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ALEXANDRA GILLESPIE

AUSTRALIAN MEDIA ARTS: IN THIS PLACE

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Declaration of Originality

I, ......................................... [sign and date] hereby declare that the thesis here

presented is the outcome of the research project undertaken during my candidacy, that I am

the sole author unless otherwise indicated, and that I have fully documented the source of

ideas, references, quotations and paraphrases attributable to other authors.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# ABSTRACT

*Australian Media Arts: in this place* examines themes of relationships to place, and loss of place within an Australian context. A series of academic accounts of national media arts practice, trace the evolution of the field and explore a particular period, the technologies that emerged, artists who explored these technologies and their works that articulate this exploration. What is common in these recent accounts of media art histories is a tracing of the relationship between the artists and the technologies that afforded their explorations within a national framework. What I aim to do is something different; I intend to locate a small subset of Australian media art works that talk about key issues pertinent to Australian cultural identity, namely colonisation, the displacement of the First Australians and the ongoing effects of loss of place also experienced in a broader sense through migration. The dissertation examines three collaborative works by artists, Krzysztof Wodiczko and Ian de Gruchy, Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley, and Lynette Wallworth that explore aspects of Australia's colonial, Indigenous and migrant histories.

The aim of my studio work and its account in the exegesis has been to examine how issues of place and loss of place can be addressed through my visual and media arts practice. My work has formed around the interrelationship of terms such as location/dislocation, memory/site, identity/loss of identity and what is visible/invisible. I have explored the intersections of personal and cultural histories, a sense of home and belonging as an individual and with particular Australian communities through media arts installation, site specific performance, video and photographic works.

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## Australian Media Arts: in this place

## Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine a series of Australian media art installations that discuss issues of place and the loss of place. Through analysing these works I argue that the use of media technologies invites the viewer to experience a connection to and greater understanding of place and Australian histories of colonisation and migration. In the case of Krzysztof Wodiczko and Ian de Gruchy's *Humpy* and Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley's *Edge of the Trees* by revealing the particular layered history of a site. Lynette Wallworth*'s Evolution of Fearlessness* focuses on the individual stories of contemporary mainly migrant women within the Australian community. These stories of place and individual lives allow us to examine our own relationship to place and the social, economic and political forces prompting colonisation and migration.

A series of academic accounts of national media arts practice have traced the evolution of the field and explore a particular period, the technologies that emerged, artists who explored these technologies and their works that articulate this exploration. Artists as well as the exhibitions and institutions that were important within the national landscape over a particular time have been explored. Recent Australian examples include Darren Tofts's *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* in which key Australian artists and the thematic concepts underpinning their work are explored over a relatively short fifteen-year period from the early 1990s to mid 2004.[1]

Stephen Jones, in his recent book *Synthetics; aspects of art and technology in Australia, 1956 – 1975* covers the early Australian pioneers working with technology from the inception of computers in Australia around 1951.[2] These artists explored what Jones terms "the rolling new". He writes: "New technologies continually arise, providing new and interesting opportunities for artists, establishing art and technology as a form that is constantly renewed and regenerated." [3]

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1    Darren Tofts, *Interzone: media arts in Australia / Darren Tofts*  (Fishermans Bend, Vic.: Craftsman House, 2005).
2    Stephen Jan Jones, *Synthetics: aspects of art and technology in Australia, 1956-1975* Leonardo Series (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), 1.
3    ibid., 6.

Internationally *White Heat Cold Logic* examines the beginnings of computer art's practice in the United Kingdom, starting with the influential exhibition of 1956 *This is Tomorrow* held in Whitechapel Art Gallery in London.[4] In *This is Tomorrow* cross- disciplinary teams of artists, architects, designers and theorists, drawn from the Independent Group of artists associated with the newly established *Institute of Contemporary Arts,* worked to respond to advances in technology, communications and media.[5] While many of the artists in this group did not use computers to make art works in this exhibition or in subsequent works their interest in technology and its surrounding discourses supported the development of British Computer Art.[6]

What is common in these recent accounts of media art histories is a tracing of the relationship between the artists and the technologies that afforded their explorations within a national framework. What I aim to do is something different; I intend to locate a small subset of Australian media art works that talk about key issues pertinent to Australian cultural identity, namely colonisation, the displacement of the First Australians and the ongoing effects of loss of place also experienced in a broader sense through migration. These are issues that have affected and I believe speak to all Australians regardless of whether they are Indigenous, 6th generation or 1st generation, or recently arrived migrants. Of course these issues also have relevance to other postcolonial nations where a colonising group has displaced First Nations peoples and subsequent waves of post-war migration have occurred.

In selecting these works I am conscious that whilst they increase our knowledge and understanding of place, of what it means 'to be here now' they are at the same time speaking about loss of place. *Humpy* speaks of the displacement of the First Australians from their 'country' to the fringes of the colonists' settlements. *Edge of the Trees* positions the viewer at the moment of contact between Indigenous Australians and the colonisers as the First Fleet drew up on the beach at Botany Bay and the Eora people looked out from 'the edge of the trees'.[7] The work also references the convict experience through naming the people of the First Fleet and so also references the loss of place experienced by the colonisers arriving in

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4    Paul Brown, *White heat cold logic: British computer art 1960-1980 / edited by Paul Brown [et al.],* Leonardo Series (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008), 2.

5    Ibid., 2.

6    Ibid., 3.

7    Peter Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees: a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*  (Glebe NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2000), 1.

an unknown alien land and in the case of convicts being displaced forcibly from their mother country. *Evolution of Fearlessness* speaks of loss of place through modern war, conflict and the legacy of colonisation by presenting the stories and video portraits of eleven mainly migrant women who are born in countries such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and El Salvador and are now living in Australia, in addition to two stories from women born in Australia.

*Humpy* discussed in Chapter 1 is an architectural projection collaboration between Polish-American artist Krzysztof Wodiczko and Australian artist Ian de Gruchy undertaken in the significant year of Australia's Bicentennial 1988. *Edge of the Trees* dealt with in Chapter 2 *is* a collaborative work by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley created for the opening of the Museum of Sydney in 1995; built on the site of the first government house. *Evolution of Fearlessness* discussed in Chapter 3 is an interactive video installation by Lynette Wallworth shown at the Melbourne International Arts Festival in 2008, Sydney Festival in 2010 and which premiered internationally in 2006.

I describe and frame these works as 'media installations'. By describing them as media installations I place them within the context of media art works that operate within a spatial context. In these particular works media projected onto an architectural surface for example re-animates the building with a new textural surface or skin and alters our reading of it spatially and temporally. Sound and light embedded within a sculptural form create an installation to enter into be encompassed by and immersed within. A video portrait presented on a 1:1 scale amplifies our feeling of being in the presence of the subject. This is media art that moves away from a "computerised" screen aesthetic that inserts media into actual environments creating an uncanny slippage between the actual and the virtual, allowing a new reading of the present through alluding to the past.

In the case of *Edge of the Trees* the artists or commissioning institution did not intend the work as "media art", indeed at that time in the early 1990s the term media art was not in use.[8] The work was instead conceived as 'a permanent sculptural installation, with sound and light' and in the concept brief, prepared by curator Peter Emmet, the envisioned work is described as "not something to look at in architectural space, but something to enter/engage. It has depth. It is installation not object. It demands engagement through the physicality of place and

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8      Tofts, *Interzone : media arts in Australia / Darren Tofts*: 8.

sensory engagement/interaction."[9] The completed work allows this spatial interaction with sound, material, form and light. For these reasons I include it within this discussion of "media installations".

*Edge of the Trees* and *Humpy* allow contemplation of the place in which the viewer is situated in both physical and historical terms. The site of *Edge of the Trees* was once a highly significant place, Australia's first permanent European building. It was also Governor Phillip's house and offices which had by 1968 become a non-place, a car park, the original footings of the building sealed over with bitumen not to be revealed again until an archaeological dig in 1983.

*Humpy,* an architectural projection work *by* Krzysztof Wodiczko and Ian de Gruchy, was shown over three nights during the 1988 Adelaide Festival, the year of the Australian Bicentennial. Through multiple projections onto the roof planes of the Festival Centre's exterior, the building was visually transformed into a humpy structure fashioned from iron sheeting, as occupied by the Indigenous first people of Australia in some Aboriginal settlements around Australia both in the past and in some cases to the present day. The site of the Festival Centre "Pinky Flat" was once an Aboriginal settlement and the history of the site is a key motivation in the works creation.[10]

In the Bicentennial year where the colonisation of Australia was both widely celebrated and protested, Wodiczko and de Gruchy's act of projecting a "Humpy" onto a key cultural building is an act of remembering, amidst the haze of the party, the displacement and disenfranchisement of Indigenous Australians in the processes of building a 'modern nation'. The trauma of colonisation has caused a fracturing and forgetting of Indigenous culture and language in generations of Indigenous Australians. In *Trauma Trails* Judy Atkinson traces the effects of Indigenous contact with colonial settlers in the period 1860 - 1930, mapping the results of intergenerational trauma into the present day. She draws comparisons between the trans-generational transmission of trauma in the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps and Aboriginal experiences of the transfer of trauma.[11]

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9   Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees : a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 35.
10  Ian de Gruchy, "Art Projection," http://www.artprojection.com.au/.
11  Judy Atkinson, *Trauma trails, recreating song lines: the transgenerational effects of trauma in Indigenous Australia*  (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2002).

*Evolution of Fearlessness* unveils the personal stories and histories of women, mostly political refuges living in Australia who have survived trauma through war, racism and acts of extreme violence. The women are presented in a life-size video portrait in which they approach the viewer and raise their hands in in a gesture referencing the Buddhist posture, the '*abhaya mudra'* which represents benevolence and the absence of fear: "The gesture is made with the right hand raised to shoulder height, arm bent, and palm facing outward."[12] The women do not speak their stories directly to us; rather, they are presented indirectly in a written form via a bound sheaf of papers. And the stories are read independently from interacting with their video portraits.

On viewing the work at the Sydney Festival in 2010 I noted that while the stories were shared they were at the same time dislocated from the video portraits of the women who had experienced these events. They were shared stories that were ordinarily concealed within the body and memory of the women. Having a sense of who these women were and what they had lived through via this small sample of political refugees gave one insight into the experiences represented in the greater migrant population of Australia including post-war migrants from Europe to recent migrants from the Middle East and Africa. In bearing witness to these women through reading their story and viewing, interacting with their portrait on a one-to-one scale there was a revelation of individual history through which one could better contemplate a section of the community who are visible, yet whose stories are ordinarily invisible.

*Humpy, Edge of the Trees* and *Evolution of Fearlessness* map memories of the loss of place, home and identity and what it is to survive this trauma. Whilst media technologies such as the Internet, wireless technology and smart phones have increased the speed of communication and contribute to an increasing feeling of speed in the everyday and of being in more than one place at a time. The art works discussed here use media technologies of large scale projection, sound and light embedded within sculpture and large scale touch screens to communicate subtle layers of information about particular places and particular people. They are works of located media, located in a particular site, located within a particular culture. The works reveal absences of what was once here, an Indigenous culture, a story of the brutality of colonisation and the beginnings of a nation, the trauma of a moment, a point in time, held in the memory

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12  Forma, "Lynette Wallworth - Sundance Film Festival," http://www.forma.org.uk/archive/2009/
    exhibitions/lynette-wallworth-sundance-film-festival.exhibitions/lynette-wallworth-sundance
    -film-festival.

of an individual, a story of being pushed out of one's place, out of one's body and surviving to tell the story in the present.

As an Australian media artist I am drawn to analyse works that deal with themes close to my sense of self. As a fifth generation white Australian with convict and free settler ancestors and Indigenous members in my extended family contemplating what it means to be in this place, what forces have brought us here and what forces bring others here builds upon my sense of identity and offers me insight into what it means to inhabit this place and make work as an artist here.

The selected works are important because while they unearth unpleasant difficult histories they offer spaces for critical reflection.  Stories of loss of place are a continuing concern with global and national populations increasing; space becomes more contested. The spectre and scale of loss of place caused by climate change is an unfolding story.  Both Wallworth and Laurence explore the interconnections between loss of place and environmental loss in their practices. Whilst the three selected media art works span over the course of more than 20 years the themes embedded in the work resonate with the issues of the second decade of the 21st century and will continue into the foreseeable future. As the themes of Indigenous loss of place, the spectre of mass loss of place through climate change and our ongoing relationship to the environment have become perceived as being more intertwined.

## Chapter 1 - *Humpy* an early Australian architectural projection by artists Ian de Gruchy and Krzysztof Wodiczko

### A prehistory

*Humpy* is an early Australian media art installation that continues to hold resonance 24 years on from its temporary presence at the Adelaide Festival. While large scale outdoor projections are now a common form, in the 1980s this new medium was being developed by pioneering artists such as Polish American artist Krzysztof Wodiczko and Australian artist Ian de Gruchy who collaborated for a seven year period. While I did not experience the work at the time I came across it in the documentation and archival record of de Gruchy and Wodiczko's individual practices and from this electronic and paper record the work has come to life in my mind and stayed with me. To understand its potency I have interrogated its location/ site; the historical moment in which it emerged Australia's Bicentennial and the collaborative and solo practices of the artists who created it. I examine the way it draws from both traditional Australian Indigenous architecture and how it foregrounds contemporary architectural works where media is embedded in the architectural form of a building or media becomes an embedded electronic skin. I will also discuss how the work intersects and relates to works by contemporary Australian artists who comment on the ongoing politics of the nation's colonial legacy.

 In subject matter *Humpy* explores Australian history and identity and the ongoing uncanny moments of post-colonial identity. In it we experience an embodied mediated experience of a particular place in which a no longer visible history of the site is made visible. In the dialogue about the particularities of place a wider narrative of Indigenous loss of place and the ongoing politics of this loss of place is uncovered.

There are uncomfortable silences and aspects to this work in both its subject matter and form. The dispossession of Indigenous Australians from their particular countries and ongoing Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships to place arises in the work. As an early form of media art installation it was critically ignored at the time. There are also questions to be addressed about ownership and authorship in a collaboration between International and Australian artists.

From 1968 when prominent Australian anthropologist WEH Stanner identified 'the great Australian silence' identifying the structural gap in historical discourse about the relationship between 'ourselves and aborigines' the debate about what happened between coloniser and colonised in terms of frontier conflict and relationships between Aborigines and settlers has developed.[1] In 2003 historian Tim Rowse questioned the focus of that debate saying:

> …it is arguable that the current controversy about the extent and
> causes of frontier violence does not matter much because it is
> incidental to the really important story that indigenous people lost
> ownership and sovereignty without ever consenting to that loss.
> I want to suggest that the grounds for Indigenous grievence rest on that
> uncontradicted story, not on any particular account of…colonial settlement.[2]

Historians such as Peter Read have delved into Australian's sense of place, belonging and loss of place[3] set against the backdrop of Indigenous dispossession and loss of place. In *Belonging*[4] he asks, "How can we non-Indigenous Australians justify our continuous presence and our love for this country while the Indigenous people remain dispossessed and their history unacknowledged?"[5] It's a difficult question, one he explores in conversation with Australians of varied backgrounds and with reference to the work of Australian artists, poets and writers and also personally through his sense of place and attachment to the Northern Beaches of Sydney/ the Gai-mariagal country of his friend Dennis Foley.

1   S. G. Foster, Bain Attwood, and Australia National Museum of, *Frontier conflict: the Australian experience / edited by Bain Attwood and S G Foster* (Canberra : National Museum of Australia: 2003), 1.
2   Ibid., 23.
3   Peter Read, *Returning to nothing : the meaning of lost places* (Cambridge ; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
4   ———, *Belonging : Australians, place and Aboriginal ownership* (Cambridge ; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
5   Ibid., 1.
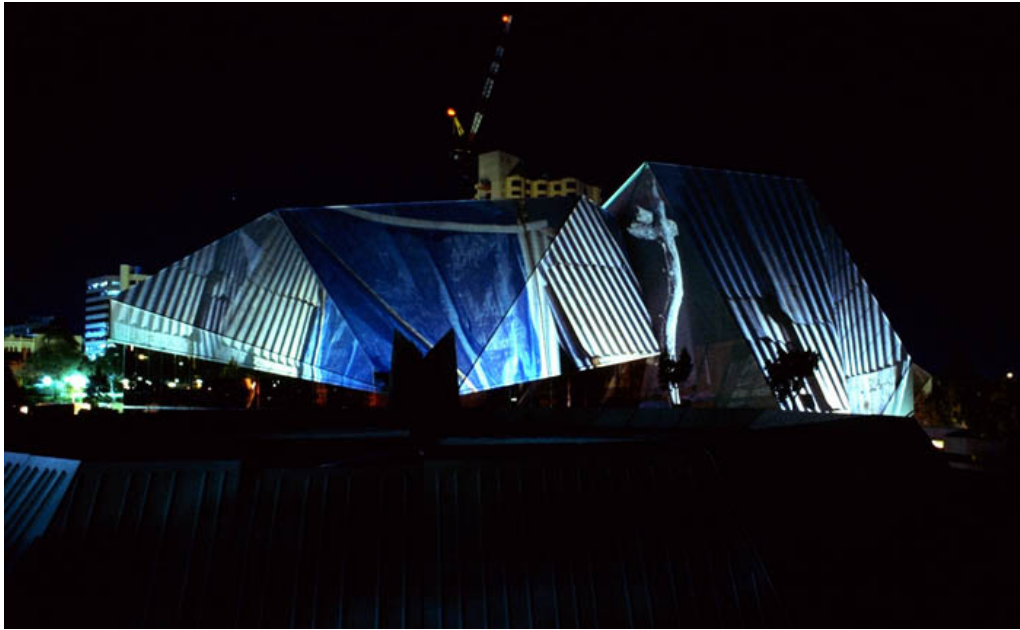
Fig. 1. Krzysztof Wodiczko and Ian de Gruchy, *Humpy*

In the year of the Bicentennial there were protests around the country, reiterating an ongoing annual contest of competing perspectives, Australia Day/ Invasion Day commemorated each year on the 26th of January, the day the First Fleet landed on the shores of Botany Bay. The Bicentennial celebrations focused on a reenactment of the landing of the tall ships of the first fleet performed in Sydney Harbour to a crowd estimated at 2 million.[6] In opposition to the notion that Australia was only discovered 200 years ago and not occupied by Aboriginal groups for 40,000 years prior to the establishment of the British colony the Aboriginal flag was flown at Mrs Macquarie's point on Sydney Harbour and at other locations around the city. A large scale protest of more than 40,000 people, including Aborigines from across the country, and non-Indigenous supporters marched through Sydney and rallied in Hyde Park in what was the largest march in Sydney since the Vietnam moratorium.[7] The slogan 'white Australia has a black history' was used in the protests,[8] pointing out the short view of white history privileged in the celebrations.

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6    "1988: The Bicentenary," National Australia Day Council, http://www.australiaday.org.au/australia-day/history/1988-the-bicentenary.aspx.

7    "Indigenous Protest, 1988 Australian Bicentenary," Museum Victoria, http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/themes/2835/indigenous-protest-1988-australian-bicentenary.

8    For a comparative account of the media coverage in the Sydney Morning Herald of the Bicentennial and 1938 Sesquicentenary celebrations see Gary Foley, "The Sydney Morning Herald and Representation of the 1988 Bicentennial," The Koori History Website, http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/15182/20050125-0000/www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/essay_11.html.

Fig. 2. City of Sydney Archives, Mrs Macquarie's Point Australia Day 1988 and Aboriginal Flag

## Site and history

*Humpy* is set against this scene of Indigenous loss of place and Australians' questioning of their relationship to place during the Bicentennial year. In this year marking 200 years of European colonisation/occupation a significant collaboration between Polish-American artist Krzysztof Wodiczko and Australian artist Ian de Gruchy occurred, resulting in the temporary architectural projection work *Humpy.* It was created for the Visual Arts Program of the Adelaide Festival and over a five night period projected onto the Festival Centre building.[9]

Ian de Gruchy's description of the project states that the festival centre was built over an Indigenous settlement and that the work was created to highlight this fact. [10] An Indigenous camp, which would have later evolved into a town camp as Adelaide developed, existed on the site. It was known as *Pinky Flats* and was a favored camping and hunting ground for possum, water fowl and other game.[11] *Pinky Flats* was also a favourite drinking spot during the Depression for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The site name is possibly derived

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9   On alternate nights de Gruchy projected a less politically charged and historically positioned solo work based on his reading of the building as landscape. In this work textural close-up images of the rocks of the Flinder's Ranges, close to the city of Adelaide were projected onto the surfaces and planes of the Festival roof rendering the building as landscape.
10  Ian de Gruchy, "Humpy," http://www.artprojection.com.au/html/urban.htm.
11  The University of Adelaide, "Tarndanya Womma," The University of Adelaide, http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/placenames/council/areas/map26.html.

from pingko 'bilby' in Kaurna the Indigenous language spoken in Adelaide up until 1929, or from 'pinky' a colloquial term for cheap red wine.[12] On choosing the site de Gruchy drew on his local knowledge as an Adelaide resident.

> I was well aware that Pinky Flat was a site of original settlement.
> When you live in Adelaide long enough you know what the history
> of the Torrens is, ..it's a beautiful spot along the river and it was
> always known as Pinky Flat and that had a resonance for me. The
> work was about turning a high culture site into a memory of its past
> and drew stark treatment to the people who had lived on Pinky Flat.[13]

Pinky Flats is one of the few Indigenous place names to have survived in Adelaide.[14] To counter this, in 1997 the Adelaide Council developed a reconciliation policy which has seen the dual Kaurna naming of all city park lands and squares by 2003.[15] Tarndanya Womma (meaning  tarnda 'red kangaroo' + kanya 'rock') or Adelaide plain/oval includes the site of Pinky Flats[16] Adelaide was of course founded in 1836 by free settlers rather than the earlier convict settlements of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and one year later Moreton Bay (Queensland). While there was an intention in the establishment of the colony to pursue a new approach to the treatment of Aboriginal people much of the earlier frontier violence continued.[17]

Designed by architect John Morphett[18] the Festival building at Elder Park overlooking the river Torrens was built over the period 1970-1973 on the site of Pinky Flats. The distinctive white geometric triangulated dome roofs of the centre provided a unique projection surface for the

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12  ———, "Kaurna Warra Pintyandi / Kaurna Language in the City of Adelaide,"
    The University of Adelaide, http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/projects/language/.
13  Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
14  Adelaide, "Kaurna Warra Pintyandi / Kaurna Language in the City of Adelaide".
15  Adelaide City Council, "Place Naming Initiatives," Adelaide City Council, http://www.adelaide.edu.
    au/kwp/placenames/council/#background.
16  ———, "Tarndanya Womma," http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/placenames/council/areas/map26.
    html.
17  Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck, Out of the silence : the history and memory of South
    Australia's frontier wars / Robert Foster and Amanda Nettelbeck  (Kent Town, S. Aust.: Wakefield
    Press).
18  Morphett was a founding member of the Hassel Group. Adelaide Festival Centre,
    "Adelaide Festival Centre History,"  http://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au/afc/history.php.

artists; de Gruchy describes the building as Adelaide's answer to the Opera House with the knowledge that it had opened some months before the Opera House.[19] The triangulated white dome roofs of the building recall the white sails of Utzon's Sydney Opera House. de Gruchy describes the building as "form following function" with its skin following the shells of the concert hall and theatres. Having an "unspectacular surface" it was a prefect surface to temporarily reconfigure the buildings architectural form though projected images.[20] In Wodiczko and deGruchy's projected humpy, the triangular peaked roof of the festival centre is visually matched with the triangular peaked shape of a makeshift humpy's roof supported by a twisted tree trunk that is used as structural frame for the dwelling's entry.



Fig. 3. Wolfgang Sievers, *Exterior view with a person on the steps of Festival Hall*

19   Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
20   Ibid.

Fig. 4. Krzysztof Wodiczko and Ian de Gruchy, *Humpy*

## Collaboration

*Humpy* is an interesting tale of collaborative practice and illustrates some of the practicalities of getting a media work of this nature off the ground in the late 1980s when architectural projection was a relatively new art form. An international artist like Wodiczko was needed to attract funding and interest in the project in Australia. As a pioneer in the field of architectural projection Wodiczko had connections to Australia and an established collaborative relationship with Adelaide artist Ian de Gruchy who was also working in this field. To unpack the interwoven nature of the artists' practices over their period of collaboration between 1982 and 1989 I will give a chronological account. I also intend to clarify some errors in the historical record to do with the year of the work and the nature of the collaboration between the two artists.

Wodiczko and de Gruchy met while Wodiczko was in residence at the Adelaide School of Art in1981.[21] de Gruchy had a studio on Rundle Street in Adelaide and Wodiczko, who worked with the same medium of projection, visited him there. de Gruchy gave him use of his studio while he was in Sydney to work  on, *Light Mural,* an AV slide work for the Sydney Festival Club

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21   Known at the time as the South Australian College of Advanced Education, it later became the Adelaide School of Art.

which Wodiczko saw. From this series of meetings and connections de Gruchy went onto to assist Wodiczko in his 1982 Sydney Biennale work and so began a seven-year period of collaboration.[22]

Relatively early in his career Wodiczko exhibited in Australia at the 1979 Sydney Biennale. During his residency in Adelaide in 1981-1982 he produced a number of works projecting onto the War Memorial and also notably the Festival Centre Complex during the Adelaide Festival in 1982. His projection onto the Festival Centre was shown in conjunction with a solo exhibition *Poetics of Authority* at the Gallery of South Australian College of Advanced Education.[23]
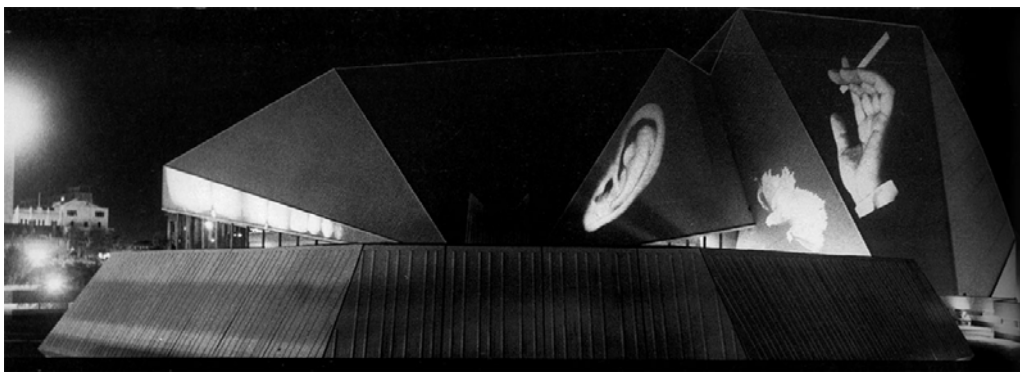


Fig. 5. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Projection on Adelaide Festival Centre*

These large scale projection works in Australia occurred relatively early in Wodiczko's practice of architectural projections which began in 1981; they included the Scotia Towers Projection in Halifax Canada; MIT projection in Boston and the School of Architecture Projection in Halifax, Canada. All of these utilised slides of expressive hands projected onto buildings, thus temporarily personifying the building. Prior to these works Wodiczko produced interior slide projection pieces, including *References*, 1977 where viewers triggered slide projections with a key board projecting cultural and historical images onto canvasses inscribed with vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines. The images were of stock political photographs and sections of official architecture.[24] This relationship between politics and the inherent ideology hidden within monuments and official architecture would later become clearer in Wodiczko's practice.

