COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Research School of Humanities and the Arts

SCHOOL OF ART

VISUAL ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

LYNNE MAREE FLEMONS

WALKING AT WEEREEWA

AN EXEGESIS SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY OF

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER 2015

Declaration of Originality

I, Lynne Flemons ….....Lynne Flemons.....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.

Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this research to my father; in remembrance of the times spent with him traversing the rural landscapes of the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales.

I would like to thank my supervisors, John Pratt and Jan Hogan, for their encouragement and guidance throughout the course of this project. It is very much appreciated. Special thanks go to my partner Michael Bourchier for editing and proofreading several drafts and for his unfailing good humour.

CONTENTS

WALKING AT WEEREEWA

Abstract

In Australia, over the past thirty years or so, there has been a change in the way non-Indigenous visual artists have interpreted the nation's landscape. During this period a cultural shift has occurred, from one where the term 'landscape' refers to a view from a fixed point in time, as in the European landscape tradition, to a broader awareness where the landscape is interpreted in terms of its memory, history, mythology, as well as its physical features. This change in perception has its origins in a deeper understanding of the Australian landscape; one that has been promoted both through the works of Indigenous artists and by a broader desire amongst their non-Indigenous colleagues to experience this unique environment as a composite of all its elements rather than just a visual scene to be captured by the artist's brush.

To help me understand and articulate these changes I have drawn upon both phenomenology and cross-cultural mapping. Phenomenology is a philosophical concept describing our interactions with, and our reactions to, the phenomena that comprise everyday life. In my research I walked extensively on the lake bed of Weereewa (Lake George) at different times of the year, experiencing the whole environment, from the sky above to the tiniest crack in the mud, using all my physical senses while being constantly aware of the Aboriginal history on this lake bed that preceded me, and any other European presence, by thousands of years. I became embedded within the whole landscape; truly able to experience its many facets through my senses. This is the essence of phenomenology. Cross-cultural mapping, on the other hand, describes the way people of different cultures record their memories of a place. It asks the question, how have they mapped the land around them and for what purposes? In my research I looked at how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists have gone about the process of mapping the land, and it is from these findings, in combination with my own experiences on the lake that much of my studio work has developed.

My studio work consists of cut-outs and drawings that reflect the physical and temporal phenomena of the Weeweera landscape: its clouds, shadows, changing colours, remnant

water, cultural relics, land-use practices and the impacts of both weather and time on its human and geological histories. My experiences of the lake are represented as a series of ‘fragments’ that engage with its different histories: the Aboriginal, the settler and the geological. In developing these fragments into wall installations and watercolour works on paper, using a process I called an *ecology of drawing*, I have been able to bring together all the influences on my work, enabling me to express my experiences of the lake in a new visual language.

List of Illustrations

All images not otherwise attributed are the author's own work.

Fig. 13. *Flowering Bones at My Feet* (2012), installation of paper cut-outs, ink watercolour and gesso on paper, mylar film. 70 x 45cm.

Fig. 14. *Cultural Relics* (2012), installation of paper cut-outs, ink, watercolour and gesso on paper. 70 x 45cm.

Fig. 15. Jonathon Kimberley & Pura-lia Meenamatta (Jim Everett), *Pura-lia Lena Retena Aya-aya: Paperbark Water-heart Re-birth* (2006), Synthetic polymer, charcoal & text on linen, 182 x 182cm (four panels, stretcher sizes). http://www.bettgallery.com.au/artists/kimberley/oct06/03oct06.htm (accessed 17 September 2012).

Fig. 16. *Mapping the Ephemeral III* (2014), ink, watercolour and collage elements on paper. 60 x 80cm.

Fig. 17. Rosalie Gascoigne, *Suddenly the Lake* (1995), formboard plywoods, galvanised iron sheeting, synthetic polymer paint on composition board; four panels, 705 x 283cm. http://www.roslynoxley9.com.au/images/galleries/GASCOIGNE_1995/001.jpg (accessed 3 February 2014).

Fig. 18. Rosalie Gascoigne, *Inland Sea* (1986), weathered painted corrugated iron, wire 39.1 x 325.0 x 355.5 cm (variable) (installation). http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/col/work/5363 (accessed 3 February 2014).

Fig. 19. *Shadowlands* (2012), watercolour on paper, 45 x 30cm each, (installation view)

Fig. 20. Rosalie Gascoigne, *Monaro* (1989), sawn/split soft drink crates on plywood, 130.5 x 465cm. http://www.roslynoxley9.com.au/images/galleries/GASCOIGNE_1989/001.jpg (accessed 6 July 2012).

Fig. 21. *Shadowlands I* (2012), watercolour on paper. 45 x 30cm.

Fig. 22. *Shadowlands II* (2012), watercolour on paper, 45 x 30cm.

Introduction

In August 2012, I exhibited a body of work at the Goulburn Regional Gallery in New South Wales under the collective title of *Walking at Weereewa*. *Weereewa* is one of several Aboriginal names for what is more commonly known as Lake George, a flat expanse of land some 24 kilometres in length and 10 kilometres wide, lying midway between the town of Goulburn and Canberra, Australia's national capital. Throughout most of my exegesis I will refer to the lake as Weereewa—an ancient lake bed, sometimes full of water but more often only partially full or dry. It is a revelatory source of geological data, Aboriginal and European history and visual wonder. In *Walking at Weereewa* I have explored the many layers that form the lake's history using a visual language of my own, one that is informed both by the ideas and art of others and by my own observations made during excursions onto the lake over a number of years. My intention has been to capture the lake's different moods, imbuing my observations with of sense of history that extends into the distant past.

Growing up in the Southern Tablelands of NSW, the daughter of an agronomist, I often spent my school holidays visiting farms with my father. As a result, I overheard many conversations about the health of the land and the effects European farming practices were having upon it. My father collected data about land-use practices from which he made maps with grids, keys, scales and longitude and latitude. These maps were used in resource management, dividing the land according to the principles underlying modern farming practices.

At the time, all I knew about Lake George was what I had seen from the window of our car as we travelled along the lake's western edge. My childhood memories of this vast plain were, however, profound, and I have been drawn to the lake ever since, bringing a certain inevitability to my decision to explore it now through this research

My exegesis is divided into three chapters, each influenced by the work and ideas of artists and writers who have been pivotal in the development of my work. In the first chapter, *Phenomenology and Cross-Cultural Mapping*, I have introduced the philosophical concept of 'phenomenology' and its relationship to the 'methodology of walking' I adopted to explore the lake bed. Phenomenology lies at the very heart of my

research because I have sought to experience and interpret Weereewa from the perspective of a walker who is embedded within the environment and not one who is observing it from a fixed point. Viewing the landscape from a fixed point is employed in traditional European landscape painting, where the vista is seen as a picture to painted rather than an environment that can be experienced on many different levels. Phenomenological engagement requires input, not only from all our physical senses, but from an understanding of the landscape's human and geological history and indeed its mysterious and ethereal qualities as well.

Cross-cultural mapping also contrasts phenomenology and the more sharply defined European approach to recording the features of a landscape. In this section I have investigated how memories of place are recorded in Aboriginal and European cultures. Traditionally, Aboriginal people mapped the land by moving through it, *singing* the route taken, thereby giving meaning and spiritual significance to its geographical and natural features in a way that intertwined both history and memory. The essence of this unique way of seeing the world is captured today in Australian English in the word *Country*. This is not to say that the true meaning of this word can easily be understood by non-Aboriginal people. It cannot. The deep underlying spirituality that imbues Aboriginal connection with the land, and the consequent devastation caused by their dispossession may remain out of reach for most non-Indigenous people, but that does not mean we should not try to understand. There are many reasons for doing this, not least among them is the that non-Indigenous people can learn much from Aboriginal people about the land as we enter into a world of increasing environmental complexity.

In *Guluga Story,* Stephen Muecke describes the relationship between Aboriginal people and land in this way:

> *the places of the Aboriginal world, so singular, so significant and powerful, so intensely loved, are they never new? The ancestral connections make travelling to those places more like pilgrimages.*[1]

In the second chapter of my exegesis, *Shifting Visual Language Traditions*, I have explored ways to experience and represent the landscape using a new *visual language*.

[1] Stephen Muecke, 'The Guluga Story'*, Joe in the Andamans* (Sydney: Local Consumption, 2008), 39.

The key to developing this visual language was the many hours I spent walking on Weereewa. Walking was the methodology I used to experiencing the landscape phenomenologically; its physical, historical and spiritual attributes. I describe this approach as an *ecology of drawing* because it is one that embraces and marries together both my phenomenological experiences and the experimental approach I undertook in the development of my work in the studio.

In chapter three, *Time and Weather*, I have explored the effects of time and weather on the Weereewa landscape. They are, of course, related, their combined effects often in evidence on the lake bed. Time is a concept that can be thought of in a number of different ways. I have reviewed ideas from a number of writers who have given the concept their consideration and I have sought to explain how they have influenced my work. The effects of the weather on the lake are evident in both found objects that reflect its Aboriginal and settler histories and in the geological formations that give it its form. The weather also gives the lake many of its ethereal qualities from the effects of colour and shadow to its many changing faces as the seasons come and go.

The underlying theme in my work is one of exploration; a search for new ways to experience and represent the Weeweera landscape and so, by extension, any Australian landscape. Wherever we stand on this continent we know it is almost certain others have stood there before us; we know that every landscape is imbued with an ancient human history that often lies unexplored and unknown. Over the period of my research, my relationship with Weereewa changed as I found myself able to experience the environment with increasing intimacy. As a child I had experienced the landscape through the eyes of my father who saw the land primarily as an agricultural resource. But I have come to a much deeper understanding now, one that embraces the lake's many layers, its mysterious beauty and its role in my own life.

Chapter One

Phenomenology & Cross - Cultural Mapping

Phenomenology is a major field of philosophy and a significant movement within the history of ideas. It has been defined in a variety of ways by philosophers as prominent as Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, but for the purposes of my research I found the description given by the writer Christopher Tilley bears the most relevance. He defines it thus:

> *phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject. It is about the relationship between Being and Being-in-the-World. Being-in-the-World resides in a process of objectification in which people objectify the world by setting themselves apart from it. This is both to create this distance between the self and that which is beyond and to attempt to bridge this distance through a variety of means – through perception (seeing, hearing, touching), bodily actions and movements, and intentionality, emotion and awareness residing in systems of belief and decision-making, remembrance and evaluation.*[2]

In *Body and Image,* Tilley refers to the concept of the *phenomenological walk* clarifying the links between mapping, walking and phenomenology, and it is this concept more than any other that I have used throughout my work. The phenomenological walk, says Tilley:

> *involves a gathering together of synesthetic and material and social sensory experiences as they unfold in the sequence and duration of the walk. It shows what is there from the perspective of the flesh, from embodied experience… such a walk involves pause, looking around, sensing place from different perspectives along the route, going back as well as moving forward.*[3]

I decided to use *walking* as the method by which I would engage phenomenologically with the Weereewa landscape for, as Tilley says,

---

[2] Christopher Tilley. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*. (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 12.
[3] Tilley. *Body and Image,* 270.

> *it is only through walking in a landscape that I can learn how to see, and more broadly, sense that landscape through my body, for the act of walking is sensing that landscape at a human pace.*[4]

In order to experience the Weereewa landscape in all its moods I walked on the lake at different times of the day and during different times of the year, stopping often to experience the sense of place and then moving again, conscious of input from all my physical senses, always conscious of the layers of meaning around me. In order to experience multiple aspects of the landscape, that is phenomenologically, it was necessary to read it from the perspective of someone *emplaced* within it, rather than as an observer of it. Walking through the landscape provides this opportunity. Walking enabled me to experience the elemental forces of the lake, to feel their poetry and to see traces of the lake's different histories in a way that would have been impossible from a fixed position. The shadows cast by the hills in the afternoon and the cloud shadows that change the surface of the ground from moment to moment, the wind and rain and sun all accentuate the sense of change that is a constant presence on Weereewa.

