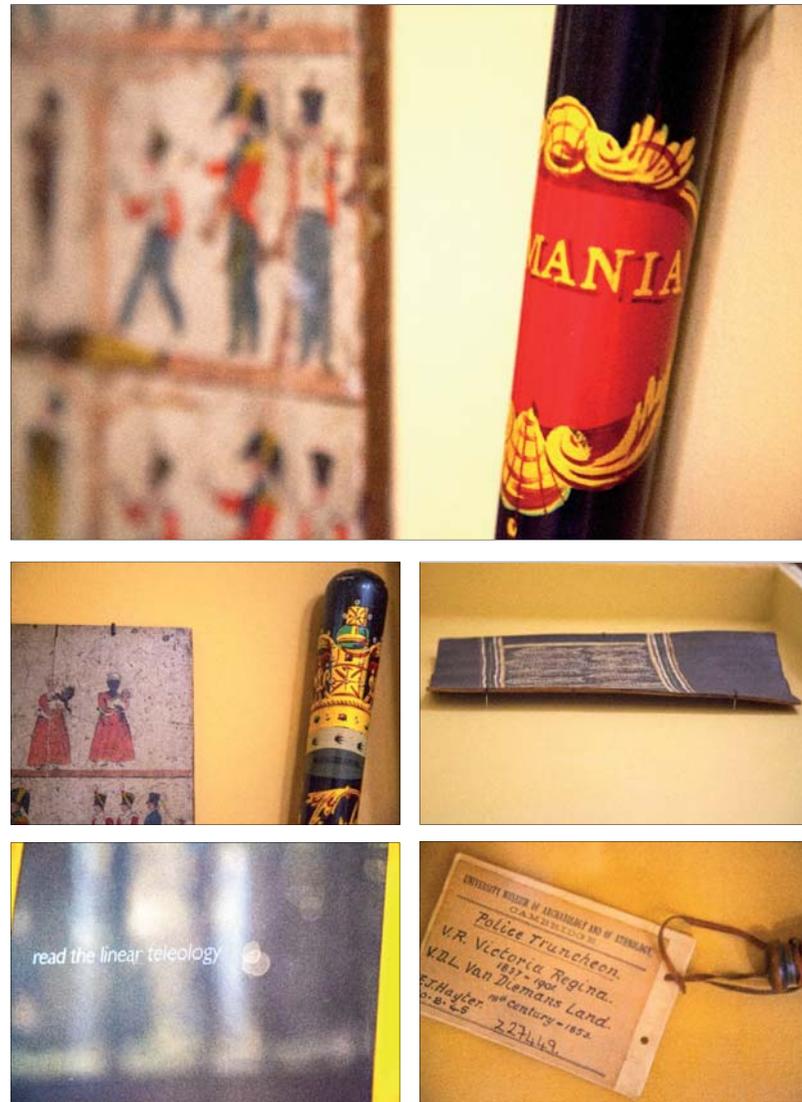


Fig. 4: Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll. "Partial Proclamations", 2006–2012, HD video, Two British Colonial Batons (Colonel F. J. Hayter. Z 27450 & Z 27449), Grootte Eylandt, bark painting (1961.150), 'Tasmania' museum vitrine, proclamation board (Z 15346). Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

The violence from which the proclamation stems is further accentuated through two British colonial batons that frame the board. They are painted wooden trophy truncheons presented to Major F. J. Hayter for service in Tasmania. The one on the right was a gift from the Commissioner of Police in Tasmania and returned with Hayter to England in 1918. While serving as honorary keeper of the Australian collections at MAA, following his service in Tasmania, Hayter authored the first catalogue of the museum's Australian collection in 1930, and a book entitled *Deadly Magic: Including the Australian Pointing Stick* (1938). Hayter's hardwood furniture still decorates Museum offices, together with the museum's vitrines, which were originally built in a circle to accommodate the social-Darwinist argument of cultural evolution from most primitive (Australia etc.) to most civilized (Japan etc.). Thus inscribed into the very architecture of the museum, these racist ideas of Aboriginal primitivity cannot be refuted alone by the proclamation board's miniature image of ostensible justice for all under the crown. Hence it was as intervention into this context that Gough's *The Lost World (Part 2)* and my installation *Partial Proclamations* sought to undertake this task.

The bottom section of *Partial Proclamations* is a video that begins with Christoph Balzar's *Protocol Archive* and then goes into a sequence of the MAA and Peabody boards that I filmed through a microscope. Looking very closely through a microscope in a process of scientific conservation analysis showed in detail the limited palette, thinly painted and cracked in the process of drying, violated, dirty, and burned down to a ground colour of eggshell or ochre. The organics appear to be tempera with ink and wash, possibly water-based paints that have gone through a process of priming. In the context of the penal colony in Hobart in which the convicts painted, the paint dribbled visibly off the edge of the TMAG version, and at some point a layer of varnish was added.

Yet all this research into material presences and cultural histories of the proclamation boards cannot bridge the void of communication across cultures that continues to shape Australia. Arthur's propagandistic painting promised the closing of this gap across the limits of language and legal reality – as if images do not need translation to communicate, and as if equality before the law was ever an option in colonial Tasmania. As it is, from the Black War to the current Forest Wars, conflicts in Tasmania continue to produce and solidify difference and hinder equality. Arthur's handshake (Fig. 2) reaches blindly into an unknown region outside the boundaries of race relations of his colonial world, as if the image-signs of civilization could ever map meaningfully onto the Tasmanian terrain. Instead of that illusion, it is only ever a partial view of justice and a lost world that remains.

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