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'Last Drinks at the Hibernian': practice-led research into art and archaeology

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ABSTRACT

Last Drinks at the Hibernian (Frederick & Ireland 2016) is a collaborative art work that explores what happens when archaeological materials are reconstituted as art and how the 'creative turn' might swivel archaeology's critical lens back onto its own practices and materialities. This creative engagement explores the history and political economy of Australian archaeology, particularly historical archaeology, in order to understand how archaeology is an affective and aesthetic framing of materials, as well as an epistemology for knowledge production about the past from materials in the present. Approaching archaeology as a set of generative practices, 'ways of seeing' and making, we wonder how entangled these sensibilities towards material remains might be and what effect this entanglement has on how heritage is generated, and how the past is represented and remembered through images and things.

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Introduction

Recent decades have seen the emergence of critical interventions in archaeological thought and process through a range of creative forms including performance, installation, exhibition and re-enactment. The degree of participation and collaboration has expanded dramatically in the UK and USA where artists have been invited to collaborate on site-specific projects and contribute to archaeology and heritage narratives (Bailey 2014a; Schofield 2007; Schofield et al. 2012; Wickstead 2009). At the same time, archaeologists have implemented new approaches to archaeological investigation by initiating novel strategies of analysis, interpretation and communication (Bender et al. 2008; Holtorf 2004). Growing recognition of these synergies is evident in unconventional approaches to archaeology and heritage publishing (Aldred and Pálsson 2018; Bailey 2014b; Frederick 2019; Jordan 2018; Schofield 2006; Tringham 2019; Watson 2004) and in the emergence of major exhibitions exploring the art-archaeology-heritage nexus (e.g. Roelstraete 2013). Several commentators have pointed to the parallel visions of artists and archaeologists, their shared attentiveness to materiality and epistemological concern with what it means to be human (Bonaventura and Jones 2011; Harrison and Schofield 2010; Renfrew 2003;

Renfrew et al. 2004). Despite a deep history of entanglement, and efforts to contextualise archaeology's 'creative turn' (Russell and Cochrane 2014; Thomas et al. 2018), art and archaeology scholars continue to work through the breadth and nature of their influence upon one another. Perhaps because this work is actively ongoing there has been little literature that addresses the research potential and reasoning underpinning art/archaeology/heritage intersections. This is particularly evident in Australia, where archaeologists and heritage practitioners have been less responsive to embracing the contribution creative artists might bring to their disciplines or in exploring the generative and practice-based aspects of their own disciplinary tropes.

In response to these issues, and to the questions emerging from creative partnerships in archaeology and heritage elsewhere, we have recently collaborated on an artwork entitled '*Last Drinks at the Hibernian*'. Our purpose in commencing this creative collaboration was twofold: It was a form of experimentation aimed at exploring the possibilities that might arise through the creative activation of a legacy archaeological assemblage. Such an approach might be phrased as 'how may a creative engagement with archaeological material be good to make and think with?' Secondly, we set out to question how creative

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practice may be applied as a form of research – specifically for interrogating tropes associated with the aestheticization of artefacts and their categorisation. It is important to emphasise that our project was not framed as a form of public engagement, as is the case in some art-archaeology collaborations. Nor was it an attempt to communicate any specific interpretations of archaeological data or findings in a ‘popular’ forum for a non-specialist audience. In this sense our project is not an audience-focussed or community arts endeavour in which creative practice may be perceived to be a mode of translation, participatory encounter, curatorial intervention, or form of infotainment. For us it was the creative process and the thinking and decision-making inherent to that activity which was our focus.

The first iteration of *Last Drinks at the Hibernian* (Frederick and Ireland 2016) (hereafter *Last Drinks*) was exhibited at the Belconnen Arts Centre (ACT) as part of an exhibition titled *Encyclopaedia of Forgotten Things* (Williams et al. 2016). Here we discuss the initial stages of our collaborative, practice-led research into what happens when archaeological materials are reconstituted as art, as well as some of the theoretical, epistemological and ontological concerns we have attempted to explore through this process. Key issues considered include the history and political economy of Australian archaeology, particularly historical archaeology; how archaeology is an affective and aesthetic framing of materials as well as an epistemology for knowledge production about the past from materials in the present and how these two contexts are entangled; and a consideration of archaeology as a set of generative practices, ‘ways of seeing’ and making.

As practice-led, experimental research, the work is based explicitly on our own backgrounds, careers, research interests and concerns. It was also shaped by the contingencies of collaboration and by our individual proclivities and capacities in terms of technical know-how and specific skills of *making*. Acknowledging the complexities of this term (e.g. Ingold 2013), here *making* refers to the construction of ideas and interpretations as much as material things. It recognises that, as practitioners, we are enmeshed participants in the world of objects and ideas we investigate. The work we produce reflects not only an understanding of the processes and potentials of various mediums, practices and equipment, but also derives from an appreciation for each other’s personal life-experience and academic background. It also conveys a shared commitment to contributing to the future trajectories of the archaeological discipline through an interrogation of its history and practices. As Estelle Barrett points out, a key feature of practice-based projects ‘is that

personal interest and experience, rather than objective ‘disinterestedness’, motivates the research process’ (Barrett 2010:5). Indeed, Barrett, drawing on Bourdieu (1993), argues that an engaged subjectivity is a strength to be exploited. Acknowledging this approach, we begin by outlining our own positions in relation to the field and object of enquiry.