In *The Right to Landscape: Contesting Landscape and Human Rights,* Jala Machzoumi describes what she terms *the European Landscape Convention* where landscape is a series of views and vistas, seen from one point. It is, she says, 'but one formalised demonstration of landscape as a collective heritage and a basis for a shared heritage and identity'[5] She goes on to say, 'contemporary Western perception is typically ego-centric, perspectival, a way of seeing which has the viewer at the point from which the *seeing* occurs'.[6]

In order to go beyond this broadly European view of landscape I experimented with peripheral vision and senses other than my sight. In doing so my intention was to enter into a dialogue with the landscape, conceptualising it as Makhzoumi says, 'where surroundings are experienced, lived-in and worked, just as they are appreciated as

[4] Christopher Tilley. *Body and Image: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology 2*. (CA: Left Coast Press Inc., 2008), 270.
[5] Jala Makhzoumi, 'Colonizing Mountain, Paving Sea; Neoliberal Politics and the Right to Landscape in Lebanon' in *The Right to Landscape: Contesting Landscape and Human Rights,* ed., Shelley Egoz, Jala Makhzoumi, Gloria Pungetti (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011), 228.
[6] Ibid.: 229.

places of identity and belonging.'[7]

In the studio, my experience of the lake; seen in glimpses, felt bodily, heard and reflected upon, were developed as fragments of paper with their own sense of ephemerality and impermanence. These fragments explored through watercolour drawings and cut-outs, suggest the elemental landscape, formed by the actions of the wind, rain and sun. The language of flux is reflected in my pooling and puddling of pigments, my use of a watercolour medium and the repetition of motifs that allude to traces of history, the ephemeral, the elemental forces in the land and the memory of these.

Cross-cultural mapping is the study of the ways people of different cultures graphically record the same landscape. Mapping, in the usual sense of the word, is defined in the English Oxford Dictionary as the 'drawing, making, or provision of a map or maps; charting, recording, or setting out on, or as a map'. A second definition from the same source refers to a topographer's use of mapping as, 'recording or "mapping" change in the visible features of a locality through time'[8]. Both of these definitions involve the idea of reflecting the physical attributes of a particular region or place.

Exploratory mapping, on the other hand, differs from both these definitions because it incorporates digging, finding, and exposing with relating, connecting and structuring. In this sense, mapping is returned to its origins as a process of exploration, discovery, and enablement. Like a nomadic grazer, the exploratory mapper detours around the obvious to engage with what remains hidden. In so doing, she discovers, as the philosopher Edward Casey says, 'a new way of relating to place, a new connection to land and a renewed interest in an embodied topography, where the land is not only seen, it is also sensed, remembered and felt bodily'.[9]

Artist and writer Kim Mahood uses an exploratory mapping approach when she imagines new ways of mapping land in *Craft for a Dry Lake*. Here she describes the groundsheet she uses to cover her swag as 'a kind of map, to record the day to day

[7] Ibid.: 229.
[8] "mapping, n.". OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113868?redirectedFrom=mapping& (accessed December 10, 2014).
[9] Edward Casey, *Earth Mapping Artists Reshaping Landscape* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 181.

immediacy of the journey'.[10] This groundsheet records her sleeping body, the marks made by twigs and pebbles, the memory of her experiences and her art making process. 'I lay out the groundsheet and my box of ochres and pigments. The center of the groundsheet is a dark rectangle, gridded to resemble a map'.[11]

In *Mapping Outside the Square* Mahood describes a project she undertook in 2005 at the invitation of the Walmajarri Aboriginal owners of Paruku (Lake Gregory) in the south-east Kimberley. In it she describes a process of cross-cultural mapping:

> *We would make a map on which all this information could be written, a document that would record Aboriginal knowledge and white science, pastoral history, mission days and land rights, to see where they intersected and overlapped.*[12]

Cross-cultural mapping helps us understand how a physical location can be experienced, mapped and remembered, not just on the basis of its physical attributes, but by taking into account its cultural and historical significance as well. I applied my understanding of phenomenology and cross-cultural mapping when I examined the 2010 exhibition *Yirrawa Kuju: The Canning Stock Route*.

*Yirrawa Kuju (*which means two languages, or two ways of being), introduces cross-cultural approaches to mapping the land that are related to both memory and history and which introduce the viewer to another reality—the Aboriginal concept of *Country*. 'The term Country in Aboriginal culture is a proper noun'[13] and considered to be 'a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life'.[14] Country is imbued with creation stories, the cosmology and the law; it is a term that describes the relationships between land and culture. In *Yirrawa Kuju* viewers are invited to see the land through the experiences of the Indigenous artists, helping us come to a greater understanding of what *Country* means.

---

[10] Kim Mahood, *Craft for a Dry Lake* (Australia: Anchor, 2000), 202.
[11] Ibid.: 194.
[12] Kim Mahood, *Mapping Outside the Square.*
http://www.abc.net.au/rn/legacy/features/paruku/docs/mapping.pdf accessed 1/8/2015.
[13] Deborah Bird Rose, *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness* (Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996), 7.
[14] Ibid.: 7.

The *Yirra Kuju* exhibition was designed to be a walk through time and place with the viewer encouraged to experience the exhibition phenomenologically, to really experience it with all their senses and not just *look* at it.

The initial 'Welcome to Country', is followed by a short film that speaks of the reciprocal and respectful relationship between Aboriginal people and Country. The introduction slows the viewer down, encouraging the idea that they are about to enter a different kind of space, moving them into a different state of mind. I imagined myself walking through the bush with Aboriginal friends, smelling the sweet earthy scent, feeling the dirt on our fingers, hearing the sound of a running brook and then flinging the soil into the moving water as the breeze picks up with 'the talking of the leaves' acknowledging our presence and inviting us into the main body of the exhibition.

Yirrawa Kuju tells of the hidden history of Aboriginal people, their stories, their visual interpretations and their cosmology. As Carly Davenport Acker discusses in her review of the exhibition:

> *The project and its exhibition were founded and directed by two primary motivations. First, an artist's history must be shared locally with families for present and future access and second, that artist's history and culture must be shared with global audiences. The project's curatorial and communication tone stems from Aboriginal values of walyja (family), ngurra (Country/ home) and Jukurrpa (Dreaming).*[15]

The intention of the exhibition's curators was to educate a largely non-Indigenous audience about the relationships between Aboriginal people and their land, and what the consequences had been when white settlers invaded the country.

'Yirrawa Kuju', says John Carty, one of the lead curators of the exhibition:

> *is not a summary of the past 100 years, but rather a vibrant assertion of the many thousands of years of cultural continuity in which our recent shared history is to*

[15] Carly Davenport Acker, 'Convergence: The Making of the Canning Stock Route Project & Yirrawa Kuju Exhibition', Cultural Studies Review – Vol. 21 No. 1 March 2015. http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/csrj/article/view/4429/4758 (accessed 16 July 2015).

> *be understood. In the end, the route itself is little more than a line on a whitefella map, but it has become a powerful organising principle, a focus for the broader and less easily harnessed histories of many Aboriginal peoples.*[16]

Carty describes the Canning Stock Route map drawn by Alfred Canning as a *whitefella* map because it is essentially a line that locates the wells along the stock route from Wiluna to Halls Creek in Western Australia. He compares this map with the exhibition space of the Yirrara Kuju paintings:

> *To move among them, on the page or in an exhibition space, is to be pulled away from the line of the stock route and the history books back into the story of the Country.*[17]

For me, the exhibition succinctly demonstrated the difference between two ways of seeing the land: the colonial perspective of it as empty and available to be exploited for its resources (symbolised by Canning's map) against the abundance of narrative, detail and meaning contained within the Aboriginal paintings of the same landscape. According to Carty, the paintings as a whole form a map of the country and include its culture, memories and stories.

Aboriginal land mapping represents a complex relationship between belief and necessity. In Aboriginal cosmology the land is, in the words of Diana James, perceived as a 'tonal liminal landscape, the focus constantly shifting between the tangible and intangible tones of the physical and metaphysical ground of being'.[18] Here, 'Aboriginal song, dance and painting are mnemonic maps, allowing Aborigines to carry their sense of place in their minds, wherever they happen to be'.[19]Australian Aborigines *sang* the country into *song lines*— a concept that has entered the European lexicon in recent

[16] John Carty, 'Drawing a line in the sand: The Canning Stock Route and contemporary art' *Kiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route* (National Museum of Australia), 31.
[17] Carty, 'Drawing a line in the sand: The Canning Stock Route and contemporary art' *Kiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route* (National Museum of Australia), 31.
[18] Diana James, *Painting the Song, Kaltjiti artists of the sand dune country* (Sydney: McCullouch & McCulloch Australian Art books in partnership with Kaltjiti Arts, 2009), 11.
[19] Ian McLean, *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 77.

years. The song lines share not only directional information but include important aspects of history, mythology and culture as well.

In *Painting the Song*, James talks about how the Kaltijiti artists of the sand dune country are able to sing the paintings because they contain song lines and are therefore aural maps. David Abram makes the observation that in oral cultures 'language is rooted in a particular terrain and ecology'.[20] In singing the country, Aboriginal people are able to participate in the interconnection of culture and Country to find their way along the song lines to places of importance such as waterholes or areas of spiritual significance.

The Aboriginal art movement had its beginnings in the 1970s in the Western Desert community of Papunya. In *Dark Writing* Paul Carter reveals that the Papunya drawings are 'both plans or maps of place, and traces of passage'[21] and that Western Desert paintings 'are a challenge to European ways of documenting relationships with place'[22] because they contain traces of passage and can be sung and walked.

For me, overlaying an Aboriginal world view of the land on my own brought new ways of thinking about the land. Exhibitions such as *Yirrawa Kuju* open a cross-cultural dialogue that gives non-Indigenous artists the mechanisms with which to interpret the land differently. The paintings are not only guides to particular sites; they represent meetings between people, culture and land. Each work involves the whole person, the feeling of being in the land, walking through it, engaging with all one's senses and being deeply aware of the personal and cultural memories and the history, contained within the paintings. The artists' use of vibrant colours captures the inner living reality of the country, bringing its energy alive, emphasising its importance within the cultural landscape of the traditional owners.

The first section of the exhibition included the large painting, *Kaninjaku* by Kumpaya Girgaba (fig. 1). Its warm dazzling colours in linear patterns seep into my being in a rhythmic dance through the shifting sand hills, always moving with the elements. The scale, rhythm and colour of the painting engage me with the experience of 'listening to Country', listening to the elements, the stories and colours and what they say about the

[20] David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 44.
[21] Paul Carter, *Dark Writing* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 10.
[22] Ibid.: 10.

land and the personal and cultural histories of this area.

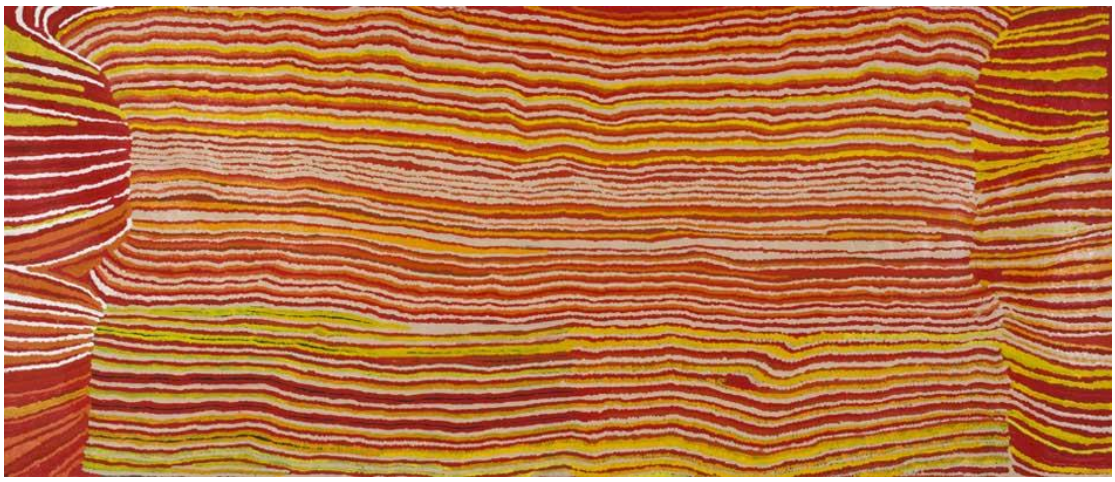

Fig. 1. Kumpaya Girgaba, *Kaninjaku* (2008).

The artists invite the audience into their world through their paintings and stories; and the curators, through the layout of the exhibition, and the use of lighting and colour, create a phenomenological engagement with the space. The visitor's sense of reality is strengthened by sensory perception where, 'the qualities of space, matter and scale are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscle.'[23] 'One's sense of reality is strengthened and articulated by this constant interaction'[24] as 'we have a need to grasp that we are rooted in the continuity of time.'[25]

In her book, *Nourishing Terrains*, Deborah Bird Rose explains that 'one of the most important aspects of Aboriginal knowledge systems is that they do not universalise. Moreover, the fact that knowledge is localised and specific is one of the keys to its value'[26]. By this, I understand her to mean that the inherent layers of meaning incorporated in a particular painting of Country by the traditional owners of that land, pertain to that land only and cannot be generalised to represent the country of others and therefore a painting such as *Kaninjaku* has specific meaning imbedded in it that is understood only by the people of the country it represents.

