University of Southern Queensland

TRAVELLING EDGES: AN IMMERSED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH IN ART

An Exegesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

Travelling Edges: An Immersed Autoethnographic and Practice-led Exploration of the Australian Bush in Art explores the effects of deep immersion in the bush on the portrayal of rural and wilderness environments. Current research into immersion in natural environments demonstrates there is "a cognitive advantage" to being immersed in bush settings that includes enhanced "higher order cognitive skills" such as creative thinking (Atchley et al., 2012, pp. 1-2). From the perspective of an artist, I argue immersed living in natural environments generates robust "emotional connections", "higher intensity learning", and "first hand" authentic experiences that enhance an artist's creativity (Chaehan, n.p., 2020). Immersion in the bush is crucial to my art and provides an important reference point for this practice-led and autoethnographic research contextualised against the "societal phenomenon" shaping Australian culture (Wall, 2006, p. 1). The use of practice-led research relates to the development of my art practice which is reflective and "informed by theory" (Bolt, 2006, p. 4), thereby enabling a more intimate response to the bush as my primary art subject. To communicate the nature of this bush centred research, the title "Travelling Edges" has been used to evoke my isolation but sense of security in rural areas and the wariness I feel towards large urban centres. This project has been motivated by my lifelong connection with the bush, traceable to a mnemonic of family origins interrelated with life in and near Australian First Nations communities, with each shaping my understanding and experience as a non-Indigenous artist and informing my artistic practice.

CERTIFICATION OF EXEGESIS

I Neville C Heywood declare that the DCA exegesis entitled *Travelling Edges: An Immersed Autoethnographic and Practice-led Exploration of the Australian Bush in Art* is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The exegesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this exegesis is my own work.

Date:

Endorsed by:

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Principal Supervisor

Associate Professor Beata Batorowicz
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Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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I acknowledge the culture, contribution and presence of our First Nations Peoples; thankful for the community we share together. Respects are paid to the Goomeroi, Kwiambal, Bigambul and Guugu Yimithirr nations and their elders and leaders past and present, and to all those rising up to become leaders.

Editorial work by Laura Black.

DEDICATION

I acknowledge and thank the Kamilaroi communities of Ashford, Mungindi and Boggabilla Toomelah for the wealth of knowledge and cultural insights communicated to me. I particularly want to thank all the Elders for their friendship and encouragement over the years.

I am also indebted to my lovely wife Lyn and family for bearing with me in the long hours this project required.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGNSW	Art Gallery of New South Wales
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
HAPH	Hadley's Art Prize, Hobart
NAVA	National Association for the Visual Arts
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
PLR	Practice led research
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
UNE	University of New England

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE SCOPE OF THE EXEGESIS

This project studies the impact of the bush on Australian culture regarding themes, subjects and settings in art and literature and discussion of Australia's historic national identity. Australian issues of national identity play an important role in artistic discourses. For instance the Heidelberg artists sought a new visual language using the Australian landscape as their primary subject undergirded by nationalist interpretations (Dunlap, 1993; Radford, 2001). This was oppositional to Indigenous people, for whom relationship to the land is termed a "signature genre" (Trigger, 2008, p. 628). As a non-Indigenous person who has had a lifetime connection to the bush I am similarly shaped by the need for closeness to nature and mindful that "the identity of a colonial descendant" is "fraught with irony" (Roussi, 2004, p. 1). This positioning therefore requires consideration of the complex issues that includes First Nations people and their connection to country, the ongoing impact of European invasion and the evolving and organic nature of artistic identity, particularly for artists such as myself who use the Australian landscape as their predominant subject matter (Carlson, 2016; Tranter & Donahue, 2007).

In defining terms, Isabella Saunders argues that Australia is currently in a stage of Neo Colonialism, which describes a nation that underwent colonialism but is now "officially decolonised" yet "maintains a powerful sense of colonisation" (2016, n.p.) Marcus Bunyan uses the term post colonialism to describe a country that concerns itself "with the history of colonialism, the psychology of racial representation and concepts of the 'Other'" for categorising those effects continuing beyond the colonial period (2013). Post colonial as a description deals with that "range of theories and commentaries" which question and oppose "the standard historical accounts of imperial histories" (Inglish, 2014, p. 1).

Nevertheless I see the Australian bush as having played a key role in shaping the Australian national character, which earlier was considered colonialist, but has since shifted to encompass more diverse multicultural, multi-ethnic identities (Ward, 1958, see also Michelle Grattan on CEW Bean, 2004, p. 92). Russel Ward's argument was that Australia's colonial national identity resulted from the imprint of "outback employees, semi-nomadic drovers, shearers, bullock-drivers, stockmen, boundary riders, station hands and … the pastoral industry" (1966, p. 2). Artists like Arthur Streeton (1867-1943), Tom Roberts (1856-1931), Frederick McCubbin (1855-1917), George Lambert (1873-1930) and Russell Drysdale (1912-1981) reflected this enculturated bush ethos in their work. The historian Charles Bean (1879-1968) also set about celebrating the nation's bushman origins in the exploits of Australian soldiers through his official histories of the Great War and his connection with the Australian War Memorial.

In recognising the powerful impact that the Australian bush has had on the national consciousness and landscape art, this project is a more personal study of its resonant impact on my art practice. Living in the bush certainly deepened my awareness of nature and in this exegesis it refers to my rural positioning away from large urban centres, in places psychologically essential for me to make art. As a non-Indigenous Australian of chiefly urban upbringing, I nonetheless retained deep family roots with the bush places whence my forebears originated. These familial and generational links indelibly affected me as I grew up. Therefore the real and metaphorical edges I have travelled in life brought into sharp relief my connection with the bush as the impetus for my art and expressed through practice-led art and autoethnographic research. In creating that art, I mediate the poetic and aesthetic nature of the Australian landscape in a unique way informed by my knowledge of non-Indigenous and First Nations artists and their engagement with it as subject matter. On a more personal level, it is important to acknowledge that I am married to an Australian Indigenous person who has had a

strong influence on my understanding and experience of the bush. My personal background therefore necessitates, where appropriate and within the scope of my own positioning, a foregrounding of a cross-cultural and inclusive discussion associated with representing the land artistically.

Through this positioning I have come to realise how significant the bush is for the health and wellbeing of others, and myself, both individually and collectively. Thus, the more complex and demanding society becomes, the more our need to connect with nature. For this reason Elizabeth Pearson believes that "notions of biophilia" support "intimate interdependent relationships" with nature to improve wellbeing and health (2014, p. 1). Although the media often depicts the bush in a romantic way that has some similarities with the Heidelberg artists, the reality is that life in the bush is extremely challenging because of its unpredictability through bushfire, drought, flooding, heat and isolation (Baker, 2005). As a non-Indigenous Australian I have found that living in the Australian bush is often a place of hard work and requires perseverance and love in order to appreciate it. Being immersed in its environment for a long period allows for unique perspectives to be developed among those living there. Therefore, my aim in this study is to present an exploration of my artistic practice informed by a lifetime's engagement with the bush and engender a deeper appreciation of its importance for self-fulfilment and artistic vision.

While the focus is in this project has been the creation of a particular body of art with analysis, it is contextualised against my long artistic career whereby many ideas were developed further in the project thereby adding meaning to it. The reader is invited to recognise the primacy of the past as a foundation for the creation of my work in the present, especially in this project. The autoethnographic strand also contextualises themes developed in the present and their relation to my past experiences. As such it is not a linear account. The inclusion of an autobiography also helps by providing a linear account of my artistic development. It weaves personal experience with my investigation of art

genres and the bush and the unique expression of First Nations culture. The autobiography is located in my digital creative art portfolio, which also provides a catalogue for my project art located at.

https://sites.google.com/view/neville-heywood-portfolio/portfolio-home

The format of the project consists of an exegesis weighting of 30% and a creative component of 70%. In the written part, the exegesis (and supplementary autobiography) narrates the key stages of my career and investigates the extent to which the bush inspired other artists, including First Nations artists (Appendix 1). However these days interest in non-Indigenous landscape art appears to oscillate. It seems that many contemporary Australian non-Indigenous artists shun the bush because of its isolation and the difficulties related to gaining exposure in the art market/milieu (Australia Council, 2017). There is however great interest in First Nations artwork, particularly in respect of their intimate connection with the land (Australian Parliament House, 2002, p. 6). In my case the bush provides my main subject matter and brings a synergy to my creative work, which envisions an ordered spiritual realm. This is reminiscent of the modernist artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) who developed a universal visual language he believed could transcend physical realities using abstraction and colour theory, although the spiritual remains a contested Universalist concept (Kandinsky, 1977)[1].

For me the spiritual aspects of nature and life remain essential, with the soul described as a spiritual entity in relation to the mind, and the spirit as that part seeking connection with God (Cady, 2019). In reflecting on the connection between the spiritual and material, I have identified a research gap that explores the idea of nature's transcendence in art, such as that informing the work of Kandinsky and artist Paul Klee. As a non-Indigenous person though, I first must acknowledge how significant

[1] Likewise, for me art created from meditation on the bush manifests a holism arrived at intuitively. It is worth noting for instance, that, through his intimacy with nature, Van Gogh showed in *Starry Night* (1889) and other pictures, an intuitive sense now known to reveal 'fluid turbulence' long before modern scientists became aware of it (Kleeman, 2014).

spirituality is for First Nations people, including their belief in the sacred cosmic (Figure 2.1). For Murri[2] people, and other First Nations groups, the "law, ceremony and key rituals", reflect the "sacred significance of landscape in the Aboriginal cosmos" (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008, p. 62), while for me there is an analogous sacrality attached to the land, the recognition of which is crucial to my art and identity. Nevertheless, I realise that that which lies beyond the material, meaning the spiritual realm, remains a complex, even unsatisfactory concept for many. As a term, spirituality is often vaguely used to refer "to an attitude or approach toward life" involving a "search for meaning" but this is so complex and diverse that it remains difficult to categorise (Arya, 2016). In a parallel way the intangible spiritual aspects pervading First Nations artwork unleashes, via connection with nature, similar impulses resulting in forms of commonality. Art for me is a "spiritual activity", deepening my "sense of existence" and revealing the "source of things" (Tisma, 1997). Several western artists have also made spirituality integral to their art including Paul Gauguin, William Blake, Kandinsky, Klee, Piet Mondrian, Mark Rothko, John Coburn and Ian Fairweather, although it must be emphasised, western spirituality is obviously very different to Indigenous conceptions. Conversely in recognising the significance of Indigenous spirituality, I am not trying to interchange it with western concepts. Suffice to say my research recognises the power of the spiritual in shaping art and human life.

For Kandinsky spirituality involved freedom from stereotypical religion, fostering awareness of the unique perceptions "concealed in the material" and loosed by creativity (Kuspit, 2003). Similarly other western artists have explored spiritual themes, considering themselves "part of something greater than the self", seeking harmony and "sacrality" despite the disenchantment the world can bring (Arya, 2016). Likewise my art is a means for uncovering meaning by a combination of the experiential and

[2] Term favoured as a general name for Indigenous people in Central and Southern Queensland and Northern NSW. Some adjoining groups use the name Goori and Koori.

transcendent. Thus in *Life Seed* (Figure 1.1), ideas of eternality and renewal coexist in a cosmic relation signified by a symbolic circle and triangle in contrast to the germination of a plant betokening regeneration.

Figure 1.1

Neville Heywood, Life Seed

Acrylic on board, 47x44 cm, 2002/3.

To analyse in this study art made in the bush, I focussed on parts of Australia's natural environment, inland, away from urban development, where human impact is minimal and nature's preservation "critical for [our] wellbeing" (Patterson, 2006, p. 147). These involve locations with low populations, rooted in nature and a pioneer heritage that shaped my thematic interests. While a wide range of territory has inspired my art, the focus is predominantly on the Atholwood Bonshaw area of New South

Wales, a place central to where my forebears lived. Because of these roots I have *always,* since childhood, felt a strong "fusional" relationship with the bush, and this in turn delineates a complex relationship where place and nature form *the central subject* of my art[3] (See Appendix 2).

Figure 1.2

My homemade kelpie cart on 'Kia Ora' station, Bonshaw (1953)

Note: here my love for art began

Through this bush-centric perspective, my project is a practice-led art investigation, presented in an exegesis that also analyses the significance of the bush for other artists. Its practice-led-research strand is driven and "informed by theory" thereby providing the overarching methodological framework of my art (Bolt, 2006, p. 4). In the exegesis, I have used an autoethnographic approach for drawing on a range of: personal, environmental, artistic, historical and literary sources in relation to my art and that of other artists. From these I investigated the range of perspectives that have challenged and affirmed the role of landscape in

[3] It reflects a life journey from the picturesque, New England region, to the desolate, heat blasted, Pilliga Scrub, to the vegetative variety of North Queensland, to the geometric land divisions of the Darling Downs and to central and northern NSW where time has eclipsed dwindling pioneer villages and scrub reclaimed country formerly cleared during the Great Depression.

contemporary art practice (Mendez, 2013; Pace, 2012). The advantage of autoethnographic research is it can provide a "highly personalized" methodology for drawing on personal events and "societal phenomenon" within the researcher's experience (Wall, 2006, p. 1). Ngunjiri et al. (2010) describes this methodological approach as a kind of "living autoethnography" because in its application it connects life and research. Its value they claim, lies in the combination of "ethnography, biography and self-analysis" for analysing the relationships and self-experience providing a "window through which the external world is understood" (2010). Margot Duncan argued that the "difference between ethnography and autoethnography" is that in the latter the researcher "is not trying to become an insider in the research setting" but is "in fact the insider" because ultimately "the context" is their "own" (2004, p. 30). In autoethnographic research, "personal story matters", its value contingent on its "power to represent lived experience" (Whitinui, 2013, p. 461) and convey "within itself not only ideals and ways of seeing/feeling/thinking", but also patterns that lead to "new experiences" (Anderson, citing Dewey, 2003, p. 158).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of my study therefore is to investigate how immersion in the Australian landscape can affect one's attitudes and insights and how this is then reflected in art practice (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008; Saunders, 2016-17). According to Klein, the advantages of immersion for researching includes: helping see in nature the relationships of part to whole, and the nuances of familiarity and intimacy revealed in a range of emotional experiences (2017, p. 6). In addition I linked the exegesis with an autobiography because this paired relationship yielded unique insights into past and present to expand "awareness in surprising and illuminating ways" (Klein, 2018, p. 12) (See Appendix 3). Both the autoethnography and autobiography reveal many of the fulfilling experiences I have been exposed to in the bush, including the freedom and experiences of nature

that informed and inspired my art practice. I have also examined other artists who have influenced my work such as: the Heidelberg artists, Albert Namatjira, Margaret Preston, Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Clifton Pugh, Arthur Boyd, Fred Williams, Dick Roughsey, and Michael Nelson Tjakamara. Of these, the Heidelberg artists were for some time widely believed to have painted 'the real Australia' as a standard in art because of their unique portrayals of rural landscapes, masculine adventure and pioneer life. Preston's contribution though was in applying a designer's eye to nature, while Drysdale, Nolan, Pugh and Boyd each created unique iconographies subjectively expressing the struggle of life in the bush. Williams by contrast, inaugurated a widespread re-perception of the Australian landscape by depicting in nuanced sensitivities, gestural gum trees set on flat backgrounds. In the case of the Australian Indigenous artists Namatjira and Roughsey however, the significance of their art was by "affirming the sanctity of place", yet in adapted western genres (McDonald, 2008, p. 182). Later the contemporary Central Australian Pintupi artist, Anatiari Tjakamara, innovated on traditional Indigenous representations by developing an appealing, decorative, intricate, illusory form of abstract art. Each of the above artists conveyed through their work a deep, at times transcendental awareness of nature. Similarly, my aim has been to create an imagery that uniquely presents the bush in a synthesis of connections between the land and culture.

My home, which we called *Sky Camp,* became both my studio and teaching space. Living there as the base for a wide area of northern NSW and southern Queensland, I consider this firstly contextualises me as a regional artist. The art historian Terry Smith commented on how regional artists have when working outside metropolitan centres experienced a "restrictive parochialism" and "provincialist bind" (2011, p. 5). Beyond this city country relationship I became even more aware of a globalising culture that placed its interests above that of individual, regional and national identities (Pickering, 2001). At international levels, Globalism presents obstacles for those artists working regionally because it shows

"little regard for national borders" thus resulting in a hybridising of culture (Arnason, 2013, p. 729). In my youth artist Jon Molvig (1923-1970) experienced this conundrum to argue:

> I'm a regional painter. I paint what I know, what I've experienced. If you're not influenced by your environment what are you influenced by? … I think Australian art should be recognisably different to art anywhere else. (Cited in McGregor et al., 1969, p. 168)

Molvig's view is central to my argument that the Australian bush helps to centre one's being uniquely shaping the art created there. While internationalist styles remove specifics of place, elements of Australia's environment still persist in the art of those influenced significantly by the environment. Williams for example chose the ubiquitous gum tree as his chief subject and frequently set them in semi-arid country expressed using a minimalist gestural iconography. Arthur Boyd's contribution had its beginnings in the depiction of mythic dramas set in the bush, then he later turned to depicting ecological concerns (Preece & Waterhouse, 2021). Lawrence Daws sought a form of spiritual expression by hovering symbolic mandala against indefinite, often arid, backgrounds. Olsen's input was to paint calligraphic imaginative images of Australian fauna and flora and the landscape, while Ray Crooke settled for intimate scenes that melded place with a quiet drama.

1.3 INTRODUCING THE ARTIST-RESEARCHER

What this project does show is that art for me is a lifelong pursuit and the most important way I respond to the world round about. As an artist I have always been involved in researching nature and in so doing, achieved a joyous feeling of oneness with it. However, this project is more structured than my previous art approaches with the aim being to focus on my predominant subject matter, the Australian bush and explore its impact environmentally, artistically, historically, experientially and spiritually. Through reflecting on these, several key concerns emerged,

such as the effects of land clearing, environmental threats, Indigenous issues, artist choices and cultural and family concerns. In relation to these, my views were deeply influenced not only by artists, but also by writers such as Sally Morgan, Judith Wright, Xavier Herbert, Patrick White, Randolph Stowe, Kylie Tennant, and James Bardon. What each has or had in common, is an awareness of Indigenous perspectives and the challenges the Australian bush presents in values formation. Their writing helped shape my love for the bush and influenced my beliefs of human destiny and relationships with nature. This passion for the bush developed very early in life and remains for me a strong psychological factor. As a child I grew up in Sydney, but during the school holidays I often stayed with my grandparents near Bonshaw, (780 km north) (Figure 1.2) and Barraba (480 km northwest). In November 1968 I was finally able to leave Sydney for the bush and have lived there ever since. This is also described in my companion autobiography which provides additional critical insights into the nature of my art practice under immersion.

1.4 CENTRAL RESEARCH PREMISE

Writing an exegesis, in combination with practice-led research (PLR), has the task of interrogating an artist's practice and driving the inquiry for new knowledge gained by that research (Haseman, 2007, Sullivan, 2005, p. xvii). PLR is an appropriate artists' research methodology because it focuses on the cultural intersections between their creativity, experience, knowledge and skill. Cultural psychologist Jan Valsiner argues that the "process of creating new knowledge is inherently ambiguous" and requires researchers to "accept their role of constantly moving ahead amidst all the uncertainties of their exploration" (Stodulka, 2019, p. vi). As an artist I am constantly reflecting on my practice and in that I draw upon my training to solve art and design problems from a basis of: "integrity towards materials",[4] creativity, sensibility and the pursuit of quality. Through these I strive to create a unique vision of the

[4] William Morris, "Hopes and fears for art," in G. Naylor (Ed.), *William Morris by himself: designs and writings,* London: Time Warner Bros., 2004, p. 153.

Australian bush, cognisant of other artists' work evidencing a similar passion regarding nature. As well, through autoethnography, I have been able to analyse the phases of my career in references to letters, artworks and journals that yield insights into the cultural influences informing my artistic practice (Figure 1.2). Ultimately I consider my exegesis and art practice to contribute to the field of learning in five ways: First, by communicating additional aesthetic knowledge from outside mainstream Australian culture. Second, by providing insight into the experiences of artists in rural areas that are often not included in contemporary discourses, therefore giving increased visibility to rural artists (Chaehan, 2020). Third, my art contributes to the richness and distinctiveness of regional art and Australian art more broadly. Fourth, it proceeds from an inter-relational identity between Indigenous artists and myself as non-Indigenous. Fifth, my work is informed by, and interrogates, design aesthetics evident in the work of artists such as: Margaret Preston, Douglas Annand (1903-1976), John Coburn (1925-2006), Ken Done (1940-), Lin Onus (1948-1996), Bronwyn Bancroft (1958-) and Sally Morgan (1951-).

My project also investigates the complexities experienced by rural and remote artists compared to those in Australia's metropolises. Moreover, my study recognises the importance of Country and of place as these affect Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists as well as the intricacies surrounding race and culture. My project is therefore underpinned by the following overarching research question:

> ***To what extent has my immersion in the Australian bush, physically and ideologically, informed my artistic practice, enabling new insights about the land and landscape art in Australia?***

In order to respond to this question I have explored how sustained immersion changes the way one regards landscape art and the land.[5] According to Willis (1993) landscape and its relation to Australian identity has become the most pervasive theme in Australian art. There is thus a case that preoccupation with the land as an identity source, stems from a very deep need to belong and satisfied only when one can identify with a particular place (Taylor, 2008). In Australia, that place is also the homelands of Indigenous people, a connection overridden by colonialism, racialism and the denial of land rights since the arrival of Europeans. My question also interrogates the nature of artists' experiences living in the bush and the advantages long-term immersion presents over short-term sortie. Deep immersion in Australia's bush can provide artist researchers with in-depth unique knowledge because learning there involves a "constant, continuing process" yielding new "insight and understanding" (Turner, 2014). The research also explores my relationship with First Nations people and the exchange of ideas regarding Country. For instance, during the mid 1970s, the Mareeba / Laura Indigenous artist Jimmy Archer and I shared an exhibition at the Trinity Gallery, Cairns, our friendship starting at Laura where Jimmy was resident ranger (Figure 1.3). In exhibiting together our art expressed unique depictions of the North Queensland bush revealing a shared love of that environment.

[5] For example, Ken Done, designer and painter was criticised for making 'shallow, populist' lightweight commercial art, yet he created a body of artwork characterised by playfulness, design and expressive colour that resulted in many exuberant landscapes (Sebag-Montefiore, 2016). Authentic art to me involves integrity in style, uniqueness and demonstrating *meaningful engagement* with one's subject, something Done's art does.

Figure 1.3

Jimmy Archer, Goobiathaldin, acrylic on bark, 60x40 cm, c. 1974.

Note. Courtesy of Neville Heywood.

Jimmy's art drew on symbolism that had developed in the Cape for over 40,000 years. Because of its multi-millennial traditions, it disproved the European myth, propagated from early settlement on, that Australia was *terra nullius*, a "land of no one … vacant, unoccupied and uninhabited" (Milliss, 1992, p. 487). This widespread fallacy resulted in the rejection and erasure of legitimate First Nations ties to the land. However, despite European settlement having fractured First Nations' culture, artists continue to express their long-standing sacred relationship with the land. The European settlers however, gradually changed the bush for their own purposes, focussed on survival and economic development. This colonial part of Australia's story began as a penal colony pullulating "timidly on the edge of alien shores", adaptive enculturation in an environment thought harsh and dangerous (Hope,

1986). As Collingwood-Whittick argues, the relationship of these "Anglo-Celtic Australians" to their new landscape was one "fraught with feelings of alienation and hostility" (2008, p. 59). Strehlow, commenting from an arts perspective, posited that it could take "centuries of residence in a new country before it is considered to be one's 'spiritual home'" (Wissing et al., 2019, p.5). Today it could be said that non-Indigenous settlement is now so predominantly urbanised that it has almost lost meaningful engagement with the bush. In 1938 poet A. D. Hope lampooned Australia's city dwellers as being but a collection of "monotonous tribes" draining Australia like "teeming sores" (Thompson et. Al., 1961, p. 119). John Olsen (1928-) echoed this when he concluded Australians live a "saucer-like existence on the edge of the continent" (McGregor et al., 1969, p. 240). For me connection with the Australian bush is vital for both my art and my wellbeing. The result for the Australian people is a seeking out of those "nourishing terrains" able to produce a harmonious nation where Country is cared for by all (Rose, 1996). For First Nations people though, this encompasses an interdependence with ancestral lands that includes "animals, plants, Dreamings, underground, earth, soils, minerals, waters [and] air" where they talk about Country "in the same way that they would talk about a person" (Cadet-James, 2010, p. 140) (See Appendix 4).

From Indigenous understanding flow different ways of relating to and depicting the land as a "living entity", one where my art presents the bush as an exciting meaningful subject capable of endless interpretation (Hamm, 2015, p. 58). How does this compare with those, who for a while use the "immersive experience as a way of establishing close proximity to landscape" (Kelly, 2018, p. 202)? Immersed living is not something I use as a strategy merely for this project, an approach some autoethnographic researchers employ, but an essential condition of my artistic vision, informed by place, family history and Indigenous presence. My experience bears similarities to the Darling Downs artist Kenneth Macqueen (1897-1960), who, in 1922, chose to settle, farm and paint near Millmerran,

north of Texas and Bonshaw. Like me, Macqueen grew up in Sydney and "adapted [Sydney's] Modernist style to enliven his landscapes" (Kelly, 2018, p. 202) (Figure 1.4). Now a generation later my work is similarly about expressing unique relationships with the land made possible by my living there.

Figure 1.4

Kenneth Macqueen, Twin Hills 1935, AGNSW.

Note: Source. Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2022.

https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/thumbnails/collection_images/3/3261%23%23S.jpg.1372x1200_q85.jpg

While there are many artists who work from regional centres, my art has a symbiotic relationship with nature, created in the bush and inspired by it. Throughout my long artistic career I have sought to create

unique depictions of the Australian bush by combining abstraction and realism to convey its light effects, vegetation patterns and organic structures. Moreover I have of late been inspired by Sidney Nolan's age centred realisation that: "The fact [of being over] seventy and maybe going to say goodbye to it all sharpens …[one's] perception" (Hawley, 1993, p. 173). Because of this long-lived symbiotic relation with the bush near Indigenous communities, I have sought an ethos entwining elements from non-Indigenous and Indigenous heritages. This has been undertaken through protocols of reciprocity, a tenet of Indigenous culture. Commentator Cameo Dalley considers reciprocity to be a transformative experience, especially when it enables Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come together in authentic ways (2015, p. 51). Helena Grehan also emphasises its importance for cultural interrelationships by quoting the Pitjantjatjara assertion: *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, - "I give you something, you give me something". Dalley considered this to be "responding to the other rather than [to] what the other can do for" you (2010, pp. 40, 42). Hence, an important premise of this project is to explore the nature of reciprocity as shared through my art practice. Because of my long-standing immersion in the bush, I have come to see the possibilities of a shared presence evaluated from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.

1.5 THEORETICAL LIMITATIONS

While autoethnography and practice-led-research have much in their favour, they also have limitations. These can be ethical or claims a focus on the self (subjectivity) can affect research quality (Mendez, 2013). Ngunjiri et al., state that: "although most social scientists have been trained to guard against subjectivity (self-driven perspectives) and separate the self from research activities, this in fact remains an impossible task. Ultimately scholarship is connected inextricably with researcher "self-interest, experience, and familiarity" (2010). In order to counter this, autoethnographic researchers seek to avoid solipsism and

keep their research focused, avoiding excessive subjectivity (McNamara, 2012, pp. 6, 11). I have used autoethnography as the means for explicating and analysing the key influences and events that have informed my long-standing and current art practice. I have also used data about the self and specific contexts so as to gain an "understanding of the connectivity between [my] self and others" (Ngunjiri et al., 2010, p. 2). Focusing on 'self' though, challenges the traditional concepts of neutrality and objectivity in quantitative research, but when undertaken "with methodological rigor", autoethnography enables greater flexibility, originality and access to the lived experience of life stories (Wall, 2006, pp. 8-9).