We both share a research interest in how the past impacts the present and how archaeology and heritage discourse is mediated through text and image, ranging from data visualisations, to photographs and drawing, and through potent discourses and narrative tropes such as ruin, empire and nation. While we have both studied archaeology and art history, one of us (UF) is a practicing visual artist and archaeologist and the other an archaeologist and heritage researcher (TI). Our research interests overlap especially in our pursuit of understanding the processes of value-creation that underpin personal, social and cultural appreciation of archaeology and heritage matters. Frederick’s recent work explores how art practice-based research can inform the production, dissemination and reception of archaeological knowledge and heritage discourse. Prior to this she focussed on the role of mark-making and creativity in generating affect, belonging and community (Frederick 2013, 2014; Hobbins et al. 2016). Ireland’s research started with questions about how Australian colonial materials were attributed with value and constituted as archaeological through the course of the 20th century (e.g. Ireland 2002, 2003; Ireland and Lydon 2005). More recently she has been re-thinking heritage conservation as a creative and generative practice, and has explored how archaeological objects, sites and heritage places are *made*, materially and visually, and what they *do* as devices that mediate a relationship between past and present (e.g. Ireland 2012, 2015, 2016).

Art, archaeology and practice-led research

This burgeoning of art/archaeology/heritage articulations in recent years may be seen as part of a ‘creative turn’ that has touched other humanities and sciences disciplines (Thomas et al. 2018). But it may also be linked to a more critical focus on representation and inquiry into the strengths and shortcomings of different modes of research communication (e.g. Coopmans et al. 2014). Increasingly, scholars in archaeology and heritage recognise that visualisations of data are never neutral (Molyneux 1997; Moser 2012; Perry 2009; Shanks 1997). This has resulted in studies which examine how archaeologists have developed specific ways of using illustration (Moser 2012), photography (Baird 2017; Bateman 2006; Hauser 2007; Parno 2010), drawing (Morgan and Wright

2018), and writing (Holtorf 2004), as well as efforts to reimagine the way these methods may be deployed within archaeology and heritage studies (Brown et al. 2016; Stephen and Morgan 2014). At the same time, many archaeologists are seeking new ways to engage with a broader non-specialist audience and range of community stakeholders and co-researchers. This might be seen to parallel moves in contemporary art theory and practice which call for more collaborative, interactive and socially-engaged approaches and a 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud 2002). Moreover, fields like critical heritage studies, community archaeology, new museology and the archaeology of the contemporary world have attempted to draw upon a diversity of voice and source, rather than only the usual 'data', to contest, enliven and enrich the production of knowledge narratives.

At this point it is important to identify that there are many different kinds of intersections between archaeology and art. There is, for example, a distinction to be made between the use of 'pictures in academic research as props for ideas expressed in other forms' (Molyneux 1997:1) and the use of images of art as evidentiary proof of an argument or line of thinking. Likewise, there are notable differences between artistic projects which consciously deploy tropes of the archaeological imaginary (such as in the work of Juliet Batten, Simon Fujiwara and Patrick Nagatani) and those which engage with archaeological matter actually (such as in the art work of Simon Callery or Janet Hodgson). More subtle still are artists who express an aesthetic that aligns with an archaeological sensibility or visuality (e.g. Cornelia Parker or Anselm Kiefer) (Frederick and Brockwell 2015). Similarly, there is a clear contrast between Bender, Hamilton and Tilley's application of creative practice to their own archaeological research at Bodmin Moor (Bender et al. 2008), and the use of other artist's work as a framing device to construct arguments about archaeological practice (e.g. Harrison 2011). Despite this growing interest in art-archaeology partnerships, such collaborations are not without their critics. Amongst archaeologists there remains some reluctance or, at the very least, uncertainty over how such interactions and the discourse around them may develop productively into the future (Russell 2011). Bailey's (2014a:231) suggestion is for 'archaeologists to take greater risks in their work', a work that will ultimately reside 'neither in art nor archaeology, but will emerge as something else altogether'.

While it is important to recognise that archaeology and cultural heritage have been a source of inspiration and creative investigation by Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists within Australia, historically archaeologists have had a fairly narrow focus on examining the material signatures of cultural and creative expression. This is best exemplified by rock art

research and material culture studies. The few cases where creative practice has been integrated within an archaeology-heritage project setting have generally occurred within a contemporary archaeology, historical archaeology and/or colonial-settler heritage context. Examples of such exhibitions that have occurred in Australia include *Batavia: Giving Voice to the Voiceless* (2017); *Digging Marulan* (2009); *Out of Context* (2019); *Out of Quarantine* (2015); and *Promised the Moon* (2019). Such initiatives demonstrate an appetite for art-archaeology-heritage collaborations. For the most part, however, Australian archaeologists have ignored developments that have occurred in the USA, UK and Europe in applying creative arts and participatory practices to the investigation of archaeology and heritage (e.g. Schofield et al. 2012; Schofield 2006; Russell and Cochrane 2014). It is not our intention here to discuss why this might be the case; but if practice-led enquiry is 'a third species of research', and a 'new paradigm' complementing quantitative and qualitative methods, then it is time for us to give it deeper consideration. For the purposes of this paper, it is useful to articulate that this emergent methodology entails a move away from considering art as the *object* of investigation to an approach whereby art may also become the *means* of scrutiny (Barrett 2010).