[23] Juhani Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2005), 41.
[24] Ibid.: 41.
[25] Ibid.: 32.
[26] Rose, *Nourishing Terrains,* 32.

In contrast, European mapping is more concerned with marking territorial boundaries and topographical features. European mapping or Enlightenment geography, as it is sometimes known, is predominantly about practicalities; about marking territory, defining ownership and getting from one place to another. Weereewa was originally mapped by Europeans in this way. Carter feels that this type of mapping represents a way of thinking and drawing that forms a static engagement with place. It is an approach that is either black or white; wet or dry. Enlightenment maps had no use for wetlands, for example, and were not layered with traces of passage or history, or with the continuous transformation and flux that walking engages the observer with.

The layering and weaving of different histories in the one place, in this case Aboriginal and European histories, creates a dialogue leading to Homi K Bhabha's idea of a *third space.* Its relevance and application to practical contexts is explored further by Ikas and Wagner in *Communicating the Third Space*. According to them a third space may arise:

> *where the evidence of two distinct and unequal social groups are found in a special third space of enunciation, where culture is disseminated and displaced from the interacting groups, making way for the invention of a hybrid identity, whereby these two groups conceive themselves to partake in a common identity relating to shared space and common dialogue.*[27]

The *Yirrawa Kuju* exhibition demonstrates the concept of a third space that results when the Aboriginal and colonial histories are interwoven. It is a space in which a meeting takes place, a place where past and present can coexist. On Weereewa remnants of Aboriginal and European land-use practices are found side by side as artifacts on its surface stone tools, weathered fence posts, wire, sheep bones, native grasses and introduced species all speaking of shared histories and the third space which accommodates them.

In *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories*, Howard Morphy introduces the idea of cross-cultural categories which 'does not involve arguing that Indigenous art or Indigenous conceptions of land ownership are the same as Western ones; but which places both in a more inclusive frame, encompassing their differences as well as what

[27] Karen Ikas & Gerald Wagner. *Communicating in the Third Space*. (Routledge), 2008. http://www.routledgementalhealth.com/books/details/9780415878401/ (accessed November 7, 2014).

they share in common'.[28] Morphy's idea has provided a cross-cultural framework within which a broader definition of art has been developed, one that allows contemporary Aboriginal art to be categorised as art, rather than as a subject for anthropologists. Within this framework European and Aboriginal art are included within contemporary art discourse, leading in some cases to the 'development of a closer interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists and a shifting of boundaries'.[29]

Morphy's categories provide a theoretical underpinning that brings together disparate world views, opening a dialogue for a language about the land that embraces new perspectives and meanings.

As the viewer approaches the exit of the *Yirrawa Kuju* exhibition there is an unspoken invitation to stop and sit within the visual language of Western Desert art. By sitting inside the story one becomes part of that story, able to join in a new interpretation and understanding of what is known as the Canning Stock Route.

Yirrawa Kuju influenced the way I interpreted the Weereewa landscape. Just as I walked through the exhibition experiencing it from the perspective of an artist imbedded in the landscape, so too have I walked at Weereewa with an increased understanding of what it means to be *in* the land, and experiencing it from a phenomenological point of view.

The *figure-ground relation*, that is fundamental to traditional European mapping techniques and landscape painting, is necessary for the visual recognition of objects. As J.J. Gibson observes, 'we could not conceive of empty space unless we could see the ground under our feet and the sky above'.[30] The figure-ground relation is described by Jan Bouman as, 'the most elementary and fundamental division of every aspect of life',[31] and according to art historian James Elkins, 'nothing can become intelligible unless seen against a background, a horizon, a surrounding field or a periphery. A figure

[28] Howard Morphy *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008), 5.
[29] Ibid.: 3.
[30] J.J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston, Haughton Mifflin, 1997), 3.
[31] Elkins. *Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Text: Art History as Writing,* 98.

without limits is unthinkable. We therefore speak always of figures but rarely of backgrounds'.[32]

In my installation view of *Walking at Weereewa* (fig. 2), I have drawn upon the *figure-ground* relation to create a space for viewers to experience my work and engage with me in the process of physically walking on the lake bed. To share my experiences of exploratory mapping, viewers are invited to bend down to see the detail in paper pieces then look up to see a bird in the sky, to engage with the process of cutting and collaging memories and experiences, seeing near, far and behind, to share with me the experience of finding the markers of history and culture on the lake bed.

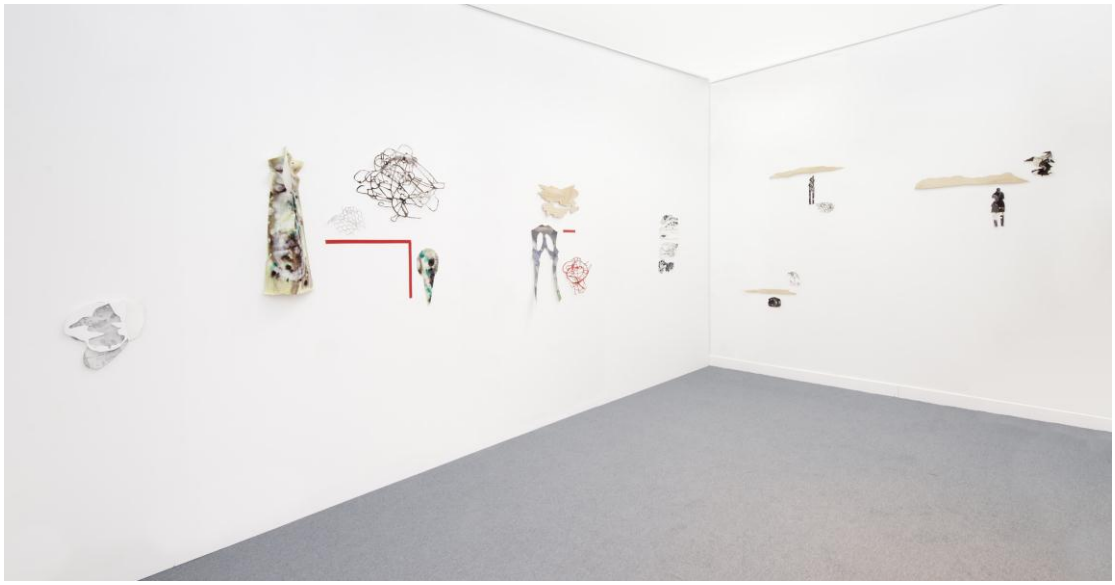

Fig. 2. Installation view of *Walking at Weereewa* exhibition (2012).

In October 1820, the Governor of NSW, Lachlan Macquarie, travelled to Weereewa for the first time and 'renamed the lake in honour of "His current Majesty", the British monarch, George IV'. [33] This naming practice was in line with the concept of *Terra Nullius* a European ruling that the land in question had not been colonised and was therefore considered wilderness. And so, to the settlers, Weereewa became *Lake George*. To the Aboriginal inhabitants, however, the European concept of 'wilderness' was completely at odds with their world view. In his seminal work *The Greatest Estate on Earth*, Bill Gammage clearly demonstrates that the Australian landscape was being

[32] Ibid.: 97.
[33] Ann Jackson-Nakano, *The Kamberri: A History of Aboriginal Families in the ACT and Surrounds* (Canberra: Ann Jackson-Nakano and Aboriginal History Inc., 2001), 9.

managed by the Aborigines for the purposes of hunting and cultural practices for millennia before the arrival of Europeans. Much of Gammage's analysis is drawn from the writings, paintings and drawings of the early explorers and artists, many of whom were astounded at the park-like beauty of large areas of fire-managed land. Wilderness, he says, did not exist in the Aboriginal world view since, 'creator ancestors made all the land, no land can be wilderness. It is made and has a Dreaming, or it does not exist.'[34]

Another of those who has been influential in the development of my work is the environmental philosopher, Simon James. In his book, *The Presence of Nature: A Study in Phenomenology & Environmental Philosophy* he draws upon phenomenology to examine how we interact with the natural world by 'attending to and reflecting on our experiences'.[35] In a similar way, I have sought to experience the Weereewa environment through a heightened awareness as I walk across its surface. It is not what is immediately apparent in a visual sense that engages me most readily but rather the ephemeral - the vague and the transient. I have sought a reciprocal engagement with the lake and not, as James puts it:

> *the platonic way in which philosophical enquiry is thought to proceed: away from the confusion and ambiguity of the phenomenal world and, as quickly as possible onwards and upwards towards a clearer, cleaner realm of pure abstraction.*[36]

Geologists tell us that Weereewa was formed some five to seven million years ago and although it is often quite dry these days, 30,000 years ago it was thought to be about 36m deep and with a much larger surface area. Under today's climatic conditions it fills ups and dries out, following a cycle of evaporation and rain whereas for millennia in the past it was a very substantial body of water.

In her book *The Kanberri*, Ann Jackson-Nakano comments on observations made by Macquarie's party regarding the absence of Aborigines during their visit to Weereewa.

---

[34] Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth, How Aborigines Made Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011), 130.
[35] Simon James, *The Presence of Nature: a Study in Phenomenology & Environmental Philosophy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.
[36] Ibid.: 3.

She says it is unsurprising that none of the local inhabitants were present at that time because 'October was the time for their annual spring trek up to the Snowy Mountains for the bogong feasts'[37], and:

> *the historical evidence suggests that different parts of the lake marked the furthermost frontier for a number of hunter-gatherer groups whose main territories stretched much further afield.*[38]

The explorer T.L. Mitchell is thought to have been the first European to record the name *Weereewa* and there are various stories about its meaning. According to the *Geo-maps* website, the name 'means "bad water" and was bestowed upon the lake because even when full, the lake is one of the saltiest bodies of water in inland NSW, almost as saline as seawater'.[39] Ms. Matilda House from the Ngunnawal Aboriginal Land Council and Wiradjuri woman Cheryl Williams say, 'Weereewa means 'a lot of water' or 'fire' … not in the literal sense of fire but rather fire in the sense of danger and bad'.[40]

For artist and writer Christine James, Weereewa has:

> *the notion of danger and fire is embedded in its name. It is a very powerful place that I always respected – for its sudden and silent storms, its mists that can sit over the entire lake basin (stretching from Captains Flat to the north well beyond Collector) for days at an end in winter (where there is no wind and when the waterbirds breed).*[41]

Despite its forbidding reputation, the lake remained a source of food and a place for ceremony for the Aboriginal people. According to Jackson-Nakano:

> *historical records suggest that a number of Aboriginal communities shared Weereewa when the Europeans first arrived, including the Parramarragoo, the Mulwaree, the Cookmai, the Pajong, the Wallabalooa, the Moolinggoolah and the*

[37] Jackson-Nakano, *The Kamberri,* 10.
[38] Ibid.: 10.
[39] http://www.geomaps.com.au/scripts/lakegeorge.php(accessed July 19, 2015).
[40] *Weereewa Ngunnawal*. Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 1999, 3.
[41] Christine James by email 16/12/2011.

Kamberri.[42]

Evidence of good food sources for these Aboriginal communities, or 'Lake George Tribes'[43] is described in *The Greatest Estate on Earth:*

> *Emu very plentiful and seen in small Flocks – track of some large Kangaroos found but none seen in the Neighbourhood – Swans, Geese and Ducks of different kinds in abundance.*[44]

Christine James, describes Weereewa's ecological diversity as follows:

> *Although trees in the large parts of the lake catchment area were ringbarked, in a lot of places trees have regrown… there are still fragments of Remnant (ie remaining from pre-1820) Yellow Box Woodland which the Capital Wind Farm had to leave alone. I have friends who have 100 acres with over 100 identified Temperate Grassland grasses and rare plants – rare orchids, etc.*

The grazing practices of the European settlers must have had a severe impact on both the lake bed and the way Aboriginal people gained access to and used the land. Early records indicate that, 'the grass had been burnt in the neighbourhood of the Lake by the natives and it was springing into nice feed'[45] attracting settlers who, 'invariably admired this country… of "rich grazing lands" full of emus, brolgas and plains turkeys, and a lake teeming with swans, ducks, eels and crayfish'.[46]

The connection between Aboriginal people living in the Canberra region and Weereewa was demonstrated during the 1999 exhibition *Weereewa Ngunnawal,* held at Canberra Contemporary Art Space. The artists, in conversation with director Jane Barney, spoke about their connection to the lake. A large mural by Jim Williams and Barrie O'Brien is described in the catalogue as the 'complex networks between one place and another … not a map in the Western sense of cartography … this map describes the spiritual and

[42] Jackson-Nakano, *The Kamberri*, 10.
[43] Ibid.: 10.
[44] Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth*, 88.
[45] Ibid.: 88.
[46] Ibid.: 88.

physical journey of the Bogong moths from the mountains…to Weereewa'.[47]

Maltilda House spoke of the:

> *campsites set up around the place with lots of interactions with groups that would come there and sit down to talk to another mob that had to come through … The lake was on a trade route too, and a ceremonial route that came from other people that wanted to come up to the mountains to do Bogong moth ceremonies*.[48]

During the design phase of the new Federal Highway, which now travels along the western edge of the lake, the Ngunnawal Aboriginal Land Council was consulted by the NSW Road Traffic Authority and satellite imaging was used to identify sites of importance in that area. As a result, a number of middens, stone tools and food resources were discovered and preserved.