There are also other criticisms that include: the necessity for other's consent, Indigenous protocols[6], and issues pertaining to respect, privacy, "self-disclosure" and "emotional vulnerability" (Ngunjiri, 2010; Smith-Shank & Keifer Boyd, 2007, p. 2). The matter of 'self-disclosure' in truth telling, particularly for First Nations people, requires sensitivity in researcher boundaries, as well as an awareness of how others feel about their portrayal (Ngunjiri et al., 2010). Researcher bias can also be problematic for traditional researchers in inquiry-based research and how the research connects people with new knowledge (Wall, 2006, pp. 2-3). Practice-led research is one approach unsuited to quantitative research, because the qualitative deals "with scientific, deductive approaches, research questions and hypotheses from theoretical models" tested against empirical evidence (Haseman, 2006, p. 98). Therefore, PLR requires an understanding of its limits, especially where Carole Kirk (2014) argues for its importance in cooperative endeavour. Although PLR works well for collegial activities like drama, it can pose problems for artists working alone because the involvement of others is limited or negligible. There is also the objection from critics who decry exhibiting art

[6] 'Ethical conduct' is more than simply doing the right thing. It involves acting in the right spirit, 'out of an abiding respect and concern for one's fellow creatures', *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*, 2020, p. 13.

"objects and images" at the end of a creative process, because they consider the finished artwork self-aggrandising or elitist (Rutter et al., 2013, p. 465). Nevertheless, for me individual and collaborative approaches have equal validity because they are simply a product of differing circumstances. For instance, while my work is usually created in isolation, sometimes I paint alongside others or interact in conferences and zooms to gain challenging and useful feedback (See Appendix 5).

1.6 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduces the overarching research question and purpose of my study, which is to create visual art while immersed in the Australian bush and explore the significance of deep immersion on my art practice. This has been undertaken from a rural positioning and analysed through autoethnography, autobiography and practice-led research so as to interrogate themes such as: identity and heritage, artists' responses, spirituality and Indigenous issues.

Chapter 2 presents the significance of literature and art history in conceptions of the bush along with the importance of reciprocity and cultural convergence as this affects Indigenous people. Such concepts tie into figurative introduced Europeanised baggage labelled 'foreign spectacles' and interrogated as such in art history scholarship. The chapter also considers intersectional perspectives in Australian art history in relation to Indigenous culture. From this proceeds acknowledgement of the sacredness of land and the consideration of the kinds of landscape art created by notable Australian artists.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology for this project in addition to my autobiography *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story.* Both the autoethnography and autobiography recount personal stories with the former analysing the development of my art and the latter a creative work adding chronological detail relevant to the exegesis. Immersion as a significant perspective for the investigation of landscape

art is also explored as well as continued analysis of my creative processes and approaches.

Chapter 4 develops the story of my art practice through reflecting on the themes of: family heritage, life purpose, reading the land, and the sharing of 'Country'. Summarily I consider my painting activity a physical, explorative, reflective, poetic undertaking inspired by the bush, childhood memories and family. Aligned with this is the sharing of Country with Indigenous people and identifying the protocols in cultural exchanges. The chapter concludes with an overview of the key artworks presented in my Doctor of Creative Arts (DCA) portfolio.

Chapter 5 analyses the project findings with the understanding that the Australian bush is: unique and enables deep insights and spiritual renewal. Especially significant are the seasonal aspects of my work and the transformative power latent in art for expressing this. The chapter also discusses my concern over human impact on the environment, an effect precipitating the need for a new ecological philosophy (aka Ecosophy) so as to avoid further damaging nature. Crucial for resolution is the importance of Indigenous bush knowledge, sustainable ecological management, and acknowledgement of the need for entwining cultural legacies to achieve inter-racial harmony.

CHAPTER 2: CREATIVE PRACTICE LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to interrogate interpretations of the bush in literature and Australian art and includes an artist survey within the field. My immersion in the bush brought physical experiential knowledge relevant to my inquiry and along with my work in Indigenous communities, exerted a significant impact on my art and a lens for examining the art of others. One outcome of this situation was an entwining with Indigenous perspectives that put my westernised education under deep scrutiny. Relationally this shared culture revealed the value of cooperation, communication and understanding for equitable friendships with Indigenous people.

During this time, the 1980's, when I worked at Toomelah and Boggabilla, there was in play a momentum towards racial convergence. The literature then began to analyse and advocate for cultural convergences as exemplified in the work of the following authors: (Donaldson & Donaldson, 1985; Benterrak & Muecke, 1984, Smith, 1991, Sayers, 1994; and Sutton, 1989). Before the 1980's the dominant art commentators tended to ignore or limit the work of First Nations' artists (Moore, 1934; Smith, 1945; Hughes, 1970). Art historian and commentator Bernard Smith's text *Australian Painting* (1962) focused on Australia's European legacy and ignored Indigenous art. However, art historian Terry Smith updated Bernard's work in 1991 with further revisions undertaken in 2001 by the art critic Christopher Heathcote. Smith's revision included a seminal chapter on Aboriginal art that contributed to cultural transformation in Australian art history. In 1983 Smith posed critical questions hypothesising whether a "transitional culture" had indeed been created (p. 28). My project responds to his question by interrogating matters of spiritual connection with nature and my positioning as a non-Indigenous Australian artist working from the environs where Indigenous artists lived and worked.

The move to transitional reassessment of Indigenous culture was also evident in Ian and Tamsin Donaldson's writing (1983), which continued the shift from Eurocentric validation to entwined Indigenous and non-Indigenous reappraisals. Furthering this empathic process, Andrew Sayers, in *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century* (1994) foregrounded Indigenous artists who had worked under colonial controls, but still managed to affirm their culture through their art. Lin Onus, in the Foreword, contended that Sayers' book filled "significant gaps in the jigsaw of the dispossessed", allowing "Aboriginal artists to speak to us through the years and tell of their lives and the events" (p. x). Sayers' aim was to present that "part of Australia's visual heritage" hidden until recently (p. 9). Although all cultures have forms of expression such as dance, music, painting, drawing or carving, the arts have been in the main interpreted through European aesthetics. Therefore, Indigenous art was generally regarded through the Eurocentric prisms of ethnography and anthropology, rather than as aesthetic cultural contributions in their own right. As a result Aboriginal art became seen more as the purview of the museum than an Australian art gallery[7] (Appendix 7). With this in mind the documentary and book *Dreamings – the art of Aboriginal Australia* (1989), was created to accompany an exhibition of Aboriginal art where the contributors were anthropologists and mostly members of the Division of Anthropology at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide. This documentary and exhibition became the first 'extended overview' dealing with Aboriginal art history. *Dreamings – the art of Aboriginal Australia* included an emphasis on "Aboriginal images of landscape" that revealed they were "not attempts to capture appealing views of nature" but "representations of instances of Dreamings", notably the "ancestral

[7] For example, in 1953 an Australian Aboriginal Culture Exhibition was organised that toured the United States and Canada and returned to tour Australia in 1957 (Aust. National Committee for UNESCO, 1964). As a result Aboriginal culture then seemed to me likely more accessible in museums because in my early years the NSW's National Gallery holdings were confined to a poorly lit basement floor along with Micronesian and Melanesian art. Bernard's work has thus been partly retrospectively redeemed by Terry Smith's survey of Desert art, which Terry linked to traditional culture from 1970 to 1990.

beings" continuing, "to inhere in the living generations" (Sutton, pp. 15, 17).

Since then other commentators added to this foundational research by reassessing and transitioning the positive values of empathy, friendship and spiritual awareness needed for revising Australian cultural identity (including Muecke, 1984; Rose, 1996; Collingwood-Whittick 2008; McLean, 2013; Judd, 2014; and Berryman, 2016). Such authors foregrounded the pressing need for resolution of the problems besetting colonially legated modern Australia and this similarly informed my approach in my connection to the bush and local Indigenous communities.

2.1 MAJOR THEMES IN THE LITERATURE

2.1.1 THE BUSH IN AUSTRALIAN ART HISTORY

The Australian bush is a key facet of my artistic identity and integral to my life there. Autoethnography and autobiography were therefore appropriate choices for this investigation because these base in long time personal experience. In this approach I discovered precedents for my writing an autobiography in Lloyd Rees' *The Small Treasures of a Lifetime (1969)* and *Peaks and Valleys* (1985). His memoirs of Australian art provided a model for contextualising my art in relation to other artists and communicating my experiences of the Australian bush as an accompaniment to my exegesis.

Now given the nature of this exploration, it is also critical to acknowledge the sacred ongoing connection to Country that is integral to First Nations people in a continuous tradition lasting over forty thousand years (Sutton & Anderson, 1988, p. 5). A similar connection to the natural world generates the key themes of my art based in the enlightenment inherent in the landscape. For the Indigenous people however, colonialism had a profound disruption on their culture and links to land. By contrast, from early settlement days, colonial artists imported aesthetic styles for representing the environment (Russo, 2007, pp. 200-201), seeing it figuratively through "foreign spectacles" of exoticism (Berryman, 2016, p.

575). Within these conventions lay a dominant English tradition underpinning colonial art from 1788 that included portraiture, topography, romanticism and realism (Berryman, 2016). By the late 19th century, a group emerged known as the Heidelberg School that included the major artists: Arthur Streeton (1867–1943), Tom Roberts (1856–1931), Charles Conder (1868–1909) and Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917). This grouping marked a shift to a home grown iconography that was eventually venerated by most non-Indigenous people as constituting Australia's national art style (Mah, 1997, p. 16).

The first to really highlight and accept Aboriginal art as "worthy of aesthetic engagement" were "Arty anthropologists" who recognised its aesthetic qualities (Fisher, 2012, p. 55). This resulted in a changed appreciation in Australian culture, moving from a focus on anthropology and ethnography, to it as art in its own right (Fisher, 2012, p. 177). Berryman (2016) though, argues that the dominant attitudes of non-Indigenous artists towards the landscape in the latter part of the last century changed dramatically, with non-Indigenous artists viewing the land in their own unique ways, and in turn being transformed by it. This led some critics to deride this attitude change as a form of ersatz Aboriginality (McLean, 1998; Macneil, 1999).

Before this more recent change, during the interwar decades, depictions of the landscape had stagnated and declined. However in the 1940s it was revitalised by Sidney Nolan (1917–1992) and Russell Drysdale (1912–1981), who each developed distinctive iconographies recasting the Australian landscape (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008, p. 71). My childhood education did not include exposure to these artists, but I remember my encounter with work of the Arrente artist Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) (Appendix 6). This was in the 1950s during my infants and primary school years. To a young boy struggling with city life, Namatjira's work conveyed a mystique of the Australian interior and evoked in me a deep nostalgia for the hills of *Kia Ora,* where my grandparents lived. While Namatjira's powerful imagery captured the uniqueness of Centre

landscapes, to a child the *Kia Ora* landscape also seemed to stretch to endless pristine wilderness, a theme I expressed in *Westland: Red Centre* (Figure 2.1, 1981).

Figure 2.1

Neville Heywood, Westland: Red Centre, marbling, acrylic, ink on paper, 21x25 cm, c. 1981.

Another highly influential artist on my work was Margaret Preston (1875–1963), who developed a design aesthetic that controversially combined Aboriginal and European iconographies, in an attempt to create a distinctive identifiable Australian visual language[8]. As an adolescent I also came across the art of the symbolic-abstractionist John Coburn whose non-figurative nature-based designs expressed a wonderful sense of "genuine religious feeling" (Smith, 1991, pp. 316, 363). I also encountered Arthur Boyd's (1920–1999) surreal painterly artwork and

[8] Controversy was aroused by Preston's work then as now, today chiefly open to "conflicting interpretations and assessments" reducible to allegations in relation to appropriation from Aboriginal art as being 'prescient and crudely appropriative' (Seigfried, 2013, p. 14).

John Olsen's Cobra-art-like imagery, including his Portalegre tapestry *Joie de Vivre* (1964-65) at the AGNSW (Figure 2.2). Olsen said: "Nature is my muse, a constant source of enlightenment and magic" (Hawley, 2016). To express this he adapted Paul Klee's mantra of "taking a line for a walk" and created "narrative through line" pictures based in landscape and figures (Hawley, 1993, p. 129). As a result these artists birthed in me a realisation of the expressive potential inherent in drawing, design and symbol, significant elements in my work.

Figure 2.2

John Olsen, Joie de Vivre, woven wool tapestry, AGNSW, 1964.

AGNSW: woven by Portalegre tapestry workshop, Portugal, 170x238 cm, 1964.

Also influential was the nomadic artist Ian Fairweather (1891-1974), whose linear calligraphic style merged Eastern, Indigenous and western iconography, relying on gesture and linearity for effect, with calligraphy forming a thematic element in my work (Hogan, 1996). Fred Williams' (1927–1982) artwork also resonated in his minimalist depictions

of the bush's sameness conveyed in signature images characterised by flat picture planes, earthy colours, design and a dichotomy of chaos to order (Broadfoot, 2014, pp. 2, 16). His unique re-visioning of the landscape mirrored my struggle to differentiate nature's order/disorder binaries, a key theme in *Pine & Scrub Celebration* (Figure 2.3). Artists like these helped me discover new insights about the landscape and inspired my own unique style.

Figure 2.3

Neville Heywood, Pine & Scrub Celebration, acrylic on paper, 55x75 cm

While Williams created his art on short trips out of the suburbs, his contemporary, the English immigrant John Wolseley (1938-) took a journeyman's view of the landscape, developing a sophisticated extension of the topographic botanic research reminiscent of Australian early maritime artists (Carmichael et al., 1982, p. 122). Employing a naturalist's eye, Wolseley incorporated aerial perspective into his

drawings, depicting the landforms and objects he encountered during his nomadic forays such as in *Arriente Desert – There is No Desert But was Once a Name* (Figure 2.4), in an approach reminiscent of traditional Indigenous artists who express their country symbolically. Wolseley was in turn inspired by Papunya art. His friendship with Turkey Tolsen Tjupurrula (1938–2001), a Pintupi-speaking Indigenous artist from the Western Desert, contributed to his belief that 'western' art resulted from a "compartmentalised way of life" compared to the "totemic expression" of Indigenous art (Wolseley in Deakin University, 1982, p. 142). A similar outlook drove me to make my home in rural areas and escape the compartmentalisation I also experienced when growing up in Sydney.

Figure 2.4

John Wolseley, Arriente Desert – There is No Desert But Was Once a Name – Jabes

https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/be/a1/af/bea1afea2cdcf0d6dc328f009484617a.jpg

As a contrast to me, located in the bush from birth, the artist Michael Nelson Tjakamara, a Walpiri elder, (1949–) drew on his traditional Indigenous culture to infuse a new cross-cultural richness into Australian art, in a linkage reminiscent of Namatjira. Tjakamara describes his artistic role as one of choosing "the *Dreaming* event" (or "relationship between the given country") and claiming his inherited "rights" (Sutton,

1989, p. 105). Tjakamara's medium is that of acrylic paint, which he uses to convey stories about The Dreaming, "a complex code of interaction" continually remodelling and reflecting "Aboriginal cosmology, sociality" and personhood (Sutton, 1989, p. 14) (Figure 2.5). Collingwood-Whittick (2008) points out that "The Dreaming", as a term is an English one "invented by non-Aborigines to reference an extraordinary … nexus that has no equivalent in Western culture" (p. 61). The Dreaming explains how things came to be and imbues Indigenous people with their laws and ways of being, making it an important consideration in viewing Indigenous art (Sutton, p. 14). From my growing awareness of its environmental cohesion, First Nations art helped the development of my signature landscape style and familial connections with the bush.

Figure 2.5

Michael Nelson Tjakamara (assisted by wife Marjorie Napaljarri), Papunya, Five Dreamings, acrylic on canvas, 1984

http://www.cooeeart.com.au/image_upload/artworks/08619411_large.jpg

As well as the influence such artists have had on my work, I have lived through many changes in art scholarship, including the re-evaluation

of Indigenous art. Although my project is informed by Australian art history, I am also mindful of the global and international influences that acted on my work and Australia's art scene. Smith sees these changes as "a world-wide shift from modern to contemporary art", and from globalisation to "all conquering capitalism" (2011, pp. 6-7). This cultural transfer makes writing an exegesis from a regional position a challenge, but one necessary for interrogating whether the art of non-Indigenous Australian artists, like myself, can be considered 'unique'. My point of difference is that the bush exerts an influence on perceptions unique to Australia, even when other styles are adapted to it. However the art most intractable to European influence (other than in materials) is that of First Nations artists whose iconography has strong connections with the land. Developing an awareness of their culture has thus helped many non-Indigenous artists, like myself, to appreciate the bush more fully and discover alternative visual languages for conveying this.

Until the 1970s art history and aesthetics were the purview of established commentators who basically ignored the cultural achievements of First Nations artists. However with the development of post modern and post-colonial theories, art history and criticism underwent a radical change. Such change formed the basis for Terry Smith's seminal critiques: *Writing the History of Australian Art: Its Past, Present and Possible Future* (1983) and *Inside Out, Outside In: Changing Perspectives in Australian Art Historiography* (2011). As a result the present focus on globalised and international art led to the demise of national art-historiography (McLean, 2006, p. 55). Nevertheless there has been a reaction against globalisation, because of its unwelcome change and homogenisation that has stimulated many to reconnect with their communities (Rentschler et al., 2015, p. 3). This brought a stronger sense of community, belonging and the renewal of "health, confidence, … self-esteem, … engagement and resilience" (Rentschler et al., 2015, p. 3). For regional and local artists especially, international changes have brought about some anxiety and identity fracturing. Turning to

neighbours and the immediate community though strengthened connections, the appreciation of others and intimate contexts for making art. It is in these local connections that bush dwellers likely have their strongest bonds.

Through my research I also found there has been a commensurate decrease in the number of images that accompany postmodern critical art writing compared to in my early adult years. In this project I emphasise the importance of images, particularly in research contexts by presenting them as "text enhanced" (Smith-Shank & Keifer-Boyd, 2007, p. 4). While traditional art history includes art photographs with analysis, there has been a change in historiography by a reduction in the accompanying of fewer, or no images (White, 1988, p. 1193). White argues that historiography is a "discourse in its own right … capable of telling us things about referents that are both different from what can be told in verbal discourse … and only told by means of visual images" (1988, p. 1193). Because images provide alternative knowledge to text it is axiomatic that an analysis of landscape art includes accompanying images. Some of the reticence in reproducing images may be due to the interpretation of finished artworks as elitist 'power' artefacts or negative associations with western colonial civilisation (Rutten et al., 2013, pp. 264-265).

Nevertheless despite the effects of colonisation, another tradition persisted. I realised this in the 1970s when I moved to North Queensland and discovered remarkable Indigenous paintings on the escarpments around Laura. These deepened my interest in Aboriginal culture because of their vitality, timelessness and "heart of life" 'holistic' sacredness rendering them at one with nature (Rose, 1996, p. 11). A related sense of sacredness also provided the thematic basis for my art, albeit from a non-Indigenous perspective. While these North Queensland paintings predated European settlement, some recorded early contact with Europeans, such as *The Giant Horse Rock Art Gallery* (Figure 2.6). These artworks (and others across Australia) provided legal evidence of the sacred relationship

of First Nations people to the land. During the 1970s however such knowledge was unknown to most non-Indigenous people and therefore not thought significant (Coleman, 2009, p. 1).

Figure 2.6

Giant Horse Gallery, Laura, NQ.

http://nationalunitygovernment.org/images/2014/rockart414-3.jpg

While the North Queensland *Guugu Yimithirr* artists had recorded European contact with Cook's beaching near Cooktown, in the later established settlement, the convict Thomas Watling (b. 1762–1814) "the first accomplished British artist to reside in Australia" (Short, 2021, p. 124) captured Australia's landscape by melding topography with a 'picturesque' style chronicling Sydney's fledgling growth (Smith, 1991, pp. 12, 15). Negative perceptions about the 'sameness' of the bush depressed him, painting what he called "non descript productions" of the bush (Short, 2021, p. 133). To overcome this Watling chose motifs of gnarly trees, winding paths, and "wildest nature" so as to create picturesque views to "inspire the soul" such as *A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove* (1794) (Smith, 1991, pp. 12-13) (Figure 2.7). His

art reveals the challenge of confronting an unfamiliar landscape, as well as the problem of cultural baggage transmitted in figuratively "foreign spectacles" minimising the ability to see the landscape in unbiased ways. As well Watling's convict status would have meant little identification with the Sydney bush because for him it was both gaol and place of exile. Watling's role became that of a "natural history" painter, under the supervision of the Surgeon General John White, immediately once Watling arrived at Sydney Cove (Short, 2021, p. 133).

Figure 2.7

Thomas Watling, A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove, 1794.

http://nationaltreasures.nla.gov.au/xpf/sites/Treasures/media/glyph/items/nla.int-ex6-s46-item.jpg

Ironically, 200 years later Fred Williams would reinterpret those perceptions of the bush's sameness that Watling had so struggled with. Using minimalist design, subjective colour and spatial flattening, Williams created a new unique semi-abstract form of aesthetic evident in *Bush Road with Cootamundras,* 1977 (Figure 2.8) (Broadfoot, 2014, p. 25).

Figure 2.8

Fred Williams, Bush Road with Cootamundras, oil on canvas, 97x107 cm, 1977.

https://www.menziesartbrands.com/sites/default/files/field/catalogue_items//DM_23831.jpg

However more than a century after Watling, Albert Namatjira rose to prominence as the first famous Aboriginal artist to work in what was then a contemporary western watercolour style. Although adapting European based iconography, a much deeper knowledge operated within his art because it was effectually a custodial affirmation of his "knowledge of Arrente country" (Rimmer, 2003). By employing European iconography Namatjira created a new form of Indigenous imagery, nevertheless Sayers (1996) points out how other Indigenous artists also managed to

adapt European iconography while still affirming their own culture[9]. In contrast Australia's non-Indigenous artists faced an opposing struggle in trying to come to terms with the Australian bush. Initially most considered the bush intimidating, with the result it took generations for an affinity to develop or non-Indigenous artists settle in the bush. One of the earliest that did was John Glover (1767-1849), an artist recognised as one of the finest Australian landscape painters of the early colonial period. In the 1830's Glover had immigrated to Mills Plain, Tasmania, where he created pictures of the unspoiled Tasmanian bush, Indigenous themes and pioneer life. For example, *A view of the Artist's House and Garden, in Mills Plain*, depicts his home and studio-gallery surrounded by a replica of an English garden. Although Glover also included details of native flora and fauna, his work situates within the "colonial picturesque" that symbolises the way imperial travellers reinforced control by great world-encompassing Britain (Smith, 2020, p. 280).

[9] These include Black Johnny (c. 1842–1883), Tommy McRae (Yackaduna) (c. 1826–1901), William Barak (c. 1824–1903), Timothy (Woorook-koonong) (early 1830s–1875) and Mickey of Ulladulla (c. 1820–1891).

Figure 2.9

John Glover, A view of the artist's house and garden, in Mills Plain, 1835.

https://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/TURNERtoMONET/Images/400/128981.jpg

Glover's work portrayed genres of the subduing of the bush: an aesthetic of the 'sublime'; and an arcadia peopled with pioneers and Aborigines. Others who managed to capture unique representations of unexplored 'virgin Australia'[10] before settler incursions were artists that accompanied exploring expeditions such as E. C. Frome (1802–1890), S. T. Gill (1818–1880), Ludwig Becker (1818–1861) and Thomas Baines (1820–1875) (McDonald, 2008, p. 283). Baines for example, was as much explorer as artist and produced arguably "the greatest body of art to come from any inland Australian expedition" creating "enduring images of inland Australia" and the north that were the first to be seen by non-Indigenous people (Kelly, 2000, pp. 94, 260). Later, as Europeans

[10] What exactly is 'virgin' country in the true sense of that word? The country was of course Indigenous land and modified over countless generations by cyclical burnings that were a regular part of care for Country. So a real sense of what actually is virgin was unknowable by colonial explorers.

explored further into the inland, urban-based artists, such as those at Heidelberg, set up communal camps in the bush outside Melbourne. Others including: Eugene Von Guérard (1811–1901), Nicholas Chevalier (1828–1902), William Piguenit (1836–1914), Louis Buvelot (1814–1888) and Julian Ashton (1851–1942) travelled on short-term trips to search out scenic subjects in ruralising NSW and Victoria. Glover though settled where he painted, unlike the temporary Heidelberg camps (Godden et al., 2006, pp. 7-8). However, in my art career I have seen many social and cultural changes that affected country locations, particularly the challenges confronting First Nations people aired in local, state and national forums. This has resulted in non-Indigenous Australians feeling 'fraught' with 'alienation', 'hostility', 'guilt and contradiction' (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008, p. 59) traceable to a 'transformation in social attitudes', realisations of Indigenous antiquity and radical changes in national and international art (Fisher, 2012, pp. 85-86). Fisher labelled this contemporary conundrum a "culture trauma in Australian public culture" unsettled by First Nations' achievements and deep-seated questioning of the reverberations of colonialism (2012, p. 83).

In re-evaluating how First Nations cultural achievements have reshaped Australian art, Namatjira's life looms large. In 1934 he met Rex Battarbee (1893–1973) and John Gardner when they exhibited at Hermannsburg. Namatjira then accompanied Battarbee on painting excursions and learned how to paint using watercolour. Battarbee was so impressed by Namatjira's aptitude that he organised exhibitions of Namatjira's work, including a solo exhibition at the Melbourne Fine Art Society Gallery.

Figure 2.10

Albert Namatjira, Central Australian Landscape, watercolour on paper, c.1953.

http://www.deutscherandhackett.com/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/lot/image/100550.jpg?itok=3j-nPSh9

Namatjira's paintings of the Centre, such as: *Central Australian Landscape*, c.1953 (Figure 2.10), appealed widely to non-Indigenous people, but despite their scenic genre, his work was still intimately related to the country that provided his subjects. These he transcribed in a European genre that cloaked his "deep attachment" yet garnering Namatjira valuable "financial return" (Kleinert, 2000). Whatever inequalities had existed in Battarbee and Namatjira's friendship, it seems to have been characterised by: "lifelong collaboration", equality and mateship (Edmond, 2014, pp. 152, 183-5, 180-1, 191). Their alliance in this instance exemplified the importance of respect and mutuality for inter-racialism, a reciprocal relationship anthropologist Lucking contends as important because "it is expected and … makes personal encounters meaningful" (Stodulka et. al., 2019, p. 110). Though I admired

Namatjira's artworks when growing up, elites back then dismissed his work as second rate; blind to his connection to the country he painted (Batty, 1963, pp. 140-141). In drawing here on personal recollection, my high school art teacher once penalised me in an exam for citing Namatjira as an important Australian artist. When I questioned her afterwards, she claimed there were many artists much better than Namatjira although my teacher did not justify her statement further. On reflection, this example illuminates the forms of art censorship that undermined Australian art during my early education. Nevertheless, as an adult I came to see Namatjira's art as a *tour de force* of Indigenous achievement forcing social change. Kleinert (2000, para. 4) asserts that although superficially Namatjira's paintings appear as conventional European landscapes, he "painted with country in mind", continually returning to sites that were imbued with "ancestral associations".

Success did bring degrees of recognition to a number of Indigenous artists, but for a long time it was marginal and on White Australian terms (Fisher, 2012, p. 47). Indigenous artists and cultural leaders like Namatjira and William Barak (c. 1824–1903) lived at the periphery of 'white society' (Stanner, 1979, p. 240). In an associated way my work is also conceived on a periphery, although my relationship with the land as my chief subject and theme is different to that for Aboriginal artists. From my fringe location, isolated in many ways from mainstream society, I mediate a deep attachment to Country despite my non-Indigeneity. As previously noted, many non-Indigenous artists also held Aboriginal art in high regard just as I do, typically Margaret Preston and Tony Tuckson (1921–1973). Preston saw in it a way of creating a new national cultural identity, one conceived as "free of Great Britain" and "internationalism" (Butel, 1995, p. 1). Today though Preston's work attracts allegations of "appropriation", even though she claimed it was "not copied" from Aboriginal art, but "applied" as "principles" (Butel, 1995, p. 63) (Figure 2.11). While Preston may not have appropriated Aboriginal art directly, there remains a sense in which her approach was exploitive, especially

since she applied it to home décor and furnishings (Leslie, 2015, pp. 9-10). Nonetheless in my practice I have sought to navigate those peripheral spaces between Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture and create an art free of the tensions that Preston's approach aroused. Her quasi use of Aboriginal iconography, selected for design attractiveness, meant Aboriginal art was separated from the context it was created for and thus resulted in a form of 'one-sided' appropriation (Butel, 1995, p. 46).