Here, our practice-led approach explores how archaeology, or the 'archaeological imagination' (Shanks 2012), might frame our engagements with materials *aesthetically*, as well as provide the epistemological structure for a process of building knowledge about the past from material fragments in the present. In fact, we wonder how entangled these two sensibilities towards material remains might be and what effect this entanglement might have on how the past is remembered through things, as well as on what we think we know about it. While various archaeological and museological approaches have long histories of aesthetic engagement with fragments and incomplete remains, for instance from classical antiquity, the aesthetic and affective qualities of materials are rarely acknowledged in Australian archaeology, particularly for the mass produced, industrial artefacts from the recent past that we will focus on here (but see Brown et al. 2016). Overwhelmingly, historical archaeology as a practice and discipline is predicated on notions of the importance of the recent colonial and national histories that it represents to the identity and values of contemporary communities.

Giving value to things: the history of historical archaeology

The term 'historical archaeology' is generally used to refer to the archaeological study of the modern

world; a field of research that has been particularly concerned with colonialism, urbanisation, the spread of global capitalism, industrialisation and its characteristic material cultures, and interactions between Europeans and Indigenous peoples (Hall and Silliman 2006). Distinctive traditions of historical archaeology have emerged in the USA, Canada and Australia, as well as in many other parts of the colonised world, and more recently also in 'metropolitan' contexts, such as in the UK, as part of social and 'bottom up' approaches to archaeology and heritage (e.g. Tarlow and West 1999). While nineteenth and early twentieth century interest in the archaeology of First Nations peoples in Australia was first engendered through discourses of antiquarianism and the colonial sciences, the material remains of European colonisation were valued through a distinctly different cultural process, most notably in the post-war twentieth century (Griffiths 1996). This period saw the development of new forms of cultural nationalism in Australia that sought to address the 'cultural cringe', or unwillingness to value the local as important or interesting when compared to metropolitan culture. This process both authorised and encouraged the expansion of archaeological research dealing with the material remains of colonisation under the auspices of a burgeoning heritage industry and cultural heritage management system which constituted these materials as important in terms of their contribution towards a sense of 'national identity' (Ireland 2002).

Historical archaeology was, thus, often characterised as a 'decolonising' practice in that it valued local colonial expressions in their own right, and not only as shadowy extensions of imperial histories (e.g. Bickford 1981). However, many of the products of historical archaeological practice (historic sites, conserved objects or remains) have also been involved in attributing material veracity and authenticity to (neo) colonialist, racist and masculinist discourses (Ireland 2003; Ireland and Lydon 2005; Byrne 2003). Adding to this tension has been the consequent relative material invisibility of the Indigenous cultural past, when compared with the 'monumentality' of the 'ruins of colonialism' (Ireland 2015). Of interest is the fact that in Australia the term 'historic heritage' is still commonly used in heritage policy and legislation to mean 'non-Indigenous heritage', thus continuing to reinforce the notion that Indigenous peoples have no history, and are absent from historical contexts unless proven to be present, contributing to their ongoing structural erasure from the contemporary. Further, the term 'colonial' is euphemistically avoided in the language of historical archaeology and heritage in Australia where the 'neutral' terms

'natural', 'historic' and 'Indigenous' are preferred to describe the components of a consensually categorised national heritage (Ireland 2012).

While, 40 years ago, Australians hotly debated whether or not the material remains of the recent, colonial past could be considered to be either 'archaeology' or 'heritage', these materials are now far more widely accepted as both valuable and important (Ireland 2012). It is, thus, within the cultural field of 'heritage' (as simultaneously material things, practices, processes, and governance structures), that historical archaeology works to produce visible materials that are scientifically validated through the authority of archaeology as a discipline, but which are constituted as 'significant' through nationally defined discourses of value. This history is perhaps one of the reasons why the aesthetic qualities of historical archaeological materials, and the way in which they provide emotional experiences in the present, has only recently been seen as a worthwhile research area for a practice long consumed with justifying its own scientific legitimacy.

Forgotten things? Contextualising the site and the collection as the basis of creative production

Our approach to *making* that resulted in *Last Drinks* thus began with these reflections on the history and practice of archaeology in Australia and by discussing what particular aspects of archaeological practice, history and theory we were specifically interested in examining through a creative practice methodology. In response to the theme of the 2016 University of Canberra's Faculty of Arts and Design staff exhibition—the 'Encyclopaedia of Forgotten Things'—we decided to focus on how materials are organised, categorised and represented, and thus constituted as legitimate archaeological data. As a venture exploring the possibilities of archaeological data, we felt that this material should derive from an archaeological collection with its own history, and this brought us to the Hibernian Hotel.

Prior to the construction of the Australian Defence Force's Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) facility near Queanbeyan, New South Wales (NSW), archaeologist Doug Williams surveyed and excavated a number of commercial and domestic sites between 2005–2007 (Archaeo Analysis Cultural Heritage Management 2008). This work resulted in a substantial collection of archaeological materials, some of which later came to the University of Canberra so that students could work on the conservation and stabilisation of specific items prior to their display in the new HQJOC building. The collection then remained at the

University of Canberra for a number of years and, with the agreement of the Department of Defence, was used as a teaching resource in the University's heritage, museums and conservation programme. The collection has since been returned to the Department of Defence and is in storage. The display of artefacts at the HQJOC remains behind layers of security and is consequently largely inaccessible. While hardly 'forgotten', this excavated assemblage is now effectively removed from public view and, in common with most collections of excavated material in Australian historical archaeology (where storage infrastructure has been a critical management issue since the 1980s), neither component is readily accessible for viewing or research. The factors surrounding this assemblage were, therefore, notable in the context of this project and for the theme of the exhibition. Amongst those sites investigated by Williams was the Hibernian Hotel and the artefacts recovered from it became the focus for our project.