In *Getting Back into Place,* Edward Casey discusses the importance of the idea of *place.* 'Places' he says, 'like bodies and landscapes, are something we experience — where the word *experience* stays true to its etymological origin of "trying out", making a trial out of".[49] In a similar vein, Abram writes that to feel 'implaced' in a landscape a person must engage with the land using all their senses because 'each place has its own mind, its own personality, its own intelligence'.[50] It is only by *sensorially* mapping a place, evoking our senses of movement, touch, smell and memories, that we can come to know it and its particular voices, and so become emplaced within the land, reunited with its elemental landscape — the wind, clouds, sounds, time of day, cycles and rhythms.

When I walk on the lake I am emplaced within it, in the opposing realms of heaven and earth; the sky and the land. My feet traverse the horizontal and I breathe the vertical. In the words of Keith Wilson:

> *There is something about the process of walking that engages the senses and the*

[47] *Weereewa Ngunnawal*. Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 1999, 1.
[48] Ibid.: 2.
[49] Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place.* (Bloomington USA: Indiana University Press, 2nd edition 2009), 30.
[50] Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 182.

mind. Something about forward motion that gets the senses going. You move at a pace that encourages you to take in your surroundings fully.[51]

A deep sense of place can be experienced when walking as this connects us with the physicality of the land itself. As Pallasmaa says, 'we dwell in the landscape and the landscape dwells in us'.[52]

In *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, Rebecca Solnit talks about the 'disembodiment of everyday life'[53] and posits that walking is 'an act of resistance',[54] an anchor against the pull of an increasingly fast world. The concept of *walking as art* arose in the 1960s. Artists such as Richard Long, whose photographs are evidence of walks he has undertaken, sought to engage with their environment phenomenologically, and as described by Abrams, become emplaced within the landscape. Works such as *Walking Lines Along the Footpath; A 12 Day Walk in the Zanskar Mountains of Ladakh, Northern India 1984* show photographs from Long's walking journeys. In *A Line of Nights, A 106 Mile Meandering Walk in North-West Scotland, 1981* a photograph shows a topographical map, onto which Long has indicated the nights he spent in each location.[55] According to Solnit:

Walking became Long's medium. His exhibited art since has consisted of works on paper documenting his walks, photographs of further marks in the landscape made in the course of those walks, and other sculptures made indoors that reference his outdoor activities.[56]

When an artist uses walking as a methodology, as I have done, the eye, hand and mind are synchronised and, as Salman Rushdie observes, a 'softening of the boundary between the world and self takes place in an artistic experience….and this allows the world to flow into the artist and the artist to flow into the world'.[57]

My work *Traces of Passage II* (fig.3.) speaks of land-use practices. The bones, remnant

[51] Keith Wilson, Irish painter, email August 14, 2012.
[52] Pallasmaa, *The Thinking Hand*, 20.
[53] Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (UK: Verso, 2001), 267.
[54] Ibid.: 267.
[55] R.H Fuchs, *Richard Long* (NY: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1986).
[56] Ibid.: 270.
[57] Salman Rushdie cited in Pallasmaa, The Thinking Hand, 19.

wire and fences refer to the first European farms, the drought cycles and the introduced species.

Fig. 3. *Traces of Passage II (*2011 – 2014).

In this work I poured water and ink across the surface of the canvas, moving the liquid to form pools and puddles. I have traced around the sheep's skull, cutting this out of the fabrics' surface. The lake bed and a prayer for rain. The memory of rain. I photocopied chicken wire which was from an old fence line on the escarpment far above the lake. The wire is rusted; it has tales to tell. Silent, its language speaks of attempts to contain animals. It utters as remnants tend to do: staccato. This work speaks of past rain, rivulets and pathways that have been dried out in the sun. It reminds me of the work of Judy Watson.

Judy Watson, an Aboriginal woman from the Waanyi language group, narrates her story in *Blood Language,* in which she deplores the loss of her culture, and of all cultures. She tells of hidden histories of violence and massacres and personal stories of resilience. Watson is interested in archaeology; digging for knowledge about hidden things, things that need to be known and burdens that need to be shared. She is a map-maker of the past, questioning the Eurocentric relationship with the land and allowing non-Indigenous Australians, such as myself, to see the land as something to be experienced,

rather than something to be observed, or as a container to be emptied or filled.

I have used her evocative canvas wall piece *Touchstone* (fig. 4), which won the Moet & Chandon Prize in 1994, to explore these ideas further.

Fig. 4. Judy Watson, *Touchstone* (1994).

In developing the imagery for *Touchstone* Watson walked through the Niagara Dam area near Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, experiencing the land with awareness then overlaying it with cultural readings. The aerial view she has used, coupled with objects she found at the site, orchestrate a song of the land; its history and memory are recorded poetically in her process of art making. As Edward Casey puts it, 'The places that precipitate out of the body-landscape interplay are cultural entities from the start'[58]. In *Touchstone*, Watson was influenced by the scattering of stone tools across the clay pans of Niagara Dam, the residual scars on the landscape from gold-mining days and the coexistence of evidence from its several occupations. She has represented these

[58] Casey, *Getting back in to Place*, 30.

aspects visually through the layering of motifs or symbols to create a sense of deep space. In an interview for the Sydney Morning Herald she said:

> *You could see Aboriginal occupation and you could see the colonial civilization that had gone through there in the goldfields era. This work is very much about memories, too, because the blue is like the sky and its layers of memories washing across you. The shape in the middle is like a disembodied form that is floating ... it also is very similar to the cornerstone of a house that was eroding in the landscape. From a distance it looked like an anthill, but when you came up to it you saw it was a house.*[59]

Watson's work provides a cultural bridge between European Australians and Aboriginal Australians, a bridge from where the view of the land is changing. In *Touchstone,* Indigenous, settler and natural histories are interwoven, demonstrating Bhabha's concept of the third space. As Watson says, 'I am Indigenous and non-Indigenous; I fit somewhere in-between. I embody the notion of two cultural frameworks occupying the same cultural space.'[60]

Watson creates a journey through her work, the different geographical locations creating links between them, like *songlines*.[61] She maps who she is and where she has come from. Mapping the land in this way, where links are made between memory and perception—the 'peripheral vision' of the senses—and the layering of these links is a concept I have engaged with in my work. I have tried to capture a record of transience and fleeting moments, recording traces and memories and allocating their importance.

Reconnecting with my childhood memories of times spent with my father in the field has been a rewarding and unexpected result of undertaking this research. I have learned how as a child I mapped my environment when out on farms with my father in a way that relied on my senses and that a map can be much more than just a 'line on a whitefella map'.

---

[59] Judy Watson in interview with Carmel Dwyer, Sydney Morning Herald, Wed 15, 1995.
[60] Judy Watson, Louise Martin-Chew, *Blood Language* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2009) 16.
[61] *Routes taken by Ancestral Beings are called dreaming tracks or songlines*. Josephine Flood, *The Original Australians,* 139.

As Judy Watson's work demonstrates, experiencing the land through walking involves entering into a dialogue with non-Western perceptions of place. As Norman Bryson says, 'acknowledge the fact that the visual field we inhabit is one of meanings and not just shapes, that it is permeated by verbal and visual discourse, by signs, and that these signs are socially constructed, as are we.'[62] I have been able to enter into this dialogue because of my phenomenological engagement with Weereewa and my understanding of how experimental mapping, walking and phenomenology can be used to represent experiences of being *in* the landscape, rather than viewing it from a point fixed in time and place. These different perspectives have informed my experiences of Weereewa, enabling me to become sensitive to the concept of place and to recognise how the land, and its many histories can be represented.

[62] Norman Bryson, 'The Gaze in the Expanded Field' in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 107.

Chapter Two
Shifting Visual Language Traditions

In this chapter I have examined the concept of a new visual language, one that draws upon both phenomenological engagement with the natural environment and an understanding of how other artists and writers have interpreted the Australian landscape. The visual language I developed can be used to describe and explain the works in my exhibition *Walking at Weereewa* as well as the way I have come to perceive and understand the lake. I have described my approach in this body of work as an *ecology of drawing*; one which embraces all the major influences I have encountered on my journey of discovery over the past five years.

Initially, I was attracted to the idea put forward by spatial geographer, Paul Carter, that a *closed region* (which he describes as one that is experienced visually only), can be transformed into an open, creative zone through the processes of collection, imagination and invention.[63] Inspired by the idea of the lake being such a zone, I explored its fragments, shadows and traces, going beyond their visual imagery to see what else they could convey.

James Elkins looks at the artistic process as one where: 'initially we simply take in light, and then we organise it'.[64] We create a seamless whole that fits with our understanding of perspective. I, however, am interested in what takes place before this organisation occurs, in the pre-verbal world where, as Elkins says, 'shape, motion, texture and colour fill in at different times'.[65] He refers to 'partial figures', which I envisage as pre-language elements or *utterances* and it is utterances that I seek to capture in the fragments, layers, glimpses and puddles that comprise my visual language.

In the studio I found that the physical action of collaging, cutting, piercing, flooding, dropping, drying and marking enabled me to re-engage with my experiences at the lake and, in doing so, express them in a new language, using objects I have seen, felt, picked up, scanned, drawn, traced or glimpsed. These processes were important to my

[63] Paul Carter, *Ground Truthing: Explorations in a Creative Region* (Western Australia: UWA Publishing, 2010).
[64] James Elkins, *Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Text: Art History as Writing* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997)*, 107.*
[65] Ibid.: 107.

investigation because flooding, drying and marking are durational just as walking is; and physical actions such as collaging and cutting are tactile just as walking is physically tactile. In this way my working process is strongly connected to my many walks on the lake bed, allowing me, as an embodied subject, to capture the ephemeral and transitory nature of the Weeweera landscape.

The cut-out (fig. 5), *Traces of Passage II (detail)* alludes to those utterances, derived as they are from the qualities of air, sound, seasons and discarded relics. In creating this work I have cut away those areas I cannot speculate about because the passage of time has eroded their histories. The patterning suggests the cracked earth of the dry lake bed, the tracks of others who have gone before and the course of rain in rivulets upon the ground.

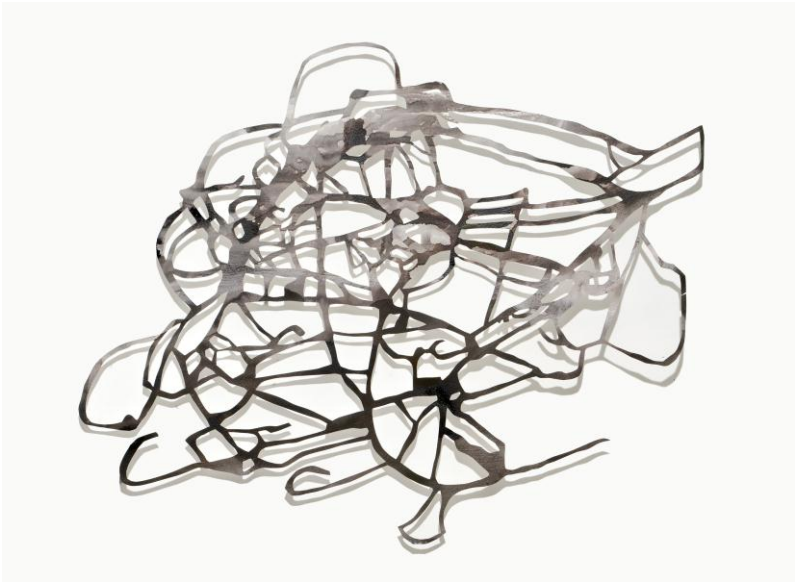

Fig. 5. *Traces of Passage II* (2012 – 2014) detail.

Semiotics, the philosophical study of signs and symbols, provided me with some useful tools for investigating and constructing meaning from natural signs. The nineteenth-century American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce distinguished three types of signs: icons, indices and cultural signs.