Figure 2.11

Margaret Preston, Aboriginal Glyph, c.1958. AGNSW.

https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/DA2.1960/

Hence a critical aspect of my approach to the Australian bush as the source for my art is acknowledging the lineage of First Nations artists (as well as non-Indigenous artists) in communicating responses to the land.

It is for me an ongoing challenge in depicting places I am attached to, to reciprocally recognise the sacred relationship Indigenous artists have to them also. Fiona Hamilton for instance similarly realised how important reciprocal values are to Aboriginal people and noted the "protocols" set in place "to establish … and maintain engagement and relationships with each other and others" by drawing on the appropriate 'behaviour, respect and knowledge' needed (2017, p. 3). By not acknowledging these protocols some non-Indigenous artists assume that they have the "right to appropriate" Indigenous art, but this really is one-sided "cultural hegemony" (Coleman, 2009, p. 2). For reciprocity to occur, cross-cultural mutuality and respect is essential. As an artist working in such spaces, I refer to the protocols that have been developed by government agencies such as the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), the National Gallery of Australia (NGA), various education departments, and representative First Nations groups.

In looking back I realise my awareness of the growing tensions aroused by Aboriginal and non-Indigenous dissenting voices began in my twenties. At the time there were media reports about Geoffrey Bardon (1940–2000), a student ahead of me at Teachers College. Bardon taught at Papunya from 1971 to 1973 and employed an approach that helped precipitate the emergence of Aboriginal art and fostering widespread interest in it. Through Bardon's influence, artists, including the Walpiri Nelson Tjakamara (b. 1946), began reaching out to non-Indigenous audiences. As well the Papunya Tula Art movement arising from Bardon's cooperative approach had other consequences, such as when Wolseley met Indigenous people near Papunya and befriended Turkey Tolsen Tjupurrula (Carmichael et al., 1982, pp. 140, 143). This encounter was important for Wolseley's artistic development because it brought the realisation of Indigenous connection to Country; compared to the compartmentalisation Wolseley believed affected western perceptions (Carmichael, 1982, p. 142). During his painting trips Wolseley travelled out into the desert to "renew" his "links with nature" and "feel right",

(Hawley, 1993, p. 139). Similarly for both of us, the bush provides a transcendent re-energising, in places also First Nations homelands. I found that the slower pace of life there provides important opportunities for reflection, an activity essential for creative thought.

Contemporary research has shown that there is significant ”cognitive advantage” and “peak psychosocial health” associated with time in nature and this can play “a critical role in how we think and behave” (Atchley et al., 2012, pp. 1-2.). Other artists also identified the healing qualities provided by the bush, and some sought to pass them on as immersive legacies. During the 1980s artists Clifton Pugh (1924–1990), and 1990s Arthur Boyd, used their bush properties to encourage communal art reminiscent of the Heidelberg ‘en plein air’ camps (AGNSW, n.d., collection notes). Similarly, my Atholwood property provided a home base for my art from which I shared in workshops, painting groups, exhibitions, external study, teaching and contacts with artists and friends from Boggabilla and Toomelah. Several of these latter formed the Euraba Artists group and in that context they are also immersed, living in isolated communities in northern NSW (Appendix 8).

The bush as a subject matter source therefore provided a variety of interpretations for these and other non-Indigenous artists. For instance going back in time, John Glover viewed the bush as a paradisal “mellow pastoral arcadia” which yielded prosperity (Hughes, 1970, p. 41). William Strutt perceived in it an inherent drama that he typified in *Black Thursday* (1862–64), a painting depicting the drama of a disastrous bushfire (Hughes, 1970). David Davies sensed a deep lyricism in nature, which he expressed in *Moonrise* (1894), thus finding a nocturne of beauty in the humdrum (McDonald, 2008). Alternatively, Arthur Streeton captured a different kind of drama and grandeur in the bush by employing descriptive topography to convey its awe and distinctive light (Hughes, 1970). Next by the mid twentieth century, Arthur Boyd began to create unique landscapes that were characterised by mystic, racialist symbols while his contemporary, Russell Drysdale, interpreted the landscape in

existential terms, communicating the concept of struggle in an impersonal universe. Clifton Pugh on the other hand sensed a freedom in the bush, and expressed it in an "animistic view" (Hughes, 1970, p. 237) of "nature red in tooth and claw" (Haynes, 1998, p. 249). The intensely thoughtful painter Ian Fairweather though, perceived the Australian bush as a spiritual universe that gave much the same satisfaction as he believed some people might achieve through religion (Abbott-Smith, 1978, p. 133). For Sidney Nolan the bush became a backdrop to human conflict, visualised like a theatre set in his Ned Kelly series. John Olsen's response was the use of an abstract, intuitive, linear, symbolist style that celebrated nature and the Australian environment (Hughes, 1970). Finally the ideographic artist John Coburn created a symbolic oeuvre which he conjured up "memories of experience" that archetypally emblazoned nature (Hughes, 1970, pp. 276-277).

All of these artists have informed my practice and helped me to express my deep love for the bush. However I think my attitude is very similar to John Wolseley, who 'experienced' the landscape by moving over it rather than as "an onlooker who … distanced his subject" (Carmichael et al., 1982, p. 150). Nonetheless despite the uniqueness of the work of all the above artists, what they created was birthed out of western cultural roots, as is mine. This realisation moved me to recognise the unique intersectional perspectives of First Nations art and its subsequent effect on Australian culture (Appendix 9). Nevertheless, despite the fragmentation of Indigenous culture, several urban-based Indigenous artists emerged wanting to re-establish their roots and reconnect with their 'Country', whether their original homelands or cities covered with tar and cement. Mary Tarran, interviewed by Lily Maire O'Neill said: "Even with bitumen and tar over the land, it's still our land. You can't destroy spirit, you can never destroy spirit" (2016, p. 225). However, the Indigenous artist Gordon Bennett (1955–2014) came to see the land as no longer alive with the spirit of his ancestors, but instead a "dead place to traverse between … cities" (Britton, 1992, p. 94). Thus for many

contemporary Indigenous artists, their work has been drawn into a political arena reliant on proclamations of Aboriginality that protest their dispossession and cultural invalidation. Gordon Bennett is one who came to believe all Aboriginal art is a political statement and wondered whether "you are an activist or an artist" how are these "different ways of being?" (McLean, 2013, p. 167).

2.1.2 RECIPROCAL VISIONS – SHARING PLACE AND CULTURE

In the literature dealing with culture and the bush, Geoffrey Bardon's work at Papunya and W. E. H. Stanner's Boyer Lecture (1968) *After the Dreaming*, (published 1969) had a significant cross-cultural impact. This re-visioning expanded in the 1980s to encompass historian Henry Reynolds' empathic rethink regarding racial frontiers and Indigenous and non-Indigenous experience of them. In art history, Terry Smith furthered change by recognising Indigenous achievement culturally, while Krim Benterrak, Stephen Muecke and Paddy Roe affirmed Indigenous knowledge in friendship-based cross-cultural dialogue. Ian and Tam Donaldson's contribution was to foreground inter-racial experiential perceptions in the visual art record (Donaldson, 1985), while beyond the Australian context, in India, Gayatri Spivak's contribution was in asserting the legitimacy of Indigenous voices as part of subverting the notion around racial, class-based and gendered 'othering' (Nichols, 2022). As contrast, Margaret Preston's achievement was that of drawing attention to Indigenous art even though, as she said, she had a limited understanding of its meaning, claiming regarding totemism: "Mythology and symbolism do not matter to the artist, only to the anthropologist" (Butel, 1995, p.52). This limited understanding of Indigenous culture applied to her art resulted in much critique. Nevertheless, Preston arguably exerted a significant influence on non-Indigenous attitudes because she did recognise the authenticity of Indigenous art compared to the European derivation she considered "atrophied" (Butel, 1995, p. 49). Preston rejected the hold European artistic traditions had on Australian art and

instead set out "to develop a truly Indigenous Australian art" and criticise the effects of internationalism in *The Home Journal* and *Art in Australia* magazines (Butel, 1995, pp. 49-50).

Between 1923 and 1949 she wrote several articles on Indigenous art and critiqued European art, justifying her appropriation of Aboriginal iconography and stipulating conventions for a "national art based on Aboriginal forms" (Butel, 1995, p. 51). In *The Indigenous Art of Australia*, (1925) Preston rejected the hold of European taste in Australia and espoused "the art of a people who had never seen or known anything different from themselves" and glad to be "rid of the mannerisms of a country other than [her] own", believing from the "art of such people … a national art can spring" (p. 44). Now today there is greater understanding of the cultural symbolism and sophistication of Indigenous art; but I think Preston's greatest achievement was that she managed to create some wonderfully original perceptive works, especially of flora, which she imbued with beauty, sensitivity and design. However, her works derived from Aboriginal art lacked her usual subtleness and flair because (according to a *Bulletin* critic) it was quarrying another culture and would "debilitate her talent" (Butel, 1995, p. 59).

Contemporary commentators' critiques of her Eurocentric attitudes, have described "an uneasy legacy of incoherency" over questions of "ownership", cultural insensitivity (SMH, July 25, 2005) and the "civilizing [of] primitive artifacts" (Roussi, 2004, p.6). In recognising this cultural imprint on Preston's art, this exegesis notes how being immersed in and near Indigenous communities must mean engaging in respectful relationships and recognition of community mores. Information provided by the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is useful here; because its published resources relate to the codes of practice in social media etiquette, dispute resolution, artists' rights and copyright protection. As a result of historical changes, art historian Terry Smith believes Australia's Europeanised art scene requires a "broader view" to change the status quo in western sensibilities (1983, p. 10). Ian McLean

moved the debate on arguing that the "anachronistic" ideology of *terra nullius* had rendered Australian art "irrelevant" (2006, pp. 51-52). Nevertheless there was pragmatic positivity at play in Benterrak, Muecke and Roe's *Reading the Country* (1984), which showed how First Nations and non-Indigenous friends could come together and learn from each other during a shared journey. What *Reading the Country* did was introduce examples of practical reconciliation by documenting the experiences and conversations of three friends travelling across Paddy Roe's country. Their mutual interactions resonated with my own experiences working in Aboriginal communities and learning from elders there.

2.1.3 A NEW IDENTITY – FINDING RESOLUTION

The Australian bush is of course a real locality, an ostensibly practical place where people live and work. For First Nations people the bush has is "no place where traditional owners cannot see the imprint of sacred creation" (Rose, 1996, p. 18). My artwork though results from a synthesis of my cultural roots and family background to convey a vision of 'Country' expressing the sacredness of nature (Figure 2.12). But for the non-Indigenous Australians living in metropolitan areas, there is often a lack of understanding regarding the challenges faced by those living in remote, rural, and regional areas. In comparison time in the bush taught me through my grandfather, that it is "from the deserts the prophets come" (A. D. Hope, cited in Thompson et. al., 1961, p. 120). Life in the bush has brought our family resilience and insight for dealing with the busyness of modern life. Most importantly, my shepherd grandfather George Thompson, who I knew as Pop, was for me a significant mentor and lived a fully integrated life; in contrast to those 'ultimate men' that Hope poeticised as being estranged "on the edge of alien shores" (cited in Thompson et. al., 1961, p. 120).

Figure 2.12

Neville Heywood, Sanctuary, apple gum & ironbark, 160x120 cm, 1978

This 'no place' existential view was explored by Ian McLean in *The Necessity of (Un)Australian Art History: Writing for the New World* claiming that although many people think of Australia as an actual place, it "remains a utopian concept (i.e. a no-place)" (2006, p. 54). I see McLean's argument as a sophisticated variant of *terra nullius* and philosophically misleading as many real people do live in this real 'actual' place. McLean's repudiation of localised self-identity regarding place and nation at the cost of globalisation and postmodernism requires a strategic response by those conscious of their regional identity. I have sought to interrogate this concern in my art practice. My landscapes, even if conceived in memory, are grounded in real places (not 'utopias') where

real (not hypothetical) people live. My art is thus ineradicably linked to bush environments and experience of them. Yet there are some artists who set out to "make landscape imagery without … referencing an actual encounter in a 'real' landscape or place". Their concern is "with the nature of representation" or art for art's sake (Tucker, 2006, p. 96).

There is also increased controversy over how national identity issues play out in Australian landscape art, especially with the emergence of Indigenous art changing the national art narrative. For this reason it is important to highlight the differing attitudes and "cross cultural interaction" that happen between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists (Eckermann et al., 1998, p. 124). Commentator Anne-Marie Willis (1993) emphasised how it is important to rethink the "image of modern Australia" and advocates that visual images can present a "major mechanism for …… the appearances of national identities" in reassessments of mainstream art history radically changed by Indigenous achievement. This change involves interrogating the embedded "discourses and social practices" that render Indigenous (and other non-Anglo cultures) invisible in the art history story until recently (Willis, 1993, p. 27). In tandem with this is the deflation of the presumptive authenticity of many Australian landscape artists' works that Willis describes as "city dwellers" views of the country (1993, p. 64). This observation aligns with Russell Drysdale's contention that "few Australian painters know the country. … They make excursions into it, but that isn't enough, and they remain on the outside looking in. Any [one] who has lived and worked in the bush … sees it differently" (Hetherington, 1963, p. 111).

Issues of national identity are important to my exegesis and practical art because through them I gain insights into the way the bush has been perceived nationally. Sarah Gray has contrasted the western landscape traditions "of possessing land" with those of First Nations traditions that represent space, place and ways "of belonging to Country" (2014, pp. 13, 15). Bill Hawthorn, commenting on non-Indigenous

attitudes, argues that Australian artists "have been intrigued, mystified, scared, intimidated, excited and held in awe by … the Australian landscape" to the extent it has coloured, conditioned and shaped their interpretations (1987, n p.). This is important for analysing Australia's art history narrative as over time a plethora of significant artworks have contributed to shaping the national identity. Change also came covertly in new directions beyond mainstream Australian art, in a quiet coming together of First Nations and non-Indigenous artists and writers seeking non-colonial convergent friendships. Stephen Muecke typified this when he stated how in Australia "most commonly uttered place names refer to large unities … so large they are become abstract and general" and evoking the "stereotyped and familiar" (1984, p. 17). Muecke argued that the "study of specific, local places puts things more on the scale of everyday living" presenting a strong contrast with globalisation's threat to local identities in its largely western homogenisation (1984, p. 17).

From my view though I see bush places as natural places, where Aboriginal people have a deep connection with the land and there is space for non-Indigenous people to share a similar attachment (Appendix 10). My regard for Aboriginal culture intensified when I taught Indigenous students at Mareeba and Goondiwindi along with friendship with the Muluridji artist Jimmy Archer. Stimulated by Jimmy's paintings, I cut bark from Box trees on *Sky Camp* and took it to Goondiwindi for Aboriginal students to paint on. Their subject choices resulted in artworks reflecting the motifs of the local Goomeroi artists such as Warren Jarrett (dec'd). In *Riverside: Boggabilla Toomelah*, c. 1987 (Figure 4.10) my work acknowledged the important relationship of Aboriginal people to Country using the patterning on river gums as a metaphor for Indigeneity. During my time in Goondiwindi and then Boggabilla the river gave a significant context to my art and was also a pleasant place to which my wife Lyn (of Indigenous descent) and I arranged excursions with TAFE students. The outdoors and river were regularly accessed thus becoming an extended classroom. This relationship fostered an awareness of Aboriginal local

history and contextualised the sense of urgency Aboriginal Elders had of needing to pass on important knowledge to the next generation. Eileen McIntosh (also called 'Wibble') told of this responsibility in her *A Time and Place,* an unpublished booklet recounting the "doings" of "loved ones" and "old ancestors gone on before" (n.d., preface). A number of the local Indigenous artists also continued to pass on this traditional family knowledge through their art, including the Euraba group, Rod McIntosh, Eleanor Binge and musician Roger Knox (Appendix 11).

In 1993 Eileen McIntosh (Aunty Wibble) taught me Goomeroi language at Boggabilla TAFE. I wanted to learn Goomeroi because it was the traditional language of the people I was working with. Earlier I had studied externally a course in Aboriginal Studies with the South Australian College of Advanced Education (1984-86). Previously in 1983 I had also taught Aboriginal students at Goondiwindi where I invited the local Goomeroi elders to tell of their life experiences to my Senior History class. Afterwards Lyn and I returned to the district in 1986 to teach at Toomelah, oscillating with employment elsewhere. We first met Aunty Wibble in 1991 and for Lyn and I; she played an equivalent role to that of Paddy Roe who guided Stephen Muecke and Krim Benterrak across his country (see Section 2.1.2). Wibble's friendship helped us to understand community dynamics and accompanied us on some of our travels. Muecke described just such a relationship:

> At the beginning of a journey, when you are about to cover strange territory, you are always ignorant, and you have to rely on the local guides. They are the ones who know the safe tracks as well as places of danger ... one ignores the local guide at one's peril, for he is telling us how to survive in this country, and survival depends not just on the right sort of physical treatment of the country, but also on what one says about it, writes about it, and the images one makes of it. (Cited in Benterrak et al., 1984, Introduction)

At Boggabilla then Wibble became our guide, our bush authority and a custodian of knowledge. In *A Time and Place* she wrote about wild food, Toomelah traditions, war heroes, humour, sad history, tribal punishment, the old people, government controls and the last Boggabilla corroboree. Because of our friendship, Wibble had a signboard made for our home emblazoned with the words: *Mandallah Juddah*; Goomeroi for 'many ways in helping'. We were pleased to help in the community because while we did so in many ways, Wibble guided us in many others. Her friendship, and that of the other elders, influenced our attitudes to the land and showed how big a responsibility respect for Country is. To this end friendship benefited my art practice. While I am heir to a myriad of cultural influences, community relationships introduced new perspectives. Unlike Preston, who applied Aboriginal art as iconographic principles, I created my artwork drawing on a lifetime's engagement with the bush and an exposure to First Nations art these days problematized by awareness of misappropriation. This is also an issue for some contemporary First Nations artists, who draw on traditional culture yet utilise non-Indigenous knowledge and techniques in more connected ways than previously.

Nevertheless many First Nations artists draw on their traditional heritage while simultaneously utilising western iconographies and technologies in: media, symbolism, communication, and economic independence. As a case in point, Indigenous artists at Boggabilla set up a papermaking business guided by their TAFE teacher Paul West who had studied papermaking overseas. West's knowledge and the local artists' enthusiasm resulted in a successful 1998 owned project entitled *Euraba Artists and Papermakers*[11]. The group received the Prime Minister's National Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships in 2000 while its artists combined European papermaking methods with Indigenous sensibilities applyied to bush materials and 'stories' of 'their Country'. The Euraba Artists also took part in institutional exhibitions and

11 Details about *Euraba Artists and Papermakers* at www.idaia.com.au>art-centres>eu.

won national art awards, presenting work focussed on fish, animals, river plants and the Eurah bush.

Although the residents of Toomelah live in a communal bush settlement, large tracts of the surrounding land remain off limits. During Wibble's visits to *Sky Camp* this marginalisation clarified as she recounted a 'sad history' of massacres along the border from stories passed down by the eyewitness elders Old Charlie Dennison and Granny Alice McGrady (both dec'd.) (Appendix 12). Events like this critically impacted on how I felt about the landscape and my place within it. While I love the bush, I recognise this land had never been ceded and that Aboriginal people had their overt ownership and free movement curtailed by white settlement. It is problematic to me to realise that my forebears lived along this same border area during this time. Thus Peter Read argues for an empathising with Indigenous perspectives over the question of land because: "This Aboriginal land is your land as well as ours. It is an imprimatur which the non-Indigenous have to earn" (Read, n.d., p. 387). Read's statement stokes the tensions non-Indigenous people feel about their place in relation to the land and their legitimacy in it, especially since areas where my ancestors lived had such a violent history (Appendix 13).

The area's sad historical record brings a psychological tension to those living and working there, as well as for Aboriginal people, where healing is possible only through being shown authentic respect, reparation, and reconciliation. For me, teaching in Indigenous communities has been one way of reciprocating my responsibility, as well as bringing to awareness the local "social networks" and "territorial groupings" where the land and Dreaming are a connected experience (Sutton, 1989, p. 14). This balance the Euraba group is working to recover, especially for their young ones. Further many of the places where I have lived have similarly brought relationships that enabled me to hear Aboriginal stories first hand and gain some insight into the challenges Indigenous people face. Warren Jarrett's (dec'd.) story is one. He was an established Toomelah artist when I met him in 1993, creating

artworks affirmative of Aboriginality, which helped him deal with the institutionalised trauma he experienced as a child after removal from his family. This also happened to Wibble's father, Walter Duncan, Wibble telling how a number not name, identified them as wards of the state.

In addressing such sad histories, several non-Indigenous and Indigenous commentators interrogated the Indigenous / non-Indigenous divide. In art history Ian and Tam Donaldson, writing in *Seeing the First Australians* (1985), critiqued the 'power relationships' enculturated in settler depictions of Aboriginal people. This issue of power in relationships is something I have sought to address in my artistic practice so that ownership and dominance are not legitimating factors for my settler descendant presence; yet such presence is these days a significant concern in the arts and history. Andrew Sayers, in *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century* (1996) aimed to reverse colonial ethnocentrism by showing how Indigenous artists maintained links with their culture and 'Country' despite the impact of settlement. Both Donaldson and Sayers' contributions lay in critiquing colonial bias and the effect it had on Indigenous society. In a similar way I regard my work as empathic to the Indigenous situation, precipitated by my living in and near their communities. I agree with Barry Judd (2014), who recommended that non-Indigenous Australians become more open-minded, ready to listen and dialogue, respectful and committed to long-term relationships. Central to Indigenous attitudes is the tenet that "all landscape is someone's home'"(Sutton, 1989, p. 17). Through this Indigenous lens the name of our family property *Sky Camp* makes a statement about land and nature (as previously indicated) to describe a spirit place and temporary camp where the generations are temporary and our role that of caretaker.

Thus I have learned much from Indigenous people, including ideas from the Indigenous educator Tyson Kaawoppa Yunkaporta in *8-ways* (2009), which relay insights about Aboriginal learning to help non-Indigenous people understand Indigenous thought. His methodology is a visually explicated one, using an interconnected circular design to

symbolise: Community Links, Deconstruct / Reconstruct, Non-Linear, Land Links, Symbols and Images, Non-verbal, Learning Maps and Story Sharing. Each is seen as integral to the whole and because of the circularity of its segments, makes it possible to 'back-track' the processes before moving forward (p. 2). This is relevant to autoethnography since it also allows the telling of personal story in an unrestricted chronology that highlights significant connections at different points of past, present and future (Wall, 2006, p. 9). In learning from Yunkaporta's *8-ways* concepts, my art also draws on Indigenous associations by the use of: map like designs, symbolism, land links and non-linearity, for expressing multi-dimensional relationships with the land (Yunkaporta, 2009).

In acknowledging such relationships my practical art and the exegesis have been undertaken in a spirit that is affirmative of the entwining of Indigenous with non-Indigenous culture. At a national level however, related moves to concurrence are complex – due to the historical, cultural and institutional conflicts at work against mutuality. Nevertheless, a symbolic connective moment occurred when Prime Minister Rudd, on February 13, 2008, offered Indigenous Australians a national apology and honoured them, recognising their mistreatment under successive governments. Today some artists are destabilised by these revisionist attitudes rewriting history and the national identity. Inquiring into these anxieties, Christabel Kelly (2018) cited the situation for contemporary non-Indigenous artists, where reconsiderations of "postcoloniality" have now generated "a dilemma" of grappling with landscapes seen as "imbued with absence" (p. 202). Like McLean, Kelly argued that artists struggling over the concept of *terra nullius* were being challenged as to how they might now begin to legitimately represent the Australian landscape. Since generations of settlers believed in the idea of an empty continent, artists complied in imposing a dominant Europeanised identity on the Australian culture. Thus "the aesthetics of Aboriginal art seen from the settlers' side remained a footnote until now where we are all different and together in the same Commonwealth"

(Hutchings, 2011, p. 187). In my practice I implicitly question this concept of false emptiness, symbolised by the absence of figures. My response is to the land as the predominant presence, not commenting on whether or not it is populated. In this regard I have reacted to the issue raised by Kelly where she wonders how contemporary artists, like myself, can be reconciled with the landscape "as a lived space that is contested, atavistic and contemporary all at the same time" (2018, p. 204).

CHAPTER 3:METHODOLOGY WITHIN THE PHASES OF THE PROJECT

Travelling Edges: An Immersed Autoethnographic Exploration of the Australian Bush in Art is conceived in three parts. It interrogates my life and my art making in the bush; provides a visual record of my art for this project; and involves an online portfolio of my creative work formerly intended for exhibition at the UniSQ Art Gallery, but changed by COVID-19 restrictions. The exegesis consists of a written investigation linked to my artistic research and critiques the experiential challenge of making art from immersion in the bush as well as seeking to identify the trends and ideologies in Australian art. It is through the writing of an exegesis that a deep analysis of my artistic practice has been made possible as well as that of documenting my insights from a life painting landscapes. From these insights I analysed the work of other artists while contextualising how they in turn influenced my art. For the exegesis autoethnography became the research engine because it "lets you use yourself to get into culture" (Wall, 2006) and explore how it physically and ideologically informed my art. The use of Autoethnographic research forms an "alternative mode of writing" that falls "somewhere between anthropology and literary studies" (Denshire, 2014, p. 831). By utilising its "self-narrative" methodology the authorial self is placed in a social context and re-evaluated through the autoethnographic process (Butz & Besio, 2009, p. 1660). My practice-led-artistic research on the other hand involves the development of new insights from my art processes and finished work. I included with this an autobiography that can also serve as an exhibition catalogue. As a form of creative art investigation, the project happened at the edge of society in a reciprocal symbiosis that mirrors rural to urban inter-relationships (Duncan, 2004, p. 30).

There are two main approaches in my use of autoethnography: the 'analytic' and 'evocative'. Analytic autoethnography is that emphasising data gathering and 'analysis techniques', while the evocative uses

subjective investigation through "personal experience narrative" for achieving socio-cultural understanding (Butz & Besio, 2009, p. 1666). In this I drew on both modes, with the evocative particularly important for drawing on my journals and poetry, but each enabling reflection and analysis of "my personal and professional creative experiences" (Pace, 2012, p. 2). The evocative also involved 'storytelling', quite apt for transcending the "mere narration of self" to go deeper in "cultural analysis and interpretation" (Pace, 2012, p. 5). Then by combining autoethnography and practice-led research, a "dynamic interplay" in "practice and theory" resulted (Adams, 2014, p. 218) whereby the art and text narratives, based in perceptions, "ideals" and "lived experience" lead to new understandings (Anderson, 2003, p. 158). These visual and textual forms communicated a unique view, one paralleled by my autobiographical land and art stories documenting my art career.

3.1 PHASES OF THE PROJECT

3.1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF MY 'ART AND LAND STORIES'

Phase 1 of my autobiography, aligned with my autoethnographic research, refers to the development of my art in the bush following art school and utilises aspects of Yunkaporta's *8-ways* approach. The exegesis, which is the hub of my project, references my online companion project art portfolio featuring my autobiography: *Travelling Edges: An Immersed Land and Art Story.* This can be found at:

https://sites.google.com/view/neville-heywood-portfolio/portfolio-home

After Teachers College I worked extensively in the bush, eventually returning to the Bonshaw area of my childhood. There, with my family, we transformed a derelict cottage (Figure 3.1) into a durable stone house (Figure 3.2) (Appendix 14).

Figure 3.1

Derelict building before transformation, 1978

Figure 3.2

The old homestead then changed over the years into a comfortable home

We called it *Sky Camp*, (from the Indigenous *Bulimah* signifying 'sky spirit place') and adopted its meaning because it elicited a sense of transience, heaven and eternity. We used the English translation because we were uncertain of *Bulimah's* language derivation though we liked its meaning[12]. Collingwood-Whittick (2008, p. 64) highlights the problem of imposing English names on the Australian landscape, because they "extinguish" and replace "Indigenous knowledge of the Country". Over seven chapters (listed below) the autobiographical material *Travelling Edges: an immersed land and art story* links with the exegesis to provide additional detail.