The Hibernian Hotel was a nineteenth-century roadside inn situated on the Kings Highway, approximately halfway between Queanbeyan and Bungendore, NSW (Figure 1). Opened by a local farmer in 1859, the Hibernian was licenced to provide meals, liquor and accommodation as well as feed and stabling for horses. For the next twenty-five years, it served as a node in an expansive network of coach transportation. At that time, rural

hotels were an important source of provisions and communication for travellers and locals alike and played a critical role in colonial settlement of inland New South Wales. Archival records suggest that the Hibernian operated as a fairly successful and respectable establishment until 1887, when the coach route was superseded by the expansion of the railway into Queanbeyan (Archaeo Analysis Cultural Heritage Management 2008). The hotel was abandoned shortly thereafter and today exists only in ruin. In 2014, the site was registered by the ACT Heritage Council for its historical and archaeological significance and as an important remnant of the nineteenth century transport and accommodation network in the region (ACT Heritage Council 2014).

The primary objective of the archaeological study and excavation of the Hibernian Hotel and adjacent historic sites was to focus on the hotel building itself, to determine its extent, method of construction, timeframe of use and broadly what it might reveal about the lifestyle of its resident owners, the Sparrow family (Archaeo Analysis Cultural Heritage Management 2008). Excavations revealed the structure of the hotel, which included six rooms and a hallway, and an associated wide variety of artefacts. Archaeological material was also recovered from a cesspit, drain and refuse pit associated with the hotel. This material comprised glass, ceramics, metal, faunal bone and more than 500 personal

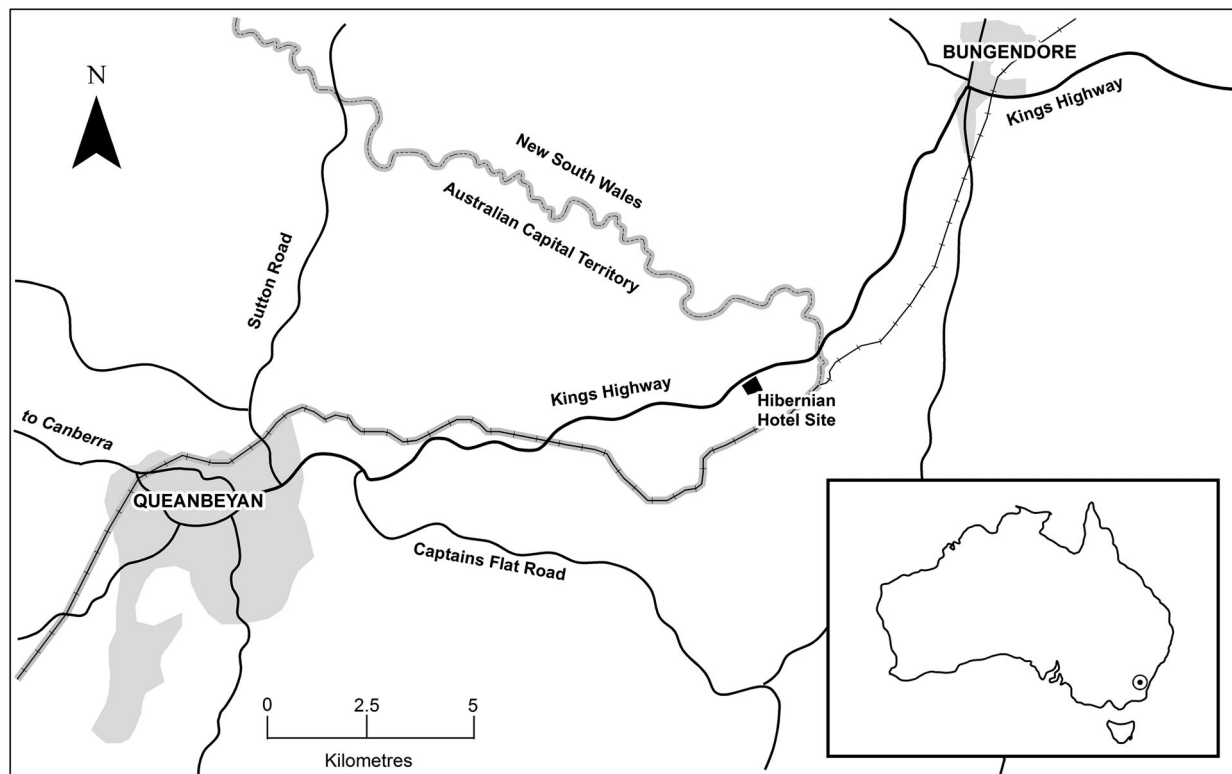


Figure 1. The location of the site of the Hibernian Hotel, near Canberra, listed by the ACT Heritage Council in 2014. Map: Neil Urwin, 2018.

items such as buttons, clay pipe fragments, jewellery and coins. Analysis by Williams' team indicated that the archaeology was consistent with the domestic and commercial activities associated with a mid-late nineteenth century roadside inn (Archaeo Analysis Cultural Heritage Management 2008:117). Together with a nearby bottle dump, producing more than 200 bottle bases, there is ample evidence for the consumption of alcohol.

Although the report authors identified Aboriginal sites in the surrounding area, none of the material retrieved from the hotel site was definitively attributed to an historical Aboriginal use or presence. While this is not to say that Aboriginal people were absent from the area during the Hibernian Hotel's operation, it points to the need for critical awareness of artefact labelling and categories as well as to the ongoing ethical and epistemological issues in historical archaeology in Australia that *Last Drinks* attempts to bring into focus (Ireland 2015).