My work can best be viewed in terms of *indices* which are described by Robert Frodeman as:

> *Cases in which one postulates a natural or causal link between the mark and the object it is taken as indicating. This is the realm of natural signs, which may be as prosaic as the piled branches left from a past flood along a riverbank.*[66]

Combining Peirce's ideas of indices with notions of history and ephemerality has allowed me to describe Weeweera's surface as forensic, poetic and semiotic. In this sense, an artist/poet/semiotician can interpret the lake bed as a series of relationships between what is seen, what is suggested and what is remembered. I have used indices from the lake bed to capture these elements—the wire remnants, the pathways worn upon the land and the vein-like rivulets left by heavy rain.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold discusses how 'communicative relationships evoke feelings of care, love and attachment toward the environment',[67] something I found to be true of my relationship with Weereewa. As geographer Jessica Weir says, communicating with the land 'establishes an emotional and ethical context for our ecological relationships'.[68]

Juhani Pallasmaa is another who identifies the importance of a holistic awareness of landscape. He makes the observation: 'focused vision pushes us out of the space, making us mere spectators whereas peripheral vision integrates us with space'.[69] To remove myself from the role of spectator, and into one where I can experience the environment through my peripheral vision, I subverted my gaze while walking, collecting ideas and images for drawing as I moved through the landscape. This method can be described it as the 'glimpse' – looking sideways – walking while surveying the sky and the lay of the land and objects on the ground. By being vertical in a horizontal plane that extends above and below I am in touch with the continual flux and ephemerality of this huge plain. The shadows from the escarpment, the traces and fragments of human activity, the wind and the clouds all enhance the sense of loss and impermanence that has been described by other writers and artists and that I am aware of myself.

---

[66] Robert Frodeman, *Geo-logic: Breaking Ground Between Philosophy and the Earth Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). eBook Academic Collection EBSCOhost (accessed January 24, 2014), 106.
[67] Tim Ingold cited in Jessica K. Weir, '*Connectivity*', Australian Humanities Review, Issue 45, November 2008, 155. http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-November-2008/weir.html (accessed 2 August, 2014).
[68] Ibid.: 155.
[69] Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses,* 13.

In *Infinite City,* Rebecca Solnit introduces artists who have reinvented notions of the atlas through the appropriation of maps of San Francisco which are then over-written with events and experiences that have occurred in the areas they cover. The maps were described by reviewer, Adam Kirsch, as being:

> *Like poems, some of these maps are inspired by witty conceits and unlikely juxtapositions. 'Death and Beauty' plots the locations of the 99 murders that took place in San Francisco in 2008 and, on the same map, shows where to find stands of Monterey cypress—trees whose 'stable, silent lives,' Solnit writes, made them the right counterweight to violent death.* [70]

Solnit's influence on my work is demonstrated in *Survey I* and *Survey II* (fig. 6) where the photographic maps show the lake's physical attributes from above. The watercolour drawings float over the top of the maps with areas cut through to reveal them. In using this approach my aim was to show that history is a layer of the lake, and that the lake itself comprises many layered histories.

Fig. 6. *Survey I* (2014). *Survey II* (2014)

[70] Adam Kirsch review 'Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas' 29/11/2010 http://www.barnesandnoble.com/review/infinite-city accessed 25/7/2015.

In Australia, there has been a recent upsurge in experimental urban mapping. The exhibition *Baadlands: An Atlas of Experimental Cartography*, which was held at the Tin Sheds Gallery in Sydney in 2013 is described by Saskia Beudel and Jill Bennett as one that:

> *explored the politics of mapping in a world where Google Earth aspires to present a uniform image of the planet, superimposing satellite imagery with aerial photographs and geographic information system (GIS) technology … The exhibition focused on a series of underdeveloped or quasi-fictitious locations that might manifest as glitches or blanks on conventional maps.*[71]

In *Survey I and Survey II* (fig. 6) my interventions interrupt the conventional map of Weereewa with remnant traces of settler and Indigenous histories as well as fragments of shadows and water. Traces of passage are suggested on these maps, the cut-out shapes of bones and stone tools evidence of how walking, as a methodology, has informed my interpretation of the landscape.

In *Landscape and Power,* W.J.T. Mitchell introduces the idea of the word *landscape* as a verb, rather than a noun. He does this to challenge the dominant Western view of landscape and states that if it is viewed as a cultural medium it, 'has a double role with respect to something like ideology: it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it was simply given and inevitable'.[72] He goes on to say that 'landscape is a dynamic medium, in which we "live and move and have our being," but also a medium that is itself in motion from one place or time to another'.[73]

Mitchell's concept of the landscape as a dynamic medium introduces a new dimension, namely the possibility of phenomenological engagement with traditional Aboriginal perceptions of Country. If we experience our surroundings as a dynamic medium, one that acculturates us, then we see that we are part of the landscape, rather than outside it, seeing it as a number of 'fixed places treated as objects for visual contemplation or interpretation'.[74]

---

[71] Saskia Beudel and Jill Bennett. *Curating Sydney: Imagining the City's Future* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2014), 56.
[72] W.J.T. Mitchell. *Landscape and power* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), *2.*
[73] Ibid.: 2.
[74] Ibid.: 2.

When I am on the lake I can sense its long history and feel the presence of those who have been there before. There is a sense of loneliness. As Martin Terry says in *Baseline*, 'The absence of the Indigenous people, and lonely traces of long gone settlers, contributes to the melancholy mood of the lake'.[75] Its silent presence also speaks of ecological decline. Colonial settlers and explorers described the environment of the lake as being more fertile and productive than it is today. Gammage quotes one settler describing the soil as *'exceedingly friable and rich; being unstocked and therefore untrodden'*.[76] Today, the absence of traditional land management methods and the presence of grazing animals can be felt as a 'noise', that echoes across the silence of the lake bed. Deborah Bird Rose says, 'to listen is to be drawn into a world of ethical encounters; to hear is to witness; to witness is to become entangled'.[77]

Two non-Indigenous artists who were influential in the development of my visual language are John Wolseley and Phillip Hunter. Wolseley is an environmental artist who aims to engage with Aboriginal perceptions of place. He works from the perspective of Casey's emplaced observer, and, like Judy Watson, his work begins in the horizontal plane of the ground, where he uses twigs, sand, rain and other natural phenomena to stain his paper. The idea of horizontality is also central to the way the land is conceptualised in Aboriginal painting. As Peter Adsett says that, 'Horizontality, by its very nature, is the locus of place, the inception of ground where the language of painting comes from'.[78]

In *Our Common Ground: A celebration of Art, Place & Environment*, Wolseley discusses his search for a new visual language, one that implies immersion in the environment, helping him articulate his concerns about our alienation from the land:

> *I intend this to be a landscape as it is experienced on the ground as I move over it rather than one painted by an onlooker who has distanced his subject. My current work presents an attempt to find alternative vehicles or forms relevant to this*

[75] Martin Terry, 'Ground Zero', *Baseline: Remnant Grassland of Weereewa/Lake George* (Canberra: Craft ACT, 2008), 20.
[76] Gammage, *The Greatest Estate on Earth*, 103.
[77] Deborah Bird Rose cited in Weir, 'Connectivity'. Australian Humanities Review, 159.
[78] Introduction essay to Peter Adsett *Betrayal* exhibition at Paul Nache Gallery, Gisborne, NZ. https://www.tumblr.com/search/peter+adsett (accessed 3/10/2014).

land … I can say something in a personal way which at the same time acknowledges its debt to Aboriginal perception and art[79].

Wolseley's view is informed by reading the land from different perspectives as he records the events that occur during the physical journeys he takes. He describes 'modes of knowledge' that underpin the 'big shapes or definite forms' of hills, plains, lakes and valleys. These modes of knowledge are something that may be experienced phenomenologically by the observer, moving through the landscape, or they may be factual and describe the geological history of an area.

He combines his ideas in *A History of Parrots, Drifting Maps and Warming Seas* (fig. 7) where delicate detailed drawings of grass hoppers, birds, butterflies and bones seem to float above the landscapes.

Fig. 7. John Wolseley, *A History of Parrots, Drifting Maps and Warming Seas* (2005).

Wolseley also refers to the 'eidetic history' in his work, that is, one that includes images of events that may not have occurred but are nevertheless clearly imagined by him as a possible reality. As he says, 'perhaps they tell the story of what may have happened but which went unnoticed'.[80] In *Material Thinking*, Paul Carter describes Wolseley's blots and puddling of pigmented watercolour as a metaphor for what he terms the 'eidetic landscape' where, he says, 'in the sunshine the visible world continues to be normal (but) something alien observes us from the shadows'.[81]

[79] Sasha Grishin, *John Wolseley: Land marks II* (Melbourne: Craftsman House, 2006), 150-151.
[80] Paul Carter, *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research* (Carlton Vic: Melbourne University Press), 26.
[81] Ibid.: 27.

WJT Mitchell also proposes that there is a 'dark side of the landscape and that this dark side is not merely mythic, not merely a feature of the regressive, instinctual drives associated with nonhuman "nature", but a moral, ideological, and political darkness'.[82]

In *The Colonizing of Lichens in Tasmania and Valdivia* (fig. 8) Wolseley uses the blots and washes, pencil and ink and collage elements that Carter describes as 'eidetic phenomena', to represent different perspectives in the one space. By overlaying these media his work becomes suggestive of the textures, smells and movements of the places he has engaged with.

Fig. 8. John Wolseley, *The Colonizing of Lichens in Tasmania and Valdivia* (1996).

I have attempted to explore the Weereewa landscape using a poetical and multi-layered technique similar to Wolseley's. In my works *Cultural relics*, and *Flowering bones at my feet* (which I will discuss later in this chapter) I have drawn upon the idea of traces of nature through the application of inks and watercolours as blots and puddles of pigment. The blurring and the course that the inks and watercolour take on the surface of the paper echo those of natural processes in action.

[82] Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 6

In Phillip Hunter's *Night Surge – Dust Wave* (fig. 9) traces left on the land are juxtaposed with conventional use of foreground, mid-ground and background where tractor lights contest the space. Through his interest in line I can feel his phenomenological engagement with place; looking down at detail and up at distance. The limited palette, mark-making and texture provide a sense that not everything is being revealed. There is a mythic quality and sense of engagement with other ways of perceiving the land. He has placed the traces left behind by tractors in the foreground of this work, reminding me of an unseen presence and the elemental forces of nature with which it is interacting. In the catalogue from his exhibition, Hunter describes seeing his long-term interest in landscape painting as 'a way of questioning our often troubled relationship with the land itself'. He asks, 'how can I allude to those layers of impact on the landscape and how can I describe them without being illustrative, of presenting just another topography?'.[83]

Fig. 9. Phillip Hunter, *Night Surge – Dust Wave* (2008).

[83] Ashely Crawford, *Wimmera: The Work of Phillip Hunter* (Fishermans Bend, Vic.: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 24.

Similarly, on Weereewa there are many different lines. Tyre marks fence lines and animal tracks cross its surface and enter into my visual language. Bones can be found with no sign of animal tracks nearby, worn away as the lake's surface is swept by the wind, parched by the sun or soaked by the rain. Evidence of time, memory of occupation and land-use practices of both 'the Aboriginal communities who currently identify with Weereewa/Lake George. Pajong and Wallabalooa, Ngambri-Ngunnawal, Pejar, Gundungurra and Buru Ngunawal'[84] and the white settlers, has gone, its lines smudged away by the elements.

In *Walking at Weereewa* (fig. 10), I have tried to capture a sense of space and evoke the feeling of walking on the lake bed. The walls of the gallery represent the vast surface upon which the events, suggested by the fragments, took place. I have taken motifs, fragments and traces from the land and made composite installations to explore Abrams' 'ambiguous realm… the fluid region of direct experience' to 'give voice to its ever shifting patterns'[85] . That which is momentary and inconsequential is foregrounded; the spaces between my fragments reflect the sound of the lake and its silence. The spaces refer also to the distance between momentary events that occur on the lake and the time between them as my work unfolds. It reveals a process of layering: the layering of ideas and the layering of history.

[84] Beth Hatton and Christine James cited in *Baseline: Remnant Grassland of Weereewa/Lake George*, 2.
[85] Abrams, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 33-35.

Fig. 10. *Walking at Weereewa* (2011 – 2012).

In the catalogue for my exhibition, artist and writer Christine James describes *Walking at Weereewa*, as 'a sparse yet active spatiality' a 'brightness and a vastness of light, of earth and sky in a profound communion'.[86]

I find the intensely experienced immensity and vastness of the landscape is somehow echoed in the word *Weereewa*. The 'ah' of vastness and the 'ah' of Weereewa are the same sound, reflecting both the great size of the lake and its melancholy nature. Saying the word aloud seems to echo a lonely sound like the cry of the crow. On the other hand, the English name, *Lake George*, has no onomatopoediac qualities and lacks poetic effect.