22  The artists worked together on projects overseas in 1984 including the  AT&T Building projection, New York, The Venice Projections for the Venice Biennale1986, and would go onto work with him in 1989 for the work *Exit Art* in New York.

23  A broad review of Wodiczko's practice was published in Artlink at the time of his residency at Adelaide CAE entitled *Krzysztof Wodiczko in Adelaide.*

24  Duncan McCorquodale, ed. *Krzysztof Wodiczko* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2011), 22.

There are some differences in the date and authorship of *Humpy* as described by Wodiczko and de Gruchy in documentation for the work. In the book *Public Address* co-authored by Wodiczko it is dated 1985[25] and does not acknowledge the assistance of de Gruchy. The publication notes that the work was created at Wodiczko's behest but in his absence.[26] De Gruchy places it in 1988 and describes the work as a collaboration with Wodiczko.[27] Dating it in 1985 of course misses placing the work in its proper historical context as having been created in the charged Bicentennial year of 1988. Wodiczko states that he was "absolutely not in control of this publication", *Public Address* published by the Walker Arts Centre. There was a lack of communication between the curatorial and publishing department at the centre which "contributed to an enormous amount of mistakes" in this particular publication.[28] Apart from the printed record, in conversation the artists are in agreement the work was a collaboration driven by de Gruchy.[29] Wodiczko hopes to correct these errors of dating and the collaborative partnership with de Gruchy in future survey publications if more eventuate.

Wodiczko states that this project differed to prior projects where de Gruchy had acted as his assistant:

> I think it should be much more clear that it was complete full
> artistic collaboration this project. It was not that he was assisting
> me, although he might have thought this way, maybe because of
> the kind of regiment mode which we used to work for all those
> years. It seemed to be like yet another project that continues the same
> type of relationship, but I think it was different.[30]

Wodiczko said that the issue of Indigenous displacement and disadvantage was very much on his mind during his time in Adelaide in 1981 - 1982 although he did articulate this concern in his

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25   Krzysztof Wodiczko et al., *Public address: Krzysztof Wodiczko*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1992), 93.
26   Ibid.
27   Ian de Gruchy, "Art Projection," http://www.artprojection.com.au/.
28   Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Canberra: 2012).
29   Ibid.
30   bid.

work during this period.[31] He remembers that during the Adelaide Festival of 1982 there was an Indigenous protest on the grounds of the festival that disrupted the festive atmosphere with a sound performance; reminding audiences of the prior Indigenous occupancy of the site.[32]

de Gruchy has said that he was inspired to make the work after seeing photographs of makeshift humpy structures from the Central Australian communities of Yundemu and Papanya photographed by friend and fellow artist Dave Kerr.[33] de Gruchy used these photographs as reference material.[34] On a trip to New York he proposed the project to Wodiczko to assist in getting it off the ground in terms of funding and support and to add the 'gravitas' of Wodiczko's name to the project.[35] Wodiczko agreed to collaborate on the project using the reference images provided by deGruchy to draw up the work.



Fig. 6. David Kerr, Images given to Ian de Gruchy used as reference *for Humpy*

However Wodiczko was delayed with the visualization. In the meantime de Gruchy went ahead with photographing onto slide the elements of the piece, shooting corrugated iron sheets, timber and pole supports and assembling the work as a whole. Wodiczko's visualization arrived the day after de Gruchy had completed the work and yet was remarkably similar to what de Gruchy had created. de Gruchy accredited this to their years of collaboration and mutual influence.[36] On this point Wodiczko responded that he enjoyed seeing the documentation of the completed work enormously[37] and that is was very close to what he had also envisaged.

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31  Ibid.
32  Ibid.
33  Kerr was working at the Adelaide Museum at the time.
34  Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
35  Ibid.
36  Ibid.
37  Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Canberra: 2012).

I am sure that it will be not that different because we learn how so
well to work together. Even if I was there I would probably add a few
things and maybe our conversations would add a few things but it will
be basically the same project.[38]



Fig. 7. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Humpy* visualisation image

What marks this work in terms of Wodiczko's ongoing practice is that the building is not
treated anthropomorphically but instead architecturally reskinned. Through projected image
the building is re-clad with galvanized sheet, tarpaulins and other makeshift materials.

de Gruchy also noted that this project differs from Wodiczk's usual practice where generally the
building is equated with the body: "All of his other projects use building as body and the hands
become gesture but this one; all of sudden the building becomes wrapped which is much
more my signature."[39] On this point I agree with de Gruchy and see this project as more closely
related to de Gruchy's continuing body of work and practice.

In response to these comments about *Humpy,* Wodiczco noted that it was possible that
de Gruchy had helped him push his work in this direction and noted an important shift in his
thinking came on the project *Victory Column Projection*, 1983 located in Stuttgart, Germany.[40]

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38   Ibid.
39   Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
40   Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Canberra: 2012).

This project came soon after he began collaborating with de Gruchy in 1982. The projection marked the first time that Wodiczco projected an object; a Pershing 2 nuclear equipped missile. The projection on the Victory Column commented on the East German, Christian Democrats' re-election campaign in which promises were made to deploy these particular missiles in striking distance of West German cities.[41] Reflecting on this particular project Wodiczco said, "In some ways I realised that bodily animation, bringing life to those monuments doesn't necessarily require a reference to living organisms you know, it could also be something else."[42]

**Wodiczko**

Wodiczko is best known for his large-scale works of projected media onto building facades and monuments for which he received international acclaim in the 1980s. Perhaps lesser known is his work with wearable technologies, including *Personal Instrument*, 1966, *Alien Staff,* 1992-1996, *Mouthpiece,* 1993, *Dis-Armour* ,1999-2001 and his mobile vehicle projects beginning with *Vehicle,* 1971-1973, *Vehicle Podium,* 1977-1979, *Homeless Vehicle Project* 1988-1989, *Poliscar,* 1991 also for homeless people, and *War Vetran Vehicle,* 2008. In these, themes of displacement, dislocation, and disempowerment are redressed through mediated environments, wearable media and mobile vehicle structures, some of which are embedded with communications technologies to assist information gathering, connection and survival.

Wodiczko's work can be linked to the oppression wrought on the individual by the forces of Communist rule. Critic Andrez Turowski maps the political climate and its relationship to the Polish artistic landscape in which Wodiczko emerged. He frames Wodiczko's work as being born out of historical reflection and the context of Poland in the 1970s where communist one-party rule was in place and lasted until 1989.[43] In 1968 Wodiczko graduated with an MFA in Industrial

Design from the Academy of Fine Arts Warsaw, in the same year student protests to defend political and artistic freedom and oppose censorship were held. They began at the University of Warsaw, spread to other universities throughout Poland, causing a brutal backlash by the government against students and the intelligentsia.

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41  McCorquodale, *Krzysztof Wodiczko*, 58. *The Memorial Hall Projection*, Dayton United States, 1983, followed soon after the *Victory Column Projection* and also used the slide of the Pershing missiles.
42   Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Canberra: 2012).
43   Wodiczko et al., *Public address: Krzysztof Wodiczko*: 28.

Wodiczko is both an emigre from the forces of Fascism and a child of survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943,[44] the first urban uprising of Jewish people against German occupied Europe. He has said of his background:

> I was born during the war and grew up after the war and we saw all the
> consequences of this kind of environment for children...displacement that
> was part of my early years of my life after the war which was basically not
> having much of anything stable. Period. Destroyed families, destroyed everything.[45]

He sees the issues of displacement, migration and homelessness as being interconnected with war[46] and has explored these issues in his work. Although he does not see that his personal history or experiences give him any particular dispensation to create work about these matters.[47]

In 1977 he left Poland and moved to Toronto, Canada where he undertook positions as a visiting professor, visiting artist and participated in various group and solo shows. Wodiczko has remained a Polish expatriate based in the United States since 1986, teaching at MIT from 1991 before becoming Emeritus Professor 2002 - 2010. He is now Professor of Art Design and the Public Domain at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University and Head of the Interrogative Design Group from 2010. As an immigrant Wodiczko experienced hardships and difficulties common to many migrants.

> Of course displacement was part of my life as an immigrant, in
> a more psychological level, a physical level, an economical level
> for sure no matter how privileged I was as an artist. I lived without
> heat, without electricity many times and without documents and
> proper papers, and crossing the borders and endless cues in
> immigration departments as you know there are no immigration
> departments there are only anti-immigration departments.[48]

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44  McCorquodale, *Krzysztof Wodiczko*, 8.
45  Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Canberra: 2012).
46  Ibid.
47  Ibid.
48  Ibid.

Through many strategies Wodiczko's work has given voice to disenfranchised groups who have experienced trauma and loss and become dispersed to the fringes of society; migrants, the homeless, war veterans, people affected by domestic violence and drug abuse.



Fig. 8. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Bunker Hill Monument Projection*

His work with marginalized groups includes the Irish-Catholic Charlestown, Boston community in the *Bunker Hill Monument Projection*, 1988. The community afflicted by under-employment, poverty, drug and gang violence had the highest murder rate in the city in which Wodiczko worked, with many of the murders remaining unsolved under an entrenched code of silence.[49] Video portraits of murder victims' family members were projected onto the monument built to commemorate a lost battle in the struggle for independence against English colonial power.

In these projected portraits mothers and sons gave voice to the loss and trauma caused by the cycle of violence with no justice enacted to resolve the crimes.

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49   McCorquodale, *Krzysztof Wodiczko*, 269.

Wodiczko's earlier works in Adelaide and Sydney utilised fragmented body parts projected via slide onto discreet planes of the building. Using the unified form of the building the viewer visually fills in the gaps, reading the building as the upper torso of the body. The series of images of body parts strategically anthropomorphises the building; projected ears, arms and hands cast the building as a monstrous political/institutional body. In his projection onto the Art Gallery of NSW the classic Ionic entry to the building implies a head with ears projected on either side and a frown projected onto the building's pediment while hands open, grasping and closing into fists symbolise the aggression of be-suited corporate institutional power. According to Wodiczko, the aim of his projection was to create the illusion of an 'architectural body' – the building being both animated and haunted by the powerful 'body of artistic authority'.[50]

Wodiczko has also said the work was created in solidarity for the cause of Australian artists exhibiting at the 1982 Biennale who were protesting against the lack of a formal artist agreement protecting their moral rights and who were not provided with a fee for participating in the exhibition.[51]

In his projection onto the Adelaide Festival Building in 1982, a site of the performance of high culture is anthropomorphised and subverted to become a consumer of high culture. Projected teeth above a window plane suggest a gaping mouth ready to draw the viewer into its maw. Sensory objects, a cigarette held by a suited man with a flower in his lapel button signify a consumer of high culture. An out of scale projected ear furthers the notion of the building as body. Through the sensory act of listening the body is drawn into dialogue with this institutionalised culture machine.

The strategy of anthropomorphizing the building for political intent is one that Wodiczko used in many other projections in the 1980s, and in 1999 for the *Hiroshima Projection* where the hands and voices of Hiroshima survivors were projected onto the Atomic Bomb Memorial Dome, Hiroshima. In this work survivor's hands were projected at the foot of the building and the tower and dome of the building become the personified torso and head of the survivor. The body of the survivor therefore becomes a public body embodying and personifying the witnesses and survivors of a war atrocity on a previously unheralded scale.

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50   Ibid., 54.
51   Ibid.

Fig. 9. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Hiroshima Projection*

From the pioneering projection work of Wodiczko we can draw parallels with contemporary media artists such as Mexican/Canadian artist Raphael Lozano Hemmer who uses grand volumes of public space and large-scale projection and light works, particularly in his *Relational Architecture Series*. Hemmer is less of a politically-driven artist. However in *Relational Architecture* 15 *Voz Alta, 2008* there is a connection with Wodiczko's work in giving voice to a moment of trauma and political brutality. The work was commissioned to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Tlatelolco student massacre. Located at the site of the massacre, *Plaza de las Tres Culturas,* a megaphone converted amplified live voices of witnesses/survivors of the massacre; students, neighbours, journalists, ex-soldiers policemen and children into a searchlight that responded to the inflections of the participant's voice, beaming and relaying the searchlight in a 15 km radius around Mexico City. People around the city could tune into an FM radio station and hear the voices rendered audible via invisible frequency.[52]

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52   Raphael Lozano Hemmer, http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/voz_alta.php.

**de Gruchy**

Ian de Gruchy was born in South Africa in 1952, migrating to Australia in 1962 with his family at the age of 10. He initially studied architecture, following in the footsteps of his father who taught architecture at the University of Queensland, but decided that it was not the career for him.[53] de Gruchy moved to train at the South Australian School of Art and graduated in 1976 with a Diploma in Fine Art and later went on to obtain a Masters of Arts from the Department of Architecture and Design at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in 1996.[54]

Evident in de Gruchy's work is his early encounters with architectural practice. In works such as *Transfomations*, 2004 the once present ornate federation verandahs on the Perth Hotel are accurately remapped onto the building, becoming visible one again through projected line and light. In *Humpy* the angled planes of the building are mapped with the textures and planes of a composited suite of still images rendered at a convincing scale.

Since the early 1980s de Gruchy has established a national and international profile working in the field of media/visual/performative arts with large scale still and moving projected images for interior and exterior environments. He has worked in a range of contexts including temporary public art and projection for theatre, dance and commissions for public and private events. He has also maintained a teaching practice at the department of Architecture and Design at RMIT and also in New Media Arts at the Swinburne University of Technology over the period 1990 - 2002.

Collaboration with visual and sound artists has been a feature of his practice. In addition to working with Wodiczko he has collaborated with American artist Barbara Kruger, both in Australia and overseas, and with Tasmanian artist Leigh Hobba to mention some of his collaborative partners.

A collaborative work of de Gruchy's, *Transformed, is* closest in theme to *Humpy*. It was commissioned for the millennium celebrations in 1999 and projected onto Melbourne Town Hall over a three-week period. The millennium was a key historical moment of reflection, similar in this regard, to the bicentennial. At the moment of the millennium audiences were

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53   Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
54   ———, "Art Projection".

looking simultaneously back at the past and into the future of Australian history and gathering a national sense of identity through the process of reflection. In this large-scale projection work, *Transformed*, de Gruchy employed archival and created media to visualise key moments in the city and nation's history: settlement, Australia's involvement in the World Wars and the hanging of Ned Kelly at Melbourne Gaol.[55] Products of Australian industry and ingenuity, such as the first Holden car, and the Australian invention of the Hills Hoist outdoor clothes line were also included in the montage of media images.

> Tall ships and ancient maps gave way to images of suburbia, the
> city and transportation. Icons of the twentieth century recurred, underlining
> the progressive thrust of capitalism, whilst images of Indigenous culture and symbols
> of reconciliation punctuated the screen.[56]

In a segment of the work entitled *Sea of Hands* de Gruchy invited Aboriginal visual artist Donna Brown to collaborate with him. Melbourne's Indigenous history was addressed through the image of  handprints representing the many hands of reconciliation overlaid with the names of tribal groups from the Melbourne area. They were temporarily re-inscribed into the sandstone surface of the town hall with their presence. de Gruchy came to Brown with the notion of the sea of hands and Brown added the idea of overlaying the names of tribal groups from the local area.[57] de Gruchy had drawn the notion of the sea of hands from reconciliation events[58] where the hand print motif was used to suggest both a ground-swell of people in support of reconciliation and also the ancient cultural marker of Indigenous presence. The hand print motif was later used as a visual symbol of the Corroboree 2000 Sydney Harbour Bridge walk for reconciliation that saw 250,000 people walk across the iconic shores of Sydney Harbour as an act of reconciliation.[59]

55    Siobhan McNabb, "Light Play With Critical Projections," *Switch Magazine* 2002.
56    Anne Marsh, "Magic Screens and Digital Projections," *Eyeline* 43, no. Spring (2000).
57    Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
58    Ibid.
59    Marsh, "Magic Screens and Digital Projections."

Fig. 10. Ian de Gruchy and Donna Brown, *Transformed – Sea of Hands*

In discussing this later work *Transformed* I have sought to illustrate the way that de Gruchy's practice has developed from his earlier collaboration with Wodiczko. The theme of Indigenous dispossesion is revisited and is interwoven within a larger oeuvre of Australian history. At this particular moment, the end of the Millenium, there is a longer timescale at play. With the inclusion of the handprints there are echoes of tangible Indigenous signs of occupation. With the traditional spray of ochre across a hand leaving a negative handprint that is a sign of occupation stretching back 40,000 years.

**Memory and repression: Freud's uncanny**

"It may be true that the uncanny [unheimlich] is something which is secretly familiar [heimlich-heimisch], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfills this condition."[60]

In Freud's 1911 essay 'The Uncanny', his notion of the uncanny or unheimlich (unhomely) is derived from the German word for home; heimlich. What is heimlich is what is known,

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60    Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 255.

comfortable and familiar and what is unheimlich is unknown and unfamiliar. Freud moves beyond this simple binary definition to define the unheimlich as a sub-species of Heimlich.[61] Unheimlich is both something that is familiar and homely and yet also unfamiliar and uncomfortable. He points to a lack of certainty and instability around these terms as they co-exist, interrelate and flow through each other.

The two points from Freud's complex essay which I wish to draw on in my discussion of *Humpy* are the notions of doubling via a mirror image and also the notion of losing your way in relationship to a particular place. In both these elements of Freud's description of the uncanny he uses personal anecdotes that for me have a greater resonance than his accounts of the uncanny in literary examples, or psychological case studies.

In Freud's account we encounter the uncanny in the uncertain territory of visual and spatial confusion. On encountering an image of ourselves, a reflection, in this moment of doubling, we momentarily fail to recognise our selves reflected and instead perceive an image of a stranger. Freud recounts his experience of thoroughly disliking the elderly man in a dressing gown and travelling cap that had entered his train compartment via way of a looking glass on the bathroom door that had swung open into his cabin. [62]

In another experience of doubling we lose our way spatially and can no longer position ourselves in relationship to a particular place and we inadvertently keep doubling back to the same place in an attempt to find our bearings or location. In Freud's example he is lost in a provincial Italian town and keeps returning to a street of houses filled with 'painted women' or prostitutes where his return draws increasing attention. He tries to extricate himself from this uncomfortable location but is lost and keeps returning.[63]

In these personal stories there is strong discomfort encountered in the uncanny moment and within *Humpy* there is a strong discomfort, for Australian audiences at least. The humpy as a form embodies the notion of dispossession, at once we see a home and an unhomely home; to eyes unaccustomed to make shift dwellings or the experience of living in them. The humpy is a home linked to traditional Indigenous forms of architecture and yet decentred through forces

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61    Ibid., 226.
62    Ibid., 248.
63    Ibid., 237.

of the colonising culture. In this hybrid form of a humpy we can see layers of loss; of land, of place, of language, of culture and of life in the violence of the frontier. And yet there is also an extraordinary spirit of resilience expressed in making do with available materials and traditional knowledge, evident in the hybridisation between form and materials.

Viewing the work within the frame of the Bicentennial year, where a series of celebrations and historical re-enactments of the moment of colonisation/invasion occurred, there is a sense of losing one's way or not knowing where to position oneself or how to orientate around the timeline and event. As an Australian of European ancestry there is a sense of awe at the speed and success of the colonial endeavour and also shame and grief at the losses experienced by Indigenous Australians and the continuing gap in advantage that many experience. On viewing an image of a projected humpy on a site that once held an Indigenous encampment but is now a festival centre there is a sensation of recovery of the past, of truth telling which at once helps us to locate ourselves within the currents of the past, but at the same time places us comfortably/uncomfortably in the on-going possibility /impossibility of reconciliation. There is a process whereby one is both orientated and disorientated by the Bicentennial year, where location, a sense of place and, for some, Australian's identity is sought, and when found is lost though the dual reality of invasion, loss of place and dispossession.

The shanty-town as a whole is something that is now unfamiliar in Australian capital cities but in the early 20th century was present on this site and in other cities around the country. While the shanty-town or town camp once existed on the fringes of our capital cities they have now been pushed out of the major population centres to less visible locations. To give one contemporary example, of which there are many,  in the regional centre of Alice Springs there are 18 housing associations known as 'town camps' managed by the Tangentyere Council which formed in the 1970s to establish legal tenure for Aboriginal people on the land they were living on. [64] Currently in two of the 18 camps in Alice Springs residents have no legal tenure to the land and as a consequence can not access government housing funding, and so lack running water, electricity and permanent dwellings.[65] In short, people in these camps are currently living in makeshift humpies.

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64    Tangentyere Council,  http://www.tangentyere.org.au/about/.
65    Ibid.

In Wodiczko and de Gruchy's work we are simultaneously bearing witness to the past and a dislocated present via a doubling of time and space; we are viewing the actual architecture in the present at the site, a superimposition of a past architectural form onto the site and also viewing a continuing architectural reality relocated onto the site.

In the doubling that occurs there is a re-presentation of what was once familiar and known on the site and has now become unknown over time. While the image is historically connected to the site it is no longer physically present and is inserted as projected archival media. The connection between the form and the site has been repressed or lost with the passage of time but through the action of projection, which is literally shining a light, it is re-presented or unearthed.

The knowledge of the site and a broader vision of Australian development fits into what Freud describes as the uncanny, 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'.[66] The presence of the shanty-town on the site is lodged in cultural memory and the physical memory of people old enough to have witnessed these structures on the fringes of Adelaide and other Australian capital cities. No longer physically present on the site the humpy is dredged up from the past and visually superimposed onto a present structure. In this superimposition there is a doubling of past on present, of architecture on architecture, of vernacular architecture on modernist architecture, all this as an act of remembrance, as a way to locate the building within a field of post-colonial history. In this process of doubling slippages occur which allow us to contemplate the forces of colonisation and the tensions and costs of development and nation building.

In a definition Freud attributes to Schelling 'Unheimlich is the name for everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.[67] Whilst the issue of Indigenous housing is discussed in mainstream media an element of it remains hidden and secret as many Indigenous communities and town camps are in remote areas and are closed off to non-residents without entry permits.

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66    Freud, "The Uncanny," 220.
67    Freud, "The Uncanny," 224

In *Uncanny Australia* Gelder and Jacobs designate the oscillation between the positions of reconciliation at one moment and division at another as a postcolonial impulse.[68] For them the Mabo decision of 1992, in which land rights were awarded to the Indigenous people of Murray Island, reversing more than 200 years of the concept of Terra Nullius, becomes an uncanny moment. In this moment the colonised becomes decolonised, the familiar becomes unfamiliar, and what was settled becomes unsettled.

Beginning in 1972 with the Labor Whitlam government's election on a platform including land rights, the first steps towards recognising Aboriginal land rights, and a movement towards reconciliation, were made. In 1975 Whitlam ceremonially returned pastoral land leased by Wave Hill station to Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindgi people after a long campaign by the Gurindgi people that included the Wave Hill walk off of 1965 in which Aboriginal workers walked off the job. In 1988 Labor Prime Minister Robert Hawke made a promise of a formal treaty to be concluded by 1990. Disappointingly this promise was converted into the policy of reconciliation formally articulated in Australian federal government policy in 1992, under Prime Minister Keating's Labor government and a formal apology to Indigenous people, in particular the Stolen Generation, was made under Prime Minister Rudd's Labour government in 2009. While these were of course politically meaningful acts they were made in an ongoing climate of Indigenous disadvantage and ongoing political conflict in which the impossibility of reconciliation also co-exists and the ongoing wish for a formal treaty to be signed is ignored.

In 2002 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to a regular public reporting process on key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage in an effort to understand the landscape of disadvantage and in order to track and manage policies to close the gaps in advantage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The report maps gaps in life expectancy, child mortality, early childhood education, reading, writing and numeracy, year 12 attainment, employment, post secondary education — participation and attainment, disability and chronic disease, household and individual income, substantiated child abuse and neglect, family and community violence and imprisonment and juvenile detention.[69]

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68    Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia : sacredness and identity in a postcolonial nation*  (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 22.
69    Australian Government, "Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage," ed. Productivity Commission (2011).

While some progress has been made towards reconciliation and focusing on closing the gap in advantage for Indigenous Australians there is obviously still a long way to go. As a result *Humpy* is still a politically charged work 24 years on from its temporary presence at Pinky Flats where it shone a light onto the site of the Adelaide Festival building and its Indigenous past. As I have argued, Wodiczko and De Gruchy utilise the uncanny and potent symbol of the humpy to reflect on Australia's colonial history and on-going post-colonial legacy at a key historical juncture and moment of collective reflection.

## Aboriginal architecture

Historian of Indigenous Architecture Paul Memmott and the first generation of Australian Indigenous architects, such as Alison Page and Kevin O'Brien, are exploring and drawing from the variety of forms and structures of Indigenous humpies. Architect Alison Page of the Tharawal people of La Perouse, Sydney has said of classical Aboriginal Architecture that: "Buildings were traditionally used as a skin, as living breathing extensions of the body. No matter what form they adopted, they were receptive, flexible and sensitive, and constantly renewing."[70]

In the context of *Humpy* this re-skinning happens electronically; projected textures of corrugated iron, and canvas sheeting resurface the roof plane of the modernist festival building. Re-materialising the structure into a makeshift vernacular architecture composed of found materials laid over a wooden frame. de Gruchy has said "I was very interested in this whole relationship of how the galvanized iron actually lived on the building as a skin." [71]

Memmott's comprehensive study into the *Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* describes the transformation of traditional 'ethno-architectural' structures into the shacks and humpies of the town camp. Traditional building structures merged with found colonial materials such as sheets of corrugated iron. Whist the appearance of Indigenous architecture changed over time the spatial arrangements of town camps were in many cases based on traditional camp formations. In essence "the 'fringe settlement' or town camp had evolved architecturally and socially from the traditional Aboriginal camp.[72]

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70   Paul Memmot, *Gunyah Goondie + Wurley : the Aboriginal architecture of Australia / Paul Memmot* (St Lucia, Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 304.
71   Ian de Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Melbourne: 2012).
72    Memmot, *Gunyah Goondie + Wurley : the Aboriginal architecture ofAustralia / Paul Memmot*: 266.