Apart from the specific artefacts selected for display at the HQJOC, the remaining artefacts recovered from the Hibernian ruins were bagged, labelled and stored according to material, type, and excavation context. The items chosen for installation at HQJOC were generally the most complete examples of their type, which could communicate aspects of their history and function to viewers. The items remaining in the teaching collection therefore tended to be small fragments, and representatives of classes of artefacts found in large numbers. While such cataloguing and storage procedures may be in keeping with standard collection management principles, they also place limitations on how the materials may be used and re-used constructively in other contexts, for example, for a creative-arts-based approach. In short, it might be argued that contemporary strategies of collection management are effectively designed to limit handling, rather than anticipate or facilitate other kinds of active use. These strategies can present a challenge to creative-practice-based practitioners, as demonstrated by our experience in this project.

One way of thinking about the possibilities and limitations of working with archaeological assemblages or heritage collections creatively is through Heidegger's notion of praxical knowledge or 'handlability' (Bolt 2004). Drawing upon Heidegger, Barbara Bolt has proposed that creative-practice-based research begins 'in our dealings with the tools and materials of production' and that it is in 'handling as care', as distinct from the habitus of everyday handling, that art emerges. In such a model, the work of art is a process, rather than product, in which the performative engagement between artist and tools, materials, methods and

concepts reveals a tacit knowledge (Bolt 2004, 2010). Applied to our circumstances, this suggests that the Hibernian Hotel artefacts, the camera, the artists, and the conventions of archaeological storage and heritage conservation practice, all become co-collaborators in the process of producing the artwork. It is then easy to see how the materials and practices of archaeology themselves may shape the practice of art when handlability is negotiated through plastic bagging, labelled boxes and degraded metal artefacts. For example, there were numerous ways in which our attentiveness to systems of archaeological cataloguing and material culture preservation partially dictated our approach to photography. What might be a fairly straightforward image of horseshoes assembled en masse, required a logic 'outside of the frame' of the image for ensuring that horseshoes from different squares or spits would not get mixed up. Beyond the difficulties of photographing artefacts while retaining the 'integrity' of their context, there are numerous options and choices that arise during the making process which will inevitably shape the result. This involves a recognition of 'materials as partners in the process of making representations' (Jones 2013:278) (Figures 2 and 3).

Making art/archaeology as a practice of value creation

As we have seen, this work documents a process of exploring how archaeology functions as an aesthetic frame through which the past is both seen and remembered, as well as how it functions epistemologically as a process of knowledge production about the past. We are also attending to matters of praxis, or what Grasseni (2007, 2011) terms 'skilled visions', which refers to how the practices of the discipline are learnt through 'routine, habitus and attention', and how they have shaped the way archaeology and heritage is perceived, interpreted and communicated visually.

Our process involved many stages of decision-making, driven by our own particular concerns. What features of the artefact assemblage would we choose to focus on? What characteristics would we select for emphasis: the form of the material, the function of the artefact or perhaps the depositional context? To complicate the process further, we had to consider whether we would mix materials, within the depiction, from different spits or contexts, or even different trenches or sites, in order to create specific artefact groupings. On a practical level, this raised the issue of how artefacts might be removed from storage and co-mingled with other objects for photographic purposes, so that they could still be returned without losing sight of their 'rightful'



Figure 2. Historic artefacts the HQJOC excavation collection. How to photograph the collection and not get things messed up? Photographs: U.K. Frederick, 2016.

context. The strictures of the archaeological archive encountered in the course of our engagement with the collection remind us of how the ‘architecture’ of the archive has been formulated to reproduce certain kinds of knowledge, particularly, as many have noted in the history of modernist archaeology, knowledge that supports and authorises masculinist national narratives and identities linked to race, gender, territoriality and empire.

We decided to utilise a single motif, in this case ‘the vessel’, as a kind of aesthetic anchor with which we might frame and encompass a suite of diverse archaeological materials. The form, size and material properties of the ‘vessel’ varies significantly across artefact assemblages throughout the world. Yet, as an object which functions to contain, hold, share and carry, it represents an enduring aspect of culture despite differences of time and space. In this way, we supposed, there may be a coherent way of presenting and ‘reading’ variation across an assemblage in terms of type, material, function, and context of different artefacts. A single motif would

enable us to enframe the diversity of the archaeological assemblage while simultaneously unifying and ‘containing’ it as a whole.

Rather than choose a shape that may be regarded as generic or abstract, we elected to use a form that carried implicit Eurocentric or Western forms of symbolism about civilisation and progress, both within and outside the traditions and iconography of archaeology. While this raises its own critical questions about privileged and under-privileged gazes and modes of representation, we also wished to return to our familiar disciplinary groundings as a productive starting point. Our series of photographic works is, thus, based on the roughly remembered silhouettes of ‘classical’ archaeological vessel types, imprinted on our memories from many darkened hours regarding slides in archaeological lectures at university. Moreover, with respect to the historiography of archaeology, vessels (in the form of ceramics) have been instrumental to the development of archaeological methods and theories of classification, such as seriation and typologies, since



Figure 3. Horseshoes from the HQJOC excavation collection. Photographs: U.K. Frederick, 2016.

Flinders Petrie used pottery ‘types’ as the basis of his Sequence Dating (Petrie 1899). Hence, the vessel, diverse and ubiquitous within archaeology and beyond, was a powerful visual metaphor speaking directly to the entangled histories of archaeology and colonialism.