As mentioned earlier, Sally Smart is another artist who has used cut-outs and the surface of the wall as the surface of the earth. Her exhibition *Shadow Farm* (fig.12) plays at the edges of our rural imaginations. We are safe within the context of the farm with its water tank, work car and working dog, yet the presence of the many birds and the grotesque figure creates a feeling of unease. Hitchcock's movie *The Birds* springs to mind, touching on a sense of cultural unease, reflected in the differences between Western and non-Western representational systems. Smart constructs meaning of place by mapping her memories and imagination in a way that is not unlike Indigenous

[86] Christine James in *Lynne Flemons: Walking at Weereewa* (Goulburn NSW: Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, 2011), 3.

cultural practices, where landforms take on qualities of the ancestors. In the exhibition catalogue for *Shadow Farm* she refers to, 'violet ranges, which lie like fragments of the body of a Giant'.[87] The work is constructed using cut-outs of felt, paper, photocopy and fabric which are pinned in arrangements that vary at each reconstruction, producing different meanings. '*Shadow Farm* is a thicket of repressed histories which can't be fenced off. It admits something about our relationship to this land which goes back to the conditions of its colonial cultivation'.[88]

Fig. 11. Sally Smart, *Shadow Farm* (2003).

In *Shadow Farm* the wall can be read as the unconscious ground, 'the ground of the psyche'.[89] The objects found on it appear as if 'nascent visual symbols'.[90] In this way the visual symbols seem to arise from, and fall back into, the subconscious where other memories of our colonial cultivation can be found. The work is made up of shadows, both conceptually and physically. One can read here the concept of the shadow in Jungian terms, where parts of our nature are hidden from us and remain unacknowledged. 'The past can be recalled by the present. But once repressed, the past, however blessed, cannot return benignly'.[91]

[87] Sally Smart. *Shadow Farm / Sally Smart* (Vic: Bendigo Art Gallery, 2003), 21.
[88] Ibid.: 21.
[89] Elkins, *Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Texts: Art History as Writing,* 121.
[90] Ibid, 121.
[91] Sally Smart. *Shadow Farm / Sally Smart*, 24.

In *Traces of Passage III* (fig. 12) I have represented fragments of bone and wire found on the lake bed. The paper and plywood cutouts allude to how the weather changes with the changing seasons, its state of flux between wet and dry, hot and cold, wind-swept and still. The cutouts became a vocabulary—parts of sentences and utterances that describe my engagement with the lake. The pelvis of a sheep in its scale and surface treatment alludes to farming practices. The red tape is a reference to Western mapping traditions, contrasting with the existing landscape as something harsh and raw. The arrangement of these fragments into an installation creates a dialogue between these two concepts, generating a third space such as that described by Cynthia Fowler as a place where:

> *the hybrid subject neither becomes the colonizer nor remains the colonized, but emerges as neither the One … nor the Other …, but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both.*[92]

Fig. 12. *Traces of Passage III* (2011 – 2012).

There is a sense of uncertainty associated with making a new work such as *Traces of Passage* because the pieces and fragments are developed in a process where the destination is not yet defined. It is like an open-ended narrative. One of the most exciting aspects of this approach was that it allowed me to experiment and discover new

[92] Cynthia Fowler Hybridity as a Strategy for Self-Determination in Contemporary American Indian Art. *Social Justice Vol. 34, No. 1 2007*, 64. http://www.socialjusticejournal.org/archive/107_34_1/107_06Fowler.pdf. (accessed 26 July 2015).

methods with which to express myself.

In the two works, *Flowering Bones at my Feet* and *Cultural Relics* (fig. 13, fig. 14), I began to explore the different ways fragments could be arranged. At the time these works were being developed I was struggling with format and ideas of near and far. I wanted to work with a vertical format, but over time my view began to change and I felt that fragments of time and place and the ephemeral qualities of the lake were best represented using cut-outs.

Fig. 13. *Flowering bones at my feet* (2012).

Fig. 14. *Cultural Relics* (2012).

In developing these works I drew upon fragments of experiences and memories that played at the edges of my consciousness. This process was informed by looking from far to near—from the horizon to the ground in front of me and to the sky above—without fixing my gaze on any one point. In doing this I was left with an *afterimage*, a lingering impression, an ethereal image, which I then expressed in combination with the visual elements. In the studio I flooded the paper with pigment and water and drew lines

in black ink to suggest visible natural processes such as bleaching, fading of bones and rusting of wire, as well as the unseen qualities and atmosphere of the lake.

Like Sally Smart, Jonathon Kimberley is an artist who maps the landscape phenomenologically, engaging with Aboriginal concepts of country. His approach is demonstrated through his collaborative work with Aboriginal poet Pura-lia Meenamatta (Jim Everett) in his exhibition *Meenamatta* (fig. 15).

Fig. 15. Jonathon Kimberley & Pura-lia Meenamatta (Jim Everett), *Pura-lia lena retena aya-aya: paperbark water-heart re-birth* (2006).

Kimberley says:

> *the paintings are of actual places, they are not panoramic images, rather they present a series of afterimages that express the residual experience and memory of being in a place rather than a pictorial depiction of the landscape itself. In many ways the paintings can be decoded through the recognizable symbols which recur in several works, and in other ways they are more abstract experiential palimpsests that are read as afterimages.*[93]

In *Mapping the Ephemeral III* (fig. 16), I explored the concept of the afterimage further

[93] Helen Norrie, Oculus, in conversation with Jonathan Kimberley, Oculus, Bett Gallery Hobart, April 2011. http://www.bettgallery.com.au/artists/kimberley/oculus/essay.html (accessed 4 May, 2011).

by returning to the more formal structure of the rectangle allowing me to use layering of the individual visual elements to add depth. I began by drawing the shapes of shadows cast by clouds and the remnants of water on the surface of the lake bed. I then flooded the paper with ink while it was horizontal and tipped it so that the ink formed an afterimage reminiscent of lines on the surface of the lake.

Fig. 16. *Mapping the Ephemeral III* (2014).

The lines in *Mapping the Ephemeral III* suggest to me not only natural processes, but also the pathways that I have taken in my journeys across and around the lake bed. The red collaged lines refer to cartographic practices of mapping and fence lines that partially demarcate the lake bed into paddocks. As Tim Ingold says in his book *Lines: A Brief History,* 'life is lived along paths, not just in places, and paths are lines of a sort. It is along paths, too, that people gain knowledge about the world around them, and describe this world in the stories they tell'.[94]

[94] Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (Oxon, USA: Routledge, 2007), 2.

Chapter Three
Time and Weather

In this chapter I have explored the elements of time and weather, both of which have played an important part in the development of my work. Their effects are clearly evident on Weereewa and remain closely associated with the feelings of transience and ephemerality that are intrinsic to my interpretation of the landscape.

Time, according to John Berger has often been culturally linked to eternity. In his book *Sense of Sight* he says:

> *Until the 19 century all world cosmologies—even including European Enlightenment—conceived of time as being in one way or another surrounded or infiltrated by timelessness. This timelessness constituted a realm of refuge and appeal. It was prayed to. It was where the dead went. It was intimately but invisibly related to the living world of time through ritual, stories and ethics.*[95]

He goes on to say that pictorial arts, because they are static, become representations of timelessness. In his view the potency of art comes from its capacity to explore the ephemeral, the sensual and the particular in a static image where a transitory moment is made timeless. 'Without an acknowledged coexistence of the ephemeral and the timeless, there is nothing of consequence for pictorial art to do'.[96]

Stephen Muecke makes an important distinction between the concepts of time in Western and Aboriginal culture:

> *It is fair to say that the notion of 'time' as seen by the West is radically different to the complex time-place circularity shared by Indigenous peoples. As such, to label this 'race' as 'culturally located in the past' simply would not make sense in the Aboriginal concept of 'time' - which is closer to a circular infinity than it is to the chronological progression depicted by the West.*[97]

---

[95] John Berger, *Sense of sight* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 208.
[96] Ibid.: 210.
[97] Stephen Muecke cited in Nina Pace. 'Limitations of Indigenous Modernity, The problems of culture-tradition, authenticity and the hybrid' (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney, 2009) *epress.lib.uts.edu.au/studentjournals/index.php/iih/article/.../1304/1362 accessed*

'Trying-on' the idea of time, as it is expressed in Aboriginal cosmology where, as Amy Lenzo says, 'everything contains in its form the memory of its creation, its history, its future and its present',[98] enables me to be in the present moment, aware of myself in relation to the qualities of inner experience, cultural memory, memory of time past, and anticipation of future time; opening up a dialogue about how the layers of history and land use practices at Weereewa are interwoven.

The work of artist Rosalie Gascoigne has been of particular importance to me in developing my ideas about time and weather. A New Zealand-born artist, she immigrated to Australia in 1943 where she lived on Mount Stromlo, just outside Canberra. For many years and she studied Ikebana, the Japanese practice of flower arranging, an art form 'in which the subjectivity of the arranger is prominently expressed',[99] and which has at its core a spiritual practice grounded in silence and minimalism. The aesthetic qualities of Ikebana can be seen in the installations and assemblages that were central to Gascoigne's later work. She drew inspiration from the Canberra region and is widely known for her representations of the rural landscape within the historical context of white settlement- exploring time, and weather and the spirituality of the land.

Gascoigne described the local landscape as, 'all air, all light, all space, all understatement'.[100] Works such as *Suddenly the Lake* (fig. 17), although pared back and sparse like the land it represents, is also highly atmospheric, creating a strong sense of the Weereewa landscape.

26/10/2014, 3.

[98] Amy Lenzo, 'Sand Art – Ancient and Modern'. *Gatherings*, Issue 6, Winter 2001-2002). http://www.ecopsychology.org/journal/gatherings6/html/Overview/overview_sand_art.html (accessed 11/10/2014).
[99] Vici MacDonald, *Rosalie Gascoigne* (Paddington: Regaro Pty Ltd.), 18.
[100] *Rosalie Gascoigne: plain air* (Wellington: City Gallery Wellington in association with Victoria University Press, 2004), 9.

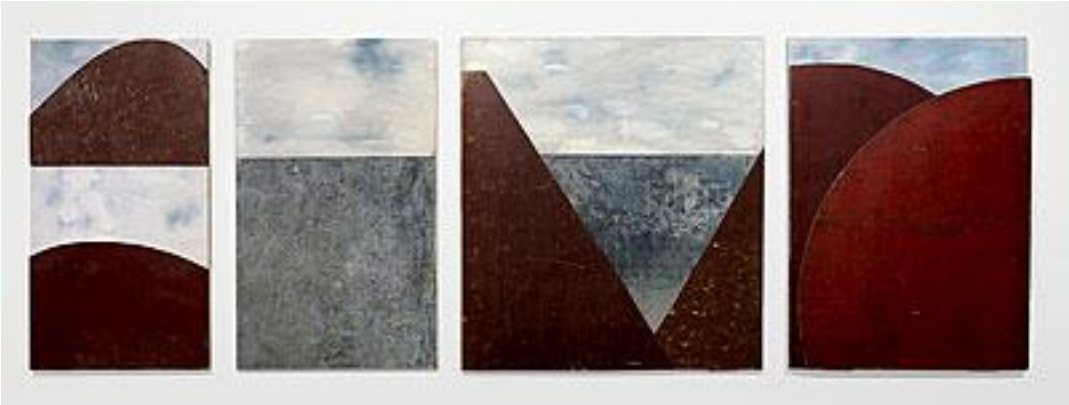

Fig. 17. Rosalie Gascoigne, *Suddenly the Lake* (1995).

In *Inland Sea,* (fig. 17) Gascoigne captures the elements of time, atmosphere, space and light through the use of objects she has retrieved from the landscape. It is an installation of weathered, painted, corrugated iron set at different heights on wire bases, eloquently suggesting a sense reminiscent of Weereewa, with its ripple of water, whipped by the wind; or the cracked mud of the lake bed when the water has receded in the dryness of summer. It also references early settlement and farming and the critical role played by corrugated iron as Europeans strove to master the land. She presents the fragments that form the work on the floor of the gallery space rather than on the wall, helping us envisage the piece as a poetic reference to land. Found objects are fundamental to her work. As she says, 'second-hand materials aren't deliberate; they have had sun and wind in them'.[101] And although I haven't included found objects directly in my own work, I too have collected objects from the lake bed that reflect the passage of time, and the place itself, and have drawn inspiration from them. With Gascoigne I share an affinity for the time-worn fragments that reflect the history of places we have walked in.

[101] Ibid.: 7.