Countering the popularly held belief that Aborigines did not construct permanent homes and only sheltered in temporary camps of makeshift lean-tos and shelters Memmott describes the diversity of architectural form. A wide variety of structural materials was utilised, including stone, whale bone, and sapling structures and cladding materials such as bark, grasses, reeds and palm leaves. Most tribal or language groups employed up to seven or eight shelter types dependent on available materials, climate and duration of stay. [73] Sadly, early colonists often misread the seasonal nature of the occupation of camps and impermanent architecture as a lack of connection or attachment to place.[74]

Following on from Memmot's study of Aboriginal architecture Indigenous architects, such as Kevin O'Brien of the Meriam people of Murray Islands, see the potential of drawing from the Aboriginal architectural traditions: "For me it is now a matter of construction. A utilitarian approach to construction exemplified by minimal structure; effective cladding extracted from materials of that Country."[75] In his exhibition *Finding Country – A Primer* from 2009 he articulated a guiding position for his work, asking "how do we empty the city to reveal country?", a position he has since used to inform his work and thinking.[76] This idea of emptying the city to reveal invisible country is effectively what de Gruchy and Wodiczko's *Humpy* does; an architectural structure of the city is erased through a process of digital recladding, revealing relationships to traditional architectural form and inherent relationships to climate, traditional architectural structures and country.

The reference images for *Humpy* were taken in Central Australia and reflect traditional architectures found in that environment. So while *Humpy* refers to the history of a particular site, Pinky Flats, the reference image is not directly linked by the artists to the site. Rather it stands in for Indigenous architecture as a whole. An historical example of particular seasonal architecture is Eugène Von Guérard's painting of 1858. It depicts wurlies in parkland near Adelaide that relate specifically and historically to the Adelaide area. Von Guérard illustrates domes of a more robust closed structure suited to wet and cold weather with an internal fire used for heating. These sort of closed structures were used in the winter in Southern Australia in addition to open windbreaks and shade structures in the summer.[77]

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73  Ibid., 11.
74  Ibid.
75  Kevin O'Brien, "For Architecture and Country," *Artlink* 32, no. 2 (2012): 62.
76  Ibid.
77  Memmot, *Gunyah Goondie + Wurley : the Aboriginal architecture of Australia / Paul Memmot*: 9.
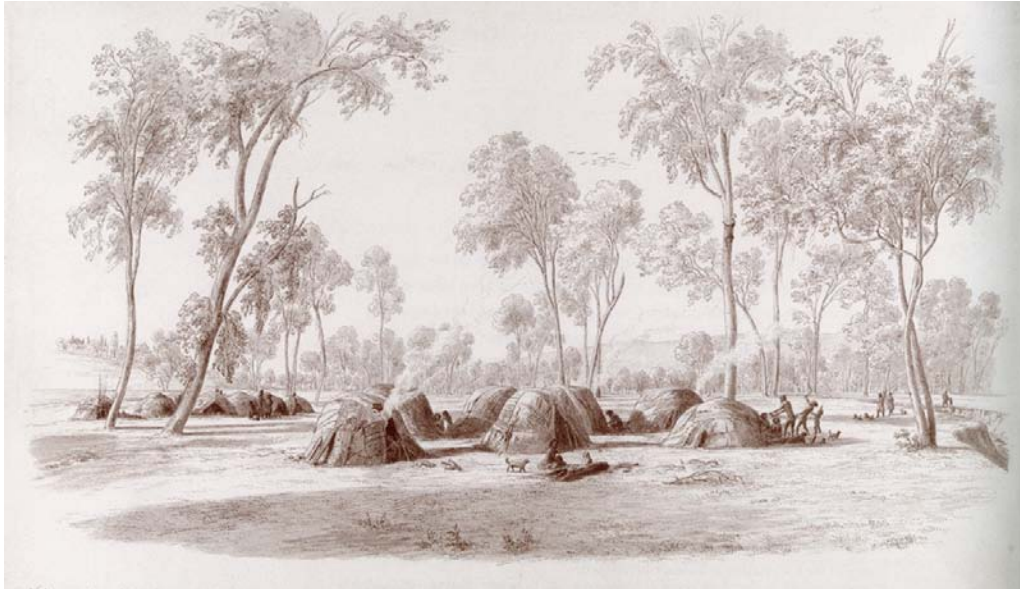
Fig. 11. Eugène von Guérard, *Winter encampments in wurlies of divisions of the tribes from Lake Bonney and Lake Victoria in the parkland near Adelaide*

Another historical image related to the Adelaide area is George French Angas's watercolour *An Aboriginal hut on the Coorong of a type used by the Kaurna people*, in which a similar rounded architectural form to that portrayed by Von Guérard is presented. However this structure is more open at the front and looks more like a shelter against the wind rather than wet, cold weather. The huts were built on the southern shores to face the north-east to provide shelter from cold gale winds from the south and west.[78]



Fig. 12. George French Angas, *Native Hut on Koorong*

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78   Robert Edwards, "The Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains," ed. South Australian Museum (South Australian Museum, 1972), 16.

At face value the humpy in all of its particular ethno- architectural and hybridised forms can be read as a symbol of the dispossession of Indigenous people from their land and culture; how they were pushed from their traditional lands to the fringes of the colonising European's settlements. And conversely the humpy can also be seen as a symbol of resistance to assimilating into white culture and ways.

> In one way, the life of the Aboriginal town camper can be regarded as a cultural triumph. Town camps provided a setting with sufficient autonomy to maintain and practice Aboriginality, something that was suppressed to a significant extent in the government settlements. [79]

The humpy and town camp existed in a liminal zone between the white world and the black world, where often the white world built over the black world, with towns and cattle stations typically sited on significant areas where water was accessible. The makeshift humpy is similarly an overlay of traditional architecture structure and colonial found materials of corrugated iron and milled wood. In the triangular form supported by a forked post and central pole, we can see traditional structures such as that described in this image from Central Victoria from 1868. It is fairly close to the form presented in Wodiczko and de Gruchy's *Humpy*.
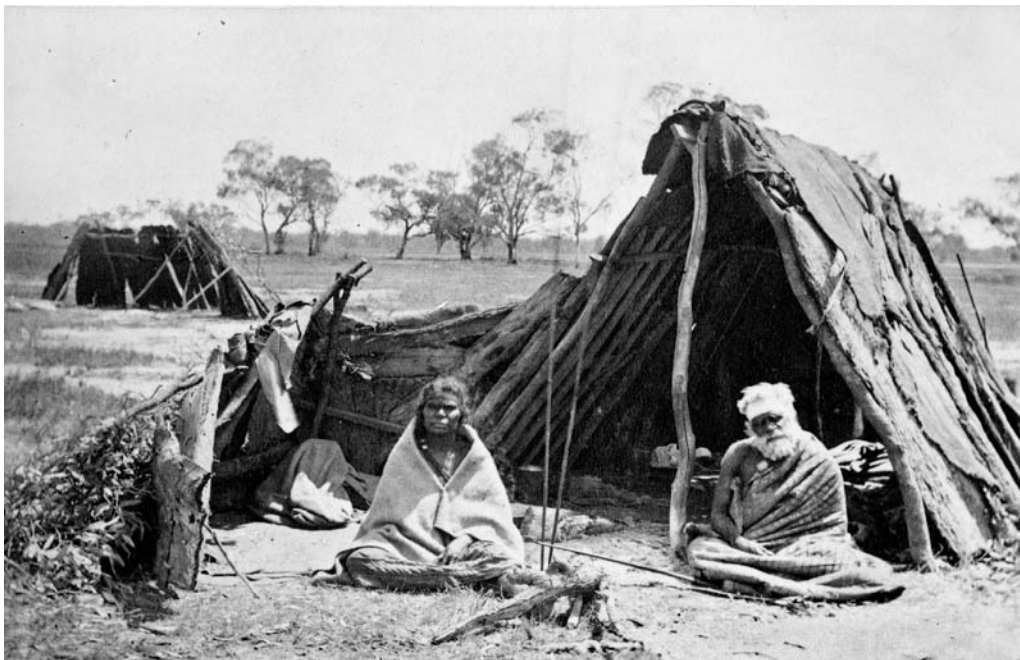


Fig. 13. Photographer unrecorded, *Aboriginal people outside a dwelling at Cobran*

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79    Memmot, *Gunyah Goondie + Wurley : the Aboriginal architecture of Australia / Paul Memmot*: 153.

The removal of humpies and shanty-towns from urban areas that occurred in the 20th century is seen as a final severing of connection between Indigenous peoples and their traditional lands. This occurred forcibly in some instances, to claim land for development [80] and in other cases was voluntary, to improve living conditions.[81] The perceptions of self-built camps and structures as being unclean and unhealthy also contributed to decisions to displace Aboriginal people from them to government-run compounds and settlements.[82]

The control of Aboriginal communities and land is still unfortunately highly contested. To put this in perspective, Indigenous people only own or control 16 per cent of land in Australia, 98 percent of which is in very remote areas.[83] In the past decade government policy from both major parties dealing with Aboriginal land and lives has come under fire for being racially discriminatory and breaching human rights. The Howard government's military style operation in which the Australian Defense Force moved to take control of Aboriginal Land in the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007*[84] was widely criticised as a pre-election *Tampa*[85] style stunt with the sexual abuse of Indigenous children used as the new *Children Overboard*[86] or *Trojan Horse* to assume control of Aboriginal land and lives.[87]  The Federal legislation and intervention came after the release of the Northern Territory Government's *Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle "Little Children are Sacred"* report.[88] However once the federal election was over and power changed hands, the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments

80  Read, *Belonging : Australians, place and Aboriginal ownership*: 23.
81  Ibid., 28.
82  Memmot, *Gunyah Goondie + Wurley : the Aboriginal architecture of Australia / Paul Memmot*: 75.
83  Australian Government, "Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage - Overview," ed. Productivity Commission (2011), 50.
84  Commonwealth of Australia, "The Northern Territory National Emergency Response ACT (NO. 129, 2007)."
85  The *Palapa* was the first refugee boat to set out for Australia after the Federal Election of 2001 was called. In a series of events involving the Norwegian freighter the *Tampa,* whose captain had rescued the asylum seekers from their stricken boat, was refused access to Australian waters for a period of five days. Senate Committee, "Select Committee for an Inquiry into a Certain Maritime Incident," (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2002).
86  *The Children Overboard affair* occurred on the 6th of October 2001 where children were reported thrown overboard from SIEV 4 (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel) in the vicinity of Christmas Island. This information was released to the media, by the then Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock in the midst on an election campaign. The Federal election was held on the 10th of November 2001 and returned the incumbent government.  A senate committee examining the incident found the claim that children were thrown overboard to be untrue. Ibid.
87  Stephanie Peatling, "Social Crusade a Land Grab: Welfare Groups," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 June 2007.
88  Rex Wild and Pat Anderson, " Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle "Little Children are Sacred"," (2007).

have to the dismay of many continued the intervention within the Northern Territory and as of July 2012 have voted to extend the legislation for a further 10 years with the *Stronger Futures* policy.[89] Both the intervention beginning in 2007 and *Stronger Futures* have received criticism as being incompatible with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and continuing race based legislation.[90] Whist a full discussion of these issues falls outside the scope of this chapter it is important background for an appreciation of the ongoing potency and political currency of Wodiczko and de Gruchy's *Humpy*.

In *Humpy* a nomadic architectural structure is also temporarily imposed over a permanent architectural structure recalling Delezue and Guattari's notions of 'state' space and nomad 'space' in their *Traite de nomadologie; La machine de guerre.* Vidler describes this contestation of space*.*

> A sedentary space that is consciously parceled out, closed, and divided by institutions of power would then be contrasted to the smooth, flowing, unbounded space of nomadism; in western contexts, the former has always attempted to bring the later under control. [91]

This contestation of space in Wodiczko and de Gruchy's work is reversed and temporarily 'nomad' space reclaims space from the 'state space'; trumping the form of the cultural institution under the cover of darkness.

**Media skins**

What is different about *Humpy* and stands out from the series of Wodiczko's projection works is that architecture is projected onto architecture. The humpy projection reskins the Adelaide Festival Building by projecting composited media of an architectural form once found at

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89  "Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory," Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/indigenous-australians/programs-services/stronger-futures-in-the-northern-territory-0.
90  "Federal Government must amend Stronger Futures laws to protect Aboriginal rights in Northern Territory," Human Rights Law Centre, http://www.hrlc.org.au/stronger-futures-in-the-northern-territory-bill-2011.
91  Anthony Vidler, "Vagabond Architecture," in *The architectural uncanny : essays in the modern unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 214.

the site onto the present day structure. And through this process of reskinning the physical architecture of the building is rematerialised in an act of politically charged remembrance.

In some ways this process of reskinning the building also foregrounds modern architectural works such as the biomorphic Kunsthaus Graz completed by architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier in Austria in 2003. The BIX media façade, designed by Berlin designers realities:united merges media with architecture to form a programmable electronic skin in which low resolution images are drawn on its surface with individual computer programmed lamps forming a pixelated image on the skin of the building. In Figure 13 a surveying eye looks out from the BIX media façade building, there are clear links with the work of Wodiczko, particularly his *Bundeshaus Projection* from 1985 in Bern Switzerland[92] and more generally his personification of buildings and political commentary on the structures of power, albeit in a modern rendition of his themes and technical strategies.
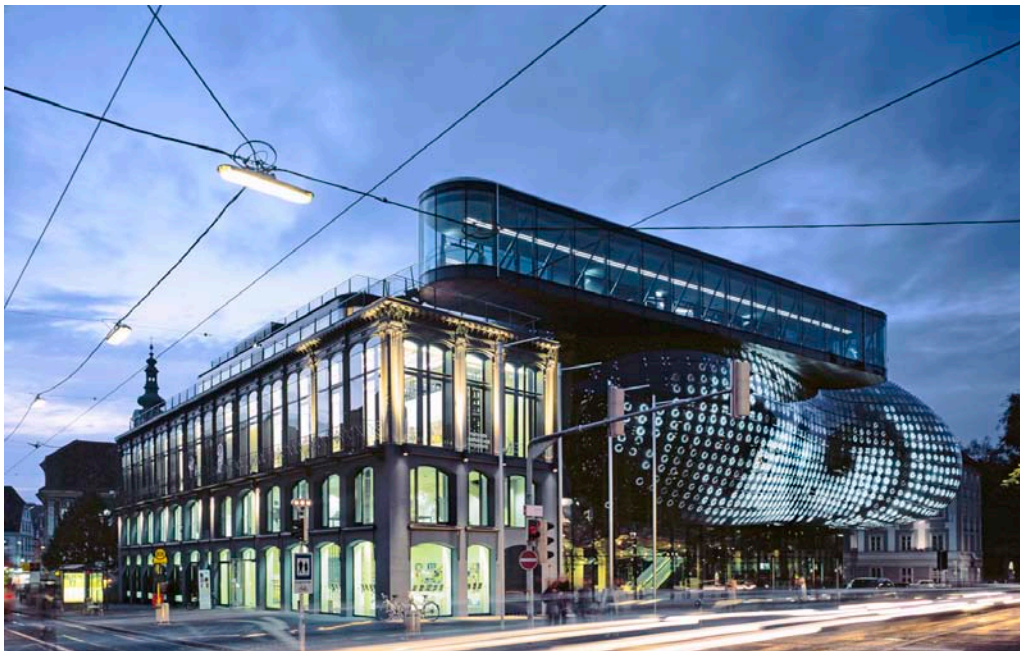


Fig. 14. Realities: united, *Media Façade*, Kunsthaus Graz, Austria

92   The Bundeshaus projection used a series of slides of an eye looking at nearby banks, the city and down at the national gold vault stored under the building and finally up to the mountains and the "pure Calvanist sky". McCorquodale, *Krzysztof Wodiczko*, 76.

Fig. 15.  Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Bundeshaus Projection*, Bern Switzerland

In terms of an Australian architectural projection work that is as politically atuned as *Humpy* artist collective Boat People's unsanctioned piece of hactivist projection onto the Sydney Opera House in October 2001 fits into the same field. It was created ahead of the Federal Election in November that year amidst the border security panic being evoked by the Howard government's Children Overboard incident. An image of a tall ship iconically linked to Australia's colonisation was temporarily projected onto the sails of the Opera House with the words 'BOAT PEOPLE' under the image. The artist group Boat People have said of the work:

> In our analysis, what we are facing is not so much a refugee problem
> as a crisis of xenophobia, a terrible and contagious national sickness.
> The border panic policies of our government are clearly designed to
> spread fear and hatred, disseminated through brilliant manipulation of
> the unspeakable psychoses of an occupying nation secretly uncertain of
> its own legitimacy.[93]

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93   Boat People,  http://www.boat-people.org/?cat=3.

The idea of categorising all non-Indigenous Australians as boat people had come from hearing Aboriginal activist Rebecca Bear Wingfield speaking at dLux Media's TILT conference held in October 2000.[94]



Fig. 16. Boat People, *Sydney Opera House projection*

To see white Australians categorised as boat people from an Indigenous perspective is a refreshing history lesson and swiftly lays bare the xenophobic sentiment underlying much of the debate about asylum seekers. The connections between colonisation and current global movements of people also puts the present debates into a longer time frame and introduces an Indigenous perspective on the arrival of people to this land.

In Indigenous artist Fiona Foley's photographic series *Nulla Forever,* 2009 the absurdity and amenisa of the race politics of exclusion are further revealed. Her series related to the Cronulla Riots of 2005 in which pumped up nationalistic Anglo Saxons attempted to reclaim Cronulla beach from invading migrant Arabic-speaking groups. In Foley's series a group of young Indigenous men stand on the beach claiming their space in the contested field. In another image white Aussies dressed in red, white and blue 'Australiana' face off in a café giving the finger to a bemused group of young Aboriginal men at the next table. The artist is barely visible in the shot, seated next to the group of Aussies, dressed in a black burqua, a conspicuous form of Muslim dress and a marker of being the current 'other' in Australia.

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94   Ibid.

Fig. 17. Fiona Foley, *Nulla 4 eva III*

**The Adelaide Festival and Sydney Biennale in the Bicentennial year**

*Humpy* is an important work in terms of its creation in the Bicentennial year, its themes and political stance, technical accomplishment, its relationship to contemporary forms of media arts; and the calibre and legacy of its creators. However at the time it was shown it was critically ignored; I will explore some of the possible reasons for this silence within the context of the Adelaide Festival and Sydney Biennale of 1988.

When the program of the Adelaide Festival went to print the work did not yet have a title or location. It is listed as "*City Projections*: using this 'new' medium for the visual arts of night time projection, the work devised will illuminate various city buildings throughout the Festival."[95] Below Krzysztof Wodiczko's name is Ian de Gruchy's with a production credit for de Gruchy.[96] The rather generically titled *City Projections* located at no particular place became the site-specific work *Humpy* projected onto the Festival Centre building.

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95   South Australian Visual Arts Committee, *Adelaide Festival : Visual Arts Program*  (Adelaide: Adelaide Festival of Arts, 1988), 6.
96   Ibid.

Aboriginal Art had entered the Adelaide Festival program for the first time four years earlier in 1984.[97] To contextualise *Humpy* within the 1988 Adelaide festival as a whole the foreword for the program is useful. Written by artistic director Lord Harewood it lists the festival's guiding principle as *'Into the Future'*. The range of works included "the perspective provided by Australia's unique 40,000 year old Aboriginal heritage as well as what has been inherited from Europe."[98] Australian artists and groups in the 1988 program included the Warlukurlangu Artist's Association with *Yuendumu: Paintings out of the Desert* and a second exhibition *Yuendumu: Paintings;* holographic artist Paula Dawson's *To Absent Friends;* and *Covering the Ground.* There was also *a* group show examining landscape painting in Australia and the differing responses of black and white Australians to the land. Over the month of March American artist Barbara Kruger utilised advertising spaces of billboards and taxi backs to present her work of text and enlarged images. The major emphasis of the artist's week program was on Aboriginal art and identity. The now leading Indigenous academic Marcia Langton gave the opening address at the conference articulating the lived reality of artists working within Indigenous communities such as Yuendumu.[99] Indigenous artist, film and video maker Tracey Moffat also notably featured in the conference program with an artist's talk.

A survey of Australian art publications reveals no review of Humpy.[100] The artist week program is extensively covered with reviews in *Art Monthly* and *Artlink*. *Artlink* also presented an intensive discussion of Aboriginal art covering both traditional and urban Aboriginal art and non-Aboriginal artists' appropriating Aboriginal symbolism[101] in addition to a pictorial spread on Barbara Kruger's billboard work in Adelaide.[102] In the non-specialist press, the *Adelaide Advertiser,* there was one review of the work, noting *City Projections* as a collaboration between de Gruchy and Wodiczko and drawing a connection between the contemporary practice of projecting images onto urban spaces and its historical predecessor of the magic lantern show.[103] However no mention is made of the political intent of the artists in projecting a humpy in the Bicentennial year or the work's relationship to the site.

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97  J. Maughan, Megaw V., Megaw, R., Sumner, P., , "Landscape with Figures? The 1988 Adelaide Festival and Aboriginal Art," *Artlink* 8, no. 2 (1988): 24.
98  Ibid., 1.
99   Stephanie Britton, "Tough times, fun times," *Art Monthly*, no. 11 (1988).
100  Publications in print in 1988 included Art Monthly, Art and Australia, Artlink and Photofile
101  Maughan, "Landscape with Figures? The 1988 Adelaide Festival and Aboriginal Art."
102  Barbara Kruger, "Barbara Kruger," *Artlink* 8, no. 1 (1988).
103  Adrian Weston, "Festival Centre; now it's a rusty 'humpy' after dark," *The Advertiser*, March 17 1988.

Whilst *Humpy* was not clearly described in the festival program it was prominently located at the Festival Centre and of course only visible in the evening. Stephanie Britton, the current editor of *Artlink*, saw the work in 1988 and remembered its subject matter as exciting, "…using the shape of the roof as an echo of a humpy with all the implications and associations that go with it" and it was technically accomplished in its positioning and focus of images visually matched to the building's architecture.[104] From this first-hand account of the work the impact, technical achievement and political potency of *Humpy* is clear.

Later articles covering de Gruchy's practice make mention of *Humpy* in the context of his work as a whole. Anne Marsh draws a comparison between de Gruchy's dreamlike interior projections and his external projections, using *Humpy* as an example in which monumental structures are rewritten by the images appearing on them.[105] Siobhan McNabb uses *Humpy* to describe de Gruchy's method of using a site's history to create works that appear like an ancestral ghost "like it is meant to be, that it has always been around".[106]

The 1988 Sydney Biennale, *From the Southern Cross: A View of the World*, directed by the late Nick Waterlow, included the now famous Ramingining artists' installation of 200 hollow log bone coffins, *The Aboriginal Memorial*, 1988.[107] During Waterlow's prior Sydney Biennale directorship in 1979 Aboriginal art was featured in the Biennale, presenting Aboriginal art within the context of International works, for the first time.[108] American critic Dan Cameron brought to Australia by the Biennale singles out the *The Aboriginal Memorial*, each hollow log representing a year of colonisation as the most historically challenging work of the Biennale.[109] The installation was instigated by now well know curator Djon Mundine[110] who was then art advisor at Ramingining community. The hollow logs constructed by Indigenous artists from the Arnhem Land communities of Ramingining, Milingimbi, Maningrida and the Katherine area

104  Stephanie Britton, 8 June 2012.
105  Marsh, "Magic Screens and Digital Projections."
106  McNabb, "Light Play With Critical Projections."
107  The work has since 1988 been on display at the National Gallery of Australia and has recently been located in a prominent position adjacent to the foyer of the newly refurbished gallery.
108   Nick Waterlow, "3rd Biennale of Sydney (1979) European Dialogue " http://www.biennaleofsydney.com.au/about/history/1979.
109  Dan Cameron, "Showdown at the Southern Cross Biennale," *Artlink* 8, no. 3 (1988).
110  Mundine was the first Indigenous curator appointed to a state galley, the Art Gallery of N.S.W.

were constructed as a memorial to all Aboriginal people who had died over the period 1788 – 1988 in the period of colonisation up until the Bicentennial.[111] Wodiczko commented that while the 1988 Biennale included Aboriginal artwork it was clear that there was still a long way to go in regards to the recognition of Indigenous issues and grievances.[112]

So why was there a reviewing omission of Wodiczko and de Gruchy's work at the time it was shown? For one, *Humpy* is not wholly Australian art or the work of an Indigenous artist, it's art that highlights these Australian issues of Indigenous dispossession and ongoing living standards. Another contributing factor may have been the collaborative nature of the work and Wodiczko's absence from the festival; without the international artist's presence the work more readily slipped under the radar. The vague description of the work given in the program and lack of dates for the three-night program could also be considered as contributing factors. Another factor may have been that as an early media arts conceptual post-object artwork it was difficult to pin down and categorise. Wodiczko explained the lack of critical comment being due to the work not been taken seriously by the organisers, hence the lack of publicity. He commented that in the late 1980s many art institutions and festivals did not know how to publicise or handle outdoor art-events as they operated outside the bounds of traditional artforms.[113]

**Conclusion**

While *Humpy* was critically ignored during the short period of time in which it could be directly experienced it has lived on in the memory of those who witnessed it. And it continues to exist within the printed and online archival records of the artists who created the work; albeit somewhat tenuously at present in the more extensive monographs examining Wodiczko's work. More than a quarter of a century on it points to continuing political debates and the ongoing difficult living conditions for many Indigenous Australians. As an ethno-architecture the humpy has recently been historically explored in its richly varied forms and continues to be fertile ground for architects and artists to draw from in both material and mediated forms.

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111 Mundine, John, Art and Australia, Vol 26 Number 1, 1988 p. 98, note Djon Mundine and John Mundine are the same person.
112 Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Canberra: 2012).
113 Ibid.

It is clear that de Gruchy and Wodiczko's early meeting within their respective careers, and their extensive collaborative relationship, had a profound impact on their ongoing individual practices. Theirs was a fortuitous meeting centred on a shared interest in projecting onto architectural form that has persisted in their practices to the present day.