As the project developed, we considered how the features of our chosen vessel might reflect different components of an archaeological assemblage and by extension the categorisation processes and the merits ascribed to them, whether that be numeric values or something more qualitative. We planned, therefore, for the vessel shapes to ‘contain’ on their surface images of the common, colonial-era artefact types, such as alcohol bottles, horse shoes and smoking pipes, that are found in large numbers at archaeological sites in Australia (Figure 4). Combining ‘old world’ and ‘new world’, ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ materialities in this way responds directly to critiques of archaeology’s ongoing enthrallment within temporalities defined by modernist definitions of civilisation and progress. As Dawdy has claimed: ‘The still settling realisation that we have never been modern poses a threat to

archaeology and anthropology if the fields are left to continue their drift through progressive time’ (Dawdy 2010:762). This combination/conflation of ancient and modern objects also recalls the ‘time transgressive’ qualities of objects, their unlimited affordances and potential to continue their existence outside worlds of human perception (Edgeworth 2016).

Once we had decided that each artefact type should be represented on a single vessel, rather than amassed together as though unsorted, the focus became how to represent each of these elements of the assemblage. Should they appear in an orderly arrangement, or simply piled together? We were aware that each decision we made was freighted with the kind of values and meanings that are assigned to visual attributes. A row of pipe stem fragments, for example, communicates pattern and multitude, perhaps ubiquity and everydayness, while an assortment of clay pipe fragments (bowl, stem, mouthpiece) may be seen to represent function and manufacture (Figure 5). In many respects, the process of artistic decision-making mirrors the methodological questions faced in archaeological

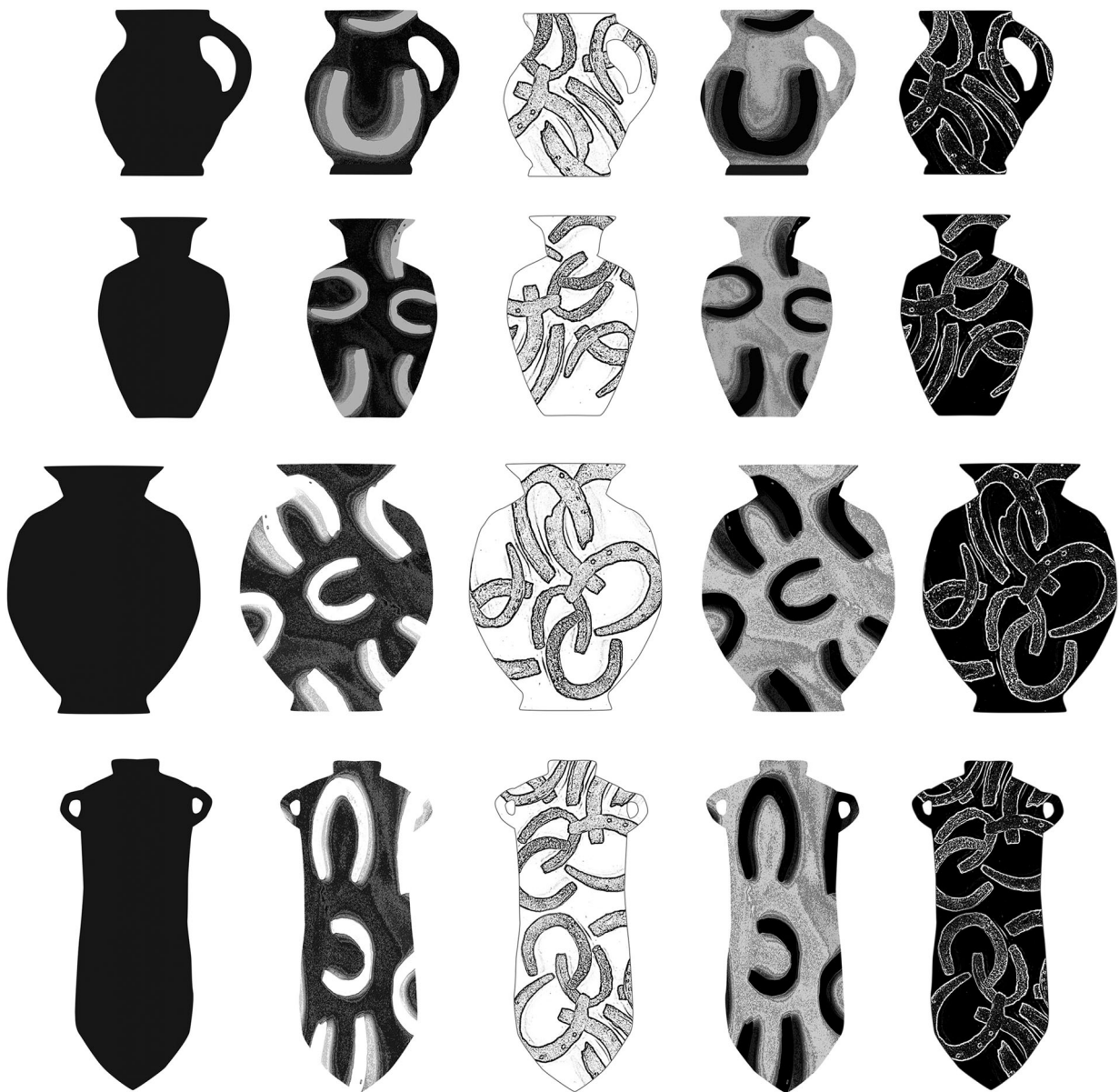


Figure 4. Exploring vessel shapes and surface decorations based on our interests and intentions. Illustration: U.K. Frederick and Tracy Ireland, 2016.

approaches, such as sampling, sorting, labelling and categorising.