[12] In Gamilaraay - *gunagala walaay* (Austin, 1993) and *Bulimah* (Fuller, 2017, p. 7). Our home is located central to traditional Goomeroi (Kamilaroi), Bigambul and Kwiambal homelands, with my wife Lyn of Eora descent and a member of the Kwiambal, Ashford Local Land Council.

Land story 1 – New England; referring to Place, the Bush and Pioneers (1969)
Land story 2 – Gwabegar; Flat Wild Country (1970-2)
Land story 3 – Mareeba; Frontier Town (1972-76)
Land story 4 – Darling Downs; Patchwork Country (1977)
Land story 5 – *Sky Camp*; Spirit Place (1978-1992)
Land story 6 – Boggabilla, Uralla; Widening Circles (1993-2000)
– Mungindi; River and Survey Peg (2001-2003)
Land story 7 – Stanthorpe; hill country & the travelling life (2004-2011)
– *Sky Camp* (2012 on); diminishing circles, settling.

3.1.2 PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH – NATURE AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Practice-led research complements autoethnographic research in this project where reflections about art, the bush and personal meaning feed narratives that interlink practice with theory. Hawkins and Wilson emphasise how for artists, reflection and practice happen in "infinitesimal loops" whereby the "the mode of reflection" for creating and writing are integral to their creative research (2016, p. 89). Linda Candy (2006), in analysing practice-based investigation divided it into two forms: practice-based and practice-led, where in practice-based research the artefact forms the basis for knowledge compared to practice-led research, which leads to new understandings about the art practice itself. For me, this project straddles both forms, but with an emphasis on practice-led research as leading to new knowledge because of its "transformative" nature (Adams, 2014, p. 218) "generated from art practices" (Lin-Yuan Lin, 2018, p. 153). Although an artist's studio is normally indoors, mine is mostly outdoors, either an open verandah or in the landscape, where light is natural, not artificial. Works created under natural light sing, compared to those produced under artificial light.

Regardless of whether I am working indoors or outdoors, the Australian bush is the inspirational source from which I have created many evocative, celebrative, experiential, symbiotic, explorative images. There are others however, who eschew the bush as their art subject, increasingly from feelings of non-belonging or guilt aroused by the treatment of First Nations people. Behrman (citing Elwes' exhibition catalogue, 2009, p. 41) realised that in this "time of continuing legal disputes relating to Aboriginal land rights … non-Aboriginal artists have been hesitant to depict their surroundings lest their gaze is represented as an illegitimate claim of ownership". For me immersion includes the experience of graduated attitudinal change towards the land and to questions of Indigenous people's connection with it. The bush gives me deep meaning from meditating on its shimmering landscapes, foliage, wildflowers, scintillating grasses, calligraphic forests, fissures, textures, landforms, cloud formations and light effects, all shaping a unique phenomenological language. Klein, speaking of this "everyday [natural] world" (that includes the bush) argues how nature presents us with "many ordinary, sublime, and beautiful landscapes" (2017, p. 4).

3.1.3 ANALYSIS OF PICTORIAL RESPONSES

In my visual and written analyses I documented my chief subject the bush in autoethnographic and practice-led research, the latter employing 'symbolic', rather than 'discursive' data and resulting in "intrinsically experiential" "new artistic forms for exhibition" (Haseman, 2007, p. 3). The advantage of PLR is its a non-stereotypic approach compatible with autoethnography that engenders "many ways of knowing and inquiring" (Wall, 2006, p. 2) and opening up "the possibilities of knowledge" through "creativity, imagination" and life understanding (Duxbury et al., 2008, p. 8; Smith-Shank & Keifer-Boyd, 2007, p. 3). Autoethnographic research is useful for exploring artistic knowledge by three major components: a description of the self, analysis of the self, and re-presentation of the self (Austin, 2005). Austin refers to these from

the contexts of "identity formation" and a repositioning of the Self "along a myriad of … axes of identity" used to interrogate class, race and gender (Austin, 2013, p. 1-2). The axes link to feelings or perceptions of 'commonality' 'identified', and 'accorded value' according to the 'psychological dimension' at play (Austin, 2013). Significantly Austin maintains that the person one is today "is in part the result of how they have acted … and embraced certain views of the world" through the interactions had with themselves and the myriad social forces acting upon them (2005, p. 21). For me this applies as equally to the person I was in the mid 1970s as to the person I am today, and presented in the following self-portraits by way of description, analysis and re-presentation since I believe a good portrait reveals key facets of one's psyche (Maister, et al., 2021).

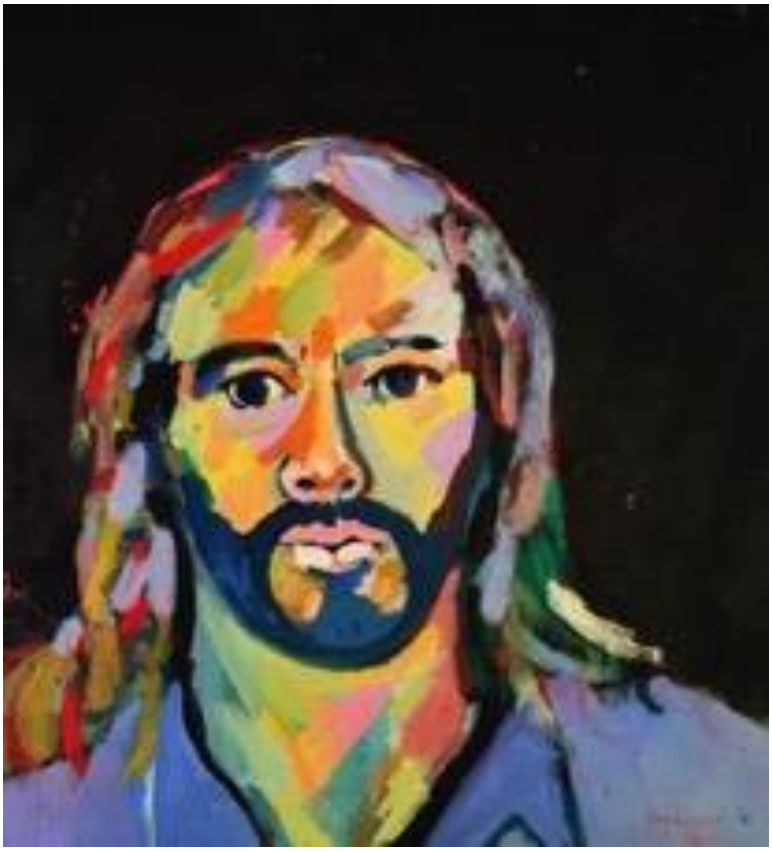
In the works reproduced below, individuality equates with psychological manifestations. Each portrait depicts the 'self' from a different context and inner state. As visual records they are autobiographical without text. One is a Fauve-like representation of me as an art teacher engaged in painterly self-conversation, a longhaired free-spirited product of the 1960s. Thus self-portraiture can be freeing because there is no sitter other than oneself to critique the result, the portraitist free to express as they want, limited only by skill and honesty. My first Fauve-like portrait (Figure 3.3) is a frontal statement of this self, created for understanding and describing my presented self in painterly style. However, *50 Self Portraits After Oktoberfest* (Figure 3.4, 1976) analyses through abstraction, the confusion precipitated by German beer shandies on a non-drinker. The third (Figure 3.5) represents an increasingly uncertain self, as paintings accumulate over a two-year painting stint with limited success, ultimately leading to the financial need to return to teaching. During this time I also needed glasses (previously worn age 11 to 17) because of the headaches induced working plein air in northern sunlight. These portraits were studio self-statements whereas my landscape art is outdoors revelatory of nature. There is thus a degree

of congruence between practical art and text where each applies to depictions of the landscape in descriptive, analytic and representational terms. The advantage of autoethnography though is that it enabled me to reflect on the significant experiences that informed my practice and document the experiential 'place and memory' markers unique to the bush (Taylor, 2008, p. 1). In this way both the exegesis and creative art interconnected conveying a range of experiences and understandings where 'no moment of … existence' was 'not an experience of reality' (Spiller, 1969, p. 12).

Description of the self

Figure 3.3

Neville Heywood, Self-portrait (description of the self) oil on canvas, 40x35 cm, 1975



Analysis of the self

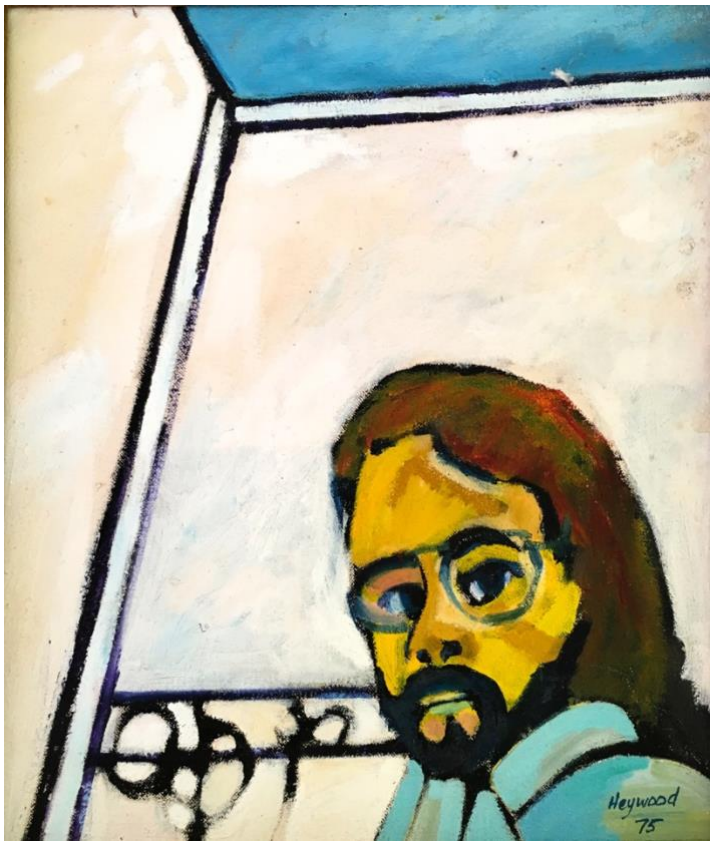
Figure 3.4

Neville Heywood, 50 Self-portraits after Oktoberfest (analysis of self), 90x150 cm, acrylic on canvas, 1976

Representation of the self

Figure 3.5

Neville Heywood, Self-portrait (representation of the self) oil on canvas, 36x30 cm, 1975



CHAPTER 4: MY STORY WITHIN MY CREATIVE PRACTICE

My project seeks to discover to what extent has my immersion in the Australian bush, physically and ideologically, informed my artistic practice and enabled new insights about the land and landscape art in Australia? This chapter examines that premise in terms of my creative practice starting with the fact that painting for me is a physical act, a journey and exploration shaped by my vision and emotions immersed in and travelling in two worlds: the individual and socio-cultural. When I paint, I use line, form, shape and colour to create images resulting from observation and intuition. I also seek innate visual equivalence to poetry; even though a poet's tools are text, line structure, symbolism and style. For this reason my artworks have been published as frontispieces for poetry magazines such as *Studio: A Journal of Christians Writing,* a journal exploring spiritual journeys in poetry and fiction. A picture takes on poetic connotation for me in the fusing of intention, intuition, imagery and design. It also devolves from cultivating an inner artistic eye to meld the real and imaginative. Ian Fairweather (1891–1974) realised this when translating from Mandarin to English *The Drunken Buddha,* a centuries old devotional tale about the monk Chi-tien. He concluded that contemplation, seeking and play could bring forth wisdom by "turning things over to find traces of the true" (Walker, 1988, p. vi). Fairweather's conclusion resonates with my mine because I also create art in a search for meaning through meditation and artistic playfulness.

4.1 THEME 1: HERITAGE – THE BUSH AND FAMILY

A search for meaning then forms the wellspring of my art, one indissolubly linked to Australia's vast inland and deeply affecting me since childhood heightened by family links. For analysing the significance of this, Autoethnography has proven valuable, allowing me to revisit the importance of influential family members such as my grandfather

('Grandpop', 'Pop') George Thompson. He was the most significant life relationship I knew until meeting Lyn and beginning our own family. Pop, a bush worker, lived unselfconsciously with calmness and humour. His example bestowed on me a strong legacy of family and a deep love for the bush. This generational awareness is important because it heightened an awareness of the importance of family and empowered me as a teacher, artist, husband and father. Another significant family member is my namesake, Uncle Neville, accidentally killed during the Second World War in military training, four years before I was born (Figure 4.1) (Appendix 15).

Figure 4.1

Neville Clarence Heywood NX127907 (1922-1943) 4TH A. I. F. Battalion

As noted earlier, the power of a name is significant and being named in memory of Uncle Neville, became an ever-present reminder of mortality. However, making art has helped me deal with such thoughts by replacing them with a celebration of life. Other artists similarly have reflected on mortality, like John Coburn, whose work *Death and Transfiguration* 1988, explores comparable perceptions based in death and renewal. These universal themes I also explored in works like *Life Thought: Symbol & Nature*, (Figure 4.2) and *Life Seed* (Figure 1.1, 2002/3).

Figure 4.2

Neville Heywood, Life Thought: Symbol & Nature, steel, wood, masonite, acrylic, 140x140 cm, 2017

Such themes touch notions of therapeutic renewal available in nature as well as interrogating the difficult and tragic phases of life. Integral to the bush's therapeutic healing is the responsibility of caring for

the bush that so strengthens me. As a caretaker I identify with some of the traditional responsibilities of Indigenous people, such as cool burning to enrich the vegetation, a process that signifies "kinship and care" (Kelly, 2000, p. 181). Marcia Langton argues "we would all do well to learn from the cold-fire burning and scrub clearing practices Aboriginal people have perfected over millions of years" (in Murphy, 2015). Fire as a tool cleans country, although some are opposed to this. The fact is neglected country is anathema to first Nations custodians, emphasising the great difference between that of exploitive and ecological response. I identify with the latter and look for ways to care for the land in an approach similar to John Wolseley's nurturing of the "re-enchantment that mends the broken relationship between nature and humankind" (Gruber, 2015).

Many artists (and others) are likewise passionate about nature and work at preserving and restoring bush environments. From this perspective artist researcher Carole Kirk (2014) considered her art practice a form of 'ecological cognition' for climate change, while my art focuses on the bush as habitat and home. For me the bush has brought a multiplicity of experiences that derive from the web of family heritage and my life there. For example, I drew on my Thompson family legacy in *Feeding the Cattle with Pop* (Figure 4.3, 1972/3), an early work painted to remember a memorable event in childhood where I helped feed hay to cattle from Pop's horse and cart. Painting it was a way of reliving that precious moment and made solely for that pleasure, that of remembering and celebrating the experience.

Figure 4.3

Neville Heywood, Feeding the Cattle with Pop, oil on board, 25x40 cm, 1972/3

Both my grandfathers lived according to the seasons, respecting its cycles. Grandfather 'Clarrie' Heywood, was born at Jondaryan, Queensland, drove bullocks at Kingston, NSW, and became a vegetable grower and dairy farmer at Barraba. Pop Thompson by comparison was a gentle giant, bookended by champion boxers in his own father Bendigo and son Keith. Pop was of calm character, uncomplaining, possessing few needs and enjoying a joke. For instance, I recall at age thirteen, riding a horse that bolted towards a wire fence. Pop yelled: 'Grab his ears boy, grab his ears!' I grabbed them and flew straight over the horse's head and the fence. As I led the cantankerous creature back Pop asked, 'you didn't grab his ears did you son?' Confused I said, 'Yes Pop, you told me to.' Pop replied, 'You shouldn't believe everything I tell you son.' Although not aware of it at the time, he was teaching me a valuable life lesson (Appendix 16). Pop's example had a significant influence on my life and I acknowledged this in other artworks such as: *A Monsters Happy Party for*

Grandpop and a Little Boy (Figure 4.4, 1975). The fact is during my childhood I lived awhile with Pop and Nana Thompson and this so deepened my love of the Australian bush that it was pivotal for my choice of a career as an artist.

Figure 4.4

Neville Heywood, A Monster's Happy Party for Grandpop and a Little Boy, oil on board, 30x30 cm, 1975

Memories from this childhood time, including sounds like the clip clop of horses or travelling on two-wheel tracks like those on *Kia Ora*, create a fusion of past and present. In reflecting on these significant childhood stories, I realise how their 'phenomenological experience' inspired and shaped my life and art (Adams, 2014, p. 218). The genesis for this owes much to the freedoms of my childhood in the bush, and synchronous with those times, my creative processes now require slowed

down time for exploring the "multi-sensory understandings" latent in the bush's tree scribble, structural dynamics and hard / soft quotients (Adams, 2014, p. 218). By the terms hard / soft, I mean the physical form of the bush compared to the indefinable atmospheric sky effects at play upon the land (Appendix 17). Art for me then touches many indelible roots, symbolised by those childhood times when I lay on *Kia Ora's* adzed house floor drawing by lamplight, lost in pleasure beside the warm wood stove. That art could be created for enjoyment and psychological wellness, became an important insight very early in life. For me art is restorative, and essential, even with the pressures of limited time and a need to earn a living. Thus through the insights revealed using autoethnography, I have been able to show how links between the past and present conjoined to elicit the rich memories, impressions and observations that inform my art practice. Is it any wonder that Suze Adams argues art is able to challenge assumptions and "change the way in which we view the world" (2014, p. 221). Thus being able to live and create art in the bush has intimately shaped my perceptions and unique oeuvre.

Now it is characteristic of those who live in the Australian bush that they are mostly practical people and for this reason I occasionally encountered misunderstanding about why I dedicated my time to creative art. For instance I recall stopping work on the house one day to draw with Ken, a Slade School graduate from Bonshaw post office. A neighbour stopped by and laughed seeing us drawing by the creek when there was *real* work that needed doing. He did not see drawing as a valid undertaking, a bias reflecting Mumford's view of pragmatism as an approach that produces "insensibility, depersonalisation" and non-creativity (1952, p. 140). Another issue has been the impact of digital media on the visual arts, stimulating discussion over whether my field painting, is now a meaningless art form. Remember Paul Delaroche said in 1839, that "painting is dead" (Art & Object, 2019) and with similar criticism increasing today Kraus argued that digital change has ensured

the "contemporary obsolescence" of the traditional arts (Kirk, 2014). For me though painting is not meaningless, but a practice that is consequential despite changes in creative media. In fact advances in technology and representationalism have provided a great variety of media and methodologies in the arts, including painting. However I relish the experience and intimacy of traditional materials, because while working digitally might be enjoyable and challenging, it does not provide the sensual physicality painting does. While I continue to experiment with media, my primary materials remain acrylics, inks, watercolours and oil paints because for me these best fit the physicality of painting, where a poetic response to nature is uppermost. For example in my imagery, trees exemplify some of nature's most glorious structures, but they can also act as metaphors as in *Glorious Pepperina and Pine, Sky Camp*, (Figure 4.5, 2018) where I depict native Cypress pines alongside introduced Pepperina trees[13] (Appendix 18). In works like this I consider the relationship between unlike species to symbolise the potentiality available for settlers and Indigenous people to live in harmony. In fact my earliest memories involve the distinctive scent of a Pepperina tree beside *Kia Ora* house where everyone washed in a basin after visiting the distant bush toilet (Appendix 19). These memories accompanied by birdsong and flicking insects, function as a subliminal background to my art and result in a visual dance of life celebration (Figure 4.4, 2018).

[13] Pepperina termed *Schinus molle* is Greek for a mastic substance-exuding tree from Peru (Simpfendorfer, 1975, p. 251).

Figure 4.5

Neville Heywood, Glorious Pepperina and Pine, Sky Camp, acrylic on paper, 42x58 cm, 2018

4.2 THEME 2: SHARING COUNTRY IN GOOMEROI, KWIAMBAL AND BIGAMBUL HOMELANDS

A map of Australia's Indigenous territories reveals to non-Indigenous people that wherever they live, it is on traditional Aboriginal lands (Appendix 20). As such *Sky Camp* centrally locates between the country of the Goomeroi, Kwiambal and Bigambul tribes. Today the relationships that I have established with these communities emphasises for me how art can express unique individual, cultural and relational insights. In a comparable way, my college contemporary Geoffrey Bardon moving to Papunya, "mixed freely with Aboriginal people and believed in them" and invited the community elders and artists into his classes (Beier, 1986, p. XV). Bardon came to see the linkages between culture, the land and the Dreaming shaping the daily life of the Luritja, Pintupi,

Annmatyerr and Walpiri people among whom he worked. His support helped bring about global recognition for Indigenous art at Papunya. As an artist and teacher I am also aware of the significant knowledge possessed by First Nations artists and its importance for passing to subsequent generations. Some of the local Indigenous people I have been privileged to know at Boggabilla studied at TAFE NSW and went on to form the Euraba Papermaking Cooperative. Because of my involvement with the communities of Boggabilla and Toomelah, my interest in Indigenous culture brought about in 1984, enrolment in an external Aboriginal Studies course that included researching the art at Toomelah and Boggabilla[14]. At the time I was working as an after-school homework tutor and then as a teacher. This role, and the university course work, enabled me to complete a series of portraits, prints and paintings that extended my understanding of the significance of these areas for First Nations people.[15]

As my community involvement grew, so did my interest in Aboriginal culture, to the extent I realised that cultural intersections can produce different conceptions of Country built on layered differences and commonalities and resulting in "a rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions" (Schama, 1995, p. 14). Myth, memory, and obsession have threaded my life and link to hallowed places, a consciousness of family history and the tensions associated with settler ancestors and Indigenous land. My family's settler roots, significant through place, history, and relationships, have engendered for me memories and experiences that provide deeper insights into Indigenous links to Country. In stating this I am not trying to avoid the issues that stem from colonialism because ultimately it brought tragedy, disruption and land loss to Indigenous people. At the time my ancestors arrived, the movement of settlers and convicts into the colonies was justified by a doctrine today considered a

[14] "Reciprocal Visions: Aboriginal and White Responses in the Visual Arts", student project for the Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Studies, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1986

[15] See images: *Riverside* (Figure 4.10, c.1987), *Ancestral* (Figure 4.19, 1977) and in *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story, Nature Trap* (Image 105, 1980).

legal fiction, that of *terra nullius*, the idea of 'land belonging to nobody'. This concept informed John Locke's assumption that land ownership was only validated by joining labour to it (Macintyre, 2016, p. 34) (Appendix 21). Such western notions of land ownership were foreign to Indigenous people who saw themselves as caretakers, not owners in a western sense. Indigenous peoples' rights in relation to western ideas of land ownership were invisible to the early settlers and the administrators who considered land basically a material wealth resource (Appendix 22).

My art though in confronting this centres on a lived rather than materialistic experience of the bush. It is in this sense that *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth* (Figure 4.6, 2017), has an orientation that, in exploring a land and river theme, expresses an experience of Country coalescing pioneer and Indigenous culture. Official maps, such as the 1848 Inverell District Squatting Stations map, documented the land appropriated by squatters, dividing it into boundaries (Howell, 1982, p. 152). In contrast *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth i*s not about land appropriation but a symbolic traversing of territory. It is not a map for government purposes but that of expressing land as a living organism, reflecting Paul Klee's theory of the "reciprocity" of parts and "multi-dimensional movements". Klee taught "movement and countermovement result in balance" and so my picture is a two-dimensional representation informed by his assertion that "all figuration is movement, since it begins somewhere and ends somewhere" (Spiller, 1961, p. 195). In this vein *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth* is built through contrasts of ink and acrylic on notepaper glued to cardboard. Its structure consists of organic shapes and colour swabs intersected by serpentine colour and shapes expressing part to whole concepts where each segment has a life of its own. Compositionally these segments form the *dividual* parts of an *individual* work (in Klee's terminology), based on a chessboard structure like that taught in Klee's Bauhaus notes.

Figure 4.6

Neville Heywood, Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth, ink and acrylic on cardboard, 21x41 cm, 2017

While *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth* proposes an aerial perspective, it is more an imaginative concept. Thematically it constitutes a philosophic, creative interpretation of nature that deals with part to whole ideation (aka Mereology), a philosophic inquiry where parts 'fulfil a function within a greater whole'. It was Alfred North Whitehead who proposed a "method of extensive abstraction" according to which points are defined roughly as "chains of infinitely converging regions, ordered by the relation of being part" to whole (Bochman, 1990, p. 76). In *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth*, lines, points, and organic shapes constitute an intuitive landscape that conveys natural features in layered pigments that travel, stop, and redirect the viewer's gaze. It presents contrasting parts signifying life within life and interconnections in topography. Traversing the image in this way fuses a mind's eye revision of nature, sharing perspectives with Yunkaporta's *8-Ways of Learning* using maps, non-

linearity and symbolism as facets of knowledge. Equivalents perhaps are the Papunya sand and acrylic paintings, Paul Klee's art, Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942-43), Godfrey Miller's *Divisionism* and Ian Fairweather's paint layering. In *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth* the land is depicted organically, mythically, and topographically, presenting a mythic view of bush and desert while acknowledging First Nations culture. The work filters my experiences of nature while acknowledging the visuality of Indigenous culture forty thousand years in the making. This appreciation of First Nations art stemmed from my contact with Indigenous communities whereby I came to differentiate the folkways of two oppositional cultures, one dominant, the other marginalised. This influenced how I approached my work and the importance of personal relationships typified in artworks such as: *Aubrey Drawing at the River's Edge, Toomelah*, (Figure 4.7, 1986).

Figure 4.7

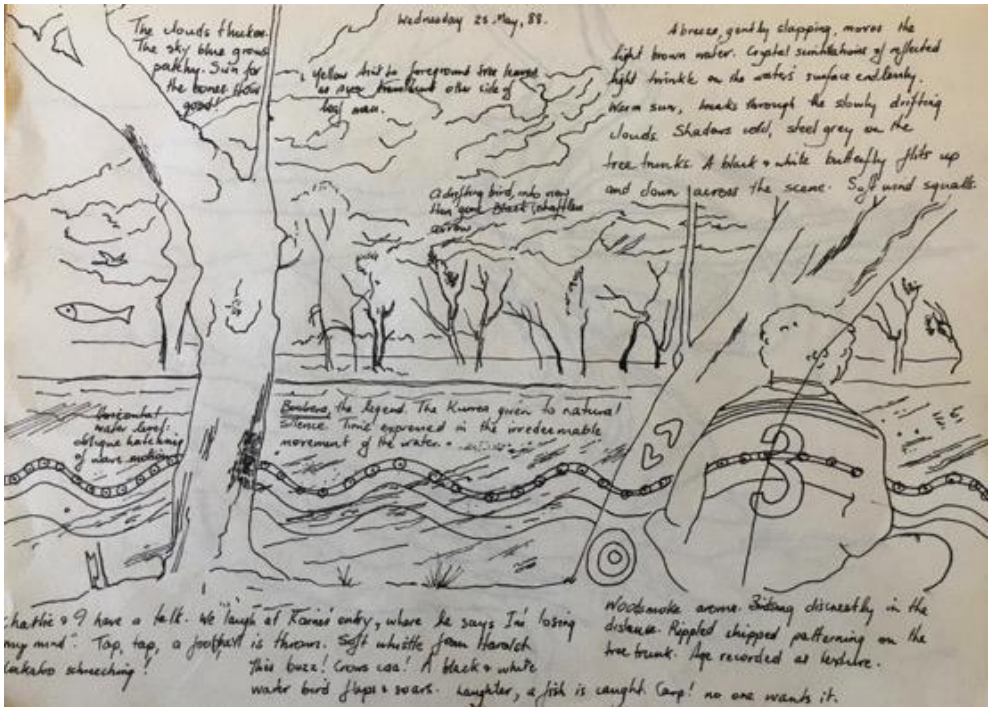
Neville Heywood, Aubrey Drawing at the River's Edge, Toomelah, acrylic on paper, 15x23 cm, 1986

Figure 4.8

Neville Heywood, Toomelah, ink and acrylic on paper, c. 1987

Figure 4.9

Neville Heywood, Drawing Boobera Lagoon During TAFE Class, ink on paper from sketchbook, 20x28 cm, 1988



Toomelah (Figure 4.8, 1987) is another artwork I created when working at Toomelah. It was a former government settlement that today spills into nearby Boggabilla and further afield to Goondiwindi (Gundawinda), Moree (Coolabindi), Warwick (Gooragooby), Tenterfield (Moombilleen), Inverell (Goonoowigall), Toowoomba (Woomba Woomba), and Sydney (Cadi, Djubuguli) (Appendix 23). During this time my wife Lyn and I taught at TAFE, and to make learning relevant and enjoyable, we organised trips to archaeological sites, the Boobera Lagoon and the McIntyre River. Normally classes at the Boggabilla Community Hall centred on practical literacy but we also incorporated cultural activities like cooking kangaroo stir-fry and Johnnycakes[16]. Classes and field trips

[16] Flat bread made with flour, salt and water kneaded into circular flat shapes and cooked on netting wire above ashes. These days they are spread with margarine and golden syrup. They were originally made from native grass seeds including 'nardoo' which was ground into flour meal and cooked.

became a laboratory for learning where a fishing line could be thrown in during lessons, since Boggabilla and Toomelah each bordered the river. Our teaching method resulted from the approaches of Indigenous community members who appreciated our incorporation of Indigenous cultural learning with visits to traditional sites. From that time also *Sky Camp* came to function as an occasional camping and hospitality centre following community requests for a place in which to enjoy the bush (Appendix 24).