The concerns of the work regarding Indigenous loss of place and ongoing disadvantage with reference to a particular site's history are strongly supported by the use of composited photographic media to reconfigure the present architecture of the site. As an immersive media experience *Humpy* re-positions the viewer in time and space, thereby allowing an invisible repressed history to become tangible.

## Chapter 2 - *Edge of the Trees:* an early Australian immersive media installation

In this chapter I will provide a close historical reading of *Edge of the Trees* a highly significant immersive media installation from 1995.  I have selected this work as it is an early media installation dealing with foundational historical issues of place and loss of place in an Australian context. The installation is permanent and maintained; continuing to function on the site of what was once Australia's first Government House built in 1788 to house Governor Phillip and his offices. The site, which now houses the Museum of Sydney, can be read as both the centre and the beginning of colonial administration in Australia. It also functions as a memorial to the first inhabitants of the Sydney/Warran area, the Eora. Apart from the significance of its site, *Edge of the Trees* also marks the first major public monument in New South Wales to be jointly developed by an Indigenous and non-Indigenous artist; Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence. As a work of public art in Sydney it was progressive for its time, not a single object and not a typically figurative bronze, it was instead an installation to enter into be encompassed by and immersed within. *Edge of the Trees* marks the place as a site of memory and in its relationship to the surrounding architecture and landscape, functions as an anti/monument. Meaning is created by the artists through a careful mapping of physical materials and their planned incremental responses to the environment over time. Strategies of mapping and naming are employed as a way to remember and evoke the site's history and meaning.

Positioned at its conception as a meditation on a highly contested place and historical moment, the site of colonial government and dispossession for Indigenous Australians, this early media installation drew from historical records and scientific data from the period. I describe the work as a media installation as it employs a multi-channel spatialised soundscape to locate, name and map through sound, Indigenous places known at the time of colonisation, in the retrieved Indigenous language of the Eora people.

The installation draws from invisible layers of data related to place, positioning the body of the viewer within a dense field of information drawn from historical, anthropological, linguistic, botanical and pictorial sources. In positioning this work as an early locative media installation I draw upon its sound component and reference contemporary sound installation works and

locative web/mobile platforms used for interpreting place. In arguing that *Edge of the Trees* is an immersive media installation, links between post-modern sculptural practice, in which architecture and landscape are engaged in a relational field, are made.

*Edge of the Trees* opened on the 26th of January 1995 exactly 207 years after the First Fleet arrived on the shores of Botany Bay. The launch of the installation preceded the opening of the Museum of Sydney, MOS, by a couple of months; it opened on March 11. The MOS was itself conceived as a site to be developed into a museum and interpretive place in Australia's Bicentennial year, 1988.

Between 1789 and 1792 the group of artists known as the Port Jackson painter[1] documented the site of Governor Phillip's house and its surrounding buildings in watercolour and ink. The house was the first stone structure in the colony and the only two-storey building to be built for a number of years.[2]
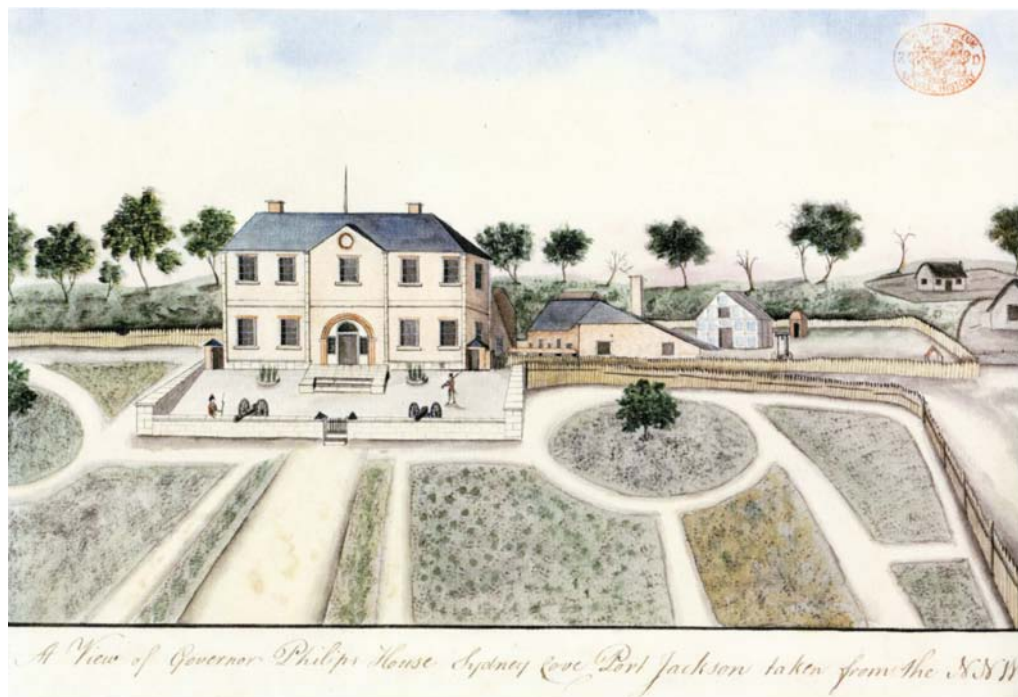


Fig. 18. Port Jackson Painter, *A view of Government House and outbuildings*

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1     Bernard Smith coined the term 'the Port Jackson painter' and later believed it was a group of artists rather than a sole artist who painted the body of works attributed to the Port Jackson painter. Bernard Smith, *Place, taste and tradition : a study of Australian art since 1788 / by Bernard Smith*, 2nd ed. rev ed. (Oxford University Press, 1988).
2     Lisa Di Tommaso, *The Art of the First Fleet* (Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant Books, 2012), 24.

In convict Thomas Watling's painting *A view of Sydney Cove and Port Jackson from the North Shore*, Governor Phillip's house can be seen on the far left; one is struck by the forest of buildings now obscuring the Governor's once commanding view of the harbour. To visually read the same incline of hill winding up from Circular Quay to the MOS is impossible. However, today you can feel the incline of the hillside as increased duress as you walk the few city blocks up from the edge of the harbour at Circular Quay. Instead of the thickly treed slope that would have existed prior to colonisation, the hill is now a forest of tall glass buildings jostling to provide a glimpse of the harbour. In the foreground of Watling's painting a group of Eora[3] people gather around a canoe witnesses to the developing colony. In the background of the image, behind the clearing made for the colony, is the edge of a dense forest of trees.



Fig. 19. Thomas Watling, *A direct north view of Sydney Cove and Port Jackson*

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3    Eora also spelt Iyora is the name ascribed to the tribal group who live/lived around the Sydney Harbour area at the time of colonisation as recorded in Lieutenant Dawes of the first fleets diaries. Eora was most likely their word for 'people'. Ross Gibson, *26 Views of the Starburst World* (University of Western Australia Press, 2012), v; ibid.

**Early conceptions of the work as an immersive media environment**

Prior to the work of historical and conservation groups in the 1980s, and the agitation to build the MOS, this highly significant place had become a non-place of sorts, a car-park hermetically sealed with a layer of bitumen in 1968 following the removal of the Government Architect's office located on the site. The history and significance of the site lay below the surface under layers of asphalt for a further quarter of a century, waiting to be unearthed and revealed in the mid-1990s.

Then Senior Curator of the MOS, Peter Emmett, wrote the brief for *Edge of the Trees* conceiving the work as questioning place, perceiving place as contested and striving to create a new metaphor for the site.[4]

As an antithesis to simple interpretations of Australian history, he asked "Why do we make our national history so simple, when it was so bizarre, beautiful and brutal, like us still?"[5] Emmett carefully directed the symbolic interpretations of the site in his brief, suggesting that it was not about the ghost presence of first Government house as a symbol of British colonial authority. Rather it was to be about contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.[6] Thus the site of first Government House comes to represent colonisation as a whole from colonial and Eora perspectives.

Five years on from the opening of the work, Emmett reflected on his conceptualisation of the project and his reading of the site of the first Government House in the MOS's folio publication *Edge of the Trees*.

> This place is contested ground; contested then, and contested still,
> for the right to be in this place and for the favoured version of national
> origins. How to create a new metaphor of place as a site of celebration
> for Australians today in all our difference and diversity? We must think of 1788

4    Peter Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees : a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett* (Glebe NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2000), 22-23.
5    Ibid., 34.
6    Ibid.

as a turning point for this place, and as a meeting place before and

after 1788. For when those 1000 odd people on the First Fleet met the

1000 or so Eora, Indigenous Australians, this place was utterly changed

for those 2000 men, women and children. And so for us, for we are the products

of the decisive moment that unleashed the forces of colonialism.[7]

Positioning the work at the moment of contact locates the viewer in that window of the first

few moments of colonisation when relations between the Eora and the people of the First

Fleet were curious and hopeful. While we know the dark history of what is to come a space is

opened for reflection in which we can consider our own place within a complex web of colonial

relations, ongoing race politics and the politics of place and belonging flowing on from the first

moments of colonisation.

Emmett's brief envisioned the installation as responding to the architecture of the MOS

in counter-point and even tension; to avoid being a stand-alone piece of civic sculpture.

The installation was to "demand engagement through the physicality of place and sensory

engagement/interaction" and include sound and light in its realisation.[8]

*Edge of the Trees* was intended as a key element in the interpretive scheme of MOS, which

would itself make use of media technologies to communicate its message. As a response to the

museum's limited collection of material artefacts Emmett planned to use media technologies

of video projection and sound in the permanent exhibits to fill the space. He described his

approach as "making the technology visible" and about revealing the meaning of objects rather

than fetishising an object behind glass.[9] Utilising technology within the museum also informed

the conception and approach to the *Edge of the* Trees located at the entrance to the museum.

In placing *Edge of the Trees* within the field of media arts my argument lies not with the

practices of Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley but more with the way the work was envisioned

and conceived by Emmett as being immersive and interactive in its sculptural form and its

inclusion of embedded light and sound as key elements. As Laurence and Foley were not

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7    Ibid., 23.
8    Ibid., 35.
9    Jill Sykes, "On the Edge of The Trees and Controversy: The New and Revealing Museum of Sydney,"
     *The View*, 53.

media art specialists, then or now, a team of collaborative consultants including sound, lighting, and audio-visual specialists was on hand to assist them to realise their concept and MOS's requirement to use sound and light.

Within the broad collection of artists and thinkers involved in the work, and within the large collaborative team assembled to produce it, there were a number of media artists and thinkers whose interests lie in creating immersive media experiences. Included in the collaborative team were Gary Warner and Tim Gruchy who are credited with sound production and installation; both have a long history working in interpretive media installation.[10] And also in the broader circle was historian and media artist, Ross Gibson, who worked as part of the development team of MOS and who informed Laurence of Lieutenant Dawes' map of Eora place names around Sydney Harbour.[11] This material was gathered from his encounter with this primary source material, the notebooks of William Dawes[12] at the MOS, which describe the colonial officer and astronomer's attempts to grasp the Eora language and ontology. Gibson has recently published his faceted observations on this material as the book *26 Views of the Starburst World.*[13] Writer, historian and sound/ media artist Paul Carter was also on the development team and his book *The Road to Botany Bay, An Essay in Spatial History* is listed in the MOS publication *Edge of the Trees* as a key reference. Carter's discussions with Laurence influenced her consideration of how sound could function as a spatial map within the installation.[14] So, while Laurence and Foley make immersive sculptural pieces they would not describe themselves as media artists; however in creating this work they were surrounded by a team of people who would describe themselves as media artists and their influence is very tangible in the final outcome.

To define my use of the term immersive media environment: an immersive media environment is one where the sound and/or video images are presented in such a way that the viewer is surrounded by media elements in a spatial environment that can be navigated via the body's passage through the space. Rather than a media screen presented on a two-dimensional

10  Both artists have commercial production companies: Gary Warner in his company CDP and Tim Gruchy in his company grup.tv with brother Mick Gruchy.

11  Janet Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Sydney: 2012).

12  Maria Zijlstra, "The Notebooks of William Dawes; Interview with Ross Gibson," ABC Radio, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/linguafranca/2012-08-18/4204560.

13  Gibson, *26 Views of the Starburst World*.

14  Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

wall or a stereo presentation of sound, there are multiple planes within a three-dimensional environment where media is located or embedded into a sculptural environment that is experienced in an embodied multisensory manner. As Popper states: "Immersive images integrate the observer in a 360-degree space of illusion, or immersion, with unity of time and place."[15] *Edge of the Trees* is obviously not a space of illusion but it is a space of immersion in a sculptural and sonic 'grove of trees' unified at the time and place of the European colonisation of Australia.

French Philosopher and Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty offers a framework that has been applied to understanding immersive installations. In his most famous text *Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945 he describes the relationship between the body and perception and how we come to knowledge through the interface of our body. Our faculties of perception are not separated from the body in a Cartesian division between mind and body rather we know the world through corporeal perception. For Merleau-Ponty the body is our primary medium for gathering information about the world. As he says, "The body is our general medium for having a world."[16] Merleau-Ponty describes the way we make meaning through the movement of our body through an environment.

> Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it's caught in the fabric
> of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But, because it moves itself
> and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself.[17]

An immersive environment is one where information is communicated with this intention for the viewer's body to "circle around itself"; we move through the work layering and accumulating sensory data via the interface of our body to form meaning.

Laurence's work often involves the experience of immersing the human body through the device of reflections in glass planes; in *Edge of the Trees* both architecture and body are captured in the reflective glass surfaces that encase substances within the glass pillars.

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15  Frank Popper, *From Technological to Virtual Art*  (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007), 181.
16  Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*, trans. C. Smith, International library of philosophy and scientific method (London: Routledge, 1974), 146.
17  Maurice  Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 3.

Laurence has said: "It is in this transparent, reflective space, where the body becomes entwined into space and time, where we see our reflection ghosted through the material/ immateriality of glass. We merge into the surrounding architecture and landscape as a play on the virtual."[18]

In Laurence's recent installation *After Eden, 2012* commissioned by the Sherman Foundation, the artist meditates on the fragile situation experienced by many mammals around the world via an immersive environment of veiled spaces with titles such as *Fabled, Sanctuary, Love and Extinction.* Extinct and endangered animals are presented as wet specimens floating in formaldehyde and taxidermy museum displays accompanied by still and moving image. The viewer moves through the exhibition space layered with multiple planes of glass as surfaces for printed images, containers of animal specimens and as sculptural objects. Video projections of mammals under threat of extinction are accompanied by the recorded sound of their breathing. In this immersive environment the viewer is offered a place for contemplating these endangered mammals loss of habitat.

Laurence describes this work as being connected to *Edge of the Trees* in its meditation on loss and its function as a memorial.[19] She also described it as a 'media environment' and said that she has moved more into that terrain, having made several videos that were not just screen-based works but which had a spatial dimension to them.[20]

Fiona Foley has also created immersive environments in her work *Bliss*, 2008 installed in the *Bliss Room,* one of a suite of seven Millenium rooms by Foley permanently located at the State Library of Queensland. *Bliss* encloses the body through the device of video, projected onto the wall of a small room creating a claustrophobic feeling. This feeling of claustrophobia or entrapment is related to the subject matter of the video, fields of gently swaying poppies.

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18  Artist's unpublished notes, 2002 quoted in Rachel Kent, "Changing Topographies: The Environmental Art of Jant Laurence," in *Janet Laurence: after Eden / Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation*, ed. Foundation Sherman Contemporary Art (Paddington, N.S.W. :: Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, 2012).
19  Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
20  Ibid.

The video is overlaid with texts about the Queensland government's profiteering in the opium industry of the late 19th century and the harm caused to Aboriginal people who became addicted to the substance.[21] The feeling generated by the small room and movement of the poppy fields is akin to the waves of nausea that can wash over a user of opiates.

Following on from *Edge of the Trees* Laurence and Foley have gone onto use sound in installation works as an immersive device in their individual practices. Laurence's collaboration *Birdsong,* 2006, a site-specific installation for Object Gallery in Sydney, created with Ross Gibson featured a sound composition. In this installation taxonomical museum specimens of various bird species, borrowed from the Australian Museum and complete with their museum labels, were laid out on a transparent perspex ring hung at eye level. The display was accompanied by a composition of field recordings of the bird species made by Ross Gibson in collaboration with Jane and Phillip Ulman. Foley used sound in *Lie of the Land,* 1997 now installed permanently outside the Melbourne Museum; this was her second public artwork after *Edge of the Trees*. It includes a soundscape composed by Chris Knowles that features birdcalls of the crow and eagle-hawk significant to the Wurundjeri. The text of Batman's treaty with the Wurundjeri of 1835 is spoken in seven languages of early colonisers to Australia spoken in the Melbourne area today: Dutch, Portugese, Chinese, English, Indonesian and French. In this treaty, land was traded for material goods such as blankets, flour, beads, tomahawks, knives, scissors and looking glasses. Texts recounting the quantities of these items traded are inscribed onto imposing square sandstone tablets in order to create an elegiac monumental presence to the items and underscore the ephemeral nature of what was traded for land. The inclusion of soundscapes in both these works is an important immersive device, creating a field of sound that the body of the viewer moves through and responds to.

While *Edge of the Trees* is an immersive environment it is of course not a completely synthesised environment encountered via a head-mounted visual and sonic display where one is completely dislocated out of place and time. Rather as an immersive environment it is deeply embedded in place and time, caught in the diurnal activities of the surrounding city at the edge of ebbs and flows of people entering and exiting a museum, its design reflecting and responding to the surrounding architecture. The sound emanating from the work is heard in

21   Fiona Foley, *Fiona Foley: forbidden*, ed. Art Museum of Contemporary and Museum University of Queensland Art (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, University of Queensland Art Museum, 2009), 96.

conjunction with the flowing sound environment of the city. In its material form the sculpture responds incrementally and slowly over time to human touch and the elemental conditions of UV light, oxidisation and water.

## Collaboration

The collaboration between Laurence and Foley was especially significant for Foley at the beginning of her career, providing an opportunity to work with an established artist working across public art and installations. And it gave Laurence the chance to work and enter into a dialogue with a young Indigenous artist who would become a leader in the field of public art works that reflect on Indigenous relationships to place, and whose aim it is "to write Aboriginal people back into the visual landscape".[22]

Through a process of invitation the artists Laurence and Foley developed a proposal for what was to become *Edge of the Trees*. Other artists invited to submit proposals were Ken Unsworth, Narelle Jubelin, a young Indigenous artist REA (of the Gamilaroi/Wailwan people) and Alison Clouston, their competing projects are presented in *the Edge of the Trees* publication published by the Historic Houses Trust.[23]

Laurence invited Foley to collaborate with her as the brief required artists to respond directly to the site as a contested space; a culturally resonant site for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It was thought Foley would have the authority to deal with the Indigenous content in a manner not possible for a non-Indigenous artist.  Laurence has stated that Foley's contribution very specifically dealt with the Indigenous content.[24]

Foley has said that in being brought onto the project she was not described as a secondary or junior artist when agreeing to the collaboration with Laurence but as it unfolded she came to be treated as such. In my discussion with Foley she described the work as her first piece of public art and one where she learnt some hard lessons about the machinations of creating art in a collaborative and committee environment.

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22   ———, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Brisbane: 2012).
23   Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees: a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*.
24   Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

While the artists' dialogue became mired in the difficulties of the large-scale collaborative process it is interesting to clearly see the voice and on-going pre-occupations and themes of both artists resonate within the installation. Laurence has continued to embrace environmental themes and the trace of memory in place and material matter. Foley has continued her work uncovering the hidden histories of Indigenous people enmeshed in Australia's colonial past; a dialogue of place from an Indigenous perspective. In their individual practices they have created immersive environments both outside the gallery in public art works and inside the gallery with installations combining physical materials, photography, sound and video.

## A site of memory

Laurence and Foley's submission was noted as fitting Emmet's vision for the work most closely. Emmett was inspired by the passage in Rhys Jones' essay *Ordering the Landscape*, particularly the following passage:

> …the discoverers struggling through the surf were met on the
> beaches by other people looking at them from the edges of the
> trees. Thus the same landscape perceived by the newcomers as
> alien, hostile or having no coherent form, was to the indigenous
> people their home, a familiar place, the inspiration of dreams.[25]

Laurence and Foley's interpretation of *Edge of the Trees* was the most literal response to Emmett's brief alluding to a once present stand of non-native stone pine trees (or pine nut trees) that had existed on the site. They developed a series of vertical pillars originally proposed as columns of glass and later becoming columns of recycled wood, steel and sandstone. Laurence was aware of the public protests that had occurred in the 1890s when the grove of trees on the site was pulled down.[26] The grove included the pines, in addition to native species of tallowood, ironbark and rosewood [27] and it is these native tree species that are used in the installation to re-site the grove. Laurence has said of the trees and her original intentions

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25 Ian Donaldson and Tamsin Donaldson, *Seeing the first Australians* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 185.
26 Landscape architect Oi Chung had told Laurence about the protests informed by a book on historical sites around Sydney Harbour.
27 Peter Emmett, "Brief for the Commision of Sculpture," (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of NSW).

of the work: "The site has always been a real focus for me because I knew of a grove of stone pine that had been pulled down and caused a huge outcry. I always wanted to make a piece that commemorated the lost trees. When I was invited to submit I had that piece in mind."[28]

Returning the native trees to the possible site of their growth brings to mind the notion of the trees as a once living form, now material object, bearing witness to colonialism and industrialisation, as evidenced by the clearing of the site of first Government house and the marks left by industrial use retained in the wood. This theme of material forms as containing memory recurs in Laurence's work. Laurence said of this circular journey: "The most interesting thing about them is that they were once trees growing around the site and were then part of an industrial building in Pyrmont and now having gone through a whole history, a whole era, they are once again back in the ground so that they have been witnesses to this period of history."[29]

In her preliminary research for *Edge of the Trees* Laurence travelled internationally to investigate commemorative memorial spaces including gardens. From this journey the place that resonated most strongly was the Old Jewish Cemetery, one of the six dispersed sites of the Jewish Museum in Prague which she photographed extensively and had revisited two months prior to my interview with her. This "deeply memorial space" influenced her work on *Edge of the Trees*.[30] The cemetery dates back to the early 15th century and was used up until 1787 with several burial layers on the densely "inhabited" site.[31] There are 12,000 tombstones cut from stone that poke haphazardly through the site and are further interspersed by growing trees. In physical form the parallel with the cemetery and the finished form are clear to see in the interspersing of trees forms and upright cut rock forms carried into the installation.

In speaking of the work and her early thinking about *Edge of the Trees* Laurence described the city of Sydney as being a space without places of memory. "I was really interested that Sydney had so few memory spaces in it and I was thinking how do you make a memory space in a city

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28 Unknown, "Spirit and Place - Historic Houses Trust Document," (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales).
29 Ibid.
30 Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
31 The Jewish Museum in Prague, "Old Jewish Cemetary," http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/en/acemetery.htm.

that is devoid of memory?."[32] Contained in this notion of a city devoid of memory spaces are the ideas of cultural amnesia and a city that forgets its uncomfortable truths concerning colonial history and its Indigenous past.

Foley's ongoing work to unearth and remember Indigenous histories is a process of undermining the cultural amnesia that seduces us into forgetting the violence of the process of colonisation in which Indigenous people were dispossessed of their lands. For Foley, to succumb and forget is to risk the cycles of violence being repeated.[33] She has said that "many white Australians really don't want to own their own history"[34] and her practice works to undermine this culture of forgetting or choosing to look away from the less palatable events of Australian history. In my interview with her she re-confirmed her view of *Edge of the Trees* as a memorial,[35] saying that "I think of the work as a memorial to one language group of Indigenous people-the Eora."[36]

## War memorials/aboriginal memorials

Significantly, prior to *Edge of the* Trees Laurence had been involved in creating a memorial work in which she explored some of the ideas and visual language that she went on to develop. Laurence's collaboration with Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects, *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* installed in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in 1993 was used as a reference for *Edge of the Trees* as stated in the artist's submission.[37] The work features four 11-metre high pillars representing the four Platonic elements of water, earth, fire and air represented by the materials of glass, stone, nickel silver and jarrah wood.[38] The elemental pillars sit directly behind the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which rises slightly from the ground plane taking the form of an excavated tumulus. The burial mound is hand carved with the text "an unknown Australian soldier killed in the war of 1914-1918."[39]

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32  Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
33  Foley, *Fiona Foley : forbidden*: 98.
34  Ibid., 16.
35  ———, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
36  Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees : a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley : from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 102.
37  Ibid., 51.
38  *Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects*, ed. Patrick Bingham-Hall (Sydney: Pesaro Publishing, 2005), 52.
39  Ibid.
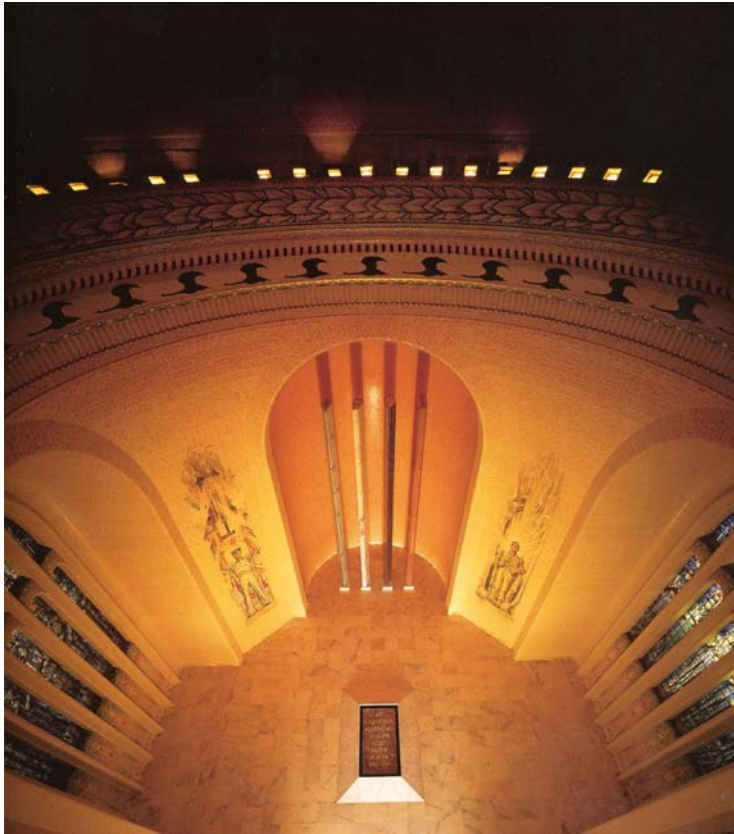
Fig. 20. Janet Laurence, *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*

The echo and reference to the tomb of the *Tomb of Unknown Soldier* within *Edge of the Trees* brings to mind the notable absence of Indigenous resistance to colonisation, which is not recognised as a conflict within the institution of the War Memorial[40] or the commemorative sculptures leading up to the War Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra commemorating wars fought in other lands, Africa (the Boer War), Vietnam, Korea, the theatres of World War I and World War II.  This absence of recognition of the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders to Australia's war efforts is a form of myopia on the part of an institution that gives an account of national identity distinct from our colonial past as forged in the battles of the World Wars.