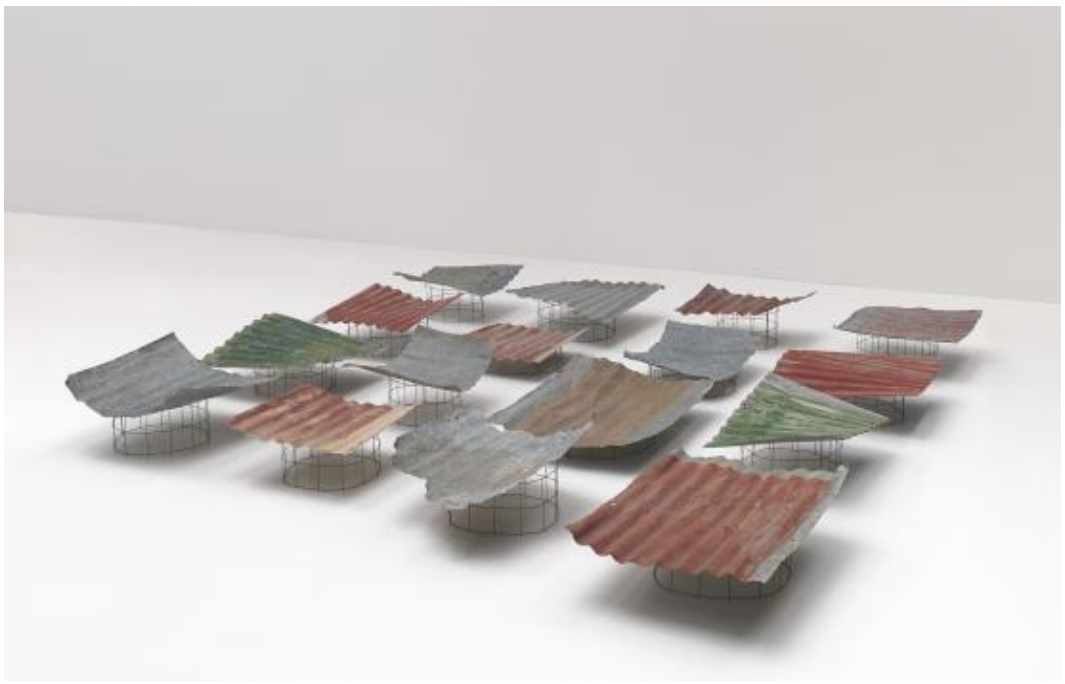

Fig. 18. Rosalie Gascoigne, *Inland Sea* (1986).

The underlying grid in *Inland Sea* is modernist, because, as well as expressing Gascoigne's phenomenological interactions with the environment, it references modern topographical and geographical maps. The grid is a matrix upon which meaning is arranged.

According to Rosalind Kraus:

> *The grid's mythic power is that it makes us able to think we are dealing with materialism (or sometimes science or logic) while at the same time it provides us with a release into belief (or the illusion) of fiction.*[102]

Gascoigne's use of the grid enables us to read her work as a powerful grounding tool with which she can talk about a kind of invisibility, about the air and how to represent its qualities. As Berger says, she wants 'to make what is not present *seen*'.[103] Her work can be read as time-in-motion where each fragment, or frame, is an experience that the viewer sees and senses as they walk, either around it, as in the case of *Inland Sea,* or

[102] Rosalind. E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge MA USA: MIT Press, 1986), 12.
[103] Berger, *Sense of Sight*, 212.

along it, as is the case with *Suddenly the Lake.* The grid provides the reference to *time-in-motion* as we journey through her work, just as we would if we were walking through the landscape itself.

Similarly, in my installation of watercolour drawings, *Shadowlands*, (fig. 19), the wall of the gallery space and the repetition of fragments in the works also provide a sense of time-in-motion as the viewer journeys from one image to the next. Like Gascoigne, I have arranged my fragments on a grid, enhancing the sense of time as the viewer moves along, experiencing the changing forms of the landscape.

Fig. 19. *Shadowlands* (2012).

In *Monaro* (fig. 20), Gascoigne uses discarded soft drink crates to capture the essence of wind moving across yellow grasses, and of that which is above the surface—the air and the atmosphere. The ephemeral nature of movement, found objects and the senses of sight, feel, touch, hearing, smell and memory, are lovingly constructed into this timeless ode, this monumental poem, to the Monaro landscape.

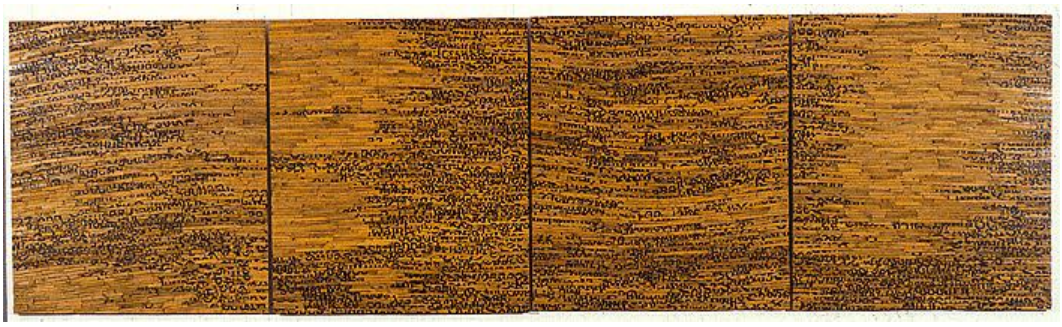

Fig. 20. Rosalie Gascoigne, *Monaro* (1989).

Gascoigne talks about time as an element, present not only in the pieces she collects, but in her studio practice:

> *my appreciation of what's available increases with the unfolding of time. In the studio ideas and objects often sit for some time before they are incorporated into a work…I work with things I rather like and move them until they recall the feeling of an actual moment in the landscape.*[104]

Time, history and memory, experienced phenomenologically and expressed through fragments, are themes from Gascoigne's work that have influenced my own. In *Shadowlands I* (fig. 21), I have used watercolour paint on paper to reflect the atmosphere of Weereewa. The paint represents fragments of water, the transient nature of clouds and the fluidity of the elements. Shadows are on the water, on the escarpment and on the ground; my own shadow, and the shadows of bones, all lend weight to the eidetic history of the place - a history that might have been.

Fig. 21. *Shadowlands I* (2012).

My work is necessarily fragmented because I am aiming to suggest incompleteness, a kind of suspension, a becoming. As Lesley Duxbury notes:

[104] *Rosalie Gascoigne: plain air*, 8.

> *fragments sometimes trigger emotions or realisations that the so-called whole cannot...by suggesting incompleteness, the fragment is a more complete embodiment of the unknowability of the universe and the impossibility of rendering it artistically than a work that aims at totality.*[105]

Phenomenologically, time is an element of human experience. We change as time is changing. The landscape of clouds, shadows and other weather effects on the lake bed are also temporal phenomena which we experience alongside change within ourselves. In works such as *Shadowlands II* (fig. 22), I have used fragments of clouds, shadows, remnant water and bones to express the process of becoming and passing away, to capture the memories held in the traces of other lives and other histories. This painting is imbued with a grieving for the lake. It speaks of a shadow land of memories, the signs of unknown histories smudged from view by the passage of time.

Fig. 22. *Shadowlands II* (2012).

Engaging with ideas of phenomenology and phenomenological time has enabled me to engage with Weereewa in ways I had not considered before starting my research. When I taste, smell, feel or hear Weereewa, I am aware of its ancient history reaching back

[105] Lesley Duxbury, 'The Eye (and Mind) of the Beholder.' In *Thinking Through Practice: Art as Research in the Academy,* ed. Lesley Duxbury, Elizabeth M. Brierson and Dianne Waite (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2007), 25.

millions of years to when it was first formed. I glance and experience the landscape as a moment in time, sensing not just its past, but its present and future as well. John McPhee has shown in a series of books on geology and geologists that walking and thinking in terms of deep time can profoundly affect the way one experiences the world. 'What was taken as real becomes ephemeral, while the inconsequential becomes freighted with significance'.[106] The interlocking concepts of time and weather mean that we can walk today in places that will later be underwater; we can walk over dry sheep paddocks where decades ago people drowned in heavy inland seas.

The weather also forms part of our phenomenological experience because once we step outdoors it impacts upon us immediately. As Tim Ingold says:

> *we negotiate a way through a zone of admixture and interchange between the more or less solid substances of the earth and the volatile medium of the air…as inhabitants of this zone we are continually subject to those fluxes of the medium we call weather.*[107]

In *Traces of Passage II* (fig 3.) I have reflected upon periods of drought, when time contracts and life, like the land, becomes hard. It's a time when the surface cracks, the water retreats and the sheep die of thirst and heat exhaustion, their bones gleaming white in the harsh light.

Objects on the lake bed, passages of wind, the heat and the cracked earth all form part of what Simon James describes as the environmental phenomenological experience. They remain with me when I am away from the lake and they continue to speak to me through my work, of all that may be lost to the future of a drying continent.

[106] Robert Frodeman, *Geo-logic,* 123.
[107] Tim Ingold, 'Footprints Through the Weather-World: Walking, Breathing, Knowing' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Issue 16 (2010), 122.

Conclusion

The primary aim of my research has been to explore, both visually and conceptually, changes to the way the Australian landscape has been viewed and represented over recent decades and to incorporate this knowledge into the development of my own work. I have explored these changes through the works of contemporary thinkers, concerned with the importance of the landscape and our place in it, and by looking at how contemporary artists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have engaged with the way the Aboriginal people have perceived and understood their environment for millennia. Within this broad context I have sought to address questions about what makes a place special and unique, and to reflect my answers in my interpretation of the ever-changing Weereewa landscape.

My research led me to artists and writers whose work helped me to develop my own *visual language*; one based on phenomenological engagement with *place*. With this visual language, I was able to represent the Weereewa environment in greater depth than would have been possible using the traditional European approach to landscape painting with its reliance on the observer being fixed in time and space. The idea that the artist can be embodied within the landscape, and not separate from it, has been fundamental to my work. As Rebecca Solnit says, 'the landscape is a space for the body rather than a site for the eyes'.[108]

Just as others have done, I adopted walking as my research methodology. The insights I gained from walking at Weereewa, using all of my senses to engage with its many layers and histories, enabled me to experience the lake on many levels and to explore an approach to representing it that goes beyond the traditional graphical interpretation. By walking across or beside the lake bed at different times of the day and during the different seasons, observing not just what was at my feet, but aware of the sky, clouds and shadows; stopping to draw or to pick up remnants of times past, I greatly increased my connection with Weereewa. It was a sense of engagement, limited not only to what I

[108] Solnit, Rebecca. *As Eve Said to the Serpent, On Landscape, Gender, and Art,* (USA*:* University of Georgia Press, 2001)), 169.

was able to capture with my physical senses but one that embraced the lake's sense of ephemerality- a sense of what has gone before but is not necessarily apparent.

Our understanding of place can be shaped by ephemeral events such as the passage of clouds, the shadows that are cast or fragments that we find from the past, all churning in a process of slow flux. And, like the observable landscape, the ephemeral landscape can be mapped. For as Paul Carter says, 'it is possible to conceive of the land/site as being an area of *spatial events*– one we can consider mapping through its use patterns, its flux and time.'

During the course of my research I developed a method of working that encapsulated all I had learned. I call this method an *ecology of drawing*. It draws upon both my phenomenological engagement with Weereewa, and my study of the visual language and writings of others who have sought to interpret the landscape from the perspective of someone embodied within it. Walking, as Rebecca Solnit points out, can be an act of resistance, not only against the speed of contemporary life, but as a way to engage with alternative ways of perceiving time and place.

The idea of the *third-space*, elucidated by Homi K. Bhabha, introduced me to the notion of hybridity. It is one I have explored in the installations *Traces of Passage* and *Walking at Weereewa* where I have used both the walls of the gallery and cut-outs to explore a third space, a hybrid space that incorporates found objects that speak of Weereewa's Aboriginal and settler histories.

Time and weather proved useful elements in my exploration of the ephemeral and the timeless qualities of Weereewa. I discovered in cloud shadows on the lake bed, the shifting patterns of the seasons and varying effects of light, a sense of what has been and what might have been. Weereewa's unique geography, history and qualities of ephemerality and mystery have made it a stimulating and moving environment for me to work in. Gates and Diesendorf describe Weereewa as a *closed lake*. They make the observation that:

> *because of their limited economic utility such lakes are frequently undisturbed by*

> *industrial development and therefore provide valuable "laboratories" for the study of basic hydrological, geological and climatological phenomena. They are virtually closed systems, a thing rarely found in nature'.*[109]

The preservation value associated with a *closed lake* like Weeweera has made it an ideal site for my work. I have been in the extraordinary position of being able to observe Aboriginal artifacts that pre-date European settlement on the dry lake bed, connecting me strongly with a history of human settlement that stretches back thousands of years.