Our experiences with the Boggabilla TAFE class provided important opportunities to learn from First Nations people. These included travelling to the spear and axe sharpening grooves on sandstone in the McIntyre River, Yetman. We also went to *Bedwell Downs* Station (south of Yetman) where there was a University of New England (UNE) archaeological dig at a large cave with commanding view, reminiscent of the Laura rock sites. As well when I taught in state schools, outings were made to Euraba and Old Toomelah (near Boomi) where on a rainy day, demonstrating women's knowledge, two Aboriginal girls made a fire traditionally, even though everywhere was wet. On that trip Hannah Duncan (deceased, Wibble's mum) taught my daughter Beth how to collect nardoo seeds for making bread (*thord*). Such stories anchored life experiences in real relationships and broadened my knowledge of the bush as a heritage and sustenance source, stimulating my interest in Aboriginal culture and a deeper knowledge of Indigenous history compared to the settler accounts I had studied as an undergraduate. As a result, I undertook courses at the South Australian College of Advanced Education and the University of Queensland, investigating relationships between European and Indigenous people in literature and art. In 2003 while studying Theology, I enrolled in Aboriginal Spirituality at Charles Sturt University where Wreck Bay Indigenous rangers taught the courses' practical applications at *Booderee* National Park (Appendix 25). This provided Indigenous knowledge that challenged my mainstream education in the privileging of settler history.

Figure 4.10

Neville Heywood, Riverside: Boggabilla Toomelah, acrylic & lino print, 31x25 cm, c. 1987.

This emergent knowledge gained from teaching Indigenous people manifested in *Riverside – Boggabilla Toomelah*, (Figure 4.10, 1987), a linocut symbolising Indigenous relationships with Country in hybridised schema. The block was carved on the spot, printed then additionally painted by hand, to depict the McIntyre River at a farm near Toomelah. It is a statement about Indigenous presence and non-Indigenous land ownership, symbolised in the evocative pattern and colours characteristic of Indigenous art. Although Toomelah was located nearby, Aboriginal people could not visit this spot because fishermen (whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous I do not know) had littered the riverside. I felt for this

land loss, which derives partly from the fact my grandfather lived and worked for 27 years on *Kia Ora*, but as a child I always thought he owned it. However, as I grew up I came to realise Pop was an employee not the owner, he leaving in 1967 due to age and heart trouble. I felt a profound sadness when I realised he was leaving the place so central to my life. Yet that sadness is only a shadow compared to the sadness Aboriginal people must feel fenced out of their traditional homelands.

4.3 THEME 3: TRAVERSING AND CENTERED OUT BUSH

To live in the bush is to move through it, to traverse country, in my case often covering huge distances. Residence there brings intimacy with the land and a stronger sense of self, an integrated self, at home in nature, centred and at peace within it. This centred life characterised Indigenous society before the entry of Europeans but it has taken generations for a deeper identification with the bush to develop among non Indigenous people as evidenced in art.

During the early exploration phase before settlement the maritime expedition artists Sydney Parkinson, William Westall and botanical draftsman Ferdinand Bauer created topographic scientific views of the Australian landscape (Smith, 1988, p. 34-35). Bernard Smith claimed such scientific "interest in the non-descript productions of New Holland [were to stimulate] the production of hundreds of drawings of Australian plants and animals" that continued with settlement (1991, p. 11). Through this scientific approach a European eye was brought to nature, conceiving the landscape through the baggage of Europe's softer light rather than the authentic, harsher Australian light later depicted by Streeton and Roberts. In my work, particularly in this project, notice how the portrayal of light oscillates between flat skies, no sky and a painterly filtering in design, subjectivity and experiment.

Figure 4.11

Ferdinand Bauer, Banksia Speciosa, 30x20 cm, c. 1811

https://i.pinimg.com/originals/57/88/6f/57886f435cffc7c7fb17bb209cac9b3b.jpg

It seems a curiosity for the exotic characterised early colonial artistic investigations with the resulting artwork despatched to Britain for English audiences and learned societies. Several of these artists were amateurs, often termed Port Jackson Painters such as George Raper and another called The Port Jackson Painter. The latter's image of a *Diamond Python* reveals a curious eye for design using a brooch-like composition that, along with Indigenous snake representations, must rank as significant in Australian design history (McDonald, 2008, p. 32).

Figure 4.12

The Port Jackson Painter, Diamond Python, 29x18 cm, c. 1790

A curiosity towards flora and fauna shown by several lesser-known artists also spanned the national art record. Among these were female artists, like Louisa Ann Meredith (1812–1895, arrived 1839) who cultivated an eye for detail, particularly of flora. She also authored *Notes and Sketches of NSW* (1844), documenting daily life in the colony and observations on the environment (Meredith, 1973). I became acquainted with Meredith's contribution to colonial culture when studying Australian history at UNE in the early 1980s. She belonged to a subset of fashionable middle-class artists and naturalists who, of insatiably curious

mind, created extremely detailed studies of plants and flowers (McDonald, 2008, p. 104).

Figure 4.13

Louisa Ann Meredith, Study for gum flowers & 'love', watercolour, 37x26 cm, NGV, c. 1860

https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/30231/

Interest in native flora was also significant in Margaret Preston's work, which united design with botanical accuracy. While she crafted detailed artworks reproducing descriptive appearances, Preston's work

proceeded from sensual impulses that allowed a "full licence in colour" while "letting her subjects appear as realistic as … aesthetic feeling allowed" (Butel, 1986, p. 33). *Wheel Flower* (Figure 4.14, c. 1929), a hand coloured still life woodcut print, shows her blending of observation, design and aesthetic experience which rendered the subject as both motif and artist's "laboratory table" (Butel, 1986, p. 34).

Figure 4.14

Margaret Preston, Wheel Flower, hand coloured woodcut, c. 1929

https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/204.1977/

Years later John Wolseley developed his own unique laboratory visual research in journal type drawings recording Australia's deserts and inland with similarities to early expedition artists. In undertaking this work Wolseley also incorporated ideas from "map making, explorer's charts, early topographic books and … scientific illustration" juxtaposed with "natural phenomena" and "man made [sic] ephemera" (Briggs, 1982, p. 122). Ultimately his art sprang not so much from recording "new territories" as being stimulated by the "phenomena of beauty" driving him to record endangered environments (Briggs, 1982, p. 126). Wolseley's method involves arranging and pasting several nature drawings onto a large sheet of paper to reveal by a "gentle meditative … stream of consciousness" the conglomerate of his physical and visual experiences (Briggs, 1982, p. 138). While colonial experience was an ethnocentric approach towards the Australian environment, Wolseley's was to create landscapes synthesising Indigenous perspectives. The big difference between that of the colonial and Indigenous traditions is that the latter flows from a "totemic expression of the collective unconsciousness … and an all-embracing relationship with the land" (Briggs, 1982, p. 142). *Yam Dreaming*, (Figure 4.15) by the Walpiri Anmatjerre artist Paddy 'Cookie' Japaljarri Stewart (c. 1940–2013) communicates this spiritual, ecological, observational interrelationship in terms of skilful design and colour thereby revealing the bush as a source of sustenance.

Figure 4.15

Paddy 'Cookie' Japaljarri Stewart, Yam Dreaming

https://image.invaluable.com/housePhotos/ArtInvest/56/569956/H4708-L76877792.jpg

Such art is radically different to colonial - neo-colonial iconographies because western artists are generally not attuned to the complexities and

life-giving nature of the bush, responding to it instead from aesthetics of 'art for arts sake', pragmatism, the picturesque, or threat. The early colonials felt dread or unease regarding the bush, a characteristic that came to permeate the work of both writers and artists. These include Marcus Clarke in *For the Term of His Natural Life*, Rosa Praed's colonial narratives and Patrick White's *Voss* (Kelly, 2000, p. 62). The equivalent in art can be found in William Strutt's *Black Thursday* (1864) or John Longstaff's *Arrival of Burke, Wills and King at the Deserted Camp at Cooper's Creek, Sunday Evening, 21st April 1861* (1907). Considering this from over a century removed, my fifty plus years in the bush has brought feelings of ease and belonging compared to my early adulthood where I wrote poetry expressing an inchoate need to belong. Two things precipitated this: my immaturity and the uncertainties over earning a living. Once I realised I could find work in the bush, the anxiety of a pull back to the city disappeared and I became more centred and at home there. Nevertheless, those early years brought other pressures, as well as the fact I had to teach many subjects other than art. The advantage of poetry was that it could be jotted in uncertain and time-starved situations. Creative art by contrast needed a place and time for developing continuity. At first I was undecided as to whether to write or paint, since writing back then involved just pen and paper compared to visual art which required costly materials, plus transport and storage. As a result much of my early art was left behind or given away due to my many moves, so that today their whereabouts are unknown.

However, for Australia's early Europeans, life became one of struggle in a profoundly unfamiliar environment, notwithstanding the fact that the convict classes endured severe economic and social struggles long before transport to Australia. Once arrived the settlers introduced northern hemisphere culture, crops, animals and technology, essentially unaware of what the bush had to offer so that adapting to Australian conditions took time. Eventually however, some absorbed generously shared Indigenous knowledge such as the Mungindi pastoralist Frank

Bucknell. He had shown an interest in Aboriginal culture and so was helped by the Gumeroi around Mungindi to find water (Mungindi Historical Society, 1988, p. 2). In the matter of European art introduced into Australia, the art history record reveals a combination of western scientific research and imitative description as normative. Over two hundred years later John Wolseley applied a similar scientific approach, but he immersed himself in the landscape while documenting the land's micro macro structures, seeking authentic re-centring by shedding the compartmentalisation he believed characteristic of western attitudes (Briggs, 1982, p. 142). Viewing Wolseley's work is to meditatively relive his peripatetic journeys, while the following from *A History of Parrots, Drifting Maps & Warming Seas*, (Figure 4.16, 2005) shows how he learned from maps and nature illustrations to contextualise in careful draughtsmanship, a reality viewers can explore vicariously.

Figure 4.16

John Wolseley, detail from 'A History of Parrots, Drifting Maps and Warming Seas', 2005.

From Griffin, S., (2015). *John Wolseley, Land Marks III*, Thames & Hudson.

Similarly my art also records environments experienced through movement and travel such as *Leaning Weathered Tree Study* (Figure 4.17, 1985) where a gnarly tree caught my eye because of its wind-blasted tenuous grip into traprock soil. As a tool drawing broadens knowledge and offers an immediate response only surpassed in speed and detail by photography. Thus as my drawings multiplied, they formed a pictorial journal of my encounters with nature on *Sky Camp*. Picasso viewed his painting similarly saying of it that: "Painting is just another way of keeping a diary" (Richardson, 2007).

Figure 4.17

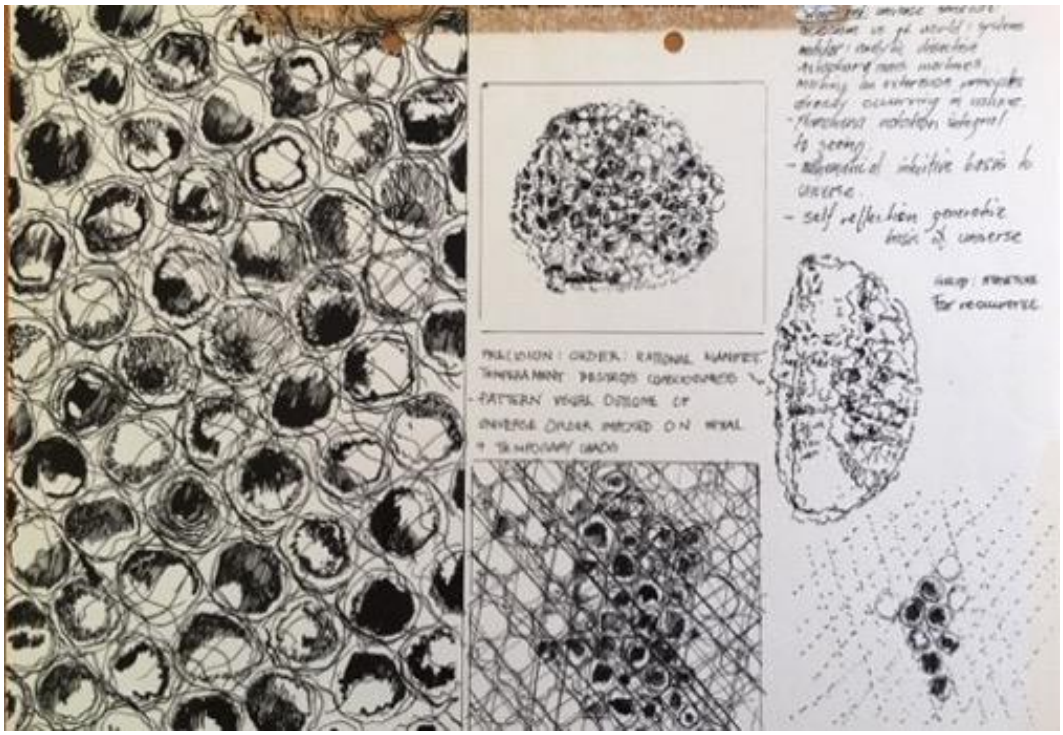
Neville Heywood, 'Leaning Weathered Tree Study', pencil, 30x25 cm, 1985

Drawing thus provides the means for acquaintance with and analysis of a subject. Another striking phenomenon I encountered was a wasp's nest, which I drew because of its unusual shape and structure. I

then applied its characteristics to symbolise the macro-mathematical structure I sensed underlying the universe.

Figure 4.18

Neville Heywood, Wasp's Nest, ink on paper, 21x30 cm, 1980/1



This concept of macro-mathematical structuring that I saw as underpinning nature (and the universe), I developed further in *Worlds and An Ordered Universe* (Figure 4.19, 1980) where I incorporated the structure of the wasp's nest into a broader statement about nature and part to whole by experimenting with reductive symbolic abstraction. In effect I interpreted nature by combining an abstract approach with real phenomena. This stimulated new ways of expressing nature in its light effects, vegetation patterns, soils, rocks, wood grains and tree-roots. To do this I stamped with pieces of rusty tin and textured materials for symbolising the interrelation in nature between the microcosmic (close-up) and macrocosmic (distance).

Figure 4.19

Neville Heywood, World's and An Ordered Universe, acrylic on cardboard, 24x26 cm, 1980

Figure 4.20

Neville Heywood, Ancestral, liquitex on canvas, 130x200 cm, 1977

Analysing that wasp nest had however, built upon ideas already germinal in my work, such as *Ancestral*, (Figure 4.20, 1977) which used organic bands to represent the interconnections between the human generations. The organic shapes between the bands provided a counterfoil to the rapidly changing human environment I saw pressured by roads, infrastructure and land use. Historically these changes were also traumatic for Aboriginal people because they involved a dramatic loss in "unrestricted access to traditional country", disruption of "life ways", the cessation of land management practices and the inability to halt unwanted environmental changes (Paterson, 2013). Not only did Europeanised culture change the land technologically, but it also introduced flora and fauna replacing many native varieties. Feelings of being marooned between past and present thus resulted in themes that also explored mortality and generational change. As a result, I visualised the conflicted impact of human intervention on the bush in works like *Number Carefully the Furrowed Fields of Wheat* (Figure 4.42, 1977) and

Highway (Figure 4.43, 1978). In both pictures I used hard lines and straight edges to symbolise human change, whereas the organic, curvilinear and textural represented natural elements.

Figure 4.21

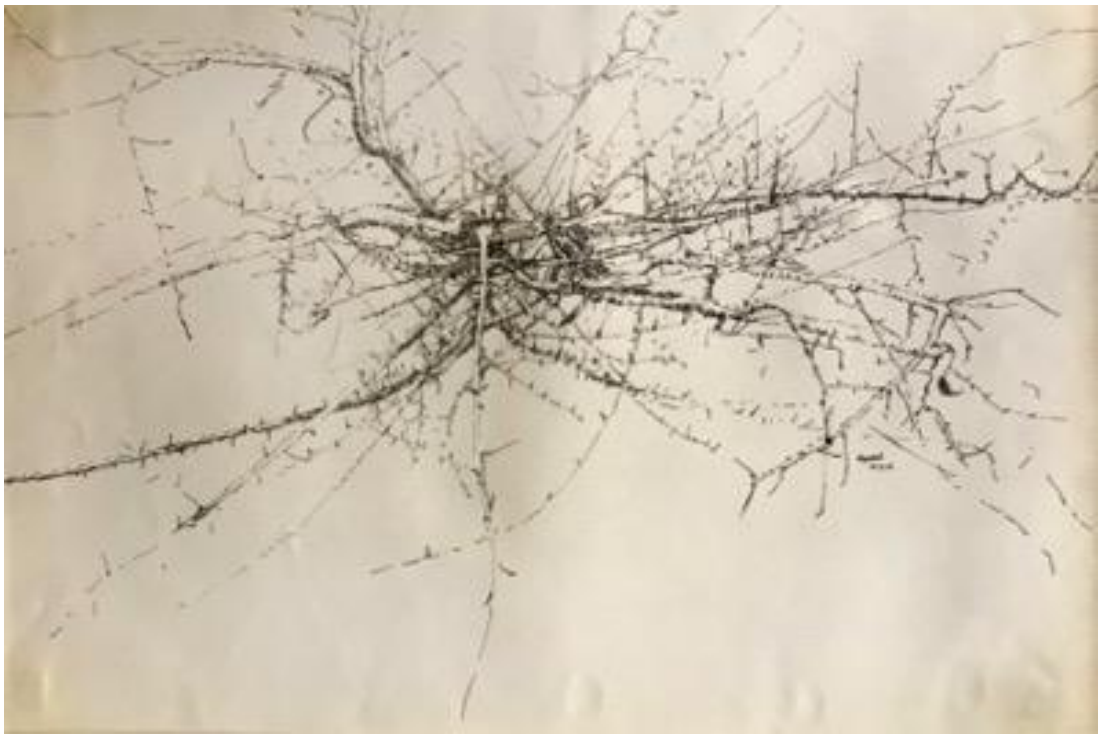
Neville Heywood, Dried Prickly Pear Leaf, ink on paper, 15x40 cm, 1978

As time passed I realised that to really understand the landscape and my relationship to it, I needed to examine nature very closely. Bizarrely, I found that even death and decay could present intriguing beauty, because these lay bare the structure that contributed to an organism's life. Examples were found in upturned tree roots that exposed an array of centrifugal and organic structures. Paul Klee too found death interesting, conceptualising it as a "movement of the radius in relation to the centre" whereby the "progressive is towards life" and the regressive "towards death" (Spiller, 1969, p. 400). I continued studying natural forms and their rhythms and structures, fascinated by their intricacy and design. *Branch* (Figure 4.22, 1975) is an early work that resulted from exploring the linearity and axes of a spiny tree branch blown down in a storm. Such drawing, where I overlaid forms from several angles, developed to the point where the act of drawing, of depicting a motif with lines and marks was also able to be used as a painting technique. This development of intuitively using pigment like drawing enabled a more

complex analysis for creating images such as *Transcription of a Waterway* (Figure 4.32, 2019).

Figure 4.22

Neville Heywood, Branch, ink on paper, 30x50 cm, 1975.



In other works, like *Branch* (Figure 4.22, 1975), I continued developing axial compositions. My interest in roots for compositions based on axis and rotation persisted in *Roots: Progression* (Figure 4.23, 1975) and *Roots with Snakelike Form* (Figure 4.24, 1975). Others progressed into symbolic mandala that incorporated earth colours bearing a similarity with Indigenous art.

Figure 4.23

Neville Heywood, Roots: Progression, acrylic, paper, 30x45 cm, 1975

Figure 4.24

Neville Heywood, Roots with Snakelike Form, oil on masonite, 200x150 cm, 1975

While this project is chiefly about works I am currently making, my ongoing references to my earlier work is to show the impact these key influences have had on my current practice. My interest in micro macro structures remains evident in *The Bush's Little Jewels* (Figure 4.25, 2017), which presents a polymorphic subjective arrangement of plants in chessboard composition. In *The Bush's Little Jewels* I combined abstraction, symbolism and plant imagery in an arrangement referencing Paul Klee's checkerboard structure. What interested me was arranging

pattern, harmony and contrast as a way of showcasing bush flora. Klee had inspired me with his enigmatic designs and rational checkerboard theory called: "Structural formation: measuring as a pictorial procedure" (Spiller, 1961, p. 217). My use of the checkerboard format was however, intuitive rather than mathematical. The repetitive arrangement of its forms meant each micro image presented a visual statement in itself, yet worked as a part to a whole in multiple format. Ironically, because it began as a journal sketch, the drawings on lined notepaper needed much over-painting. Like *Rainbow and River* (Figure 4.36, 2017), The *Bush's Little Jewels* (Figure 4.24, 2017) had its genesis as a drawing forty years earlier, but was then reworked and expanded in 2017. This non-linear back and forth method is similar to Yunkaporta's *8-ways* approach as well as reflecting the "multiple layered action, feeling [and] thought" characteristic of autoethnography (Whitinui, 2014, p. 461). For me a long gestation in creating artwork is not unusual. The *Bush's Little Jewels* had as its inspiration an earlier drawing, plants from my garden, bush flora and a book of Australian plants. In it's devising, the combination of brush and stick painting, pattern and subjective colour, imparted a decorative quality reminiscent of the designs of John Coburn and Margaret Preston.

Figure 4.25

Neville Heywood, The Bush's Little Jewels, acrylic on paper, 35x44 cm, 2017

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Figure 4.26

Lyn Heywood, Across the Creek: An Afternoon's Glorious Light, iPhone photo, 2015.

Immersion is crucial for coming up with creative ideas like these and so most of my artwork is completed in the bush's isolation, contemplating and expressing the relationships in nature. This I celebrate whether in drought or when the natural world is fertile and green (Figure 4.26). Until recently my home area was beset by drought, resulting in dry creeks, fly plagues, hot winds, seared country and bushfires, the landscape patterned by ochres, browns, greys and olives (Figure 4.27). Thankfully the rains have now come and the drought officially ended.

Figure 4.27

Droughted hillside, Sky Camp, 2018

Ian Fairweather also sought the seclusion of the bush to create art when later in life he moved to Bribie Island, Queensland. There he stated, "My absorption with my work is my life. It is a personal thing, impossible to define or discuss. It gives me the satisfaction and comfort that, I imagine, religion gives …" (Abbott-Smith, 1978, p. 133). Like Fairweather's, my art is also highly personal, with the bush's diversity demanding a unique iconography for expressing my emotional and spiritual delight in terms of its spatiality, form, line, and colour as in *Tree Rhythm across Camp Creek* (Figure 4.28, 2016) and *Row of Trees, Camp Creek,* Figure 4.29, 2017).

Figure 4.28

Neville Heywood, Tree Rhythm across Camp Creek, acrylic on paper, 31x54 cm, 2016.

Explaining his approach, Fairweather said: "In painting I am faced with a problem which I must solve. The work can only be completed when I have found the right answer" (Abbott-Smith, 1978, p. 150) For me painting is not about a specific 'right answer' so much as coming to the end of a process that satisfies, while recognising that process still has other facets worth exploring. My problem then is not about having a right answer, so much as knowing when a work is actually finished. For me this happens when a point is reached and anything added seems extraneous. Fairweather said of his process that: "I've got an idea of what a painting should be. It's not a mechanical thing. Sometimes I solve the problem; then as far as they go, I like them". He notices the painting next to it,

grimaces and thrusts it aside. "Horrible lines …" (McGregor et al., 1969, p. 157).

Figure 4.29

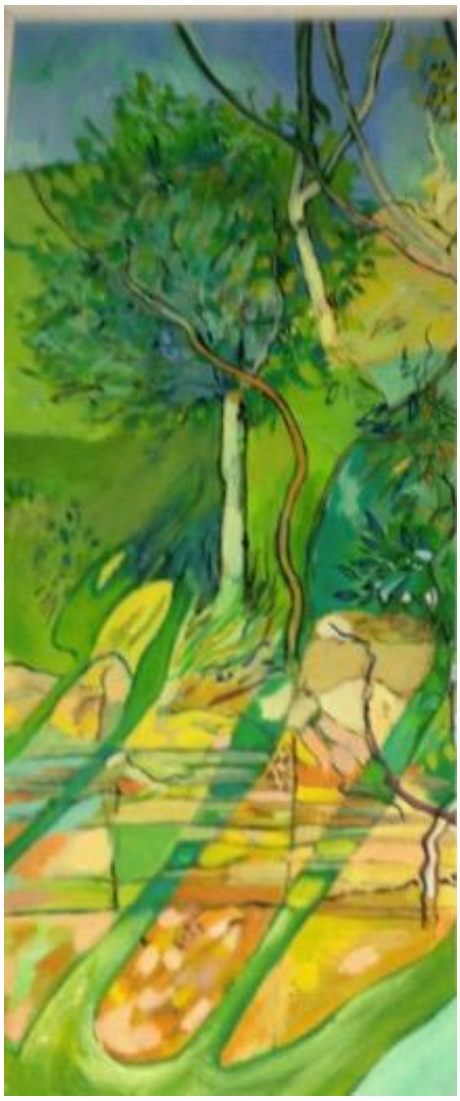
Neville Heywood, Row of Trees, Camp Creek, acrylic on paper, 13x38 cm, 2017

I too encounter challenges in painting, such as resolving discordant lines, shapes and colours, but a time of reflection can help to see afresh and push on as happened in *Row of Trees, Camp Creek* (Figure 4.29, 2017). This is because some days there is creative flow, on others, resistance. Clifton Pugh and Fred Williams experienced a similar challenge in painting the bush. For Williams new landscapes were threatening, causing him to fight "a series of battles" in order "to get on top … a personal battle, inside himself". Pugh though described painting as a "never ending war" (Turner, 1975, p. 42). For me, a finished picture can hide the struggle of its creation but resolution is ultimately achieved by persistence. Thus I rarely discard an incomplete work – considering its thought and struggle essential to the process. Fred Williams however confessed he might choose a view he liked but then immediately turn around and paint whatever he had not considered behind him. In my case I am not so much taken with the scenic as with exploring nature's variety and design. So where I see complexity in various environments, others perhaps see sameness or the nondescript. For me the bush provides a

wide variety in subject matter to which drawing yields an immediate response. *Camp Creek Sliced By Shadow* (Figure 4.30) is one such image developed from a drawing where the shape of the canvas and the creek's visuality gained strength through vertical arrangement. Conceived as a slice from a scene, it portrays the patterns of sunlight and shadow falling across dry creek grasses with the blue sky contrasting the serpentine tree forms and shadows angling the creek.

Figure 4.30

Neville Heywood, Camp Creek Sliced By Shadow, oil, acrylic on canvas, 41x17 cm, n.d.