There were many other factors considered in the first stage of our project, such as why we elected to remove all colour, and even why we chose to print one signature image on a grid of squares rather than as a single large piece of paper. The allusions the work makes are varied: from the vessel as a motif of an artefact shared, in all its diversity, across different times, places and cultures all over the world; to the function that vessels represent—to contain, to carry, to hold, to offer something of exchange. The limited palette references the graphic drawings embedded in archaeology's visual canon, and in a more nuanced way the decorative surface treatment of many ceramic cultures, for example, the bold geometrics of Native American pottery or

the black silhouettes on an Attic amphora. References to graphic embellishment could be extended even further to the line work of sgraffito or the burnt poker patterning on wooden coolamons.

The utilitarian purpose of amphorae and other vessels or jars used to carry wine, oil and other liquids takes on a certain relevance when we consider the history of this archaeological site as a roadside inn. We made reference to the availability and consumption of alcohol at the Hibernian Hotel, as well as to the currency of drinking within the Australian archaeological community, by using beer coasters as the material substrate on which to print our images. The absorbent quality of the coasters produced an interestingly muted image when we printed the photographic images on them using a



Figure 5. Clay pipe fragments from the HQJOC collection. Photograph: U.K. Frederick, 2016

large-scale ink jet printer. The tessellated coasters are at once a set of fragments that combine to make a whole, reminiscent of a sliding tile puzzle, and this too might be read as a metaphor for archaeology. It is also, of course, a grid—that essential device of archaeological thought and practice—and a mosaicked surface (Figures 6 and 7).

In using photos of horse-shoes as the basis for our primary image we clearly reference the role of the Hibernian as a coach station inn. Thus, in one sense, this artefact-type is specific, but it also reflects a fairly ordinary and generic aspect of rural life across colonial-settler Australia. Although it draws attention to the horse, an introduced species in this landscape, it is an archaeological trace that also reminds us of the shared Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal narratives of this country's recent history. While the horse was a vehicle and carrier of colonial-capitalist expansion, this animal also became a means for Aboriginal people to attain

mobility and freedom. Indeed, the stories of stockmen, droving and the cattle industry are reflected in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artworks, including photography, printmaking, painting and sculpture (e.g. Croft et al. 2017).

Last Drinks was installed at the Belconnen Arts Centre (Canberra) as one of several artworks in the group show, *Encyclopaedia of Forgotten Things* (Williams et al. 2016) (Figure 8). This exhibition itself constitutes something of a tradition, insofar as it is an annual undertaking of staff from the University of Canberra's Faculty of Arts & Design (and their collaborators) who undertake creative practice as part of their academic research. The curatorial premise of the 2016 show was that "forgotten things" references the ways in which creative practice can recover elements of the past, and reconsider them in light of the present' while the 'notion of the encyclopaedia references conceptual frameworks and groupings, and gestures toward the contingency and fragility of facts and meanings' (Williams et al. 2016). The breadth of this theme and the diversity of the disciplinary backgrounds of the staff involved in exhibiting meant that *Last Drinks* appeared in a large room alongside paintings, poetry, photographs, glass, video, textiles and found media.

In this installation, *Last Drinks* included the mosaicked wall work of the single tessellated vessel, with an adjacent plinth incorporating a jumbled assemblage of more printed coasters (Figures 7 and 8). These coasters might be seen as a collection of our process images, other vessel prints that we made but which are singular items. Their disorderly display and lack of arrangement served as a counterpoint to the systematically positioned mosaicked image nearby. We had hoped that the casual placement of the coasters might invite the opportunity for handling, so that visitors could undertake their own individual process of image sorting. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this happened throughout the show's duration. However, the height and position of the artwork on the plinth, along with its flat surface, definitely facilitated a certain correspondence between the artwork and the audience, leaving them marked by drinking activity (Figure 9).

Discussion

Our artwork juxtaposes representations of 'old-world' archaeological vessels and the 'modern' detritus of the recent, colonial past in Australia to suggest how archaeology is in itself a framing device that imbues materials with both aesthetic and affective qualities. This highlights for us how archaeology



Figure 6. *Last Drinks at the Hibernian* was installed at the Belconnen Arts Centre, Canberra as one of several artworks in the Faculty of Arts and Design staff exhibition, *Encyclopaedia of Forgotten Things*, which ran from 22 July – 14 August 2016 (Williams et al. 2016). Photograph: Katie Hayne, 2016.

is not only a trope or frame that enacts a rational, encyclopaedic structure to classify materials to produce distinctive narratives of culture and time, but also a creative, imaginative and generative response to the material world. The classical vessel shapes evoke the western art canon and its so-called ‘universal values’ of truth and beauty—and we contrast this shape with the mass produced, quotidian, colonial artefacts which have nonetheless also come to be highly valued through the frame of national heritage. An important insight here is that the colonial, archaeological fragments that we use in our work are experienced through both a ‘modernist’ understanding of their scientific archaeological value (i.e. how they have been produced by archaeological excavation and how they embody research potential as archaeological evidence), as well as through Romantic tropes of the sensuous materiality of ruins and traces.