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40   Brennan notes that within the internal exhibits of the Australian War Memorial there is only one explicit allusion to Indigenous service, in a reference that explores the experiences of the home front in World War II. Anne Brennan, "Lest We Forget: Military Myths, Memory, and Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Memorial," *Memory Connection* 1(2011): 40.

Tellingly the memorial gifted by the government of New Zealand to Australia in 2001 as a symbol of the ANZAC experience is the only sculptural piece with any Indigenous reference. It represents the two handles of a traditional flax basket and the Maori proverb, 'Each of us at a handle of the basket' (Mau tena kiwai o te kete, maku tenei).[41] The Australian side of the memorial features a pavement design by Indigenous artist Daisy Nadjundanga from Maningrida Arts and Crafts, Arnhem Land, fabricated by Urban Art Projects. New Zealand has of course a markedly different story of colonisation and the level of acknowledgement with this history is reflected in art works such as this memorial.

Whilst the Australian War Memorial has no official memorial to Indigenous soldiers an unofficial memorial was established and funded by a concerned white citizen of Canberra in the Bicentennial year in parkland behind the War Memorial. This site now functions as a place for returned Indigenous service people on ANZAC day to gather and remember and has been co-opted in this function by the War Memorial.[42]



Fig. 21. Ramingining artists, *The Aboriginal Memorial*

41   Australian Government, "ANZAC Parade Walk," National Capital Authority, http://www. nationalcapital.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=281&Itemid=251; ibid.
42   Brennan, "Lest We Forget: Military Myths, Memory, and Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Memorial."

As mentioned in the previous chapter the Ramingining artists' installation *The Aboriginal Memorial*, 1988 was constructed as a memorial to all Aboriginal people who had died over the period 1788 - 1988 defending their land. Indigenous curator Djon Mundine, who was then art advisor at Ramingining community, instigated this now famous work created by Indigenous artists from the Arnhem Land communities of Ramingining, Milingimbi, Maningrida and the Katherine area.[43]

Mundine was inspired to make the work after seeing John Pilger's documentary *The Secret Country* in which Pilger says, 'Indeed, in a land strewn with cenotaphs which honour the memory of Australian servicemen who have died in almost every corner of the earth, not one stands for those [first Australians] who fought and fell in defence of their own country.'[44] The work was first shown at the 1988 Sydney Biennale and was then relocated to the National Gallery of Australia which had assisted the work's realisation in commissioning artists involved in the project. The installation has recently been located in a prominent position adjacent to the entry of the newly refurbished art gallery.

In his brief for the artists on *Edge of the Trees* curator Peter Emmett rejected the relationship between the earlier installation of *The Aboriginal Memorial* and the developing installation stating that it would be culturally inappropriate to have Arnhem land burial poles on an Eora site.[45] This is of course true. However the spectre of this earlier memorial has clear parallels and thematic undercurrents with *Edge of the Trees* and Foley's interpretation of the work as a memorial to the Eora.[46] Indeed Laurence does not like the reading of *Edge of the Trees* in reference to *the Aboriginal Memorial* echoing Emmett's view.[47] There are continuing connections in the spatial arrangement of the vertical tree forms in the 29 poles representing the tribal groups and their location around Sydney harbour. In the Ramingining installation the placement of the poles also relates to the arrangement of tribal groups around a body of water; the course of the Glyde River estuary in Arnhem land flowing through the Arafura Swamp to the sea.

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43   Mundine, John, *Art and Australia*, Vol 26 Number 1, 1988 p. 98, note Djon Mundine and John Mundine are the same person.
44   The National Gallery of Australia, "The Aboriginal Memorial - History," The National Gallery of Australia, http://nga.gov.au/AboriginalMemorial/history.cfm.
45   Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees : a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 36.
46   Ibid., 102.
47    Janet Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

In recent years the silence and lack of memorials acknowledging the loss of life through conflicts between colonisers and Indigenous groups has been addressed in works such as *Mayall Creek Memorial* (2000) and Fiona Foley's *Witnessing to Silence* (2004). The Myall Creek Memorial was the first commissioned public artwork to address the topic of frontier violence in the historically well documented massacre where 28 Wirrayaraay men and women were murdered at the site in the Gwydir Valley in the northern tablelands of New South Wales: the white perpetrators were for the first time in Australian history hung for the crime.[48] However this is a community artwork arising out of the concerns of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and descendants of those involved in the massacre. Furthermore it was realised by the community involving local artists in contrast to the process of commissioning a public art work executed by nationally recognised artists, such as Laurence and Foley.

In Foley's *Witnessing to Silence,* 2004 commissioned for the Brisbane Magistrates Court the artist employed processes similar to those in *Edge of the Trees*. They include a listing of place names ostensibly associated with floods and fires and a language of materials; water and ash to speak of environmental disasters in the committee approved concept design process.[49] The ash is contained in five stainless steel and glass faced columns, which physically recall the square glass faced metal pillars/containers in *Edge of the Trees*. In this work Foley covertly employed a researcher to compile a list of massacre sites in Queensland and at the last moment handed the pavement engravers this list of place names rather than the committee approved list.[50] After the work was officially opened Foley publicly revealed the hidden meaning of the installation to be about reinscribing the history and places of Indigenous massacre sites in Queensland. The symbolism of the materials of water and ash referred to those commonly used for the disposal of Indigenous bodies[51] through burning or placing bodies in a watercourse and letting nature do its work.[52]

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48  Catherine De Lorenzo and Vivien Chow, "Contained Memories or Catalysts?: Some Aboriginal Memorials in Australia," *Memory Connection* 1, no. 1 (2011): 11 and 5.
49  Tess Allas, "Histo
50  Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
51   Louise Martin-Chew, "The Guerrila Operative in Fiona Foley's Public Art," in *Fiona Foley: forbidden* (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, University of Queensland Art Museum, 2009).
52  Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

**Anti-monument**

In essence *Edge of the Trees* functions as an anti-monument in stark contrast to the formal figurative bronze statue that was envisioned prior to curator Emmett's involvement in the project. The envisioned sculpture, a commanding imperial bronze sculpture of the founding Governor Arthur Phillip flanked by rows of flagpoles leading into the museum, is illustrated below. One can wonder how the public and art community would have received the work then and now had this initial vision of architect Richard Johnson's of Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) been built. Conservative members of the public now and 15 years ago would have been soothed with a traditional bronze heralding a courageous forefather of the colony. Others would have been aghast at the singular lens view of this significant site and by extension our national history, omitting once again the prior occupancy of the first Australians.
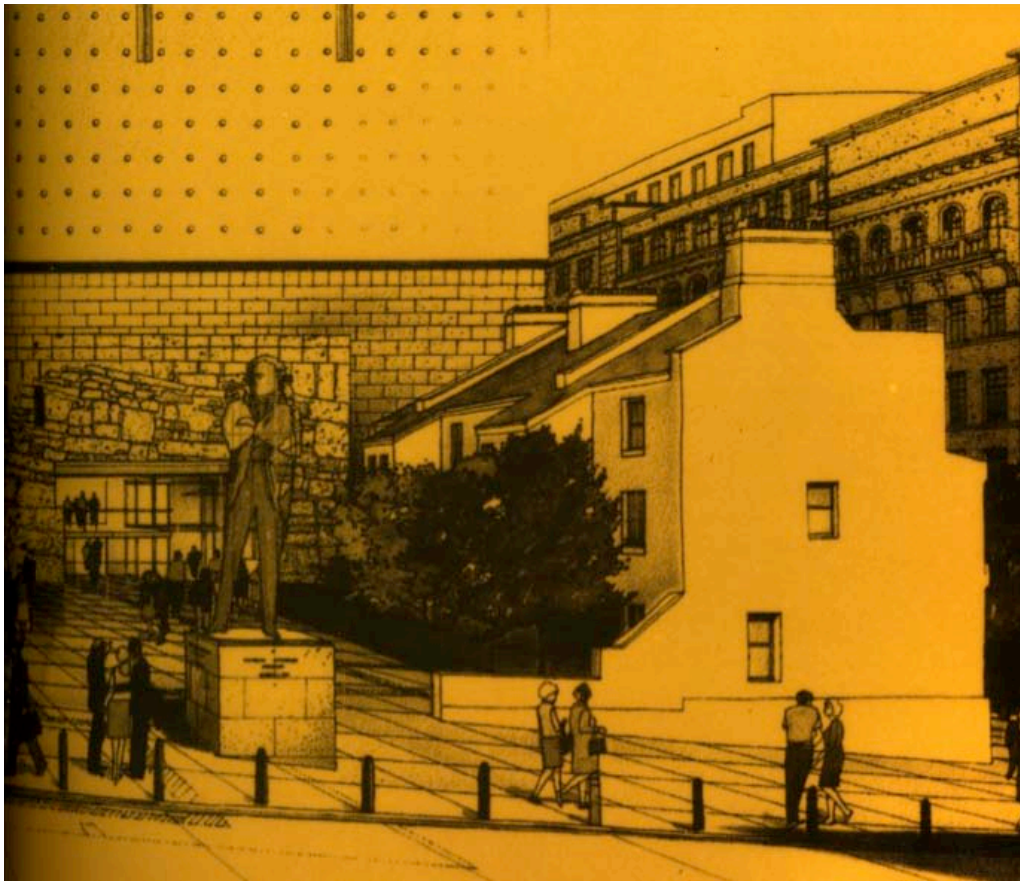


Fig. 22. Denton Corker Marshall, *Early concept drawing featuring Governor Phillip statue*

Rodney Broad's sculpture referencing Governor Phillip and ensuing governors, *Wily Wily*, 1992 was instead installed in the foyer of Governor Phillip Tower, one of the two office towers designed and built by DCM at the same time as MOS. However it, is far removed from the sculpture initially envisioned; the figure of Phillip is no longer directly represented at a heroic scale instead a small "spirit" figure referencing Arnhem land Mimi figures crosses a spiralling form, a cyclonic storm wave at sea, on a tightrope.[53] The spiralling form contains the heads of the nine governors who lived in First Government House and the base of the form contains an excerpt from Phillip's journal recording his arrival at Sydney Cove.[54] In this sculpture both the coloniser and colonised are caught up in forces beyond their control.



Fig. 23. Rodney Broad, *Willy Willy*

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53   Rodney Broad, Phone Conversation, 13 November 2013.
54   Peter Ward, "Twin temples to Mammon evoke bleak past," *The Weekend Australian*, September 2-3 1995.

Entering the plaza of the MOS one is struck by the public, even democratic space that is presented. The plaza appears to be cut into the side of the rising slope of the land on which the museum is situated. At the back of the space the MOS sits, made from large blocks of cut sandstone that bear the marks of its excision from the earth; above MOS a symbolic wall reflecting the architectural layering of the city of Sydney is presented.  Hand-cut sandstone blocks are layered on top of smooth blocks of machine-cut sandstone and then a steel studded wall, out of which the Governor Phillip and Macquarie high-rises emerge, pushes into the sky. This layering of building materials symbolically speaks of the passing of time, a developing mastery of materials and the colonists pushing forward into the present as symbolised by the modern building forms with the names of first and second Governors of the colony.

As a post-modern sculpture *Edge of the Trees* exists in dialogue between architecture, landscape and sculpture installation. The installation alludes to a once present form in the landscape; material and spatial elements speak to the architectural site in which it is located. The conceptual drive for the work is derived from the site that encompasses a set of particular historical conditions.  Rosalind Krauss' famous essay *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* describes the logical structure of post-modern sculpture where, "Sculpture is rather only one term on the periphery of a field in which there are other, differently structured possibilities."[55] These possibilities are the axiomatic structures of landscape /not landscape, architecture/not architecture, site construction/sculpture.  This is in contrast to modernist sculpture, which can be expressed within a field of exclusions of not landscape and not architecture.[56]

In contrast to post-modern sculpture, modernist sculpture draws away from place through its use of the base or pedestal separating dialogue with the ground on which it sits.[57] The modernist approach to the original sculpture proposed for the site is obvious in its use of a plinth to separate the work from the ground and the broader implications of the history of the place on which it was to be sited.

*Edge of the Trees* fits comfortably within Krauss' description of postmodern sculpture; the once present trees in the landscape are now reintroduced as landscape/sculptural form. The elongated forms of the squared wooden and metal posts relate to the elongated squared

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55   Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in modern sculpture*  (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 43.
56   Ibid., 41.
57   Ibid., 40.

forms of the office buildings around the museum; particularly at night when the forms are lit from within echoing the internally lit highrises. Thin beams of light escape from the edges of the wooden pillars tracing out lines of light that fall across the sandstone ground, these echo the illuminated vertical forms of the surrounding skyscrapers.  The lines of escaping light are reflected in the glass panels contained within the I-beams and are also reflected in the small vitrines contained within the wooden pillars. Some of the pillars fall back into darkness at night to create interplays of light and shadow within the work.

The relationship to the site is of course a strong current within the work and extends through to the ground on which it sits. Rather than meeting a flat concrete plane or plinth the sculpture rests on a soft ground bed of crumbled sandstone, intended to absorb the elemental run off of materials, such as the iron oxide, interacting with the forces of oxygen and water and in effect bleeding into the ground. However this intention of the artist has been subverted by the overly efficient conservation practices of the museum that keep renewing the ground beneath the work.[58] In their ongoing maintenance of the sculpture the crumbled sandstone beneath the work is regularly replaced which does not allow for the sandstone ground to be coloured over time by the iron oxide runoff.

Entering the open space of the sandstone piazza of the MOS the *Edge of the Trees* sits to the far right, to the side of the rectangular glass entry area. Laurence had originally wanted people to weave their way through the work to enter the museum and the architect had wanted the trees to stand in a straight formal line.[59] Between these two positions a compromise was reached where the trees were placed less formally and are more representative of a grove of trees and as mentioned reference a spatial mapping of the tribal groups around Sydney. Placed at the side of the museum entry there is a seen/not seen quality to the work akin perhaps to the Eora looking out from behind a forest of trees, possibly seen/not seen. No doubt many people move straight past the work and into the museum without seeing or stopping to engage with it. However to take a slight detour and physically move through it opens up a richly layered historical memory of place and the first chapter in Australia's complex colonial history and ongoing race relations.

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58  Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
59  Ibid.

**A mapping of materials**

Present in *Edge of the Trees* is a mapping of materials to meaning. All of the materials used were conceptually mapped, drawing out the artists' intended references for utilising these materials in the proposal stage of the work. Their concept statement speaks of "Using materials as carriers of memory and reflection of the past and present site."[60] Zinc was an element naturally occurring in Australia and transformed by colonial mining practices; it was also to reference the architecture of the Governor Phillip and Governor Macquarie Towers, part of the MOS development on the site. Granite was a dialogue between architecture and nature, relating to the material of the site's plaza. Wood references the absent grove of trees; Eora carved trees, their wooden spears, shields, shelters and burnt wood referring to fire as an elemental force. Corten steel spoke of the passing of time as the iron oxidised and formed a powder, the same iron ore ochre used by the Eora as bodypaint. Sandstone was used by the Eora for rock carvings at sites around Sydney harbour, is a material that weathers over time and is local to the area.

Physically the completed work comprises 29 pillars of varying height that roughly represent the spatial positioning of the 29 tribes that existed in the Sydney Harbour and inland areas at the time of contact. Of these pillars 18 are wooden, composed of tallow wood, ironbark and rosewood recycled architectural posts sourced from the McWilliams winery demolition at Pyrmont. This was the site of the first foundry in Sydney and Laurence and Emmett claimed the posts as heritage items with reference to their link to the botanical record of the site. Trees such as these were confirmed as having existed at the site via archaeological and pollen records and the posts were claimed because they were derived from trees sourced locally from the harbour area, from the original forest covering that existed prior to colonisation. Laurence explained of the rationale behind claiming the posts as related to the site:

> Sydney was heavily forested, huge big hard wood trees and the
> Sydney colony was built from those and these enormous hardwood
> trees would have come somewhere from around Sydney. So they

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60   Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees: a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 48.

possibly could have been from that area. Some of them were the

same species. In actual fact nobody could bring anything from too

far away so the wood was local.[61]

The five smaller round wooden posts, which are recycled telephone poles, are split in half with the inside edge lined with a flat glass plane. On the opposing inside face of the pole sitting a hand's width apart, are metal speaker faces inserted in the posts from them sound emanates, from within the 'trees'. Evidence of the industrial use of the poles as telephone poles or as building stumps is evident from groves, insets and cuts made in the posts and metal nuts set into inset circles within the posts. Elemental forces have rendered both the native trees and telephone poles a uniform grey tone where scale is the only clue to the differing sources of the wooden posts and poles. Through tone the greys of the forest suggest the notion of a once present forest that now appears as a ghosted form.



Fig. 24. Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley, *Edge of the Trees*

There is a harsh quality in the industrial treatment of this resurrected forest of greyed trees; bolts are inset into the surface of the wood and metal caps contain the top of the wooden and metal posts. The metal inserted into the interior foot of the posts to secure the trees into the

61   Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

ground is akin to a metal prosthesis standing in for the once present natural root system of the trees. The uprooted quality of the tree forms in the present can be read as an indicator of the uprooted quality of the colonists who would in turn dispossess Indigenous peoples uprooting them from their place.

Two squared posts in the composition are composed of planes of corten steel that have oxidised to a rusted red from exposure to the elements. Through the surface of these square posts the rumbling of the city's traffic can be felt moving around the side and the front of the museum's courtyard. In addition to these solid corten steel posts, three corten steel I-beams form part of the composition. Two of these have the open end of the beam enclosed with glass. On the interior surface of the glass, red and yellow oxides have been poured down the glass plane (the pouring of substances is a continuing trope in Laurence's practice). Set high up in a wooden post a small vitrine filled with red oxide has over the years broken its seal and bled down the outside of the wooden post, in the process it has stained the exterior of the grey bleached wooden post red, leaching the interior contents onto the exterior surface.

Looking into the interior of one of the I-beam posts of the sculpture the viewer can see themselves and the museum at the same time. The museum is captured and reflected in the sheet of glass, layered in a present moment into an arrangement of materials that speak of durations of time and occupation. The exteriors of the I-beam posts are sealed with a dark grey powder-coated paint that echoes the colour and material form of steel I-beams utilised in the architecture of the building, thus extending the materiality of the museum into the open plaza and the installation.

Indigenous materials are introduced into the third I-beam's interior which is filled with oyster shells and layers of ash that are presented in sedimentary layers compressed and subjected to the forces of accretion wrought upon the earth. The shells layered at the top of the sedimentary pile are ground down to a fine powder mixed with ash, while the shells buried deeper beneath 'the earth' are more intact, whole and substantial in form, visible as whole oyster shells. The mixing of ash, oyster and pipi shells is a potent symbol signifying Indigenous practices of making midden piles out of sea shells, and the colonists' use of these piles. Shells represent the Eora's source of food and the remnants of their feasts. Competition between the colonisers and Indigenous people over hunting and fishing grounds was the source of many

conflicts throughout Australia. Middens[62] were repurposed, burnt to make lime used in mortar for colonial building sites such as the Governor's House. The use of middens for these purposes speaks of the lack of understanding and indifference to Indigenous culture and practices by the colonists. Ash is also used by the artists to signify the campfires of Aboriginal groups and as a residue of matter.[63] And, as discussed in later works, Foley uses ash to speak of the way Indigenous bodies were hidden and disposed of with fire. In another smaller vitrine set into a wooden post is an additional harbour-side food source, an assemblage of delicate pipi shells with pink interiors.

Existing notches and voids excised into the wooden posts also contain sealed glass containers composed of assemblages of materials. Foley was responsible for collecting and placing these materials into the glass vitrines. Materials used were spinifex resin, native bees' honey, coastal giddy giddy seeds and bush string made by women from Maningrida in Arnhem Land.[64]



Fig. 25. Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley, *Edge of the Trees* (detail with oyster and pipi shells)

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62  A midden is a pile of shell and bone left at feasting grounds and compiled over many generations and considered to be sacred. Middens composed of shells can still be found in sites around Sydney harbour and on the beach dunes of the Royal National Park outside of Sydney.

63  Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees: a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 51.

64  Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

In *Edge of the Trees* the violence wrought upon the Indigenous body and the landscape by the forces of colonialism is brought to bear through the symbolism of the chosen materials. Materials included in these glass vitrines are hair used in Aboriginal ceremonial life and presented in a composition with crab claws that were used by the Eora to decorate their hair. This glass vitrine, filled with Indigenous hair bleached white by the sun, can also be read as referencing museological practices of preserving, containing and presenting Indigenous culture and more brutally, of collecting and preserving the bodies of Indigenous people as artefacts. The presentation of these objects within glass offers a cool detached view and contrast to the lived reality of these fragments of human matter. The use of Indigenous hair in the installation is a fragment from a body now disappeared.

In one relevant historical example, of which there are many, Aboriginal resistance fighter Pemulwuy, who is named in *Edge of the Trees,* had a bounty put on his head for leading attacks against settlers in the Parramatta area. He was shot in 1802, his head preserved in spirits and sent to England and his remains have not yet been identified in any museum collections.[65]

Actual historical material was not used in the material compositions in the glass vitrines of the installation. But the presentation of material in the installation in the manner of museum displays sets up an interplay between the installation and the historical narratives contained within the MOS. The forensic/archaeological nature of materials employed in *Edge of the Trees* is further connected to the site by materials revealed just inside the doors of the MOS. Where evidence of colonial life is revealed beneath the glass entry floor, shards of blue and white transferware pottery are visible. Along with the skeleton of a Labrador pet dog and the remains of a dump for the house containing glass, a canon ball and the cylindrical form of a clay drain-pipe.

In addition to this evidence of prior occupation of the site a section of the archaeological dig from 1983 is left exposed by the architects; close to the edge of the street curb it reveals the original footings of Government house and the bedrock on which the foundations of sandstone blocks and the first bricks to be used/made in the colony were cut. This archaeological dig is sealed from the elements behind a glass plane and lit from within so that we can look down onto the illuminated foundation stones of the colony.

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65   J. L. Kohen, "Pemulwuy (1750–1802)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
     (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2005).

The plan and footings of the once present Governor's house are made visible with granite pavers of a paler tone and metal studs inset into the paved floor of the courtyard revealing the now invisible footings beneath the contemporary architectural layer. The sandstone pillars of the installation, the preferred building material in the new colony, are positioned with direct reference to the original footings of Government House. Through this material language a dialogue between the past and present of the site is articulated. The once visible, now invisible is drawn out through a process of tracing and mapping.

## Responding to the environment

Materials in the installation were chosen both for their poetic material quality and also for how they would age and respond to the elements of water, air and human touch. Corten steel would rust, leaving a red trace in the gravel ground beneath the work. The wooden posts would weather over time as evidenced by well-touched elements shiny with use where fingers have traced over them. The sandstone pillars engraved with Dawe's texts will similarly weather and soften. It was planned that if the timber posts cracked they would be stabilised with date stamped zinc bands, this has not yet been necessary as the MOS look after the sculpture "too well".[66]

The elemental force of fire is also present in the work; two of the wooden pillars are burnt, a side of the pillar charred broken down by the fire. These burnt poles speak of the Indigenous practice of land management and clearing through fire and the impact this has had on the Australian landscape over millennium.  Donaldson in *Seeing the First Australians* notes, "Aborigines perceive an unburnt piece of ground with tall dry grass, with its skin-penetrating seeds and the lurking dangers of snakes, rather as we would a dirty untidy room. They set fire in order to curate it, to look after it."[67]

The burnt pole also speaks of the renewing force of fire within the landscape, where fire has scorched the land, fresh new growth begins to appears on trees; like a bright green woolly jumper covering the whole form of the tree, green shoots appear in the undergrowth which attracted game for hunting. Seedpods, such as banksia, only open on contact with fire.

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66   Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
67   Donaldson and Donaldson, *Seeing the first Australians*: 204.