At Atholwood, the annual rainfall is generally 600 mm but most years much less falls and there are droughts, this seasonal change having a marked effect on my subject matter. Most of the time in writing this exegesis, *Sky Camp* had received only about 100mm, missing the annual rain that brightens and transforms the landscape. What drought does do is to uncover the structures within natural forms normally concealed by foliage. A mistletoe branch for example, tumbles to earth twisted and macabre, or trees shed their leaves revealing skeletal trunks and branches. During drought even mature trees can die, shedding their bark in curls, their leaves sear, their trunks split in fissures. Sometimes a melancholy pervades my mind seeing this, especially since I planted many of those trees. Because of my love of trees and of forests I think it significant the name Heywood (originating in Lancashire England) refers to a person who lived in a high (heigh) wood protecting and caring for the forest. I see this as my role, caring for the land and recording its beauty, whether in drought or green, though a transformation from brown to green is wonderfully pleasant. My daily movements around *Sky Camp* have enhanced my love of foliage, especially its permutations of colour in the morning and afternoon light as in *Forest Glade, Sky Camp*, (Figure 4.31, 2018). These times are particularly refreshing compared to the glare and diminished shadow of midday.

Figure 4.31

Neville Heywood, Forest Glade, Sky Camp, acrylic on chart cardboard, 26x39 cm, 2018

The small work *Forest Glade, Sky Camp* was inspired by my analysis of a waterway photo in a National Geographic magazine. The photograph's linearity stimulated a new approach for depicting Cypress and gum forests using observed line, point, and colour patches. I completed *Forest Glade, Sky Camp* while working on *Transcription of a Waterway* (Figure 4.32, 2019). Its creation is comparable to where I once wrote poetry using words cut out of magazines to expand my vocabulary. Examining that intricate photo of a waterway stretched my skills and helped me experiment with new ways of recording complexity of the bush. It also provided a challenge reminiscent of Fred Williams' actions when he turned to paint a scene immediately behind him thus jolting his perceptions.

Figure 4.32

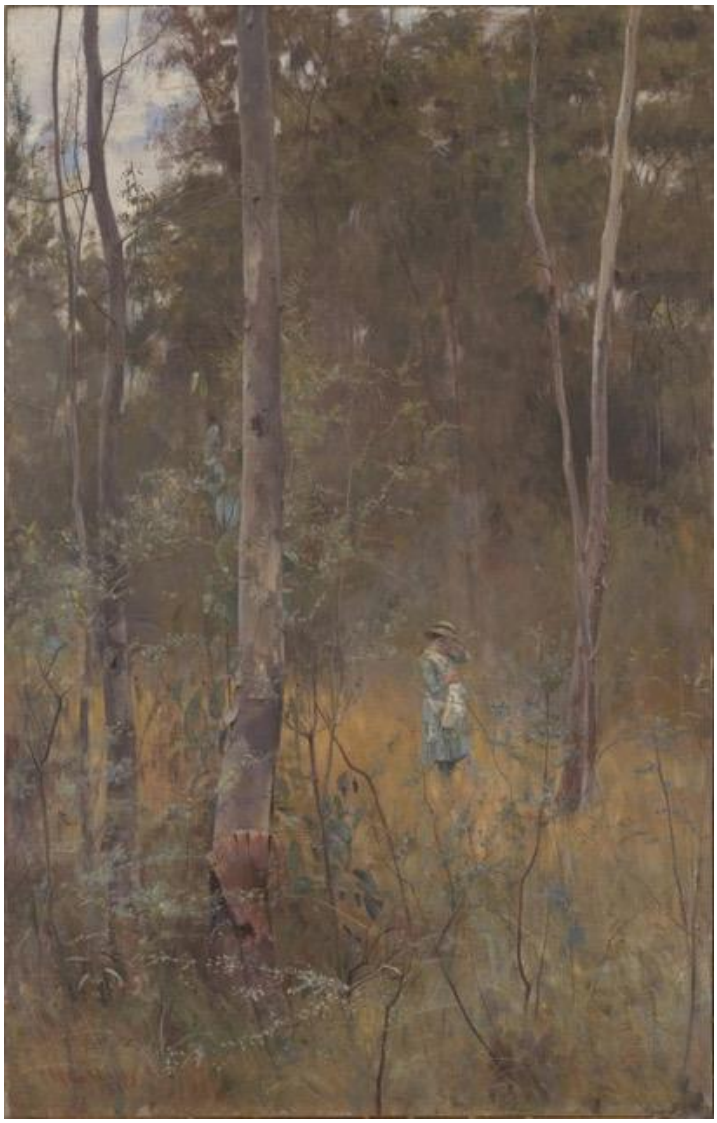
Neville Heywood, Transcription of a Waterway (from a National Geographic photograph), acrylic on paper, 28x20 cm, 2019

Artist Fred McCubbin (1855-1917) also found that nature offered creative opportunities to reconcile light and form with a focus on the indefinite or atmospheric. McCubbin's *Lost* (Figure 4.33, 1886) recorded the enigma of a lost girl in the bush, a theme later explored in the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Although the figure in McCubbin's picture provides

its focal point, his interest lay just as much in rendering the trees and shrubs. These present a muted background to the foreground grasses, a work in painterly poetry 'lighter' and more "naturalistic than anything he had previously produced", its forms sketchy, suffused with atmospheric light (McDonald, 2008, p. 390).

Figure 4.33

Frederick McCubbin, Lost, oil on canvas, 115x74 cm, NGV, 1886



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The challenge that McCubbin faced was that of expressing the bush's essence in the physicalities of enclosure, colour, texture and light effects. This he achieved by the use of thinly layered paint applied to finely woven canvas (Whitelaw et al., 2014). McCubbin's subjective approach transmitted a quality of pathos to the bush, in an era when it largely had sinister connotations. However, instead of pathos, I want to convey my experience of the bush's liveliness and the and joy and freedom found in living there. My working method is to paint outdoors, unlike Olsen who said:

> All my pictures are done in the studio. I dislike working directly out of doors, because I think it limits the unconscious flow, and memory in a picture is as important, or more important, than the present. A landscape, the appearance of a landscape seen by the eye, is only the first door by which we enter. If it's a really good painting, the associations of that landscape may open many doors. (Walker, 1988, p. 109)

Olsen researches the landscape by sketching then draws upon his semi-subconscious for conceiving his ideas expressed in 'automatist' linework (Hart, 1997, p. 49). His subjects are presented on an abstraction continuum because he believes too much reality can destroy the lyricism in his art. In my case, by relying on intuition, I transpose what I encounter, by showing for example, the changes wrought by drought using oranges, browns, ochres, and yellows to depict the dwindling short grass in *Camp Creek Meditation* (Figure 4.34, 2017). When comparing our approaches there is some overlap, with foliage textures for me resulting from observation and applied design, while for Olsen, observation and memory are his means for creating art.

Figure 4.34

Neville Heywood, Camp Creek Meditation, acrylic on paper, 74x55 cm, 2017

4.4 THEME 4: HOLISTIC RESOLUTION THROUGH IMMERSION

To attain spiritual expression is as important for me as it was for Paul Klee's "metaphysical view of the world" (Klee, 1969, p. 67). Being able to live a free life in the bush has brought a spiritual harmony and experiential joy in nature that I want to convey to others in works like *A Jacaranda Eye-poem*, Figure 4.32, 2016).

Figure 4.35

Neville Heywood, A Jacaranda Eye-poem, ink, acrylic, pencil, 21x30 cm, 2016

In my desire to express feelings of harmony with nature, I felt a kinship with the Australian artist Robert Juniper (1929-2012) who created a poeticist art that awakened 'memories of a common experience' (McCullough, 1984, p. 48). Although some artists thought they could achieve a sense of poetry by incorporating text and text-morphed images into their work, I, like Juniper, imbued my art with intuitive forms of visual poetry. This sense of the poetic lies in the mind and feelings to thus connect eye and mind so as to express in visual imagery what a poet might in words.

There is also the potential of viewing the bush empathically in terms of Indigenous perspectives, that is learning to see it as a 'nourishing terrain', 'lived in and lived with', a 'home' with 'sacred and dangerous

places' (Rose, 1996, pp. 7, 9). Today many non-Indigenous people are unaware of this nurturing connection of the bush, considering it a place of fear and calamity away from highways and towns. This feeling was uppermost in the public response to Kenneth Cook's *Wake in Fright* (book 1961, film 1971). The film version of his novel was a disturbing, xenophobic portrayal of misfits in the New South Wales outback. Nicholas Smith commented on its fear-hate mix conveyed in 1970s and 1980s Australian cinema as "something essentially Australian located in the landscape" that spoke to "the myth of Australian alienation" (2011, pp.12-13). Of course, the bush does present many dangers, a fact that causes me to wonder at the degree to which these impacted my forbears' lives where under its vagaries some died in childhood, in falls from horses or drowning crossing flooded rivers (Appendix 26). While familiarisation with Australia's environment increased dramatically since settlement, today there are still many who have not experienced or can relate to the strangeness and beauty of regional, remote and rural Australia. Tension arises from the fact Australia's identity in the bush is seen symbolically by a majority urban 'fringe' as being a form of 'remote rurality' because having lived turned away from it, few have had experience of its interior (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008, p. 59).

Banjo Paterson (1864-1941) internalised this tremulous city country divide when he eulogised the allure of the bush in his iconic *Clancy of the Overflow* (Appendix 27). In that poem Paterson contrasted the loveliness of nature with the "foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city" and this was my feeling also when growing up in Sydney. Conversely, in the bush my spirit soared, so that I felt a oneness with it, forming as for Dorothea Mackellar (1885-1968), the 'core' of my 'heart'. As an adult my life has been one long continuous encounter with nature, punctuated by memorable moments such as in 1977 when I beheld an amazing rainbow that I memorialised in sketches. In 2017 I again returned to this theme

and reworked it in acrylic and oil to result in *Rainbow with Birds*[17] and *Rainbow and River* (Figure 4.36, 2017). In both works the rainbow signified feelings of psychological release celebrated in bright colours. Though originally sketched in watercolour, I re-worked the theme in acrylic and oils under full sunlight to intensify the colour. Thus one characteristic of my working method is to move backwards and forwards in time, enriching and reliving meaningful sensations. Robert Juniper (1929-2012) also found allure in his older work saying: 'Today, there's not a great deal of my drawing around because more often than not it would, even if it was on paper, end up as a painting. I would seal the surface and paint over with oil paint, or something like that' (Walker, 1988, p. 76). In my case I found redrawing images from preparatory drawings meant the image could lose vitality in translation, but when painted straight over, the impact was enhanced.

[17] Figure 59, 2017 in autobiography - *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story*.

Figure 4.36

Neville Heywood, Rainbow and River, ink, oil, acrylic on cardboard, 28x20 cm, 2017.

Sketching for familiarity and analysis is another characteristic bringing a sense of immediacy to my work. This was the case in *Yuccas* (Figure 4.37, 2018), an example of design punctum (eye-catching interest) focused on a striking plant. It is a theme to which I applied a designer's eye with sensibility, integrity to materials and the pursuit of quality. The work homages a design tradition in Indigenous and non-indigenous art applied to the symbolic for expressing nature's multi-dimensionality. Yuccas grow many places along the border because, being hardy, they need little water. Hence the bush is today a compromised environment where

introduced species can cause many problems. Yuccas originated in the dry regions of North and Central America and here at *Sky Camp* they form an exotic link with earlier colonial settlements. Despite their incongruity compared to native flora, their dangerous needle tipped leaves present eye-catching juxtapositions transposable to line, pattern, shape and positive and negative spatiality in contrast to their showy flowers.

Figure 4.37

Neville Heywood, Yuccas, acrylic and inks on paper, 26x25 cm, 2018

In depicting different kinds of introduced species such as Yuccas, Pepperinas, Cotoneasters and Oleanders (as well as native species) I came to see these plants as survivor composites. Each gave symbolic context to places penetrated by settlement and today function as organic artefacts linking back to earlier eras. In choosing the Yucca as my subject I focused on its design aspects, drawing it in ink then expressive colour applied to leaves and flowers. From the start of the colonial story, non-native plants (and animals, and technology) also became the subject matter of other artists. But there is another incongruity applying to non-Indigenous representations. Since most artists today are urban based they usually lack experience of the bush and have internalised "an ensuing sense of settler-culture discomfort" that discourages involvement with it as a subject choice (North, 2002, p. 9) but my familial connection to the bush negates this feeling.

4.5 THEME 5: PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

While many non-Indigenous artists have depicted Australian subjects, most contain elements of hybridity. This is something of an unbridgeable challenge for non-Indigenous artists like myself. However, that is not to say there is no rapprochement in exploring one's European origins through books, films or overseas trips, but for many their roots remain cerebral and unlived, because Australia is now the home that most settler descendants associate with. This presents an ongoing identity dilemma given the presence of First Nations peoples. Conversely in life and art my aim has been to enjoy and explore my homeland in a full engagement of the "senses" and "intellect" (Klein, 2018, p. 4). Delving into such tension Judith Tucker explored the interrelationships that apply between art, land and selfhood by comparing the making of art to 'wandering' the "diasporic aesthetics of temporal and spatial exile" (2006, p. 100). I thus share affinity with Tucker's conclusions because I was forced to grow up in a city where I experienced feelings of strong alienation until I could finally make the bush my home (Appendix 28).

Today life there has provided a place of "spiritual sanctuary" for resolving of life's "tangles" and to pursue the really important things of life (McCullough, 1984, p. 13). However, living in the bush basically demands persistence and stamina to be able to cope with its heat, droughts, bushfires, floods, manual work, decay, and isolation. Such difficulties inform my art and struggling through them yields an intimate knowledge where I "knower and … known interact" to "shape and interpret" the landscape afresh (Haseman, 2006, p. 104).

This intimacy is evident in my art-practice and autoethnographic research. While autoethnography provides textual tools, it is a tenet any artwork must still ultimately stand on its own. The physicality of making art is different to writing but there can be overlaps in poetic intent, experiment and creativity. As Hodgkinson (cited in McCullough, 1984, p. 27) contends: "unlike writing; drawing and painting make up their own syntax as the work develops". That is, "line and colour cannot be reasoned out. They must be worked out on paper, canvas, or whatever". For some this might call into question the value of a portfolio compared to an exhibition, but a portfolio with an autobiography included presents additional knowledge for documenting my artist journey. Thus my accompanying book *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story* containing also other reproductions of my art has advantages in disseminating it on the net. In relation to practice-led-research though the act of painting as research is that of 'thinking' and 'seeing' through the processes of making informed with theory (Tucker, 2006, p. 95). Artist John Borrack (1933-) argued the act of "painting is itself knowledge", because in order to create and communicate meaning, artists must cultivate intimacy with their subject (McCullough, 1984, p. 18). For me art is an action process based in research conveying feelings and knowledge (Haseman, 2006, p. 100). John Olsen though saw art as: "the function of artists to show people how to look, how to see" in a form of seeing that involves "morality, ethics, and just pure beauty" (Hawley, 1993, p. 132). My desire in painting is to evoke nature's glory in images

created by mixing together play, intuition and gesture to echo Klee's belief that "dialogue with nature is essential", a "condition sine qua non" (Spiller, 1969, p. 83).

For me art is transformative, driven by a vision to uncover the "inexhaustibly rich information" in nature (Arnheim, 1969, p. 18). From this vision developed over a lifetime, I absorbed nature's forms and that of the landscape while travelling, working, running, meditating, drawing, camping and living in the bush. These activities inspired celebratory images I created using brushes, sticks, feathers and mono print applications with fibro, gauze and rusted tin etc. As I utilised these found tools, I often started with no fixed idea of the finished picture, but discovered it by a mix of observation and experiment. This experimentalism is evident in *Granite Hillside* (Figure 4.38, 2016), which mixed stamping with drawing, and also *Moon and Trees* (Figure 4.39, 1976), a photo etching created in experiments with photosensitive film.

Figure 4.38

Neville Heywood, Granite Hillside, acrylic & ink on paper, 18x25 cm, 2016

Figure 4.39

Neville Heywood, Moon and Trees, photo etching, 42x52 cm, 1976.

A reworked serendipitous ink blob represents a balanced, symbolic moon.

This experimentalism led to many 'new insights' gained in a "bowerbird approach" that crossed the diverse disciplines and fields of autoethnography and practice-led research (Pace, 2013, p. 13) (Figure 4.41). This penchant for eclecticism and experiment is typified by *Moon and Trees*, where ink drawn on celluloid was overlaid using colour transparencies exposed to ammonia, and then superimposed to result in four different related views. The advantage gained from this process was skill development applicable to other media as well as broadening my artistic practice (Bolt, 2006, p. 12). In time my experiments extended to the unpredictable effects gained by printing, stamping, pouring, mixing and collage. These were applied to represent the order and energy I sensed underlying the universe in: *Hillside: Energy in nature* (Figure 4.40, 1978), *Butterfly Motifs*, (Figure 4.41, 1985), and *Glorious Pepperina and Pine*, (Figure 4.5, 2017). In these experimental works Klee's ideas had a

great influence, including his belief that "freedom in nature parallels an artist's right to develop their own paths to form" (cited in Spiller translating Klee, 1969, p. 17).

Figure 4.40

Neville Heywood, Hillside: Energy in Nature, acrylic on canvas, 110x110 cm, 1978

Figure 4.41

Neville Heywood, Butterfly Motifs, acrylic and ink on paper, 25x53 cm, 1985

While life in the bush has brought an intimate knowledge of nature, it was also punctuated by the need to travel long distances for teaching. This resulted in landscapes based on the countryside, but flashing past my car windows and helmet visor. Nevertheless, I still found time to paint while coping with what was at times a disjunctive existence and expressed in: *Number Carefully the Furrowed Fields of Wheat* (Figure 4.42, 1977), *Highway*, (Figure 4.43, 1978) and *Rainbow and River* (Figure 4.36, 2017). Teaching enabled time to paint and supported my family, yet I never forgot how in starting out (and at other times) I had significant times of unemployment, an all too familiar experience for artists. As a result I learned how to combine work and painting so as to stay in the bush whereby a lifetime's output has since proceeded from that strategy.

Figure 4.42

Neville Heywood, Number Carefully the Furrowed Fields of Wheat, watercolour & ink, 17x44 cm, 1977

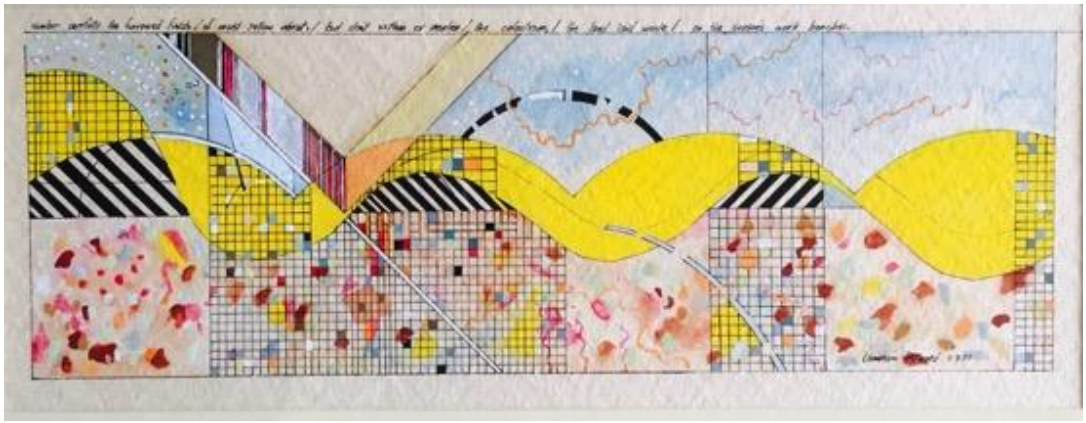


Figure 4.43

Neville Heywood, Highway, acrylic on canvas, 120x180 cm, 1978.

Sky Camp's isolation however brought problems that included limited opportunities to work with other artists. As well teaching in country schools and external studies constrained the time I could give to my practical art (Appendix 29). This situation helped me realise how my life has occurred in a milieu different to that of earlier artists. For example in studying history at UNE, the idea of a bush-centric national identity was the central tenet in my lecturer Russel Ward's (1914-1995) teaching. He asserted that the bush exerted a 'disproportionate' impact 'on the attitudes of the whole Australian community' and shaped the national identity (1966, p. v). Today there are detractors from Ward's theory with Gary Lee considering Ward's thesis part of a "colonial gaze" permeating art and literature which:

> … portray[ed] a panoramic affirmation of the colonial ideal – an image of the conquered (therefore tamed) land inhabited by all those hard-working pioneers and settlers, living in the landscape that they, in effect, had 'made'. (Leviticus, 1997, pp. 105-106)

Lee described this view of the "bush tradition" hearkening back to the tenets of colonialism:

> Cultural activity in post-Mabo Australia will be meaningful only if it abandons the legal and cultural falsehoods of colonialism, and practices are adopted to support the political and cultural empowerment of its indigenous owners. (Leviticus, 1997, p. 110)

Lee thus invokes the need for a decolonisation of the structures, policies and enculturation rooted in Australia's colonial past by pressing for Indigenous self-determination as "a legal and moral" imperative (Stilz, 2015). For Lee these result from a "lack of just rule" and the denial of "political enfranchisement" only fixed by reinstating stolen rights, redressing injustice and dismantling colonialism (Stilz, 2015).

Herein lies a problem, with the obvious question, are artists in their localized sphere themselves agents of the colonial state? Perhaps its crux lies in artists' socialisation absorbed as individuals, meaning they

represent a dominant culture despite viewing oneself from a perspective of individuality. To cross the culture divide is to seek sympathetic change while reflecting on the colonialist attitudes individuals may have inherited. Norman Dale perceived the incongruity between settler and Indigenous as the "settler child … born into the history and ideology of colonialism", inheriting a mind-set that sustains colonialism immersed in "the popular culture and consciousness of the heroic settler on a frontier" (2014, p. 19). I have had to work through this dichotomy. During my postgraduate and MA studies, I sought out instances of reciprocity and enculturation across the race divide. Such were the experiences of the marooned convict William Buckley (1776-1856), writer-speaker David Unaipon (1872-1967), guide and artist Albert Namatjira, and schoolteacher Geoffrey Bardon (1940-2003). However it was uncovering examples of reciprocity and humanitarianism on the race frontier that led Henry Reynolds to write *The Whispering in Our Hearts* (1998) where he documented examples of empathic relationships. Because of my rural location I continually moved between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities without considering my art ideological or racialist, even though I realised enculturation must pose problems. With this in mind my work in the bush reflects a personal story where I have tried to see others from different backgrounds as *us,* as people together, making art and living without enmity. This carried over into how and why I celebrated nature. Olsen described how he felt by saying, "I am in the landscape and the landscape is in me": a poetic way of describing his connection to it (Walker, 1998, p. 103). Indigenous author Bayet-Chariton described the relationship of Indigenous people to the land by asserting: "Aboriginal people are an integral part of the Australian landscape. We are the land, the land is us" (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008, p. 61). As a non-Indigenous artist, bush environments surround me, shaping my art and settler heritage (Appendix 30). Awareness of these family origins forms the underpinning for my life just as ancestral and family ties are also vital in the Indigenous community. From childhood, this consciousness drove me

to the extent that eventually I connected with many of the places where my forebears previously lived. I expressed this bond in poetry, such as *Old Man* where my grandfather's life became generationally "my living, [his] memorial … my flesh".[18]

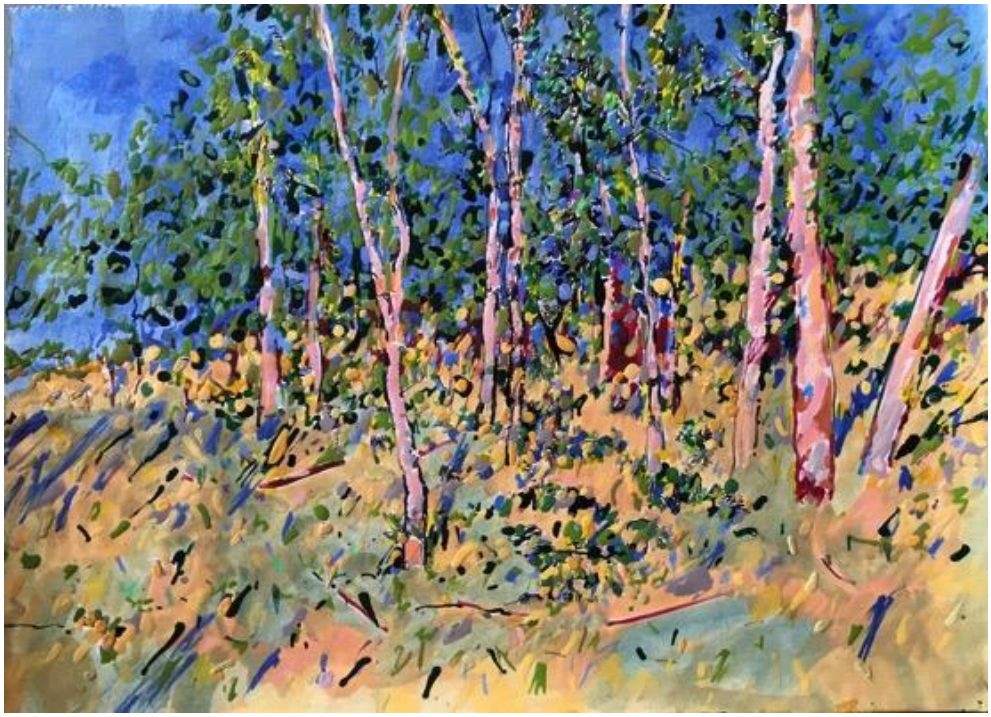
Because of this familial foundation there arises a question about the importance of art in rural contexts, namely: What is the experience of the Australian landscape for shaping art and life among past and present generations? To me it comprises the ecological, spiritual, and experiential but it is also problematic because of over two hundred years of fraught relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the latter including my forbears. Their residence began here under the exacting rule of a planned dumping ground for convicts, though for the Indigenous inhabitants the outcome was invasion and culture loss (Crowley, 1977, p. 5) (Appendix 31). Historically, after arrival in New South Wales, Governor Phillip's instructions were "to open an intercourse with the natives, and … conciliate their affections, enjoining all … subjects to live in amity and kindness with them" (Macintyre, 2016, p. 33). Although some tried, many did not. Today the pendulum has swung to a greater understanding of Indigenous rights as "central to the renewal of this nation as a harmonious just society" (Auguste, 2019, p. 432). This is the milieu against which my art has developed. Nevertheless one incongruity is that when I paint many of my pictures are unpeopled, that is to say the land depicted has emptiness, although occasionally roads and fences are included. Roads have connotations of freedom and surprise, but also unnerve as an infrastructure of violation. Along with roads, fences are a fact of life in the bush as settlements expand parcelling up the country (Appendix 32). Fences occasionally appear in my work, but they are often indiscernible because at a distance wire is imperceptible. My pictures portray a symbolic world contemplated from a real place you can walk through and enjoy, a world of sunshine and scurrying things. *The Bush Alive; Rejoice!* (Figure 4.44, 2019) expresses this vibrancy in sketchy

[18] See *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story*, p. 43.

paint expressing the bush's liveliness scintillated by soft winds (Appendix 33).

Figure 4.44

Neville Heywood, The Bush Alive; Rejoice!, ink, acrylic, 21x28 cm, 2019



4.5.1 OVERVIEW DCA EXHIBITION/PORTFOLIO

At present there are thirty-eight completed works in my creative portfolio. These express heritage, ecology, and a holistic relation to nature.

- Life thought: Symbol & Nature, steel, wood, Masonite, acrylic, 2020 – typifies creation and the order in nature.
- Map and the landscape – Symbolic Aerialscape – expressing orienteering, movement across the landscape – shared country, reciprocity.
- Bush and garden -the garden as nature in transition – a curious eye and the ecology of caretaking.