The Aboriginal, European and natural histories of Weeweera are interwoven and over-layered on this unique lake bed. Each has left its footprints in the form of fragments, remnants of bones, fencing wire, stone tools, grasslands and geological forms. It is impossible to walk upon the Weereewa lake bed and not be aware of the profound impact the arrival of white settlers must have had on the original inhabitants of the lake and the surrounding area.

Over the course of the past five years I have discovered the power of phenomenological engagement, through walking, and the deep insights one can gain from this. It has helped me create a new *visual language*; one that has given me new tools for interpreting the Australian landscape, allowing me to discover more, and to want to discover more, about how a place becomes familiar and loved.

[109] David Gates and Mark Diesendorf. 'On the fluctuations in Levels of closed Lakes', Journal of Hydrology, 33 (1977), 267.

Bibliography

Works cited

Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1994.

Barrow, Graeme. *Magnificent Lake George: the Biography.* Canberra: Dagraja Press, 2012.

Berger, John. *The Sense of Sight.* New York: Vintage Books, 1985.

Saskia Beudel and Jill Bennett. *Curating Sydney: Imagining the City's Future*. Sydney: New South Publishing, 2014.

Bryson, Norman. 'The Gaze in the Expanded Field' in *Vision and Visuality*, edited by Hal Foster, 87-113. Seattle: Bay Press, 1988.

Cameron, John. *Changing Places Re-imagining Australia*. NSW: Longueville Media Pty Ltd, 2003.

Carter, Paul. *Dark Writing: Geography, Performance, Design.* Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2009.

Carter, Paul. *Ground Truthing: Explorations in a Creative Region.* Western Australia: UWA Publishing, 2010.

Carter, Paul. *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research.* Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2004.

Casey, Edward S. *Earth-Mapping, Artists Reshaping Landscape*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Casey, Edward S. *Getting Back into Place.* Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press, 2nd edition 2009.

Crawford, Ashley. *Wimmera: The work of Phillip Hunter*, Fishermans Bend, Vic: Thames and Hudson, 2002.

Davenport Acker, Carly. 'Convergence: The Making of the Canning Stock Route Project & Yiwarra Kuju Exhibition', Cultural Studies Review – Vol. 21 No. 1 March 2015. http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/csrj/article/view/4429/4758 (accessed 16 July 2015)

Duxbury, Lesley. 'The Eye (and Mind) of the Beholder.' In *Thinking Through Practice: Art as Research in the Academy,* edited by Lesley Duxbury, Elizabeth M. Brierson and Dianne Waite, 18-27. Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2007.

Elkins, J. *Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Texts: Art History as Writing*: University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997.

Flood, Josephine. *The Original Australians: Story of the Aboriginal People.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2006.

Fowler, Cynthia. 'Hybridity as a Strategy for Self-Determination in Contemporary American Indian Art', Social Justice Vol 34, No. 1 2007. http://www.socialjusticejournal.org/archive/107_34_1/107_06Fowler.pdf (accessed 26 July 2015).

Frodeman, Robert. *Geo-logic: Breaking Ground between Philosophy and the Earth Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. *eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed January 24, 2014).

Fuchs, R.H. *Richard Long*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1986.

Gammage, Bill. *The Biggest Estate on Earth, How Aboriginies Made Australia.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011.

Gates, David J. and Mark Diesendorf. 'On the Fluctuations in Levels of Closed Lakes.' Journal of Hydrology 33, (1977): 267-285.

Gibson, J.J. *The Ecologicial Approach to Visual Perception.* Boston, Haughton Mifflin, 1997.

Grishin, Sasha. *John Wolseley: Land Marks II*. Melbourne, Craftsman House, 2006.

Ikas, Karen & Wagner, Gerald. *Communicating in the Third Space.* Routledge 2008.

Ingold, Tim. '*Footprints through the weather-world: walking, breathing, knowing'* Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, (2010): 121-139.

Ingold, Tim. *Lines: A Brief History.* Oxon, USA: Routledge, 2007.

Jackson-Nakano, Ann. *The Kamberri: A History of Aboriginal Families in the ACT and Surrounds.* Canberra: Ann Jackson-Nakano and Aboriginal History Inc., 2001.

James, Christine. *Lynne Flemons: Walking at Weereewa*. Goulburn NSW: Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, 2011.

James, Diana. *Painting the Song, Kaltjiti Artist s of the Sand Dune Country.* Sydney: McCullouch & Mcculloch Australian Art books in partnership with Kaltjiti Arts.

James, Simon P. *The Presence of Nature: A Study in Phenomenology and Environmental Philosophy.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Krauss, Rosalind. E. *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths.* 1986. Cambridge MA USA: MIT Press, 1986.

Lenzo, Amy, 'Sand art – Ancient and Modern'. *Gatherings*, Issue 6, Winter 2001-2002) http://www.ecopsychology.org/journal/gatherings6/html/Overview/overview_sand_art.html (accessed 11/10/2014).

MacDonald, Vici, *Rosalie* Gascoigne, Paddington: Regaro Pty Ltd, 1998.

Magnus Ljunge, "Beyond 'the Phenomenological Walk': Perspectives on the Experience of Images", Norwegian Archaeological Review, Vol 46 Issue 2, 141 - 142 accessed 25 July 2015.

Mahood, Kim. *Craft for a Dry Lake.* Australia: Anchor, 2000.

Mahood, Kim. *Mapping Outside the Square.*

http://www.abc.net.au/rn/legacy/features/paruku/docs/mapping.pdf accessed 1/8/2015.

McLean, Ian. *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Mitchell, W.J.T. *Landscape and Power*. London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Morphy, Howard. *Becoming Art, Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories.* Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008.

Stephen Muecke. 'The Guluga Story'*, Joe in the* Andamans. Sydney: Local Consumption, 2008.

Helen Norrie, Oculus, in conversation with Jonathan Kimberley, Oculus, Bett Gallery Hobart, April 2011. http://www.bettgallery.com.au/artists/kimberley/oculus/essay.html.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses.* West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2005.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Thinking Hand: Existential & Embodied Wisdom in Architecture.* West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2009.

Pace, Nina. 'Limitations of Indigenous Modernity, the problems of culture-tradition, authenticity and the hybrid.' Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney, 2009 *epress.lib.uts.edu.au/studentjournals/index.php/iih/**art**icle/.../1304/1362 accessed 26/10/2014.*

Rosalie Gascoigne: Plain Air. Wellington: City Gallery Wellington in association with Victoria University Press, 2004.

Rose, Deborah Bird. *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness.* Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996.

Sally Smart: Shadow Farm, Bendigo Art Gallery, Vic. 2003.

Solnit, Rebecca. *As Eve Said to the Serpent, On Landscape, Gender, and Art,* USA*:* University of Georgia Press, 2001.

Solnit, Rebecca. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking.* London: Verso, 2001.

Terry, Martin. “Ground zero”, *Baseline: Remnant Grassland of Weereewa/Lake George*, Canberra: Craft ACT, 2008.

Tilley, Christopher. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994.

Tilley, Christopher. *Body and Image: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology 2*. CA: Left Coast Press Inc., 2008.

Watson, Judy and Louise Martin-Chew. *Judy Watson Blood Language.* Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2009.

Weereewa Ngunnawal. Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 1999.

Weir, Jessica K. ‘Connectivity’. Australian Humanities Review, Issue 45, 2008 http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-November-2008/weir.html.

Yiwarra Kuju, The Canning Stock Route, Canberra: Australian National Museum, 2010.

Additional Reading

Bachelard, Gaston. *Air and Dreams.* Dallas, Texas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1988.

Bolt, Barbara, Barrett, Estelle Edited by. *Practice as Research: Approaches to* Creative Arts *Enquiry.* New York: I B Tauris Pty Ltd, 2010.

Brady, Veronica. 'The Poetry of Judith Wright and Ways of Rejoicing in the World.' In *The Littoral Zone: Australian Contexts and their Writers*, edited by CA.Cranston and Robert Zeller, 146-152. New York: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2007.

Bonyhady, Tim & Griffiths, Tom Edited by. *Words for Country: Landscape & Language in Australia*. NSW: University of NSW, 2002.

Carmichael, Makin, Wolseley. *Orienteering: Painting in the Landscape.* Victoria: Deakin University Press, 1982.

Carter, Paul. *The Road to Botany Bay: an Exploration of Landscape and History*. New York: Knopf, 1988.

Caruana, Wally. *Aboriginal Art*. London: Thames & Hudson 2003.

Casey, Edward S. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. London: University of California Press, 1998.

Casey, Edward S. *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps.* London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Cloke, Paul, Philo, Chris and Sadler, David. *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, 1991.

Coventry, R.J. 'Abandoned Shorelines and the Late Quaternary History of Lake George, New South Wales.' Journal of the Geological Society of Australia, 23:3 (2007): 249-273.

De Deckker, Patrick. 'Late Quaternary Octracods from Lake George, New South Wales.' Alcheringa 6 (1982): 205-318.

Field of Glyphs, G.W.Bot. London: Hart Gallery, 2009.

Flood, Josephine. *The Moth Hunters: Aboriginal Prehistory of the Australian Alps.* Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies; Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 1980.

From the Studio of Rosalie Gascoigne, Canberra: The Australian National University Drill Hall Gallery, 2002.

G.W. Bot *The Long Paddock*. Canberra: Goulburn Regional Gallery, 2010.

Heathfield, Adrian, Hsieh, Tehching. *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh.* Cambridge: The Mit Press 2009.

John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque. Hansen, David. Hobart, Tas.: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; Art Exhibitions Australia Limited, 2003.

Isaacs, Jennifer. *Aboriginality Contemporary Aboriginal Paintings and Prints.* Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2002.

Manning, Erin. *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009.

McKenna, Mark. *Looking for Blackfella's Point*: *An Australian History of Place*. Sydney: UNSW press, 2002.

Moet & Chandon 1996. Sydney, NSW: NSW Art Gallery, 1996.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Primacy of Perception*. USA: Northwestern University Press, 1964.

Myers, Fred R. *Painting Culture, The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*. London: Duke University Press, 2002.

Morphy, Howard. 'Landscape and the Reproduction of the Ancestral Past.' In *The Anthropology of Landscape, Perspectives on Place and Space*, edited by Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon, 184-209. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Nalda Searles: Drifting in my Own Land. WA: Nalda Searles and Art on the Move, 2009.

Noland, Carrie. *Agency & Embodiment: Performing Gestures/Producing Culture*. USA: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2009.

Nold, Christian Edited by. *Emotional Cartography: Technologies of the Self.* emotionalcartography.net/EmotionalCartogrpahy.pdf, accessed 17/7/2015.

One Sun One Moon Aboriginal Art in Australia. Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007.

Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.* London: Routledge, 1993.

Pound, Francis. *Stories We Tell Ourselves: the Paintings of Richard Killeen.* Auckland, N.Z.: David Bateman 1999.

Pura-lia Meenamatta (Jim Everett & Jonathan Kimberley) *Meenamatta Lena Narla Puellakanny*. Bett Gallery Hobart. 2006.

Read, Peter, *Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership.* Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Read, Peter, *Haunted Earth*. Sydney. NSW: University of New South Wales Press, 2003.

Relph, Edward. 'Geographical Experiences and Being-in-the-world: The Phenomenological Origins of Geography.' In *Dwelling, Place and Environment* edited by David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, 15-31. The Netherlands: Martinu Mijhoff Publishers, 1985.

Richard Tuttle. Institute of Contemporary Art ICA / Amsterdam, SDU Publishers, 1991.

Rigby, K.E., 2003, 'Tuning in to Spirit of Place', *Changing Places: Re-imagining Australia*, 10/09/1996-15/09/1996, Longueville Media Pty Ltd, Double Bay NSW Australia, 107-115.

Rosalie Gascoigne Colin McCahon Sense of Place. Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1990.

Rosalie Gascoigne. Gellatly, Kelly. Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2008.

Rothwell, Nicolas. *Another Country*. Melbourne: Black Inc., 2007.

Ryden, Kent. *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and the Sense of Place.* Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1993.

Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. London: Fontana Press, 1996.

Slow Motion Walk, a performance piece with Marina Abramovic is described by a participant in her article *Why I took a short, slow walk with Marina Abramovic* http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/brittany-bailey-on-slow-walking-with-marina-abramovic-52558 Accessed 25/7/15.

Thomas, Nicholas. *Possessions, Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture, London:* Thames & Hudson 1999.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* London: Regents of the University of Minnesota, 1977.

Van Dommelen, Peter. 'Exploring Everyday Places and Cosmologies.' In *Archaeologies of Landscape*, edited by Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp, 277-284. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999.