Laurence was influenced to use burnt pillars by her first-hand experience of the periodic bush fires around Sydney particularly near Pittwater in 1994 where she was living at the time of developing the installation.[68]

## Mapping and naming; making the invisible visible

In addition to the careful mapping of materials there are three other maps/mappings at play within the work, spatially and conceptually overlaying each other. Spatially, the columns each represent one of the 29 Indigenous groups in the Sydney /Warran area and loosely their physical location; the soundscape forms a spatial map listing places around the harbour and wider Sydney area spoken in retrieved Eora language, and the location of the sandstone columns in the work is in reference to the original layout of Governor Phillip's home and the colony's administrative centre.
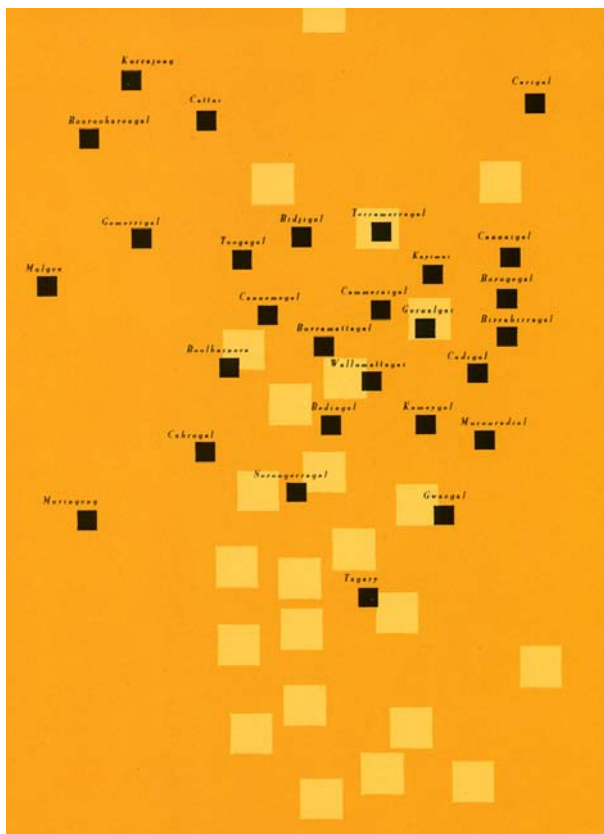


Fig. 26.  Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley, *Edge of the Trees* (proposal image of 29 Indigenous groups in Sydney/Warran area represented by glass pillars)

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68   Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

The soundscape forms a spatial map listing places around the harbour in the Eora language; Gamay meaning Botany Bay, Dubuwagulya – Bennelong Point, Balangalawul – 2nd Island up Harbour. In addition to these physical places broader ideas about place are explored: Nura meaning place or country and there is a counterpoint with the far way homeland of the coloniser's Angalanda – England. Foley drew the list of 25 place names from Jakelin Troy's dictionary of *The Sydney Language* that was being compiled at the time.[69]

Contemporary Indigenous people read out this list of place names and the recordings were then spatialised, distributed in the speakers contained within the small wooden telegraph poles of the installation. Foley oversaw this process of recording the place names and editing the final stereo track.[70] The mono master files were then handed to technical producers Gary Warner and Tim Gruchy who created the spatial arrangement of the voices, placing them at temporal and spatial intervals across the 11 speakers. Gruchy said that the main concern for the artists in the sound design was to create a sense of intimacy, to draw people into the installation.[71] A near-field listening experience, where the body needed to be closely positioned to an individual speaker, was designed to create this affect. Different voices dispersed across multiple channels also created an experience of whispering voices that drew the listener into the installation. Foley and Laurence did not respond to or refine this spatial arrangement of voices, which was left to Warner and Gruchy to complete.[72]

In this recording of Indigenous voice, language and place there is an implied journey, in the sequential reading of place names a movement through places familiar to the Eora people. In experiencing the work you also naturally move through the trees, creating a sound composition of sorts via your passage; some voices will be more or less audible depending on where you are located and at what point in time, in relation to the sequence of the piece as a whole.

Even before you are located within the sound environment of the installation the work beckons with voices hidden amongst the trees calling to you with a 'cooeee', voices laughing, speaking in an unfamiliar tongue that locates them within the landscape through an incantation of place.

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69   Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
70   Lavina Allum working at the ABC studios is credited for this recording and editing work.
71   Tim Gruchy, *Recorded Interview with Author* (Sydney: 2013).
72   Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

The voices remember an Indigenous landscape now encased in a sprawling metropolis, yet set around the enduring landscape feature of the harbour. The voices recount the place names through which the land was once navigated, named and known. At night the sound is perhaps more present, with the drop in the background noise of the metropolis the voices within the trees invite passers-by into the installation.

This mapping of sound to place is a familiar device in contemporary media art works, particularly in the work of sound artists utilising compositions of field recordings from particular environments, which are then spatialised in their presentation. Futurists such as Balilla Pratella in the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Music* published in 1911 called for composers to utilise sounds derived from the environment: "the musical soul of crowds, of great industrial plants, of trains, of transatlantic liners, of armored warships, of automobiles, of airplanes."[73] From Musique Concréte[74] in the early 1940s and the electroacoustic works of John Cage, the way that sound is spatialised in an environment and derived from an environment has been a concern. For example, Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 5*, 1951-52 utilised field and studio recordings of electronic sounds, instrumental sounds, wind sounds including singing, city sounds, country sounds and amplified quiet to explore principles of interdeterminancy.[75] Also created for the *Music for Magnetic Tape* project, *Williams Mix*, 1952 utilised eight channels of monophonic sound played back off synchronised tape recorders.

A contemporary and thematically linked Australian work that utilises field recordings and spatialised sound is *Landing*, 2009 by sound and multimedia artists David Chesworth and Sonia Leber who work under the name *Wax Sound Media*. For *Landing* they created a sound environment at Botany Bay National Park as part of an interpretive centre for the area,[76] locating the site as a place of arrival and dispossession. Captain Cook of course surveyed the area in 1770, and the First Fleet arrived there in 1778 and moved a short distance up the coast to Port Jackson to establish the colony. In *Landing* Indigenous voices from La Perouse

73  Peter Manning, *Electronic and computer music / Peter Manning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

74  For a history of Musique Concrete see ———, "Paris and Musique Concréte," in *Electronic and computer music / Peter Manning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

75  ———, *Electronic and computer music / Peter Manning*: 75.

76  *Landing Place* is part of an interpretive centre designed by Freeman Ryan and commissioned by the NSW government.

Aboriginal community are re-embedded in the landscape, along the Burrawang Walk via a multichannel soundscape composed of traditional songs, field sounds of traditional activities of tool-making, shellwork, and the making of clapsticks.[77] The sound is distributed across the walkway through eight channels of audio that emanates from corresponding speakers. Implicit in the work is the notion of re-inscribing place and the Indigenous communities' cultural connections to the ground zero site of the first wave of colonisation on the continent. Through field recordings of cultural activities the continuity of the communities' connection to the surrounding country is asserted. The artists stated that their intention was to provide a permanent marker of Aboriginal culture in the area as counterpoint to the monuments to Captain Cook and botanists Banks and Solander.[78]

Sound is also used to re-inscribing place and the Indigenous communities' cultural connections to the Sydney/Warran area in *Edge of the Trees* through the layering of place names.  In this recanting and inscription of place tensions arise around the process of seeing, naming and knowing. While Indigenous place names are presented they are recorded and mis-recorded through the eyes and language of the coloniser. Mapping, naming and knowing is the first task of the coloniser.[79] Through the process of renaming a site a process of erasure is at play. In the renaming of places many Indigenous place names were lost, written over by names created and used by the coloniser.

Names such as Baramada (Parramatta) and Cammeraigal (Cammeray) awaken us to the way some continuing place names are based on mispronunciations of Indigenous place names. Unfamiliar sounds transferred between languages become lost and are misinterpreted. The recovery of language in the installation was one of the most resonant and striking features of the installation for Foley. As she said:

77   Sonia Leber and David Chesworth, "Landing Place,"  http://www.waxsm.com.au/landingplace.htm.
78   Ibid.
79   *Place: local knowledge and new media practice / edited by Danny Butt, Jon Bywater and Nova Paul*, ed. Danny Butt, et al. (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

What's been politically significant for me is the re-enactment of language

in the written format and the spoken. It's not a dead language, it's a language

which is coming to life…there is the spoken word which has given voice to the

names of Sydney sites.[80]

The intention of the artists in *Edge of the Trees* was to re-imbue the site, to reclaim

relationships to place by evoking through naming. Naming is used to call forth what is no

longer present; the trees, plants, people, Indigenous place names and language. Through an

interweaving of naming and mapping, a way of seeing and hearing into a past that is no longer

physically present is provided.

As Emmett has stated: "Naming was always regarded as an important element of the

installation. European settlers claimed the land by naming everything they saw – to 'rename'

would be a way of reclaiming the site."[81]

The theme of naming also extends to the crew and convicts of the First Fleet. Their signatures

are engraved on zinc plates and attached as a series of small nameplates to one of the wooden

posts. A list of 13 Aboriginal people who appear in the historical record selected by Foley have

their names carved into the sandstone pillars linking their naming to Indigenous practices

of carving into sandstone. People included are Bennelong who had a long association with

Governor Phillip, beginning with his abduction and internment at First Government House and

the warrior Pemulwuy who led uprisings against the colonists.

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80   Unknown, "Spirit and Place - Historic Houses Trust Document."

81   Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees : a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 53.
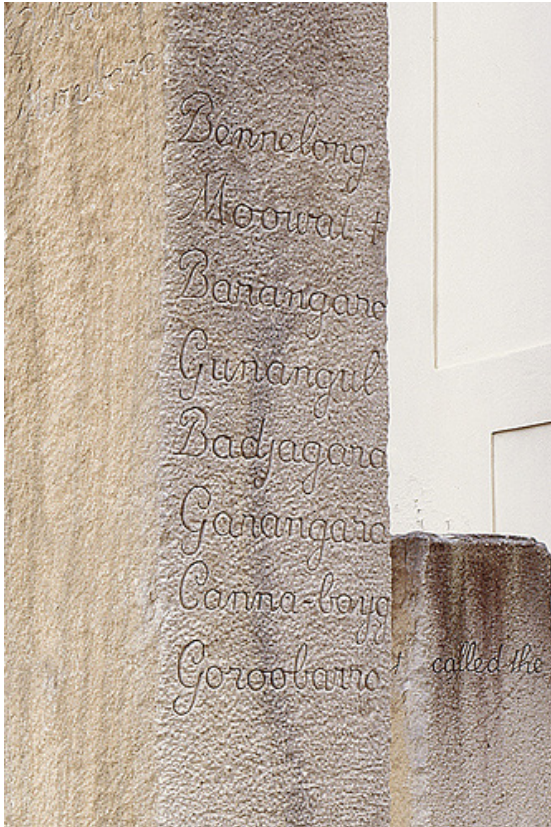
Fig. 27. Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley, *Edge of the Trees* (detail of Eora names carved into sandstone pillars)

A list of botanical names of flora in the Sydney area is burnt into one wooden column, it is drawn from an archaeologist's pollen mapping of Governor Phillip's garden. Laurence was alerted to the presence of the pollen report by archaeologist Peter Tonkin who worked as a researcher on the project.[82] As a cultural counterpoint, burnt into another wooden post are the Indigenous names of local plant species cross-referenced to the pollen map and historical records of the Indigenous language. The Indigenous plant names were researched by Jakelin Troy as a mirror to what had been uncovered in the pollen report.[83] This list was compiled from the recorded plant names in the Sydney language drawn from the writings of a variety of eighteenth and nineteenth century writers including William Dawes and Governor Arthur Phillip amongst others.[84] The pollen map and botanical listing of Indigenous plant names relocates now invisible layers of information to the site in a forensic manner mining data drawn from the site through linguistic research and scientific processes of reading 200-year-old samples.

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82   Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.
83   ———, 21 November 2013.
84   Jakelin Troy, *The Sydney language / Jakelin Troy*, ed. Shirley Troy ([Flynn, A.C.T: J.Troy], 1994), 33.

Excerpts from astronomer and marine Lieutenant William Dawe's notebooks, which are the first attempt to map the Eora language and ontology, are engraved on some of the other sandstone columns. At night from the newly established observatory Dawes charted the southern stars and during the days was pressed into service by Governor Phillip to survey and map the landscape and lay the ground plans for the townships of Sydney and Parramatta.[85] Dawes also mapped the country as known and named by the Eora through his cultural interpreter and ambassador the teenage girl Patyegarang. Interestingly Patyegarang is not named in *Edge of the Trees.* Foley has said she was not interested in Dawe's notebooks and did not draw from them in her research as they were "a colonialist's interpretation of events" and were being utilised at the time by Paul Carter.[86]

While I am unable to trace all of the sources that were used in the research and development of the installation *Edge of the Trees* it is clear from what I have discussed that there is a dense field of information drawn from the historical, anthropological, linguistic, botanical and pictorial accounts and data record of the period embedded in the work. The purpose of this being to locate the viewer in this field of information and site related data.

## Locative media/ information environments

*Edge of the Trees* foregrounds contemporary immersive locative media installations where invisible data is made visible through media elements of sound, video, text, and image mapped to a physical GPS co-ordinate. While the installation predates locative media practices and technologies by a decade there are similar concerns at work to make the invisible, visible with reference to a particular site. The field of information encountered in *Edge of the Trees* is annotated to the site on which the sculpture sits and is encountered bodily and spatially and it is for these reasons I describe the work as immersive and locative.

Locative media is a term used to describe media arts practice that draws inspiration and content from a specific site or location. Locative media practices include utilising portable handheld technologies such as mobile phones, iPads, laptops, and broader wearable technologies in a location or locations assisted by networked technologies.

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85  Gibson, *26 Views of the Starburst World*: 163.
86  Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

Most commonly information about the site is then overlayed onto the location via the inbuilt camera, and screen of the device. For example a real-time image of the site drawn from the camera of the device can be overlayed with a historical image. Sound is also an important layer of information that can be mapped to location and heard through the devices inbuilt speakers or headphones. The real-time mapping of media content to site can also be described as Augmented Reality or its acronym AR.

Tuters and Varnelis position locative media as developing over the last half decade as a response to the decorporealised screen-based experience of net art whereby the practice moves beyond the gallery and computer screen to claim the world beyond as its territory.[87] They categorise locative media as having two types of mapping either annotative—virtually tagging the world—or phenomenological—tracing the action of the subject in the world. "Roughly, these two types of locative media—annotative and tracing—correspond to two archetypal poles winding their way through late 20th century art, critical art and phenomenology, perhaps otherwise figured as the twin Situationist practices of détournement and the dérive. Annotative projects generally seek to change the world by adding data to it, much as the practice of détournement suggested."[88]

Recent online platforms virtually tag historical information onto a particular location creating a view of the past that is layered onto the present. Historypin and Layar allow media information about a site to be pinned or annotated on a particular GPS location and accessed insitu whilst moving through a particular place or town with the aid of a wireless internet connection. Many national and international museums have established Historypin channels particularly with their photographic images allowing their collections to be explored on the site they relate to. Institutions such as The London Museum have, with their own authored smart phone application Streetmuseum[89], moved into the territory of locative media, which can also in this example be described as AR. With this application users are able to navigate and explore the streets of London, using a map or GPS and be guided to significant locations and experience a real-time overlay of a present scene onto a scene from the past at that same location. The historical images and photographs are drawn from collection items of the Museum of London.

87  Marc  and Varnelis Tuters, Kazys, "Beyond Locative Media,"  http://networkedpublics.org/locative_ media/beyond_locative_media.
88  Ibid.
89  Museum of London, "Streetmuseum," http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Resources/app/you-are-here-app/home.html.

Fig. 28. A screengrab from the Streetmuseum application showing a historical overlay in realtime

Artists are also making use of these platforms to create political works of locative Augmented Reality. In *Tiananmen SquARed*, 2011 [90] the Chinese artist collective, *4 Gentlemen*, have used the Layar AR platform to superimpose a monument and event from the democracy uprisings of 1989 that took place in Tiananmen Square. The hastily erected democracy goddess sculpture that once faced Mao's portrait and became an iconic symbol of the uprising and the famous 'tank man' who stood in the way of tanks mobilising to clear protesters from the square can be viewed through AR technologies on the precise GPS location they once stood. While the Chinese government has sought to erase the historical memory of the democracy protests that took place in 1989 within China, expatriate dissidents such as 4Gentelmen are working to re-inscribe historical memory to place with the use of locative media. While not an unsanctioned work *Edge of the Trees* similarly acts as a mnemonic historical art work facilitating a vision of the past with ongoing political resonance.

In contrast in *Edge of the Trees* information is not remapped or tagged to the site as a screen overlay, it is instead presented in a material form as text engraved in sandstone or wood. The text is presented as lists drawn from historical, anthropological, and botanical records, people

90  4 Gentelemen, "Tiananmen Square Augmented Reality," 4 Gentlemen, http://fourgentlemen. blogspot.com.au/2011_01_01_archive.html. I first came across this work in a talk given by artist Warren Armstrong to Dorkbot Canberra 26 July 2011.

and place names of the Eora, signatures of the people of the First Fleet, lists of once present botanic species. This listing could be compared to the list of information a database might recall on being given a particular set of search terms. The work is experienced phenomenologically through the passage of the body through a spatial environment where sound is in embedded into material forms. The body moves through the work accumulating meaning via passage in the installation environment.

Whilst the term site specific is more applicable to artistic practice of the mid-1990s locative media practices can be linked to site-specific practices, as they are both concerned with overlaying and re-embedding information about a particular site into the location an artwork is presented. In both site-specific works and locative media works this act politicises the place or site in which art is created. Art is no longer presented in a seemingly politically neutral white box or institutional frame but is located in a particular place with a particular historical record. Art historian, Miwon Kwon frames contemporary site-specific art as being orientated in a field of knowledge and debate that is subordinate to both its relationships to site and institution.

> ...the distinguishing characteristic of today's site-orientated art is the way
> in which the art work's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site)
> and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both
> subordinate to a discursively determined site that is delineated as a field of
> knowledge, intellectual exchange or cultural debate.

In this context *Edge of the Trees* can be seen as orientated in an ongoing field of debate about colonisation, reconciliation, memorials and ecological concerns.

**Conclusion**

The most debated aspect of *Edge of the* Trees has been the work's connection to the ongoing process of reconciliation. Foley has said that the word reconciliation was not used whilst the installation was being created and that it was only used on the actual day of the launch, with the press positioning it in that context.[91] On reconciliation as a whole Foley said that what was being called for in 1988 by Indigenous Australians in the Bicentennial year, was a treaty.

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91   Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

Indigenous groups such as the Northern and Central Land Councils called for a treaty, as did the Barunga Statement[92] presented to Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1988. Hawke responded to the Barunga statement by saying he wished to conclude a treaty with Aboriginal people by 1990. However what came out in the 1990s through the Labour Keating Government was the process of National Reconciliation. Foley said of the Reconciliation process:

> ...this process called National Reconciliation where we're made to
> feel good about one another, but there's nothing tangible about
> Reconciliation and most non-Indigenous people don't know what
> they're apologising for. And, if you can't get to the guts of that or the
> crux of that, then it's meaningless.[93]

Reflecting on the work five years afters its installation Laurence said, " I genuinely wished for this primarily as a statement towards reconciliation and also to express the enrichment of our culture through the entwining of our diversities."[94] In my interview with Laurence she said that her desire for the work to also be understood as being about environmental loss "will never be seen".[95] However over the past 17 years the themes of Indigenous loss of place, the spectre of mass loss of place through climate change and our ongoing relationship to the environment have become more intertwined. There is much to be learned in an Australian context from Indigenous land management practices and their interrelationship with the land.  Laurence has said in regard to Indigenous knowledge of the land, "I just can't understand why we have never been able to embrace native knowledge."96  Hopefully Indigenous knowledge will increasingly become a greater part of Australian's understanding, relationship and connection to place.

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92  The Barunga Statement was written on bark and presented to the Prime Minister Hawke "...it called for Aboriginal self-management, a national system of land rights, compensation for loss of lands, respect for Aboriginal identity, an end to discrimination, and the granting of full civil, economic, social and cultural rights." Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Studies, "Treaty- Barunga Statement," Commonwealth of Australia, http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/treaty/barunga.html.

93  Foley, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

94  Emmett et al., *Edge of the Trees : a sculptural installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley: from the concept by Peter Emmett*: 101.

95  Laurence, *Recorded Interview with Author*.

96  Ibid.

# Chapter 3 - Loss of place and Evolution of Fearlessness

*Evolution of Fearlessness* is a single channel interactive video installation by Australian artist Lynette Wallworth commissioned in 2006 for the New Crowned Hope Festival in Vienna. I have selected this work as the women who are the subjects of it present a multi-faceted view of the ways a sense of place can be lost in an Australian context. The stories are mainly from refugees who have experienced loss of place through trauma such as war and political persecution. A secondary thread in the stories comes from Australian-born women, who experience loss of place through the ongoing effects of colonisation and the secondary effects of war. For Wallworth all the women embody the quality of resilience and have gone on to build positive lives for themselves beyond their experiences of trauma; to recreate their sense of place and community. Director Peter Sellars, in commissioning works for the New Crowned Hope Festival in Vienna, asked artists to create works that responded to their current spheres of reference.[1] For Wallworth this was the harsh political rhetoric around border protection and asylum seekers and the positioning of these related issues during the Howard Government's third election campaign in November 2001.[2] After the debut of *Evolution of Fearlessness* in Vienna in 2006 it has been shown at the Melbourne International Arts Festival in 2008, Sydney Festival in 2010 where I viewed the work and Brighton Festival 2011 curated by Aung San Suu Kyi.

As is the case for many media artists Wallworth works on projects solo and in a team to create pieces such as *Evolution of Fearlessness*. In this mode Wallworth functions as the artist/ director; the concept is developed independently by her and then taken to a small production team to execute. The production team usually includes Interactive Systems Designer Peter Brundle. Cinematographer Michael Williams has worked with Wallworth on two of her projects. The production team for *Evolution of Fearlessness* included Brundle and Williams as well as construction and production assistants.

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1   The festival was a commemoration of Mozart's birth 250 years prior. His concerns at the time of his death in Vienna at the early age of 35 and his political association with the Viennese Freemason's Lodge entitled New Crowned Hope. Peter Sellars, "Welcoming Statement," New Crowned hope Festival, www.newcrownedhope.org/fileadmin/nchfiles/statement_peter_en.pdf.

2   The Howard Government, a Liberal-National Coalition, was in office over the period March 2 1996 – November 24 2007.

Wallworth is also supported by an arts production company FORMA based in the UK, who have a technical director to support their productions. FORMA has produced and toured Wallworth's work since 2006. Prior to her partnership with FORMA, Wallworth's interactive art works did not have an onward life and were often not shown beyond their first incarnation.[3] Working with a producer has changed her practice and the way she thinks of her artworks and their longevity. "I do think of the works as having a very long life. So the responsiveness in the systems have to be strong and robust enough so that they can go on."[4]

## A trilogy: Invisible by Night, Evolution of Fearlessness and Duality of Light

*Evolution of Fearlessness* is part of a suite of works incorporating *Invisible by Night*, 2004 and *Duality of Light*, 2009, which the artist sees as a trilogy dealing with grief, loss and resilience. Of this trilogy she has said: "*Invisible by Night* is about grief and loss, it's if you like in a state of rawness of that loss, whereas *Evolution of Fearlessness* has transitioned on from the rawness to this state of resilience, and then *Duality of Light* is finally a meeting with your own self."[5]

The three works were shown together for the first time at the Sydney Festival in 2010[6] at the Carriage Works, Sydney. *Invisible by Night* was originally commissioned for the Melbourne Festival to respond to the history of the site as Melbourne's first mortuary and now part of the Federation Square development. Thematically the work deals with the initial raw emotions of grief and features a friend of the artist who had recently lost her partner.[7] On a life sized screen, a video of the woman cyclically pacing can be interrupted by touch, summoning the woman from her grief to wipe a layer of condensation from the screen and meet the eyes of the viewer. Grief and loss in this context is presented without a narrative as part of the universal human condition and experience.

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3    Lynette Wallworth, *Recorded interview with author* (Sydney: 2012).
4    Ibid.
5    Ibid.
6    Sydney Festival, "Lynette Wallworth," http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/2010/Visual-Arts/Lynette-Wallworth/.
7    Lynette Wallworth, *In conversation with Author*, 19 November 2012.

Fig. 29. Lynette Wallworth, *Invisible by Night*

*Duality of Light* is a video work for a single person in which the viewer walks down a corridor immersed in sound; at the end of the corridor they encounter a life sized delayed live feed of their passage through the space. After completing this journey the audience either sees or does not recognise their image, which then slowly disintegrates. On viewing this work in 2010 I thought it the least successful of those in the trilogy being overly reminiscent of Bruce Nauman's *Live-Taped Video Corridor*, 1970.  However considering it within the context of the other two works particularly *Evolution of Fearlessness*, allows a deeper reading of the uncanny moment of the apprehension of approaching a stranger to find that it is in fact yourself. In the context of the politics of the day around fear of the stranger – that is asylum seekers - the work is strengthened. There is also a repetition across the two works of the device of walking down a corridor. For the women in *Evolution of Fearlessness* it becomes a re-enactment of their journey through trauma to fearlessness and for the viewer of *Duality of Light* it is both a journey towards oneself and towards the doubled image of oneself creating uncertainty about who is apprehended through vision the self or a stranger.

Fig. 30. Lynette Wallworth, *Duality of Light*

## Asylum seekers, resilience and loss of place

*Evolution of Fearlessness* was created in response to Peter Sellar's provocation to respond to what was currently happening in the artist's world or home. What emerged from this for Wallworth was the Australian Government's response to asylum seekers[8] under Prime Minister John Howard's leadership. The government had begun a hard-line response to asylum seekers in the lead-up to a federal election held in November 2001; the Liberal Party wished to portray it self as tough on border protection issues. International events were also important, the 9/11 September 11 terrorist attacks in America had occurred two months prior.

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8   A note on terminology following the Centre for Policy Developments definition: "An asylum seeker is a person who has declared themselves a refugee in need of protection but who has not yet gone through a refugee status assessment by the UNCHR or a signatory Government such as Australia." Kate Gauthier John Menadue, Arja Keski-Nummi, Angelica Neville, "Key Terms," Centre for Policy Development, http://refugeefacts.cpd.org.au/facts-myths-and-realities/key-terms/.

In late 2001 incidents such as the Tampa Affair[9] in August 2011 and Children Overboard Affair,[10] which occurred in October 2001, post-9/11, saw boats in distress carrying Afghan asylum seekers refused entry to Australia. In the Children Overboard affair asylum seekers were represented, in the mainstream media, as inhumane throwing their children overboard as a ploy to gain entry to Australia. They were also represented as being a security risk and potential terrorists. The Government's solution to the Tampa affair was to enact the Pacific Solution voted in on September 17 2001 where islands off Australia were excluded as migration zones. This made it impossible for asylum seekers who did not reach the Australian mainland to be eligible to apply for asylum.  Prior to these events the Howard Government had been trailing Labor's primary vote by 13 percent according to Newspoll. With the arrival of the Tampa and the events of 9/11 the Liberal/ National Coalition were able to narrowly hold onto power with 50.95% of the primary vote.[11]

Following on from these events the Labour Gillard Government reintroduced the Pacific Solution allowing for offshore processing to begin again on Nauru and Manus Island with The Migration Legislation Amendment (Offshore Processing and Other Measures) Bill on August 12 2012.[12]  In the 2013 election, the issue of border protection and the legitimacy of asylum seekers was still a major issue 12 years on from the Tampa incident. The Labor party, led by Kevin Rudd, positioned itself as even tougher than the Liberal party on border protection announcing that all asylum seekers arriving by boat would be sent to Papua New Guinea and ultimately not resettled in Australia.

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9   In *the Tampa affair* of 26 August 2001 a boat of 438 Afghan asylum seekers, the *Palapa*, was in distress in Indonesian waters spotted and was spotted by Australian Search and Rescue; they broadcast a request for boats in the area to respond to the distress call. When the Norwegian Freighter, the Tampa, captained by Arne Rinnan picked up the asylum seekers he was refused access to Australian waters and Christmas Island and directed to return to Indonesia where he had already attempted to take the asylum seekers. So began a 5 day stand off and a new era of border protection. The *Palapa* was the first refugee boat to set out for Australia after the Federal Election of 2001 was called. Senate Committee, "Select Committee for an Inquiry into a Certain Maritime Incident," (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2002).