- Water in the landscape – bringing life, soothing, the, spirit refreshing.
- Being analytical – deconstructing nature – grafting Braque and Cezanne for depicting spatial elements and nature's rhythms.
- Imaginative rendition – playing with nature – design and process – calligraphy and the bush – nature's language.
- Horizontal rendition – exploring the horizontal format as reading a painting, panorama and the calligraphic.
- Painterly approximation – abstracting the sensual – Nature and process – holistic resolution.
- Bush land series – point and line, spatiality, life energy, drawing a painting, pattern in nature, expression, light effects, heritage, the curious eye, personal engagement – an ecology of the sacred – a frieze of the bush – a journal of moments.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND THE DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 MAJOR THEMES

To what extent has my immersion in the Australian bush, physically and ideologically, informed my artistic practice, enabling new insights about the land and landscape art in Australia? This chapter presents the results of my inquiry and discusses the findings. Of course this starts with my art in which I sought to transform attitudes towards the bush as providing poignant meaning and enrichment. These qualities though abstract, manifest also as emotions that help drive my work. Immersion for deepening involvement with ones ' subject, involves many factors posited on the environment and relations with others. Despite a great variety in seasonal extremes, to survive in the bush involves a long-term perseverant relationship. This engagement with and ongoing journey through seasons of heat, cold, drought, flood, and fertility, are depicted in works such as: *Creek and Trees*, (Figure 5.1, 2015), *Sky Camp Scene* (Figure 5.2, 2015), *The Colours of Droughted Country*, (Figure 5.3, 2016) and *The Calligraphic Language of the Bush: Sapling Patterns*, (Figure 5.4, 2019).

Figure 5.1

Neville Heywood, Creek and Trees, Sky Camp, oil on board, 60x90 cm, 2015

Figure 5.2

Neville Heywood, Sky Camp Scene, oil on board, 60x80 cm, 2015

Figure 5.3

Neville Heywood, The Colours of Droughted Country, acrylic & ink on paper, 30x42 cm, 2016

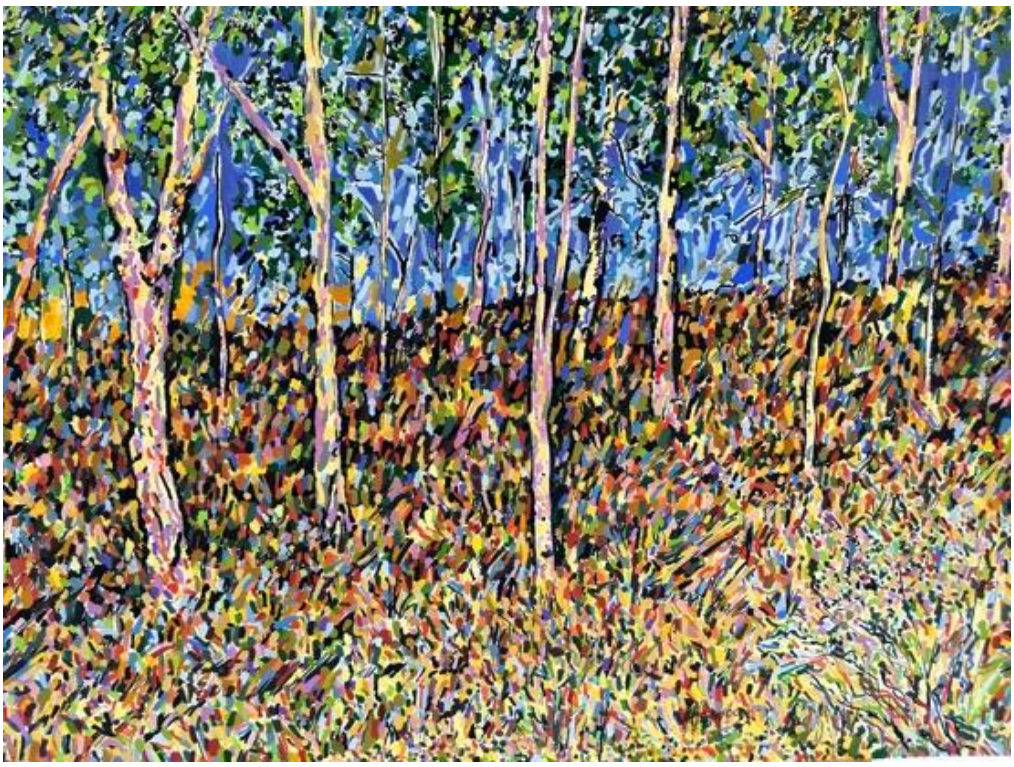


Figure 5.4

Neville Heywood, The Calligraphic Language of the Bush: Sapling Patterns, acrylic and ink on paper, 21x58 cm, 2019

Thus how one sees the bush depends on an attitude where drought, bushfire and floods are threats seen in context and adapted to. My long-

time neighbour Eddie (decd.) (who only left Atholwood to serve as a *Chocko* operating searchlights when Japanese subs entered Sydney Harbour[19]) would often say: "a good drought sweetens up the country". What he meant was that following a drought nature produces a vital lushness compared to average seasons, making up for the dry years by an abundant growth stimulated by good rains. Eddie's knowledge was considerable, having lived around Atholwood all his life, observant of the bush and wildlife, finding significance in the movements of ants, environmental changes and animal behaviour. Vignettes of others' experience, like Eddie's, made for a composite picture of the bush that had influence on my attitudes. In living with the bush I sometimes liken viewing it to the metaphor of a window frame. This is because the large windows in our house first at *Gowrie,* then *Sky Camp,* allowed the bush to blur the boundaries between interior and exterior, the window frame cropping and confining the image's conception. Artists Richard Long (1945–) and Robert Smithson (1938–1973) who created *Spiral Jetty* (Figure 5.5, 1970) rejected the traditional window/frame-like image by working directly with earth elements to create non-traditional, large-scale, environmental, enigmatic artworks that merge with nature while simultaneously standing out from it (Appendix 34). But to me Land Artists, who produced 'art for art's sake', altered landscapes and created intrusions in ways reminiscent of rural fencing, ploughed fields, roadways, yards, electricity wires and buildings. Both Land Art and rural infrastructure are forms of intrusion. My work however, with canvas or paper, instead of changing the landscape, leaves no environmental disturbance thus fulfilling the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace (Leave No Trace Australia, 2022) by taking nothing but pictures to leave only footprints (Appendix 35).

[19] Derisive AIF term in WW2 towards national servicemen (militia), believed to originate from a comic opera *The Chocolate Soldier* and applied to the militia claiming they "would 'melt' if action ever came" (Brune, 2004, p. 25)

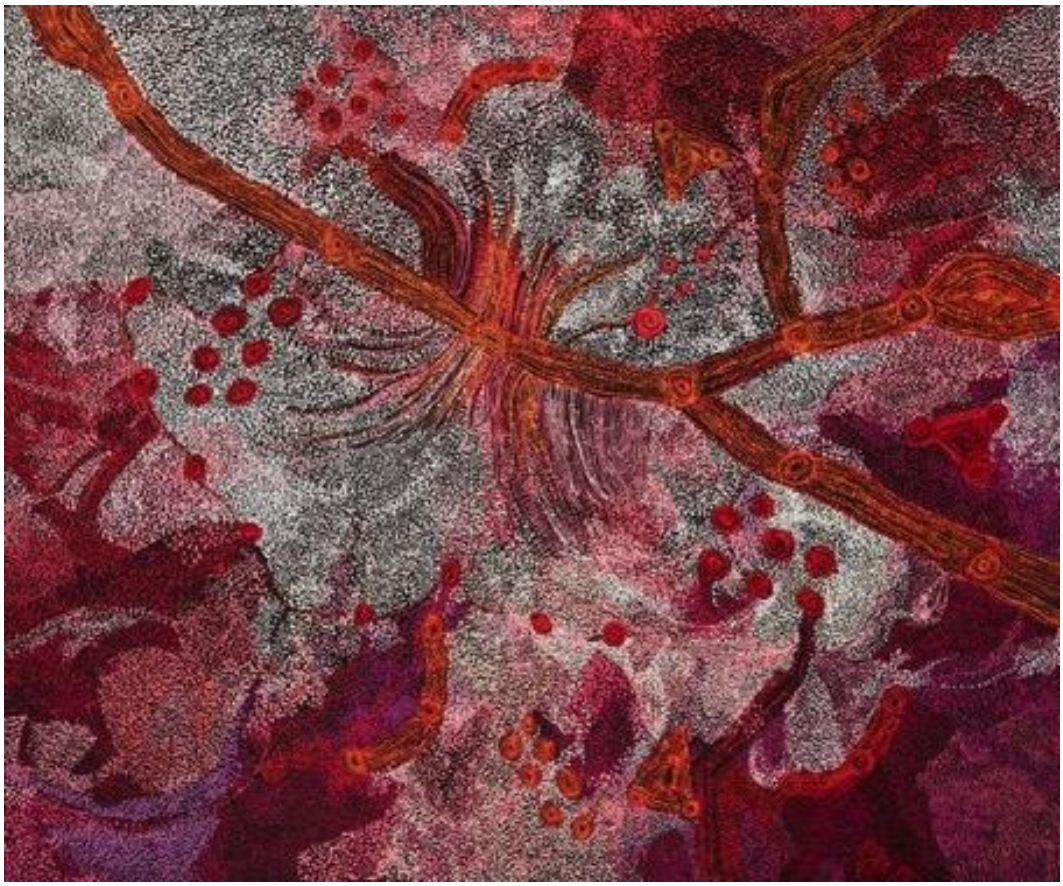
Figure 5.5

Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, April, 1970

On the other hand, landscape and nature-based art links back to the innate need people have to engage with nature. Problematically some no longer recognise this relationship and believe landscape art an irrelevant, dead genre. Nevertheless, landscape painting has not disappeared despite such thinking, because interest continues, fostered by art competitions such as the Wynne Prize for Landscape and Hadley's Art Prize, Hobart (HAPH).

Figure 5.6

Sylvia Ken, Seven Sisters, Wynne Prize winner, 2019



In 2019 the Wynne was won by the *Amata* artist Sylvia Ken with *Seven Sisters* (Figure 5.6, 2019) and in 2020 Hubert Pareroultja, *Tjoritja* (West MacDonnell Ranges) took the coveted prize with a Namatjira evocative landscape. Then in 2022 the HAPH prize was awarded to the senior Pitjantjatjara artist Tuppy Ngintja Goodwin for her work *Antara*. These works are powerful statements about rights to painting 'Country' and complement the art of non-Indigenous artists working from more visual and conceptual bases.

5.1.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The major themes of my work focus on the bush to express its order / disorder, environmental relationships, calligraphies, rhythms, and

spiritual meanings. More recently though I have been disturbed by the penetration of new wind and solar infrastructures that are causing visual and physical despoliation of the landscape. These imposed changes have introduced a new variant colonialism that affects the rights of Indigenous people by shrinking their access to already limited land whereby "most traditional owners … have little legal say" and any "positive impacts … depends in part on the leverage they have to negotiate" (O'Neill et al., 2020). Such monolithic pressure have elicited feelings of powerlessness in me as well as forming an emerging issue for First Nations peoples. My response to this challenge is to highlight the bush's aesthetic beauty and reprise its essentiality and need for care from a conservationist position.

5.1.2 A HOLISTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

My art then does not on face value interrogate the domination of nature through human intervention, but that of living intimately with it (Appendix 35). Over my long career I have seen the despoliation caused by tree poisoning and overzealous clearing yet I still manage to find subjects of unexpected uniqueness, especially inland, where for some seeing beauty is a struggle. I first realised this in 1973 when I became bemused by criticism of my painting *West Country* (Figure 5.7, 1973). Writing in the *Cairns Post*, an art critic argued my picture was "likely to send tourists packing" because it depicted western grasslands people would see as non-idyllic.[20] The critic considered my modernist approach to have a "fundamentally different paradigm" to Hans Heysen's, which it did, because to my critic, traditional scenic representation trumped "modernity, innovation and originality" in my choice of subject (Body, 2019, p. 221). A similar clash happened when I was later asked to judge an art exhibition in Cairns. One of the organisers saw any kind of modern art as invalid in comparison to representational painting and a disagreement ensued over my views. Thus works I created like

[20] See *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story*, Mareeba 1972-76, p. 3.

Westcountry (Figure 5.7, 1973) caused confusion among a select group of coastal viewers who possessed a strong preference for picturesque art.

Figure 5.7

Neville Heywood, Westcountry, oil on canvas, 45x90 cm, 1973

5.1.3 ABORIGINALITY, POST-COLONIALISM AND RECIPROCITY

My residence in inland areas reinforced in me a belief that art can help us connect more deeply with nature and because of that develop a commonality with First Nations people, the original custodians of the Land. Similarly some today argue for a new attitude towards nature achieved by the intertwining of cultural legacies, an idea that resonates throughout this study (Wissing, 2019, p. 1). Arising from moves to intertwined relationships there has resulted greater realisation of the wealth of knowledge Aboriginal culture contributes to Australian culture and the connective "intimacy that is the authentic experience of intercultural interaction" (Galliford, 2011, p. 5). This growth inter-culturally complements Stephen Muecke's argument for an equalising of relationships where "all forms of culture are made from ancient bits and modern bits" which combine the best in a "vitality of creative hybridizations" (Wissing, 2019, p. 4).

Because of these and related reasons I consider the entwining of Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture to be integral to achieving a harmonious society. In this regard there is a bush identity, but in urban areas a broader multicultural Australian identity has emerged. From the beginning however, as settlements grew and race relations deteriorated, there were still fledgling points of convergence, such as when in 1855, Eugene von Guérard drew Black Johnny Kangatong, and Johnny reciprocated by drawing von Guérard (Sayers, 1996, p. 1). Andrew Sayers, in *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century*, documented various Indigenous artists who adapted European art to represent both European and Indigenous subject matter although he was careful to emphasise sensitivity was required to avoid "citing their work as case studies in the impact of colonialism" (1996, p. 9).

Other convergences followed, such as Battarbee and Namatjira's friendship and Bardon's work at Papunya. Desiring cultural relevance, Bardon sought help from Papunya's Aboriginal elders and sparked an art revolution. The awareness this resultant art generated meant many Australians began to realise how "extensive, rich and elaborate Indigenous knowledge of Country" is (Wissing, 2019, p. 4). Controversially though, Ian McLean argues that the change Bardon precipitated, proceeded from the circumscribing of modernism and contemporary art forms onto Indigenous art. The setting for this new style McLean saw as requiring engagement "with the simultaneous presentness of contemporaneous worlds" so that non-Indigenous culture still set the paradigms of success (2013, p. 167). This means exposure to Indigenous art took on affirmative and problematic forms. As non-Indigenous people were exposed to Indigenous art many related to it through the perspective of abstract art. In abstraction, the picture has no considered meaning outside itself but in Aboriginal art every element is essential to the story it is telling about critical issues such as Country, human activities, food sources and spiritual beliefs. Even when, as a strategy to protect sensitive knowledge, artists resorted to veiling their

images with dot patterns, the central meaning remained. Therefore responding to Indigenous artwork as attractive abstract art is to miss its real significance because there is a wealth of living and ceremonial knowledge actually portrayed in Indigenous art that makes for a different dynamic to western abstraction. In traditional, Papunya and post Papunya art, design serves knowledge, but not as an end in itself as in western abstraction. For abstract artists such as Ron Robertson Swan, Guy Warren, Peter Upward or Michael Johnson, their art is intended for appreciation non-representationally, even though illusions of externality can be intimated in enigmatic referential titles. For abstract artists the pictorial aesthetic experience remains uppermost, and does not reference natural phenomena, except in semi-abstraction.

Thus, by moving beyond interpretations of Indigenous art as abstract design into an appreciation of it as laden with meaning, there is an opportunity for deeper aesthetic understanding. Such exposure to First Nations artwork has been critical to my art practice. This began at school with Namatjira's watercolours and then broadened in the 1960s seeing Indigenous art at the AGNSW and Australian Museum. At art school I experimented with designs influenced by the striking colour and patterns of indigenous art. The application for this was combined with designs from wood grains, exposed tree roots and rock strata, examples of which today have no photographic record.

So over a career spanning two generations, I have been inspired by a combination of the works of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists in a principal focus of design, spatiality, line, panorama, close-up and abstraction. This makes for a parallel story to Indigenous experience holistically linked with nature in my creating of art. For me the bush offers comparable spiritual significance arrayed in its dawns, sunsets, droughts, and floods, blazing sun, storms, heavens and ecology. These contrast the settler remnants found in: thrown horseshoes, discarded implements and introduced plants, crumbling fences and rung trees, all evidence of life's temporality. It emphasises to me the need in the 'here and now' to

celebrate life and enjoy nature. By contrast, the early colonial settlers and artists were intrigued and awed by the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the Australian landscape. This differs from Indigenous experience where the land is First Nations peoples' home, nurturing, mysterious and sacred, and expressed in an iconography of "deep insight … narrative" and knowledge (Cameron, 2015, p.69).

The European settlers on the other hand had a scientific approach that from Cook's expedition and the colony's founding meant artists began by collecting, specifying, copying, and researching Australia's flora, fauna and geological specimens. In time some artists created sublime, picturesque interpretations of the landscape conveying "feelings of awe and fear", like Eugene von Guérard's Northeast view from the *Northern Top of Mount Kosciusko* (1863) (Bonyhady, 1991, p. 64). In art and literature, a melancholic mood developed among writers like Henry Lawson and Marcus Clarke, with Clarke seeing Australia as "no paradise of sunshine and adventure" but "a weird, grotesque melancholy land" (Smith, 1991, p. 55). Clarke described Australian forests as "funereal, secret, stern", solitary, desolate and stifling, "their black gorges" yielding "a story of sullen despair" bereft of "tender sentiment" (Smith, 1991, p. 55). In art, William Strutt, well known for *Black Thursday* (1862-4), interpreted the landscape through a frame of melancholic danger. Others like Nicholas Chevalier in *The Buffalo Ranges* (1864) depicted the landscape picturesquely or captured its moods, as did W. C. Piguenit in *Flood in the Darling* (1890). The Heidelberg artists eclipsed these melancholic or picturesque approaches by working in plein air to faithfully capture views of the bush undergirded by nationalist stirrings as in Streeton's *Still Glides the Stream* and *Shall Forever Glide* (1889). This applied also to Tom Roberts, who imbued many landscapes with drama and danger, as in *The Breakaway* and '*Fire's On' Lapstone Tunnel*, (both 1891).

These Heidelberg artists exerted a significant influence on landscape art for the next fifty years, lasting until after the Second World War. Then

artists started creating new genres expressing enigma, mystery, threat or nationalism as in Boyd's *Bride* series, Nolan's *Ned Kelly* and Drysdale's outback scenes. Others like Williams, Juniper and Ken Done used the landscape as a motif for expressing aesthetic experience. By the mid 1970s however, a cultural juxtaposition occurred in the art scene because of the emergence of Central Australian Indigenous art. Terry Smith called this *The Central Desert Blooms* in a chapter that revised Bernard Smith's Australian art survey (1991, p.498). The visual difference between these Indigenous and Austral-European styles was electrifying. Smith commented:

> While invoking the look of the secret-sacred, [they] actually contain public-secular information about Aboriginal life, presented in ways which convey something of its deep desires for harmony, peace and balance. (1991, p.502)

Though painted in acrylics, the genesis for this new iconography was traditional sand painting whose complexity and symbolism introduced unique Indigenous perspectives into Australian culture. It also widened my artistic understanding in seeing the bush from an alternative aesthetic.

5.1.4 THE BUSH AND ART PRACTICE AS TRANSFORMATION

Despite the inroads of modern development, Australia's bush still has lightly trod transitional areas where nature is ascendant in its forests, deserts, savannahs, mountains, mangroves, and shorelines. It is imperative to protect these places and thus artists have a unique role by complementing the work of scientists and biologists in affirming nature's essentiality. This is important because "Modern life has replaced the primal challenges of living" with the "artificial stress so often produced by unnatural living conditions", particularly in urban situations (McCullough, 1980, p. 13). On the other hand, creative art can strengthen, in maker and viewer, the desire for nature – first by desiring to be a creator, and second by reflecting on the holistic importance of the bush. In recognising

this vital role of artists Paul Klee asserted that nature is: "full of ideas about colour" with the "world of plants and animals [and] mineralogy" giving "something to think about and be thankful for" (Spiller, 1961, p. 467).

When we are in nature we are in the realm of direct sensory experience. Therefore making art in the bush is transformative because it results from coming to know one's subject more fully. This closeness to nature "sharpens cognition" and improves "physical and psychological wellbeing" (Weir, 2020). Recently Scotland provided a practical model for access to country in its Scottish Outdoors Access Code that opened up large land tracts to an unrestricted "right to roam" (Crowther, 2019, p. 3) (Appendix 37). The trust and respect resulting from that kind of shared access here in Australia would help alleviate colonialist guilt and contribute to reconciliation.

As the twentieth century unfolded, numbers of Australian artists sought to express their unique perceptions of landscape, perceptions influenced by Aboriginal art. This emergent art speaks powerfully about nature and human experience, and in my work, is imbued with wonder because of the primal beauty of the bush. Despite the isolation of many bush areas for artists like me, the connection between art making and the broader society remains important. Such connection helped the Indigenous community at Boggabilla to develop their art to international acclaim, even though they lived in a place overlooked by all levels of government (Human Rights Commission, 1989). This breakthrough happened when the far-sighted teacher Paul West, reminiscent of Bardon, arranged for weavers from Maningrida to reteach the weaving skills the earlier Goomeroi had practiced. These skills re-equipped the local artists to undertake papermaking (Allas, 2011). Today the vision (or dream) of the Euraba group is to "pass their knowledge on to the youth of Boggabilla and Toomelah and instil … a sense of pride" for overcoming "the obstacles they … face" (Allas, 2011). This means as artists they are "responding to the artistic aspirations of the Goomeroi people", in

initiatives to explore "generational relationships" (Boomali Art Gallery). I see this as significant because it was while working at Boggabilla and Toomelah that I created the range of my art, encouraged by conversations, involvement in Indigenous concerns and in serving the community. That is not usually an artist's role but it was one with a degree of equivalence to Bardon's time at Papunya.

5.2 FINDINGS AND THEMES

5.2.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS AND THEMES

The data in this project involves the important events and relationships of my experiences as an artist, the art history record, and the historical and contemporary writings relating to art and the bush. For instance, Eileen (Wibble) McIntosh's writing (see Section 2.1.3) and Roger Knox's songs are noteworthy in articulating issues of Goomeroi culture for raising awareness among non-Indigenous people in and beyond Boggabilla. However my chief subject and the inspiration for this project remains the Australian bush culturally and environmentally. In addition, there are places where I worked that had significant farming areas surrounded by large areas of uncleared bush that also added data. Because this project focuses on the artworks created during my Doctor of Creative Arts journey, refined by my extensive art practice and life story, it is important to emphasise the bush was certainly more accessible when I was younger than it is now.

Over my long career many isolated, contestably wild places have played a part in informing my work, including the Indigenous land previously taken over for mining but now deserted. These include the North Queensland Walsh River Arbouin mine battery, and Mt Mulligan where in 1921 the death of seventy-five miners brought about the mine's closure.[21] Similarly there are overgrown roads and ruins around

[21] See *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story*, p. 70-71 *Arbouin Mine - Hillside*, (Image 54, 1974/5). The Arbouin mine and Einasleigh had great significance for my decision to

Atholwood, Gwabegar and Gilgai that I also was able to explore. At Atholwood there are thousands of hectares of negligibly traversed hill country that edge *Sky Camp* and it was there and in similar places where I painted the images reproduced in *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story*. The following works present versions of such isolated bush places: *Rambling Country: A Composite View*, (Figure 6.2, 2019); *The Calligraphic Language of the Bush: Sapling Patterns,* (Figure 5.4, 2019); *The Bush as Rhythmic Veil Ravelling,* (Figure 6.8, 2019); and *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth* (Figure 4.6, 2017).

5.2.2 VISUAL ANALYSIS OF MAJOR FINDINGS AND THEMES

The outcomes that arise from this project are twofold. First is the possibility of influencing others by my work and second, my long-term immersion enabled me to discover new insights into the bush's portrayal. My lengthy experience also revealed the bush to be an environment where persistence and stamina are needed for coping with its unpredictability; demands that Indigenous people have adapted to and survived in for millennia. Thus those artists who did live in the bush have needed to adapt to and overcome such challenges, while for Indigenous artists their problem is overcoming the challenges imposed by non-Indigenous society including cultural and skill losses (Appendix 38). Nevertheless being able to live in the bush and learn from others, including Indigenous people, has provided the motivation for my work and need to eulogise it. Project works like *Camp Creek Afternoon Meditation*, (Figure 6.6, 2017); *The Bush's Little Jewels*, (Figure 4.25, 2017); *Symbolic Aerialscape: Intersected Bushland, Map and Myth*, (Figure 4.6, 2017); *Root and Branch* (Figure 6.23, 2018) benefited for example, from the awareness precipitated by Indigenous culture in colouration and the

build in stone at *Sky Camp* because there, a ruined stone cottage and an explosives magazine gestated the idea. The paintings of the Arbouin mine and Horse creek depicted lonely cliff and rock landscapes I identified from ordinance survey maps and found riding a 'Trials' motorcycle, which is more highly manoeuvrable than a trail bike. Because of their isolation and the physicality in finding them, I committed their appearance to memory and painted them once back home.

significance of country.[22] In other words I found it important to learn to 'read the country' as Paddy Roe describes this process. Hence I take time to focus on detail and develop my relationship with the country, so that my artwork documents its phenomena and my time observing it. Several artists, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have also sought to convey dramatic experiences in the landscape. We see this in Russell Drysdale's pictures depicting physical distance, isolation, struggle, enigma, alienation, and the inland energy-sapping heat. Drysdale communicates the idea that existential struggle is integral to life there. The Indigenous perspective though is one of celebrating their spiritual connection with the Land. While coping with nature's vicissitudes played a significant part in my life, my work proceeded from those times when the landscape and I were most at peace and I had the time and mental equilibrium to paint.

Central to my approach is expressing the order and structure I see as inherent in nature. *Life Thought: Symbol and Nature* (Figure 4.2, 2020) condenses this symbolically by way of concentric steel circles and carved organic cypress pine shapes which express concepts about the cosmos and life within life. *Life Thought: Symbol and Nature* also conveys the idea of the bush as a holy shrine, a panorama in which to meditate and worship, bringing together the sculptural and two dimensional and conjoining the spirit, emotions and mind. Just as in this work, all my art has a spiritual basis, one that connects seeing with meditation. While to some the bush is chaotic, unruly, formless and alienating, for me it presents a panorama of order veiled by complexity. This idea of order in complexity undergirds *Row of Trees; Camp Creek*, (Figure 4.29, 2017) to simultaneously express the movement of trees like dancers and utilise the concept of a scroll for recording form, space and movement. The panorama as a compositional arrangement is also characteristic of *Boobera Lagoon Triptych*, (Figure 6.1, 1983/2018) where I depicted Boobera Lagoon, a sacred Dreamtime site of the Toomelah Boggabilla and

[22] Earlier works typify this such as: *Riverside: Boggabilla Toomelah*, (Figure 4.10, c.1987) and *Landscape with feather and snakeskin* (Image 132, 1987-9) in *Travelling Edges: An immersed land and art story.*

northwest Murries.[23] In this picture I set out to show the skin of the Booberah landscape and the nuances in tree fringed water reflections. In *Rambling Country: A Composite View* (Figure 6.2, 2019) I depicted the landscape as an intimate place in which to walk and meditate. This pan scenic approach presents as another way of conceptualising the landscape as a motif of the scenic calligraphic, or meditative scrolls for expressing the order and spatiality in nature.

In Australian art history though a significant amount of landscape art has dealt with idealising the landscape or pioneering genres which contrasts with my subjectivist art style. This style celebrates the vibrancy of the bush as in *The Bush Alive; Rejoice!* (Figure 4.44, 2019) where wash, intuitive line and painterly colouration convey feelings of exuberance. Perceptions of energy forms a theme in *Tree Dance: Cypress Pine in Savannah* (Figure 6.12, 2018) where ink drawings glued together emphasise the rhythms in nature. This recurs in *Glorious Pepperina and Pine* (Figure 4.5, 2017), where native and introduced tree species growing together complement each other in a lively symbolic dance. I also see tree structures as manifesting forms of visual calligraphy such as in *Glyphs and Strophs Scape*, (Figure 6.20, 2018) and *The Calligraphic Language of the Bush: Sapling Patterns*, (Figure 5.4, 2019). The bush then is a majestic work of art there to be interpreted and symbolised.