In the twenty-first century, many argue we are seeing a renewed interest in legacies of Romanticism: an interest in exploring feelings and aesthetic responses set against the over rationalisation of scientific approaches (e.g. Dawdy 2016). Such an approach seems very appropriate to the study of cultural heritage and to how and why people form attachments to places and the narratives that surround them. In Australia, John Mulvaney, although best known as a

‘father’ of ‘prehistory’, was also a key advocate for the establishment of historical archaeology and heritage legislation in the 1960s and 1970s. In his essays entitled ‘Future pleasure from the past’ (1990[1978]) and “The heritage value of historical records: a plea for romantic intellectualism” (1990 [1978]) he stressed the evocative character of historic sites, arguing that heritage management needed to develop approaches to these types of values of historic sites, as well as to their scientific values. He has, thus, been described as being paradoxically ‘postmodern’ in his recognition of complexity and multiple meanings, while at the same time universalist and modernist in his concept of objective archaeological knowledge (Head 1998:2). These are tensions which are not only embodied in Mulvaney’s work, but also in the discourse and practices of national heritage more generally. Yannis Hamilakis’ study of archaeology and Hellenic nationalism, for instance, shows how nationalisms entangle, hybridise, and re-formulate ‘modern’ and ‘pre-modern’ approaches to the material past. He clearly demonstrates that, in Greece, the rise of modern, scientific archaeology has in no way ‘constituted a radical break from previous experiential encounters with the material past’ (Hamilakis 2007:295).

Another aspect of the work that references archaeology’s history, its traditions of skilled visions, routines and habitus, is our experimentation with



Figure 7. Installation of *Last Drinks at the Hibernian* at the Belconnen Arts Centre, Canberra 2016. Photograph: Katie Hayne, 2016



Figure 8. Tessellated wall installation of *Last Drinks at the Hibernian*, 2016. Photograph: Katie Hayne, 2016.



Figure 9. Last drinks from the exhibition opening: reactivating the Hibernian in the present. Champagne glasses on the 'artefact' coasters of *Last Drinks at the Hibernian*, 2016. Photograph: U.K. Frederick, 2016.



Figure 10. Artefact inversions: photographs of artefacts used as surface treatments for the vessels and for our coaster images have been manipulated to emulate the process of solarisation, an effect achieved in darkroom processing of black and white photography which reverses the tonal values of the image. Images: U.K. Frederick, 2016.

types of photography and photographic reproduction. Photography's so-called indexicality has been central to archaeology in providing its modernist, scientific, evidential authority, and in mediating and communicating its world-ordering techniques. Shanks and Szabo (2013:90) argue that archaeology and photography are both modernist memory practices that are so close as to share an underpinning structure or ontology (Shanks and Szabo 2013:90). Laurent Olivier, in his meditations on the nature of archaeology, suggests that to function as 'memory objects' both archaeological fragments and

photographs must have moments of sensitivity when the traces of events/actions are recorded, separated by periods of insensitivity, to allow us to see that 'the layers of the palimpsest belong to different moments in time' (Olivier 2011:132). It is only because the archaeological fragment is deposited or discarded, and because the photograph is fixed after exposure (to use analogue terms), that we can perceive them as traces of other times, or particular moments. As the excavator frames with the trench and the grid, the photographer frames and composes with the aperture, and with light and shade,

to generate the subject of the image. The vessel shape and the photograph both act here to frame and valorise the mass produced, colonial artefacts, evoking the social and cultural processes of value creation, as well as the generative role of archaeology, in shaping a distinctive, deeply history-ed materiality. The *Last Drinks* vessel and artefact images also represent a moment of exposure or sensitivity, where archaeology and photography merge to create ‘memory objects’ embedded, like the palimpsest, with complex, confusingly conflated and compressed, narratives of value, histories of production, and affective charges experienced as aesthetic qualities (Figure 10).

Conclusions

We propose that a creative engagement with archaeology, and with archaeological materials, has the potential to change the way we see and think about and through specific archaeologies. By this, we mean archaeologies as particular case studies, like the ruins and remains of the Hibernian Hotel, and more broadly Australian historical archaeology, as well as, in a more abstract sense, our own disciplinary strategies of doing, analysing, interpreting, and communicating. Creative practice also has the potential to ‘reactivate’ archaeological sites and collections that are constrained and restrained by their rigid archives and exhausted of their potency by empirical and disciplinary limitations on their use and re-use.

In analysing the differences between art and archaeological practices, Russell has questioned the ethics of archaeologists appropriating art practices for their own ‘self authorised renderings of objective material worlds’ (Russell 2011:174), stressing the different social contexts and roles of artist and archaeologist, and the very specific histories and political economies of these positions, particularly traditions of art critique that don’t transpose to the production of archaeological knowledge. To appropriate art practices he suggests ‘establishes the archaeologist as a critical authority over the objective materiality of the contemporary world while simultaneously allowing for an uncritical utilisation of affect in the perpetuation of the aura of modern archaeological process’ (Russell 2011:174). In a different vein, Shanks and Szabo simply shrug off disciplinary constraints to propose ‘archaeography’, a merged practice of archaeology and photography that is situated within a transdisciplinary field they label ‘pragmatology’, a field that aims to ‘understand people and things in their making’ (Shanks and Szabo 2013:14).

Both of these positions, while compelling in their own ways, perhaps perpetuate traditional patriarchal understandings of ‘artist’ and ‘archaeologist’ as powerful genius and auteur. However, as Thomas et al. (2018) comment in their recent overview, a feature of much contemporary art and archaeology practice is collaboration, public participation and co-production. While these modes are not without the potential for appropriation and exploitation, these authors at least welcome the ‘creative turn’s’ ability to shake up knowledge hierarchies and exclusivities and turn archaeology’s critical lens back onto its own practices and materialities. For us, our creative engagement with archaeology and archaeological materials is working to intrude upon the frame of the discipline so that we can more clearly see the shape and contours of its boundaries, what it includes and excludes, and to learn a little more about how it has been constructed, and the fixatives that hold it together.

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