10  *The Children Overboard affair* occurred on the 6th of October 2001 where children were reported thrown overboard from SIEV 4 (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel) in the vicinity of Christmas Island. This information was released to the media, by the then Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock in the midst on an election campaign. The Federal election was held on the 10th of November 2001 and returned the incumbent government.  A senate committee examining the incident found the claim that children were thrown overboard to be untrue.

11  Antony Green, "Antony Green Election Summary. Federal Election 2004," Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), http://www.abc.net.au/elections/federal/2004/guide/summary.htm.

12  *The Migration Legislation Amendment (Offshore Processing and Other Measures) Bill*

A series of advertisements were run in print, online, radio and television media across the country announcing this position.[13] The Liberal Party led by Tony Abbot won the election on a platform of "stopping and turning back the boats" which is also ultimately a position of refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of asylum seekers.[14] It seems that history repeats itself and Wallworth's installation has a renewed currency in terms of Australia's treatment of asylum seekers.



Fig. 31. Australian Government Advertisement

Wallworth's work, made in 2006 when the Howard government was in office,[15] responded to this ongoing issue of border protection policies by attempting to create an artwork that humanised asylum seekers. It connected audiences with them through the telling of individual stories in an attempt to lay bare or make visible their shared threads of humanity.

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13  The effectiveness of the ad has been questioned, as diaspora communities in Australia are its audience rather than people in transit or point of origin countries. The ads have also been critiqued as electioneering and thinly veiled pre-election political advertising funded by the taxpayer in contravention of advertising regulations. Michael Kenny, "Migrant organisations are questioning a series of advertisements in community languages promoting the Rudd government's new asylum seeker policy," SBS, http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/08/02/concerns-over-governments-asylum-ads.

14  "This Saturday you can change the government ",  in *Liberal Party TV* (You Tube Australia, 2013).

15  The Howard Government remained in office until November 24, 2007.

These individual stories would be used to counter the mainstream media's dehumanising discourse around asylum seekers.

The media discourse surrounding asylum seekers is often about the number of arrivals and the ongoing economic costs to the country for accepting people who may stay on welfare payments, as they are unskilled or unfit for work. For example, in 2008 ABC TV program Media Watch ran a critique on the Australian media's inaccurate and inflammatory coverage of the issues in a segment entitled *Welfare and Refugees.* In one example from this segment Channel 9 News reporter Peter Overton inaccurately reported: "Figures obtained under Freedom of Information show last year 13,500 asylum seekers were granted refugee status. Almost 3 out of every 4 are on Centrelink benefits." Through communication with Centrelink and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Media Watch debunked the alarming figures, detailing how the agency provided details to Channel 9 on "the number of customers who have ever held a Refugee and Humanitarian Visa," this includes the more than 700,000 refugees who have arrived in Australia after the Second World War, have worked and started families in Australia contributed significantly to the country and who are now on pensions etc.[16]

Wallworth's installation focuses mainly on the stories of former refugees, however two stories of Australian loss of place and trauma are also included. The installation features video portraits of 11 women now living in Australia and two women born in Australia; one Indigenous woman is a member of the Stolen Generation[17] another suffered sexual abuse from a family member and is then assaulted by returned soldiers from the battlefields of Vietnam. The women born outside of Australia have escaped war in countries such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, El Salvador, Chile; and in Europe, Austria and Greece in the wake of the events of World War II. All the women are survivors of extreme acts of violence and embodied for the artist a quality of strength and resilience; rebuilding their lives after trauma. Wallworth sought out this quality wanting to portray the women's strength in being able to forge a good life for themselves despite the weight of their personal histories.[18]

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16    Julie Adams, "Media Watch " in *Episode 38: Welfare and Refugees* (Australia: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2009).

17    The Stolen Generation is a term describing Indigenous Australian's removed from their families and placed into a range of settings including institutional children's homes and as unpaid domestic labor. The children were often of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry.

18    Wallworth, *Recorded interview with author*.

> I was interested in a story that I didn't think was being told which is -
>
> people who have the kind of wherewithal to move themselves from
>
> shockingly difficult circumstances, and have the drive and the will and
>
> the know how to get themselves out of their countries of birth across
>
> vast distances, and to try and find a new beginning - it appears to me
>
> that they have extraordinary qualities of resilience and strength.
>
> And that our country is peopled by just those kind of individuals.

Embedded in these individual stories of resilience and survival is the common thread of migration where people have to leave their homeland subsequently experiencing a loss of place. This is actually a very Australian story, reaching back to the origins of European colonisation, and one that should bind us rather than divide us. The counterpart to this story is the loss of place and country experienced by Indigenous Australians in the process and aftermath of colonisation. Wallworth describes this collective loss of homeland and the resilience to survive beyond this loss as "Our Story". By "Our Story" she means Australia's collective story, cutting across Indigenous, migrant and colonial histories as directly experienced by some Australians or as experienced within the history of our descendants.

> You could say there's a great sense of survival spirit or a
>
> thread of resilience that this country has in bucket loads and we
>
> are still inheriting it and we refuse to talk about it. We only describe
>
> it in certain ways as though it has to do with the country itself, it's not
>
> to do with the country itself, it's to do with our history.[19]

*Evolution of Fearlessness* frames resilience as the link connecting Australians who've been here for many generations and those who have recently arrived.  Another secondary connection is the experience of loss of place and having to build a new homeland.  The mainstream media does often connect these stories and many people don't want to see the similarities between asylum seekers and Australians that have been here for many generations. Often the media and political rhetoric frames difference rather than similarities, losing focus on the connections of humanity between asylum seekers and our selves. In a sense this loss of historical focus acts as a type of communal amnesia enacted in the media.

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19  Ibid.

To counter this Wallworth, used tools not dissimilar from those of the mainstream media. In the recording of individual stories and the use of video recording she set out to tell a story that differed from mainstream media reports in the use of image and the way it was presented. There would be a disconnection between the women's video portrait and their stories. The women's silent portraits are disconnected from the reading of their histories, which are presented as printed text. In this separation of text and image one woman's story can became universalised and can stand in for another woman's story. Also unlike news media presentations their video portrait is not composed of a series of edited moments but is rather a single take of the women walking towards the camera; it is about presence and a real time recording of an encounter without time ellipses or compressions. Wallworth has explained that:

> I was always very clear that it was their presence that I wanted in the work
> that the work would be about their presence. There needed to be a disconnect
> from the history because that's the way it's always presented in media.[20]

In *Evolution of Fearlessness* Wallworth wanted to use mediated presence, via life size video portraits of the women to provide an alternate perspective to the way asylum seekers were being discussed in the media at the time as being damaged traumatised people who were to be feared conversely because they were asylum seekers and had been through horrific experiences and also because they might not be genuine refugees.[21]  As she put it, "The artwork could facilitate a sort of meeting, which might provide an alternate perspective or an alternate experience of these people who were being discussed broadly in media at the time - so that was the intent of the work."[22]

In my experience of the work I felt the women's shared humanity, conveyed through the 'presence' of their video portraits, in reaching out to touch their images I also metaphorically reached out to share their experiences and stories. I tried to make connections between the women's portraits, their collected stories and also my own experiences of being a woman, of being vulnerable at times but also of having gathered strength through my own journey and experiences.

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20    Ibid.
21    Ibid.
22    Ibid.

Whilst the quality of resilience of the women depicted is an important aspect of *Evolution of Fearlessness,* and indeed of what Wallworth describes as an aspect of the Australian spirit, my argument centres on the depiction of loss of place as being an important aspect of artworks that look at Australian identity and the historical legacy of colonisation. *Evolution of Fearlessness* speaks primarily of the quality of resilience in the face of trauma and secondarily of rebuilding a sense of place and home, and how this is an experience affecting many generations of Australians both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. An immersive media environment is offered as a means of connection and a moment of digital touch brings the women and their embodied stories into our presence.

## Responding to touch/immersion

In the installation at the Carriage Works, as part of the Sydney Festival in 2010, the video portraits of the women were presented at a life-size scale on a vertical screen. A small audience entered a darkened room where two pools of low light lead your eye and body forward into the room. Under a small lamp the women's stories are presented as text, in a book on a music stand, each headed by first name, birth town and country. The women's harrowing stories are presented economically and simply, without emotional embellishment; the bare bones of the story are more than enough to take in. The artist intended to distil their stories into a text that related as clearly as possible the women's stories.[23] There is a tension in reading such personal stories and being in a room with strangers undergoing the same experience. A community of listeners opens in the room, the women's stories unfold upon the page and you hear their stories voiced in your mind as you watch people engage with the women's silent portraits. The silence in the room is immense and opens out around you to encompass a feeling of compassion and wordless empathy towards the women. [24] There is a sense of meditating on the experience of compassion, a Buddhist practice commonly known as 'Karuṇā' and important to all schools of Buddhism, with the women as your object of meditation. In Tibetan Buddhism cultivating compassion, kindness and love towards others form the essential foundations for developing the right attitude or Mahayana view.[25]

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23  Ibid.

24  In the first screening of the installation in Vienna a soundtrack accompanied the work that was later removed by the artist as she felt it proscribed an emotional response to the work too directly.

25  Reginald A. Ray, "Mahayana: The View," in *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, 2000).

Fig. 32. Lynette Wallworth, *Evolution of Fearlessness*



Fig. 33. *Bodhisattva*, making the fearlessness mudra

On stairs leading up to a raised platform a single person/ or closely grouped couple can ascend and stand in front of the screen that emanates a soft light. By placing the palm of your hand on a marked area of the screen a random video portrait of one of the women is summoned. All of the women walk toward you out of a darkened space and place their palm against your palm, in a gesture referencing the Buddhist posture, the '*abhaya' mudra* which represents benevolence and the absence of fear. The mudra also symbolizes transference of this state of fearlessness to others.[26]

It was an important aspect of the work for the artist that the women approach the audience rather than the audience approaching the women. This is in keeping with Wallworth's understanding, from working with Australian Indigenous communities, of taking a portrait as being an agreement where something is offered or gifted by the subject.[27] In the women's movement towards you they offer up their portrait and their story. They stand face-to-face with you and look directly into your eyes for a period of time before moving slowly away, becoming a silhouette moving into darkness. There is also a moment of visual mirroring between the silhouette of the women and the silhouette of the audience member standing before the portraits; creating a moment of visual connection for the audience witnessing this interaction.

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26   Meher McArthur, *Reading Buddhist art : an illustrated guide to Buddhist signs and symbols* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004, 2002), 111.
27   Wallworth, *Recorded interview with author*.

Fig. 34. Lynette Wallworth, *Evolution of Fearlessness*

This carefully choreographed environment composed of reduced light and spaces for reflection and connection offers the viewer an opportunity for a range of responses to emerge. The quiet, darkened room and the subject matter of the work set an elegiac tone.

Personally I developed a feeling that there were many survivors around us whose stories are held/written within the landscape of their bodies normally invisible to us;  through this work they become present and visible. The decoupling of story and portrait was a powerful device, the stories became less about individual experience and expanded into universal stories of women caught in theatres of war, political upheaval, effected by inhumane government policies such as those effecting Holocaust survivors, the Stolen Generation, the universal ill of violence against women and current government policies effecting asylum seekers, particularly in Australia.  After viewing this work there was an expanded sense that these extraordinary people were part of the fabric of our communities and you probably walked past people who had survived these sorts of experiences during your everyday movements through Australian cities and towns.

Having an understanding of these women's stories via this small sample of political asylum seekers and survivors of trauma gave one a sense of the experiences represented in the greater migrant population of Australia, including post-war migrants from Europe and recent migrants from South East Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In bearing witness to these women through reading their story and interacting with their portraits there was a revelation of individual history through which one could better understand larger movements of displaced people. Wallworth commented on the responses of overseas audiences who were amazed that this diversity of women now lived in Australia; cultural diversity is obviously not an image that is in currency when people think of Australia in broad brushstrokes.[28]

The stories of the Australian women, whilst dealing with traumas that have occurred within Australia - the loss of connection to family, culture, home and place experienced by members of the Stolen Generation, and the violence enacted on women by men and by those who have returned from theatres of war as captured in Jenny's story - also have an expansive effect. We can read a universal story from an individual story. I want to address these stories from Australian born women separately in greater detail as they represent stories of loss of place that emanate from within the country.

**Embodied/disembodied**

While the women in *Evolution of Fearlessness* appear as a video portrait and are not physically present in the room with you there is a tangible sense that they had reached out to cause a visceral impact with the weight of their story and their virtual presence. The technique for shooting these portraits is an element in the success of this powerful feeling of virtual presence. The artist walked beside the women and led them down a darkened constructed hall; at the end of it they reached a lit sheet of glass and pressed their hand to the glass where they encountered their reflected image.[29] This event of walking out of the darkness into light poetically echoed many of the women's experiences of trauma, facing the threat of death and moving beyond it. This experience is also mirrored by the audience's encounter with the work where they walk into a darkened space and advance some distance towards the lit screen where the women's portraits are encountered, or to the lit music stand that holds the women's stories.

28   Ibid.
29   Ibid.

To encounter the women's stories and meet with them the audience must also cross a threshold of darkness, which speaks metaphorically of a journey from dark to light. The structure for capturing the women's portraits translates their presence and experience into the room in a seamless manner, creating a tension between a feeling of the women being present and knowledge that they were not present; a tension between embodiment and disembodiment.

This tension echoes a theme in some of the women's stories when they recount their consciousness as leaving their body, becoming disembodied as a way for their psyche to escape the trauma they experienced. Jenny an Australian woman who experienced sexual abuse and rape, expresses this in these few sentences: "I knew how to leave myself on the floor or the ceiling of a place. By this she meant that she knew about the part of herself that she could keep safe, no matter what. She knew how to separate her body from her mind. It was a knowledge she had not realised she possessed until this moment."[30] This disembodiment is also achieved by focussing their consciousness on one element of their body. Ayen from Sudan is able to take her mind to her breath as a survival strategy. "Ayen was breathing heavily because of the beatings, and the thought occurred to her that she had one thing to look after – the breath that was in her body. To my mind, I am dying, but I am not dead yet. So before I am dead, I should care. So let me care for that breath; not to give up."[31]

This separation between the bodily experience of trauma or pain and the consciousness that experiences the pain creates an external vantage point from which to witness the trauma. Rather than be overwhelmed by the sensation of the body the mind creates a separation or disjunction as a way to master or overcome the floodgates of sensation. Wallworth has described this process as:

> The gift of the mind in that moment is to let the psyche flee the trauma
> that's happening to the body and then to come back into the body.
> That perspective is maybe something that they retain an ability to hold,
> not just out of trauma, but you could also say that's a Buddhist practice
> or that many of the great religions would hope that you would acquire this
> ability, to be able to reflect on your own state without being moved by the
> trauma of that state and to therefore have a different perspective on it.

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30  ———, *Evolution of Fearlessness*  (London: Forma, 2006).
31  Ibid.                                                                                              96

Psychologists describe this process as disassociation whereby the brain splits off the event from normal consciousness. The event can then be processed and incorporated into our memory at a later time once the immediate threat to the self and body has passed.[32]

In Jill Bennett's study of art and trauma she argues that visual art presents trauma "as a political rather than a subjective phenomenon."[33] In *Evolution of Fearlessness* this is certainly the case and is achieved via the decoupling of the women's portraits from their subjective accounts of trauma. The focus is shifted from the personal to the wider socio-political forces at play.

**I am the witness**

The notion of an internal witness mirrors the function of some contemporary video works where both the artist and audience witness the experience of the subject captured and the wider socio-political forces at play.

Lisa Saltzman diverges from Rosalind Krauss' famous 1976 essay "Video the Aesthetics of Narcissism", where video artists are characterised as driven by a narcissist impulse to turn the video camera upon themselves. Krauss writes: "For the object (the electronic equipment and its capabilities) has become merely an appurtenance. And instead, video's real medium is a psychological situation, the very terms of which are to withdraw attention from an external object – an Other – and invest it in the Self."[34]  This narcissistic impulse is tracked in the work of pioneering video artists such as Vito Acconci, and others, and in particular his work, *Centers*, 1971 and *Air Time*, 1973.

In contrast Saltzman characterises video as demanding of its audience an act of witness; "Demanding that we bear witness to its act of witness. Video like its predecessors, photography and film, also relies on the presumptive presence of a subject behind the camera

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32  Raymond B. Flannery, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Victim's Guide to Healing and Recovery* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992).

33  Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision*  (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005).

34   Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," in *Video Culture: a critical investigation*, ed. John G Hanhardt (Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986), 184.

lens, a subject who by proxy or not sees."[35] Saltzman draws on the work of Krzysztof Wodiczco, specifically his *Bunker Hill Monument Project*, 1988, discussed in Chapter 1, to argue her position. In this work video expands beyond a mirror of the self to become a mirror of the community, turning a silent monument into a projection surface. Through recorded oral history and projected images this gives voice to a previously silenced community of grieving family members of victims of gang violence. In a similar way, Wodiczco and de Gruchy with *Humpy, 1988,* the subject of Chapter 1, transform an architectural monument to contemporary culture and modernist style into an Indigenous architecture that invites contemplation on Australia's colonial history through projection.

Whilst the women view a mirror image of themselves in *Evolution of Fearlessness*, the artist holds this mirror up to the women by recording their image and story so that we can see more clearly what the women embody; resilience and survival. And from this glimpse into the personal stories of a few women we begin to uncover a larger story that recurs in the Australian community, that of resilience in the face of trauma and loss. In this work some of the historical push factors of loss of place are presented, namely war, colonisation and their ongoing reverberations.

**Loss of place in an Australian context**

The stories of the two Australian-born women Jenny and Rita sit somewhat apart from the other subjects' stories whose lives begin in other countries and are then displaced by war and political coups and arrive in Australia to rebuild a sense of home and place. In the stories of the Australian women there is a sense of the reverberation of conflict and war that is brought home to Australia from theatres of war abroad and the relationship to government policies that saw the removal of Indigenous children from their families and caused a large scale loss of family, home, community, culture and language for members of the Stolen Generation.

Five years ago on the 13th of February 2008 the Rudd Government issued a formal apology to Indigenous Australians and in particular members of the Stolen Generation. In Rudd's address to parliament he stated, "We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres

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35    Lisa Saltzman, *Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 30.

Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry."[36] And in parliament on the 5th anniversary of the apology legislation has been passed with bipartisan support in the House of Representatives recognising Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander people as the first inhabitants of this continent. The bill also makes provision to test the readiness of Australians to vote in a referendum within a two-year time frame on changing the Australian constitution, which currently makes no acknowledgement of Indigenous people.[37] Both sides of politics supported the bill's passage and many are hoping that the majority of Australians are ready for change on this issue and that progress can be made in Australia's recognition of its Indigenous peoples.[38]

In Wallworth's media installation created two years prior to the government's apology to Indigenous Australians the story of Rita Jean highlights Indigenous loss of identity and place through the removal of children from their families. Rita Jean was removed from her Aboriginal mother, a Moorawarree woman from north-west New South Wales, at the age of two without her mother's knowledge or consent. A social services officer removed Rita and her sister whilst they were playing outside their house with their cousins. At the time their mother was inside the house playing cards with their aunts. The sisters were permanently placed in a children's home. Rita ran away from the home at 15 and as a young woman found her way back to her family. Rita's father was also an Indigenous person from the Wakka Wakka tribe of Cherbourg but had died by the time she returned home.[39] Rita's story is distilled by Wallworth and written in a sparse unemotional style.

Through reading the story of Rita's removal a national experience of Indigenous loss of identity, family, community, home and place is uncovered. In the act of removal, "Rita lost all memory of her mother, her father and her home; she lost all connection to her tribal language. She grew up not knowing who she was."[40] An amendment to the Aboriginal Protection Bill of N.S.W.

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36  Kevin Rudd, "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives, 2008).
37  *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill* ; Simon Cullen, "Politicians unite on Indigenous recognition vote," 13 February 2013 2013.
38  Jessica Marszalek, "Kevin Rudd led indigenous recognition, says Julia Gillard " *The Australian*, February 13 2013. Also see Simon Cullen, "Politicians unite on Indigenous recognition vote," 13 February 2013 2013.
39  Wallworth, *Evolution of Fearlessness*.
40  Ibid.

in 1915 allowed for the removal of Aboriginal children under the age 18 from their families without a committal hearing "if such a course was considered to be in the moral or physical welfare of the child."[41] Read argues the official policy of protection was in reality a policy of dispersal of Aboriginal populations which occurred through a number of methods that separated Aboriginal families and communities, many of whom were by then living in Aboriginal reserves.

In another Australian-born story we see an account of how families are broken down by abuse within them and also how the flow-on effects of war come home with returning soldiers. Jenny survives sexual abuse as a child - the perpetrator is a family member, her uncle - and sexual violence as an adult. The sexual abuse within her family breaks down her relationship with her grandmother, who she stops visiting as her grandmother lives with her abusive uncle.  "He was the reason that all of the granddaughters stopped visiting, and that Jenny's grandmother had no one to lean on."[42]

As a young adult of 20 Jenny was kidnapped and raped by two returned Australian soldiers who kept her captive for a period of seven hours and planned to kill her when they finished with her. "These soldiers said they had been trained to rape Vietnamese women and they could not understand why they should not rape Australian women as well…They said they were trained to torture and they had a gun."  One of the soldiers is described as mad and the other has a grain of humanity in him that she uses to survive the ordeal. In Jenny's story the spectre of returned soldiers who have been psychologically damaged in the experience of war is considered. The soldier's training and experience of violence and sexual violence as a weapon in war is brought back with them and is replayed and enacted on the women in their home nation. The boundary between the territory of war and home is blurred and the sanctioning of violence in war is not seen as having been revoked on their return. The theatre of war displaces the boundaries of home.

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41    Peter Read, "A rape of the soul so profound: some reflections on the dispersal policy in New South Wales," in *Terrible hard biscuits : a reader in Aboriginal history*, ed. Peter Read and Val Chapman (St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1996). Also see ———, *The stolen generations : the removal of aboriginal children in New South Wales, 1883 to 1969 / by Peter Read*, ed. Affairs New South Wales. Department of Aboriginal (Surry Hills: NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2007); ———, *A rape of the soul so profound: the return of the stolen generations / Peter Read*  (St Leonards, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 1999).
42    Wallworth, *Evolution of Fearlessness*.

Jenny differs from the other subjects represented in this artwork in that she is a personal friend of Wallworth's rather than someone she met as a result of the project.[43] Jenny's story ends with her walking out of the police station where she has given her statement. "She walked out full of knowledge and she remains fearless. "This notion of coming to a place beyond fear is part of the underpinning logic of the whole artwork and perhaps this personal relationship was a catalyst for Wallworth's motivation to undertake the project. All those she sought out move beyond being victims and instead, through their experiences, gain knowledge and strength that leaves them fearless.

In the stories and portraits of the women who are displaced from their homelands and come to Australia there are similar themes of sexual violence against women in war - in Sudanese-born Ayen's story and Edith's Germany-born story. In addition there are interconnected stories of racial discrimination, persecution and murder, political persecution and murder, massacres and people who disappeared in violent political struggles and children being forced to act as soldiers. In many countries these occurrences have pushed the women to escape their homelands and seek a place of refuge and safety, which ultimately ends in their resettlement in Australia. However the stories that originate within this land unsettle the notion of Australia as a safe haven. By including these two women and their stories Wallworth contextualises Australia as a place troubled by the dispossession and violence inflicted on its Indigenous occupants. Australia is also represented as a place where the reverberations of violence in wars fought on other lands continue into the present day.

## Australian identity, loss of place and trauma

The conversations and contested narratives around Australian national identity are described and empirically analysed by Tranter and Donoghue amongst different socio-economic groups within the Australian population. After Bell they describe these conversations as a 'mythscape'-"in which the myths of the nation are forged, transmitted, reconstructed and negotiated constantly".[44] They describe these conversations as "the 'discovery' of Australia, British colonization and 'white' settlement (Aboriginal myths tend to be largely ignored), convict

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43   ———, *Recorded interview with author*.
44   Duncan Bell, "Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity," *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2003).

transportation, bushmen and pioneers, bushrangers, ANZACs, immigration post-World War II, and of course, Australian sporting heroes.[45]

> The politics of identity involves political contest over the
> content, boundaries and practical implications of the group
> identity, as well as dispute over who has authority to define
> this identity. The public rhetoric and argument surrounding
> this process may be understood as a form of political thought.[46]

So while there is no singular Australian identity or character we can point to there is a discourse with recurring themes that are contested and negotiated. I want to point to a connective sub-theme of this discourse as being characterised by issues of place, loss of place and trauma surrounding loss of place contained in the narrative of events such as colonisation, white settlement and the mirror of white settlement Indigenous dispossession, convict transportation, ANZAC history and post-World War II migration.  It is clear that the themes of place, loss of place and trauma are recurrent motifs running through these events and the contested field of Australian identity.

In addition if we consider that these issues not only affect the people who directly experienced them but also subsequent generations then their impact continues into the present day. The transmission of trauma from parent to child is described as secondary trauma, and from grandparent to grandchild and subsequent generations as intergenerational trauma. The effect of traumatic historical events, continuing to psychologically effect subsequent generations has been studied, particularly the Jewish Holocaust of 1939-45 and World War II.[47] Some of the historical causes of trauma in an Australian context can be identified as the process of colonisation, for Indigenous people, for convicts who experienced brutal conditions and for the colonisers, police and military personnel on the frontier who were potentially witnesses to violence, perpetrators of violence and also victims of violence. Children brought-up in

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45  Bruce Tranter and Jed Donoghue, "Colonial and post-colonial aspects of Australian identity,"
    *The British Journal of Sociology* 58, no. 2 (2007): 4.
46  Geoffrey Stokes, *Politics of identity in Australia / edited by Geoffrey Stokes*, ed. Geoff Stokes
    (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.
47  See Gabriele Schwab, *Haunting legacies: violent histories and transgenerational trauma*
    (Columbia University Press, 2010).

institutional settings including child migrants[48] and Indigenous children taken from their families can also be included in this group. There is also the trauma as experienced in overseas theatres of war by migrant civilians, for example Holocaust and genocide survivors. And the trauma experienced by returned soldiers, the families of returned soldiers, families traumatised by the loss of soldiers who did not return from war and those who have been traumatised by their contact with returned soldiers. In terms of Australian identity and trauma, the historical causes are varied and Wallworth's installation gives an insight into some of these causes.

Ruth Leys traces the beginnings of modern understandings of trauma in the 1860s with the work of British physician John Erichsen, who described the trauma syndrome of railway accident victims, and continues into the turn-of the century with the psychological work of J. M. Charcot, Pierre Janet, Alfred Binet, Morton Prince, Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud. She offers a critique of contemporary literary theorist Cathy Caruth who emphasises the unrepresentable nature of trauma and the transmission of psychic suffering to others, even to later generations.[49] Leys has been criticised for wanting to keep the history of trauma closely aligned with the empirical and away from post-modern appropriation into other fields where it becomes a "debased currency".[50]

The field of trauma studies has been studied and debated throughout the 20th century into the 21st century and the field is vast. After the Vietnam War in the 1980s post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was named, more recently the secondary effects of trauma and intergenerational trauma have been studied. In terms of studies specific to Australia, Damousi examines secondary trauma via the experiences of war widows post World War I and World War II. [51] Atkinson follows the transgenerational effects of trauma in Indigenous Australia post-colonisation.[52] In a different vein Read[53] traces the psychological effects of the trauma of loss

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48  On the 16 November 2009 an official apology was made to the Forgotten Australian's, children placed in institutional care and post- war British child migrants who came to Australia unaccompanied over the period 1947- 1967.
49  Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy*  (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
50  Mark Jarzombek, in *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*, ed. Lisa Saltzman and Eric M. Rosenberg (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press: University Press of New England, 2006), 249.
51  Joy Damousi, *Living with the aftermath: trauma, nostalgia and grief in post-war Australia / Joy Damousi*  (Cambridge ; Oakleigh, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
52  Judy Atkinson, *Trauma trails, recreating song lines: the transgenerational effects of trauma in Indigenous Australia* (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2002).
53  Peter Read, *Returning to nothing: the meaning of lost places* (Cambridge ; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

of place in an Australian context as a result of colonisation, migration, natural disasters and energy production activities such as coal mining and hydro-electricity. Within an Australian context there isn't a definitive text or comprehensive account of trauma and its historical causes or the relationship of trauma to Australian identity. Rather one can follow studies of trauma in particular groups who have been affected by particular historical events.

*In Evolution of Fearlessness* Wallworth has selected personal accounts of trauma to examine wider socio-political forces effecting particular groups in the Australian community. Her subjects however are not defined by their membership of any particular social group or their experience of trauma. They are instead defined by their shared quality of resilience in response to trauma. Wallworth has said: "The women in fact consider themselves to be a community of survivors."[54]

Atkinson's account of intergenerational trauma in Australian Indigenous populations is particularly useful for gaining an understanding of the complexity of Rita Jeans' story in Wallworth's installation. Atkinson describes the ongoing legacy of colonisation and effects of intergenerational trauma in contrast to the mainstream media's ahistorical reporting of violence, child abuse and substance abuse in Indigenous communities.[55] Atkinson traces the effects of Indigenous contact with colonial settlers from 1860 - 1930, mapping the results of intergenerational trauma into the present day. Frontier intrusion onto Aboriginal lands resulted in epidemics of introduced disease, starvation caused by restricted access to hunting and farming land, massacres of Indigenous people and forced removals from traditional lands. This was followed by removals to reservations, child removals and government surveillance in the period 1880 - 1960. Through 1940 - 1980 there were continuing removals and government interventions. These actions have caused a flow-on effect of violence and dysfunction in subsequent generations. In one example Atkinson traces six generations into the present day, where trauma has resulted in alcohol/drug misuse, mental illness, sexual assault, suicide attempts, perpetrators of physical violence, victims and witnesses of physical violence.[56]

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54  Lynette Wallworth, *Comments on Emailed Writings*, 31st October 2013.
55  Anne Barker, "Child abuse rife in Aboriginal communities," in *PM* (Australian Broadcasting Commision, 2007).
56  Atkinson, *Trauma trails, recreating song lines: the transgenerational effects of trauma in Indigenous Australia*: 184-86.

Historian Peter Read's body of work touches on many of the issues surrounding Australian identity in his work on the Stolen Generation and non-Indigenous relationships to place and the trauma of loss of place. Read notes that the psychological impact of loss of place is largely ignored in Australia and that Australia is not alone in failing to recognise the profound impact on individuals of place deprivation. He states, "Grief for dead places seems much more analogous to grief for dead people than professional carers have allowed. It is now time for environmental and heritage assessments to encompass these profound emotions.[57]

## Locating place and loss of place

Loss of place and relationships to place are also examined in Wallworth's work with reference to the interconnectedness of people and ecological systems. Wallworth's production company Forma makes this connection explicit in their media release for *Evolution of Fearlessness which states "* the interplay *between* moving image, sound, space and visitor is central to Wallworth's work and in this exhibition becomes a metaphor for our connectedness with biological, social and ecological systems."[58] The interconnections between these systems is perhaps clearer in works such as *Hold*, 2001 and 2007 and *Coral: Rekindling Venus,* 2012. In them the interconnection with the audience is emotional as it is in *Evolution of Fearlessness* however what we are asked to empathetically connect with are ecological systems under threat; the kelp forests of Tasmania and the Great Barrier Reef.

The *Hold* series and *Coral: Rekindling Venus,* 2012 allude to issues of place and loss of place in an Australian and international context with reference to the interdependence of humans and ecological systems and the threat to significant ecological environments. In *Hold*: Vessel, 2001 and *Hold: Vessel 2*, 2007 audience members catch in a fragile glass bowl projected microscopic images of marine life recorded by underwater cinematographers filming off the Great Barrier Reef, as well as scientists working microscopically to research corals. The 2007 work utilises images from micro CT scanners to see inside the coral structures in addition to imagery taken by NASA of Venus from a spacecraft with a telescope.[59] *Hold* is a continuing series with another version planned for 2014. The artist sees the series as "receiving and illustrating these

57  Read, *Returning to nothing : the meaning of lost places*: 197-98.
58  Forma, "Lynette Wallworth - Evolution of Fearlessness," *Media Release*(2006).
59  Christopher  Mooney, "Lynette Wallworth and Peter Sellars, The Real Outsider Art," *Art Review* 2008.

extraordinarily interconnected systems operating on this planet."[60] The fragility and change in ecological environments under stress, the Great Barrier Reef and Tasmanian giant kelp forests, is captured in the intervals of time between the footage filmed for the series. Between 2001 and 2007 in some locations 95% of the giant kelp forests disappeared.[61]

Paradoxically the Great Barrier Reef corals, an iconic tourist destination used to draw in local and international visitors, are also under threat from rising sea surface temperatures, the run off from the agricultural industries of beef, sugar and horticulture's use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers which encourage outbreaks of dangerous algae and invasions of crown of thorns starfish.[62] Notions of preciousness and the act of holding these environments in your hands reduces the immensity of these spaces and increases the viewer's sense of agency in relation to these connected but distant vast environments. The artist has said of this work, "To hold an underwater world in a fragile glass bowl gives a very clear, tangible sensation of these environments. It has become patently clear to most people that we really do have to think about what we are handing on to those coming after us."[63]

In *Coral: Rekindling Venus,* 2012 and *Rekindling Venus: In Plain Sight, 2011* Wallworth has revisited endangered coral species in the oceans of Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. The works were released in alignment with the Transit of Venus 2012 in 28 different cities across the globe including participation in the World Science Festival at the American Museum of Natural History and as part of the London Cultural Olympic program. In the United States they have more recently been exhibited as part of the Sundance Film Festival's New Frontiers program in January 2013. Sundance facilitated the screening of the works in 11 different planetaria across the US during the festival, including screenings at the Smithsonia, Washington.[64] *Coral: Rekindling Venus* is a full-dome planetarium experience of these life forms under threat.[65]

60  Ibid.
61  Nicholas Fabienne, "The World in Our Hands," *Realtime*, June - July 2007.
62  The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, "Great Barrier Reef catchment: Safeguarding the Reef, ," CSIRO, http://www.csiro.au/en/Organisation-Structure/Flagships/Water-for-a-Healthy-Country-Flagship/Ecosystems-and-Contaminants/Great-Barrier-Reef-catchment-safeguarding-the-Reef.aspx.
63  Fabienne, "The World in Our Hands."
64  Sundance Film Festival, "Rekindling Venus in Plain Sight," Sundance Institute, http://filmguide.sundance.org/film/130009/rekindling_venus_in_plain_sight.
65  Don Groves, "Coral: Rekindling Venus makes waves," SBS, http://www.sbs.com.au/films/blog-articles/127462/coral-rekindling-venus-makes-waves.

Fig. 35. Lynette Wallworth, *Rekindling Venus: movie still*

*Rekindling Venus: In Plain Sight* is a companion work incorporating an augmented-reality application in which photographic posters of seven coral specimens open into the viewers hand via a series of 3D animations of fluorescent corals accessed through a smart phone application.[66] Wallworth has linked *Coral: rekindling Venus* with the earlier *Evolution of Fearlessness* through the reccurring theme in her work of resilience; complex communities of coral are fragile, beautiful and have a drive and thirst for life as witnessed in the mass spawning events.[67]

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66  Lynette Wallworth, "Coral Rekindling Venus," Felix Media 2012, http://coralrekindlingvenus.com.
67  ———, "Coral Rekindling Venus Extened Press Pack," Felix Media 2012, http://coralrekindlingvenus.com.

Fig. 36. Lynette Wallworth, *Rekindling Venus: In Plain Sight poster*

In the title and conception of the work Wallworth has created a link between the Transit of Venus most recently observed in 2004 and 2012, and the international scientific co-operation undertaken for the observation of the 1761 and 1769 transits. Captain Cook was commissioned to observe the transit of Venus in 1769 from what was then King George's Island, now know as Tahiti. Observations of the transit were made from 63 locations around the world.

Wallworth compares this level of international scientific co-operation with what is now needed in terms of global co-operation to save the coral fields under threat off Australia's coastline and in our region. She has said of this connection:

> Great civilizations knew the cycles of Venus and would have watched for
> this event, it is wonderful to have a moment in time that you know won't
> occur again in the lifetime of anyone now watching it. For me it was the
> perfect moment to imagine a work centered on a current global problem
> and set it adrift on that day to see where it might land.[68]

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68   ibid.

Also caught in this linkage is a foundational moment in Australian history - Cook's voyage of 1769. His astronomical mission was of course what brought him to this part of the world and afterwards he ventured further into the Pacific and made the discovery of the Australian coast for the British Empire.

There are also further linkages between social, biological and ecological systems threaded through Wallworth's work. If we consider that war creates breakdowns of both social and ecological systems. For example, the use of chemical weapons in conflicts such as the Vietnam War[69] and more recently in Iraq[70] has left contaminated land and water resources which have resulted in an intergenerational legacy of birth defects. Humans dependent on ecological systems are effected and in some cases must completely abandon a place when their 'life support system' or ecological environment becomes contaminated and is too toxic to support life.

On the Australian continent this occurred with the British testing of nuclear weapons in Western Australia at the Monte Bello Islands and in South Australia at Emu Field and Maralinga between 1952 - 1963.[71] Wallworth, as associate Director of the Adelaide Festival in 2002 and in collaboration with Indigenous architect and designer Alison Page, worked with the site and community of Maralinga/Oak Valley. This community was unable to occupy their traditional lands for four decades due to the ongoing effects of radiation. Elders who returned to Maralinga after their forcible removal began the Oak Valley Community in 1995. The project for the Adelaide Festival was established to support the community's depiction through painting of the effect of this dispossession.[72] Victorian Indigenous artist Lance Atkinson spent two months with the community teaching the skill of painting on canvas in an art-room refurbished for the community after consultative design with Alison Page. This community art-room was used to create a series of paintings that reflected the communities' perspective on and relationship to the parts of their country that they had not been able to re-occupy. From this exhibition

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69  Fred Wilcox, *Scorched earth: legacies of chemical warfare in Vietnam / Fred A. Wilcox; photographs by Brendan B. Wilcox* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011).

70  Dr Mozhgan Savabieasfahani, "Epidemic of birth defects in Iraq and our duty as public health researchers," *Aljazeera*, 15 March 2013.

71  See J. L. Symonds, *A history of British atomic tests in Australia / prepared by J.L. Symonds; consultant: Nijelo Pty Ltd*, ed. Resources Australia. Department of, Energy, and Ltd Nijelo Pty (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1985).

72  Nici Cumpston, *Desert country / Nici Cumpston with Barry Patton*, ed. Barry Patton and Australia Art Gallery of South (Adelaide, S. Aust: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2010).

*Destruction 1*, 2002 by Kunmanara Queama and Hilda Moodoo of the Maralinga Tjarutja people depicts the mushroom-shaped cloud of the atomic bomb. The scale and spectre of loss of place due to land becoming uninhabitable as a result of warfare is foregrounded by incidents such as the testing of atomic weapons at Maralinga.

There is a growing recognition that climate change will create loss of place and the displacement of people on a previously unheralded scale[73], according to the Stern Review 150 million people will be climate change refugees by 2050.[74] In spite of this recognition the term refugee as defined in The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol[75] does not encompass the developing issues of climate change in the 21st century and the spectre world wide of environmental refugees. Currently the UN refugee convention term of internally displaced persons (IDP) covers people who are forced to leave their homes and places of residence as a result of natural or man-made disasters and who have not crossed an international border.[76] There are currently 15.5million IDPs on the UN's books, which is 50% higher than the number of refugees recorded by the agency and the UN has stated: "We believe that this trend could intensify as internal conflicts multiply and the effects of climate change deepen."[77]

Globally one of the first communities affected by sea-level rise was the Carteret Islands of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Since the 1980s several organised resettlement attempts have been made to the larger island of Bougainville near the Carteret Islands.[78] As of the Rudd Governments, July 19 pre-election announcement of its new refugee policy, effective immediately, Australia will be assessing and resettling all refugees who arrive by boat in Australia in PNG on Manus Island and other yet to be established processing centres.

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73   See Collectif Argos, *Climate refugees* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010); Ezekiel Simperingham and Jordan Bakker Scott Leckie, ed. *Climate change and displacement reader* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Earthscan, 2012).

74   Great Britain. Treasury and N. H. (Nicholas Herbert) Stern, *The Economics of climate change : the Stern Review / Nicholas Stern* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

75   UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency, "The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol," (Geneva, Switzerland2011).

76   ———, "Displacement- The New 21st Century Challenge,"(2012), http://www.unhcr.org/51bacb0f9.html.

77   José Riera, "Challenges relating to climate change induced displacement," in *International Conference "Millions of People without Protection: Climate Change Induced Displacement in Developing Countries* (Berlin: United Nations High Commisioner for Refugees, 2013).

78   I need a new home, my island has sunk, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/rio-20/single-view/news/i_need_a_new_home_my_island_has_sunk/ 6/6/2012

Ironically PNG is a country that has had trouble re-settling its own inhabitants who have been internally displaced by rising sea-levels. PNG is also not a signatory to the UN Refugee convention and is unlikely to be able to adequately provide adequate services and care for incoming refugees. The Rudd government's pre-election refugee policy has been widely condemned by humanitarian groups.[79]. Post the September 2013 election Tony Abbot's Liberal government has implemented the *Operation Sovereign Borders* policy, which includes resettlement of asylum seekers in PNG, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Nauru. The policy also includes disruption of people trafficking networks, turning back boats and issuing temporary protection visas to asylum seekers who arrive by boat.[80]

**Conclusion**

Running through Wallworth's artworks is the undercurrent of loss of place within an Australian and international context in parallel to the artists continuing theme of resilience. People and ecologies are interconnected and both must become resilient when under threat. Trauma can be seen as a companion to the experience of loss of place effecting human communities in the past and into the future. The artist draws parallels between human communities, ecological communities and environments, drawing our awareness to our interconnection to the environment. The threat of the loss of place can be read as extending into the fallout of ecological systems under stress in future scenarios which are beginning to unfold.

Immersive media is used by Wallworth as a medium of sensorial and emotional connection to understand the complex web of relations and systems of which we are a part. In her artworks we are not bombarded with didactic information about the particular issues at play but rather drawn into an immersive environment that communicates with the corporeal body, subtly and emotionally. We are asked to examine the woven web of our interconnections and relations to people and the environment we inhabit.

Wallworth's trilogy *Invisible by Night*, *Evolution of Fearlessness* and *Duality of Light* connect the themes of individual grief and loss with wider socio-political forces such as displacement

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79   Australia passes the parcel and closes the door to desperate boat arrivals. http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/comments/32302/ 17 July 2013, accessed 24 July 2013

80   Kate Gauthier John Menadue, Arja Keski-Nummi, Angelica Neville, "Operation Sovereign Borders," Centre for Policy Development, http://refugeefacts.cpd.org.au/operation-sovereign-borders/.

and colonisation. Whilst the stories encountered in Wallworth's body of work emanate from and are connected to Australian places and people they are stories that have a global resonance and whose politics continue to be played out both nationally and internationally. As we saw in Chapter 2, in the discussion on *Edge of the Trees,* the themes of Indigenous loss of place, loss of place through colonisation and migration, the spectre of mass loss of place through climate change and our ongoing relationship to the environment are becoming increasingly intertwined.

## Conclusion

In selecting the three works of art examined in this dissertation *Humpy*, 1988 *Edge of the Trees*, 1995 and *Evolution of Fearlessness*, 2006 my aim has been to analyse each work deeply. The object is to provide a core sample of Australian media art works in which issues of place and loss of place can be mapped and the threads of the interrelated histories of colonisation, ecological degradation, the displacement of the First Australians and ensuing waves of migration can be traced. I have been interested to focus in closely to uncover the methods and means the artists have used in creating media installations to speak of ongoing relationships to place and the shadow experiences of loss of place.

My process in selecting these works was personal: they are works that have resonated over time and stayed with me as an encounter with the documentation of *Humpy* and as a direct experience with *Edge of the Trees* and *Evolution of Fearlessness*. Thinking through and being with these works has furthered my understanding of my own complicated relationship to place. I am always both in place and out of place as a white Australian, part of the historical intergenerational wave of migration, colonisation, and Indigenous displacement. Through analysing the historical works *Humpy* and *Edge of the Trees* there is a sensation of recovery of the past, of truth telling which at once helps us to locate ourselves within the currents of the past, but at the same time places us comfortably/uncomfortably in the on-going possibility / impossibility of reconciliation.

From analysing Krzysztof Wodiczko and Ian de Gruchy's composited image of a humpy projected at a key historical moment, Australia's Bicentennial, an enduring history of lndigenous occupation and ongoing architectural practice is revealed. The Indigenous history of the site of Pinky Flats now subsumed by the Adelaide Festival centre is uncovered. The concept of reskinning a building links across time and space from Indigenous notions of flexible skins to projected media and electronic media skins. Indigenous loss of place and ongoing disadvantage is addressed through a temporary mediated reconfiguration of architectural form. Through the process of reskinning the physical architecture of the building it is rematerialised in an act of politically charged remembrance.

From their connection early on in their careers both Wodiczko and deGruchy's influence on each other has been substantial. My research has established the correct year of 1988 for the work rather than 1985, placing *Humpy* in its proper historical context and attributing the main driving force behind the work as being de Gruchy.

de Gruchy's practice has centred on reskinning the architectural form of buildings through projected media to reflect on the history of a site. Wodiczko's body of work with its key strategy of anthropomorphising the building for political intent connects the issues of displacement, migration and homelessness as being interconnected with war.

Freud's notion of the uncanny (unheimlich) allows a reading of the political potency of projecting a humpy "an unhomely home" onto a site of Indigenous dispossession in the Bicentennial year. Freud's personal anecdotes of the uncanny, doubling via a mirror image and losing your way in relationship to a particular place give insight into the discomfort of viewing Wodiczko and de Gruchy's *Humpy*. While *Humpy* refers to the history of a particular site and stands in for Indigenous dispossession as a whole it is both a symbol of dispossession of Indigenous people from their land and culture and also a symbol of resistance to assimilation.

Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley's immersive media installation similarly draws us through time and space to the moment the First Fleet drew up on the shore at Botany Bay. *Edge of the Trees* functions as an anti-monument at the site of the First Government house outside the Museum of Sydney (MOS) to the first moments of contact between Indigenous and colonial people. Embodied, moving through the installation we listen to Indigenous voices recounting place names around the harbour in the language of the original inhabitants the Eora. Sound is used to reinscribe place and the Indigenous communities' cultural connections to Sydney/Warran.

Through sound and sculptural form the artist's create an immersive environment as a memorial to the Eora, and evoke through naming the Eora language group and the people of the First Fleet. As an early locative media installation *Edge of the Trees* draws from a dense field of data related to site. The installation marks a particular place as a site of memory; remapping the original thickly treed forest to the landscape and more broadly remembering the dispossession of the Eora from their country and the beginnings of the colonial period. Both the native landscape and Indigenous culture have been affected and irrevocably altered from the first moments of contact with European people and culture.

*Edge of the Trees* as a memorial to the Eora and as a site of memory can be read in conjunction with other related memorials Laurences' *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, 2003 and also the absence of a memorial to Indigenous soldiers at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The spatial arrangement of trees forms representing the 29 Eora tribal groups and their location around the Sydney harbour can be related to *The Aboriginal Memorial*, 1988 which places 200 hollow log bone coffins representing Indigenous lives lost in the 200 years of colonisation in reference to the tribal groups surrounding the Glyde River in Arnhem land.

Another memorial to Indigenous loss off of life, in the process of colonisation, Foley's *Witnessing to Silence*, 2003 recorded the history and places of Indigenous massacre sites in Queensland outside a site of justice, the Brisbane Magistrates Court.  In this installation Foley upturned the sanctioned environmental theme of naming sites of fire and flood in Queensland to instead employ a listing of place names of massacre sites and a language of materials of ash and water to speak of practices for disposing of Indigenous bodies.

The development of *Edge of the Trees* is traced from Senior Curator of the MOS, Peter Emmett's vision of the installation as being immersive; utilising sound and light. The broader collection of artists and thinkers working on the development of the MOS and the production of *Edge of the Trees* influenced its development as an immersive media environment. Following on from *Edge of the Trees* the artist's Laurence and Foley have continued to make immersive environments. In the case of Laurence incorporating multiple planes of projection into an environment with sound. Foley has used video within a contained environment to create a bodily sensation and also incorporated sound within sculptural installations.

*Edge of the Trees* is viewed through Rosalind Kraus's logical description of post-modern sculpture existing in dialogue between architecture, landscape and sculpture installation. Its meaning is made in the flow between axiomatic structures, as described by Kraus, landscape/not landscape, architecture/not architecture, site construction/sculpture and the artists draw meaning through a set of particular historical conditions and the installation's relationship to place. Meaning is also made through careful conceptual relationships to material seen by the artist's as carriers of memory, which allow reflection on the past and present site. These materials are both derived from the natural environment and respond to the environment through the elements of water, air and human touch. The artists intended to

re-imbue the site reclaiming relationships to place by calling forth what is no longer present; the trees, plants, people, Indigenous place names and language.

Through an analysis of Lynette Wallworth's *Evolution of Fearlessness*, 2006 and companion works the theme of loss of place is broadened to include contemporary experiences of warfare and political persecution by recent migrants to Australia.  Two Australian born women, whose stories are told in the installation experience loss of place through the ongoing effects of colonisation and the secondary effects of war.  Through storytelling Wallworth humanises these experiences of migrant and Australian born women emphasising their strength and shared quality of resilience.

A core theme of Wallworth's work is resilience both people and ecologies under threat must adapt and be resilient to survive. Many migrants to Australia including the early colonists share the women's quality of resilience and survival in extreme circumstances. They are all people who have had to leave their homeland and experienced loss of place.

In her trilogy of works *Evolution of Fearlessness*, *Invisible by Night*, 2004 and *Duality of Light*, 2009 the experiences of loss, grief and trauma are explored. *Evolution of Fearlessness* created as a response to the Howard Government' hard-line response to asylum seekers in the lead up to the 2001 federal election attempted to humanise asylum seekers to counteract the mainstream media's dehumanising discourse of boats and numbers of arrival. Individual stories of recent migrants who sought asylum in Australia were told. The telling of their stories was used to lay bare their shared humanity and connect their stories of migration to the greater story of a nation composed of migrants. The counterpart to this shared story of migration is the loss of place and country experienced by Indigenous Australians in the process and aftermath of colonisation.

An immersive media environment is created by the artist as a means to connect us to the women and their stories of survival.  Through touch, the women's video portraits emerge from darkness and hold their palm against the viewer's palm in a gesture that references the Buddhist posture the 'abhaya mudra'. In this posture the women approach the viewer with benevolence and transfer their state beyond fear and trauma.

Lisa Saltzman characterises contemporary video as demanding of its audience an act of  bearing witness, the audience bears witness to what the artist/subject has recorded/ witnessed. Video expands beyond a mirror of the self to become a mirror of the community. In *Evolution of Fearlessness* the mirror reflects universal stories of violence against women, women caught in theatres of war, political unrest and inhumane government policies from the holocaust to Australian government policy effecting the processing of asylum seekers and the removal of Indigenous children from their families. The inclusion of stories from Australian born women contextualises Australia as a place where the trauma of wars fought in other countries by Australians returns home with the returned soldiers. Australia is also seen as a place troubled by the dispossession and violence inflicted on its Indigenous occupants.

In the contested discourse around Australian identity a connective sub-theme relates to issues of place, loss of place and trauma surrounding loss of place contained in the contested and negotiated narrative of events such as colonisation, white settlement, Indigenous dispossession, convict transportation and migration as a result of warfare. The field of trauma studies and the effects of secondary and intergenerational trauma provide insight into the ongoing legacy of these events within Australian communities.

In Wallworth's installations *Hold*, 2001 and 2007 and *Coral: Rekindling Venus*, 2011 the theme of interconnection and resilience in the face of adversity is expanded to explore ecological systems under threat specifically the Kelp Forests of Tasmania and the Great Barrier Reef. In these works the artist creates immersive media environments to facilitate an emotional connection between people and complex ecological systems in order to provide a space of reflection on the interdependence of people and ecology.

Exploring the way that Australian artists' are reflecting on place and loss of place through mediated immersive environments has provided a rich seam of material to consider. Through exploring how this issue has played out in the past and in present narratives we can begin to understand how experiences of loss of place may occur in the future. By providing moments for critical reflection the artists provide a space from which to step forward into a more considered future.

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