To communicate this I have often mixed drawing with painting in a reflective response with artistic, historical or spiritual emphases.[24] In *Camp Creek Afternoon Meditation,* (Figure 6.6, 2017) and *Fauve Encounter with the Bush*, (Figure 6.7, 2019) pattern and colour combinations express the sensuousness embryonic in tree and groundcover. *Camp Creek Afternoon Meditation* (Figure 6.6, 2017)

[23] There the Kurrea (Garriya), a mythic creature, thrashed about in a chase narrative that involved a great warrior and resulted in a winding watercourse providing sustenance, a burial area, law, and spiritual significance for the Goomeroi (Macquarie University, n.d.).

[24] For example *Tree rhythm Across Camp Creek*, (Figure 4.28, 2016); *View of Camp Creek From the Veranda During Hot Days*, (Figure 6.3, 2016-17); *The Colours of Droughted Country*, Figure 5.3, 2016); *Warm time on Sky Camp: three tree dynamic*, (Figure 6.4, 2016); *Wide view Camp Creek treeline,* (Figure 6.5, 2016) are products of mixing colour and drawing to express elements of design in bush environments.

portrays the landscape by mixing a concept of Indigeneity in bold colour to reimagine the landscape before settler contact. In *The Bush as Rhythmic Veil Ravelling,* (Figure 6.8, 2019) the land dissolves in light, a veil of colour transforming into delicacy and subjectivity suggestive of a mysterious, illumed place. This transformation of the landscape into an experience of the mind and senses is expressed semi-abstractly in *Recreating the Created: Nature as Poetic Tapestry* (Figure 6.16, 2019). Analysis also has a depictive function in my art and involves dissection through design, modulation, spatiality, interstice, and tone. While my subject themes are unlimited in the bush, some are problematic, such as the depicting of introduced plants that conservationists consider the products of colonialism (Appendix 39).

In summary my art remains a statement of love and care for the bush, created to express nature's essential beauty. To this end I work with an emphasis in mind of the responsibility we all have of keeping the land healthy by 'caring for Country', and, by so doing, caring for ourselves, a care Indigenous people practiced long before European arrived here (Wissing et al., 2019, p. 7). Research reveals that the act of caring for Country "relates to greater wellbeing" and better health outcomes for those who do so (Cadet-James, 2010, pp. 141-2). There is also a need, according to the AIATSIS Code of Ethics (2020), for fostering new, more equalitarian relationships with Indigenous people characterised by forgiveness, reconciliation, "respect and honour". In this friendship is key, including the entwining of legacies and the respectful give and take crucial for Indigenous "self-determination" (AIATSIS, 2020, p. 2).

5.3 COMBINING THE FINDINGS

The focus for my project has been: *To what extent has my immersion in the Australian bush, physically and ideologically, informed my artistic practice, enabling new insights about the land and landscape art in Australia?* The first part enquired into the physical location and the choices, and the subjects and influences that my love for the bush has

had on my art. It also highlights the impact on my work of First Nations culture and how it provided important insights and understanding related to my passion for the bush. From childhood I had struggled to live in the city, driven by the powerful need to live there. To achieve this would ultimately require perseverance, resilience and some stubbornness on my part. Fred Williams also demonstrated a similar form of stubbornness when after returning from England John Brack asked him about his art purposes and Williams retorted:

> 'I am going to paint the gum tree.' Stunned … Brack blurted out, 'You can't do that. Everybody's done that!' In a 'deadpan' voice Williams said, 'Well, it's just what I'm going to do'. (Broadfoot, 2014, p.4)

Williams was certainly a single-minded artist and as a result he managed to elevate the bush into a worthy subject despite the fact there was waning interest among the public at the time. However where Williams was content to go out and paint in the bush and at day's end return to suburbia, the bush has become my home.

Another independent stubborn artist was Ian Fairweather who, after a wanderlust life, settled at Bribie Island, Queensland. Fairweather had left behind an upper middle-class life, and after World War 1, became a rootless misfit who travelled Europe, Canada, China, South East Asia and finally Australia. there in southern Queensland he reached the place where he finally found contentment, concluding:

> I wanted somewhere to work, so I bought a boat and set out to sail right up the [Queensland] coast. The first night I came to Bribie Island. At sunset. It was so beautiful I decided to stay. (McGregor et al., 1969, p.142)

To Fairweather the bush was the place he felt most free to paint. However he did not choose it as his primary subject matter, but as a retreat in which to work. In comparison, though for Williams the bush was his chief subject, he confessed: "I don't want to live in it. I only want to

see it from a distance. I couldn't say I loved the bush" (Turner, 1975, p.50). Mine though is a love affair with the bush, it providing my central life purpose and subject matter. While this is how I relate to Australia's bush, for First Nations people there is another inherited experience, one lived over millennia connected "to the land, sea, landforms, watercourses, the species and plant life" and "Law developed at … creation". (Grieves, 2009, p.12). Grieves (p.13) in quoting Dodson said:

> Everything about Aboriginal society is inextricably woven with, and connected to, the land. Culture is the land, the land and spirituality of Aboriginal people, our cultural beliefs or reason for existence is the land. You take that away and you take away our reason for existence. We have grown the land up. We are dancing, singing and painting for the land. We are celebrating the land. Removed from our lands, we are literally removed from ourselves. (1997, p. 41)

My relationship with the land is likewise an inner spiritual one, not fixed on legal possession but on love for and delight in nature. Dodson describes the way Indigenous people respond as one of "singing and painting for the land". I too sing (in my art and poetry) when I paint the landscape, not as an indigene, but as a bush dweller celebrating its wonder. In a parallel journey, as a non-Indigenous Australian six generations removed, I too rejoice in the land, reflecting on it as the place where sky and heavens proclaim an amazing, meaningful, ordered universe. Like Dodson, I too feel deep pain and incompleteness if removed from the land, the bush uniquely shaping my art as it has shaped the art of Indigenous people.

Today though there is an accelerating threat to the bush from increased technological and social changes. For First Nations people however there is the added burden of heritage disruption and further alienation from their traditional lands. Despite these pressures Yunkaporta (2009) argues that Indigenous ways of "knowing, being, doing, valuing and learning … [are] still strong" linked with their "ancestral framework".

My exposure to Indigenous knowledge, including language, has enriched my experience of the bush parallel to that inherited from western culture. Indigenous languages, like the Goomeroi I studied with Wibble, remain essential to Indigenous knowledge, Yunkaporta stressing the "spirit of learning" residing in words for *what* and *how* applied to story patterns, kinship matters and the Land as teacher (2009). Where I use the term *parallel* to describe my bush presence, Yunkaporta envisages a strategic balance where people can find those protocols "common with non-Aboriginal ways", for attaining the best of each culture and "balancing the two worlds" (2009).

5.4 KEY IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

I began this project wondering: To what extent has my immersion in the Australian bush, physically and ideologically, informed my artistic practice, enabling new insights about the land and landscape art in Australia? The key implications of this involve the effect of the bush on my work (and that of other artists) for shaping theme and subject, emotional states, psychological issues and aesthetic concerns. The big advantage of working directly from nature is that an endless array of subjects is available in the bush's landforms, flora and fauna (Appendix 40). As well my art is undertaken in a spirit of horizontal and vertical interrelationship with a number of bush communities. How then does such art, created in isolation from the mainstream, reach beyond its immediate surrounds? This is the challenge that Fairweather for example experienced during his wanderings - and it fragmented his production. On the other hand, Pro Hart, known as Broken Hill's *Brushman of the bush,* tapped into a tourist stream that resulted in his work being avidly sought by many city galleries. However, for the Euraba artists and papermakers near Goondiwindi, they achieved a breakthrough by their sharing of artwork beyond their small community thereby resulting in national recognition. My challenge then is to disseminate a lifetime's art from a similar position of isolation for others' appreciation. Therefore this project

is my contribution to arouse wider empathy with the bush, an awareness of its beauty and recognition of its need for care.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 OVERALL SUMMARY

The desire to more widely stimulate empathy with the bush, awareness of its beauty and foreground its great need for care resulted in my project, *Travelling edges: An immersed autoethnographic exploration of the Australian bush in art.* I undertook this by employing an exegesis, online portfolio and autobiography, to showcase the bush as providing an exciting subject in its own right. Through each approach I have something unique to communicate because it is the product of my adult life in the bush and axiomatic that "the best way to know a place is to engage with it" (Wissing et al, 2019, p.9) (Appendix 50). For this inquiry based mostly in the NSW and Queensland border areas, I employed written and practice-led research to communicate an ethos of significance regionally and nationally. In focusing on 'national' as a category, First Nations people are both recognised and appreciated for their contribution to Australian culture. Because of my bush-centred ethos my research encourages deeper connection with nature and the recognition of Indigenous achievement in Australian cultural life. Of consequence is the fact that today increasing numbers of Indigenous people "see caring for Country as the responsibility of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians" because in engaging with Indigenous knowledge there is "much to learn" about how to care for the land (Wissing et al., 2019, pp. 7-8).

My project also enquires into the bush as a significant element in Australian cultural identity (Pillar, n.d.), ranging from early colonialism to contemporary multiculturalism. Of particular significance are First Nations' beliefs about the sacredness of nature in contrast to a rampant materialism dominating by incongruous infrastructures installed with virtually no regard for environmental aesthetics or ecological continuity. Such changes fulfil poet A. D. Hope's cynicism in *Australia,* where he classified those indifferent to the land as "teeming sores" draining her like

"a vast parasite robber-state". Hope's one semblance of optimism lay in the fact that "there are some like me turn gladly home … hoping, if still from the deserts the prophets come". Today we are at a crossroads to either repudiate or accept this levelling of the bush by a 'parasite robber-state'.

With such changes forming the background to my project, my research inquired into the extent to which my immersion (or life) in the Australian bush, physically and ideologically, was able to inform my artistic practice and enable new insights regarding land and landscape art in Australia. My research operated on two levels; firstly the personal regarding the making of my art, and secondly the relationships and influences involving other Australian artists, including Indigenous artists. Where the individual element of art making is concerned this DCA project gave me an opportunity to both inquire into, and take stock of my own work, by a more focussed approach than previously. This became a discipline that helped me think more deeply about my work's nature and purpose. A review of my oeuvre before the project reveals my deep interest in landscape art, but over my past career I have worked across many genres, with a number unmentioned because of the brevity confines of the exegesis. In undertaking this DCA project I thereby posed a question that foregrounded landscape art simply because of my great love for nature. Through this project then my art functions as a kind of love testament to celebrate its glory and the joy experienced living in the bush. Ultimately it invites others to also experience this unique intimacy and freedom. Further my research foregrounds the continuing importance of the land and landscape art for Australian culture and details how this applied since colonial beginnings. Yet while there are many who still appreciate landscape art, a shift has occurred through changes in modern technologies that have resulted in other media drawing people to other interests. This tension has been discussed earlier. My conclusion is that

there is a cost to the technological changes now shaping aesthetic values dramatically away from nature.

This brings me to a sombre note by highlighting the destruction via the broad scale energy infrastructures that now threaten many bush areas where I lived and worked. The pressure of this is becoming more urgent; something that when I began this project was relatively limited in scope. This change has become more personal because in the final stages of preparing this project, the farm beside *Sky Camp* sold, then sold again. Its new owners are in the process of converting 6000 acres into massive wind tower technology. These will be visible from the nearest town of Texas, 25 kilometres away, and at night in every direction with its outlying fringe of towers ringed with led lights for warning air traffic. Confronting this brings great disappointment and anxiety, but even so for people elsewhere, every area alienated by this infrastructure, destroys the potential experience of the bush for them too, reducing where they can go in nature for personal renewal and recreation. Setting aside national parks isn't a solution because rural and outback places offer lifestyles very different to short term camping in national parks. As well, these projects alienate land from local Indigenous communities.

There are two lessons in these changes; an increase in alienation of Indigenous access to Country and despoliation ranging from wide scale clearing for these new dominating artifices. My hope then is that this project and my art will not be an epitaph, but a timely reminder of the bush's essentiality for everyone's health and self-identity. In this vein my project intersects with the frustrations felt by First Nations commentators including artist Gordon Bennett (1955-2014), who considered Australia to have become 'a dead place between cities'. The reality is that if we destroy our sacral nerve centre, the bush, we destroy self, subvert principle and sunder meaningful relationships with the natural realm. In fact this new chameleon colonialism is missing proper scrutiny at the very time when people's gaze is still fixed on its old colonial form, to the

detriment of First Nations' rights and real care for the environment (Ramirez & Bohm, 2021). My hope is that my art and thinking in the project will play a role in the reconsideration needed for developing a new, harmonious, healthy relationship with the environment and, especially important, with Indigenous people.

6.2 SUPPLEMENTARY RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The project artworks work not shown previously in the text for exhibition and completed for the DCA.

Figure 6.1

Neville Heywood, Boobera Lagoon Triptych, pencil, ink & acrylic on paper, 2018

Figure 6.2

Neville Heywood, Rambling Country: A Composite View, acrylic on paper, 17x55 cm, 2019

Figure 6.3

Neville Heywood, View of Camp Creek From the Veranda During Hot Days, ink & acrylic on paper, 40x60 cm, 2016-17

Figure 6.4

Neville Heywood, Warm Time on Sky Camp: Three Tree Dynamic, ink & acrylic on paper, 27x36 cm, 2016

Figure 6.5

Neville Heywood, Wide view Camp Creek Treeline, ink & acrylic on paper, 30x60 cm, 2016

Figure 6.6

Neville Heywood, Camp Creek Afternoon Meditation, acrylic on paper, 55x74 cm. 2017

Figure 6.7

Neville Heywood, Fauve Encounter with the Bush, acrylic on paper, 30x42 cm, 2019

Figure 6.8

Neville Heywood, The Bush As Rhythmic Veil Ravelling, acrylic on paper, 49x51 cm, 2019

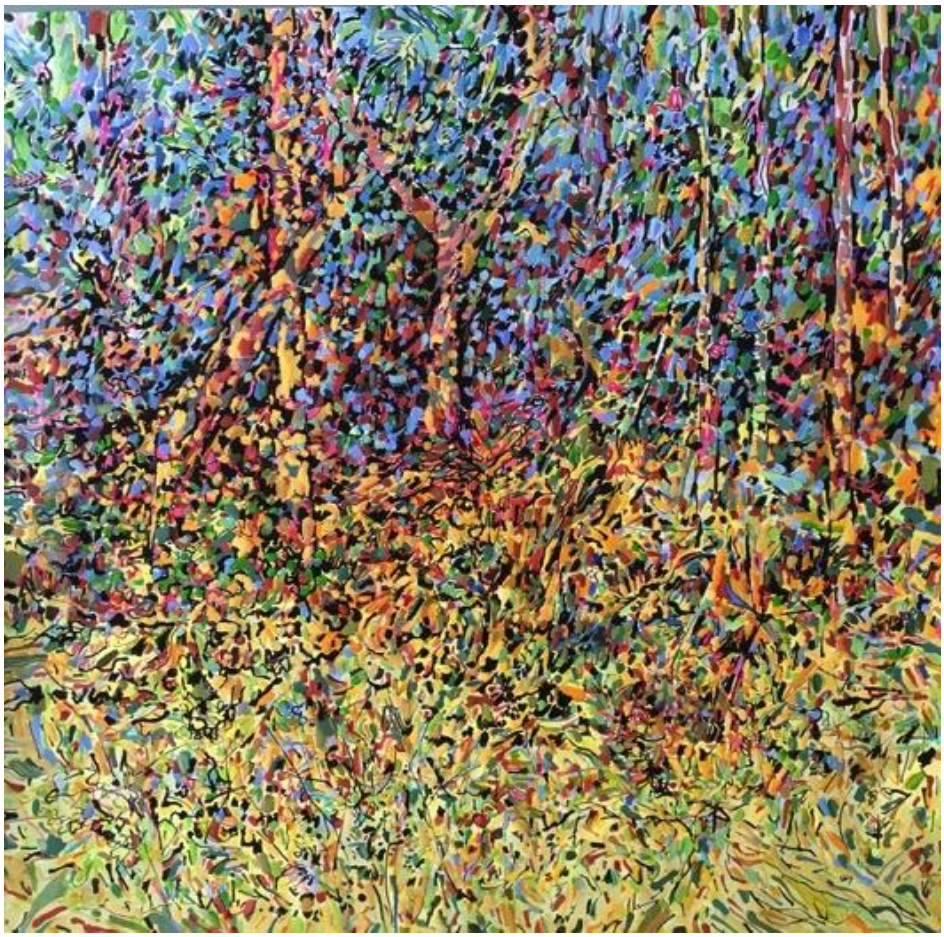


Figure 6.9

Neville Heywood, Trees vibrato, Sky Camp, ink & acrylic on paper, 42x57 cm, 2018

Figure 6.10

Neville Heywood, Colour is Like a Song Singing the Bush, acrylic on paper, 56x76 cm, 2019

Figure 6.11

Neville Heywood, Tree Study, Sky Camp, acrylic on cardboard, 19x30 cm, 2019

Figure 6.12

Neville Heywood, Tree Dance: Cypress Pine in Savannah, ink and acrylic on paper, 22x58 cm, 2018

Figure 6.13

Neville Heywood, Precious Glade, ink & acrylic on cardboard, 31x50 cm, 2017

Figure 6.14

Neville Heywood, Cypress Pine Study with Shadow, Camp Creek, ink, acrylic on paper, 28x20 cm, 2019

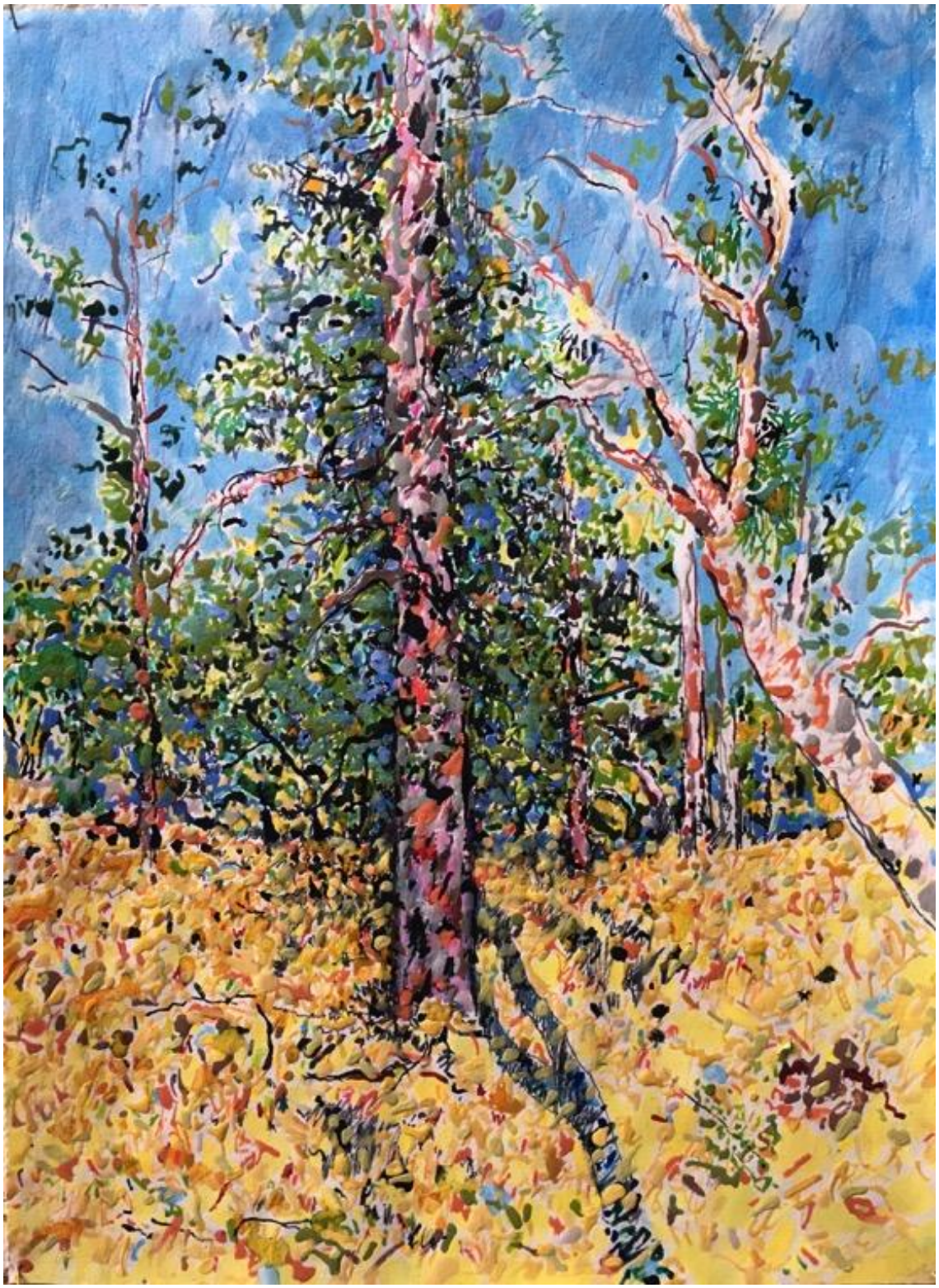


Figure 6.15

Neville Heywood, Trees: Light Effects and Spatial Relationships, ink & acrylic on paper, 30x20 cm, 2019

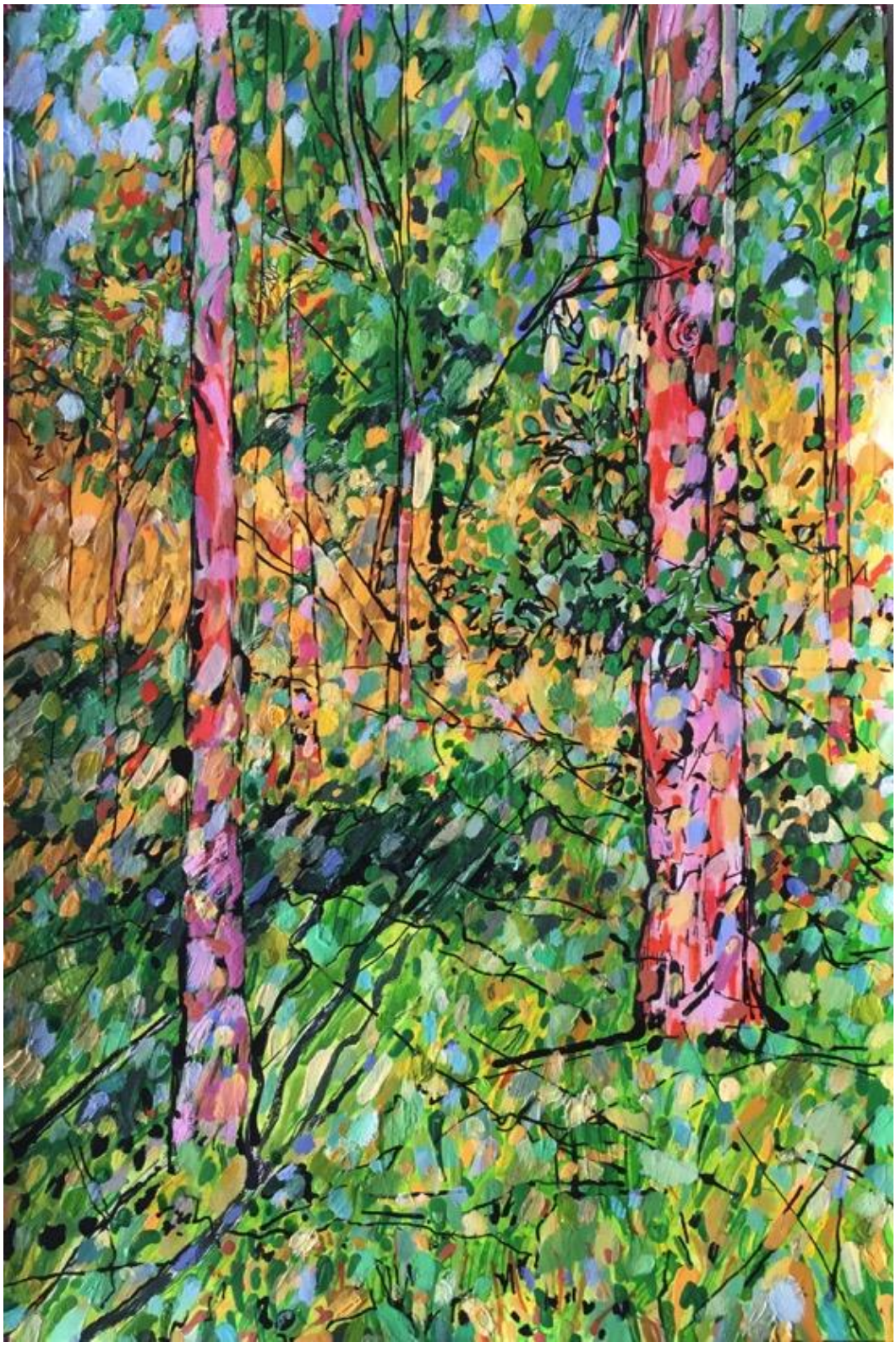


Figure 6.16

Neville Heywood, Recreating the Created: Nature as Poetic Tapestry, acrylic on paper, 44x44 cm, 2019

Figure 6.17

Neville Heywood, Pandanus and Lagoon, ink and coloured pencil on paper, 21x30 cm, 2107

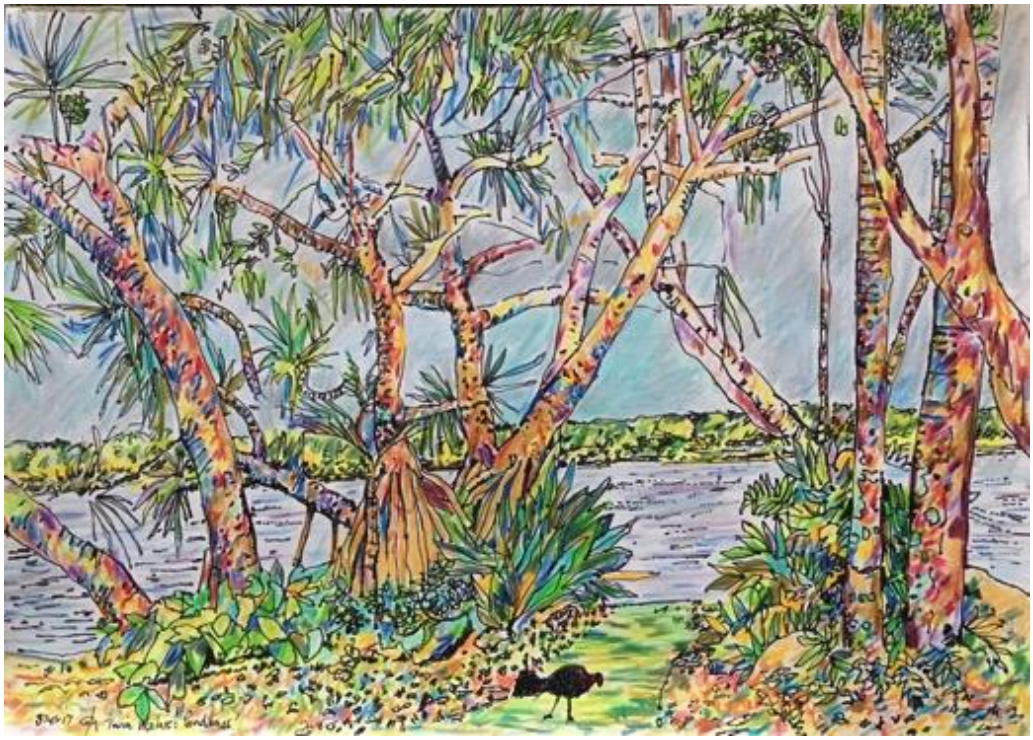


Figure 6.18

Neville Heywood, Creek Glade: Analysed, Intuited, Modulated, ink acrylic on cardboard, 32x51 cm, 2019

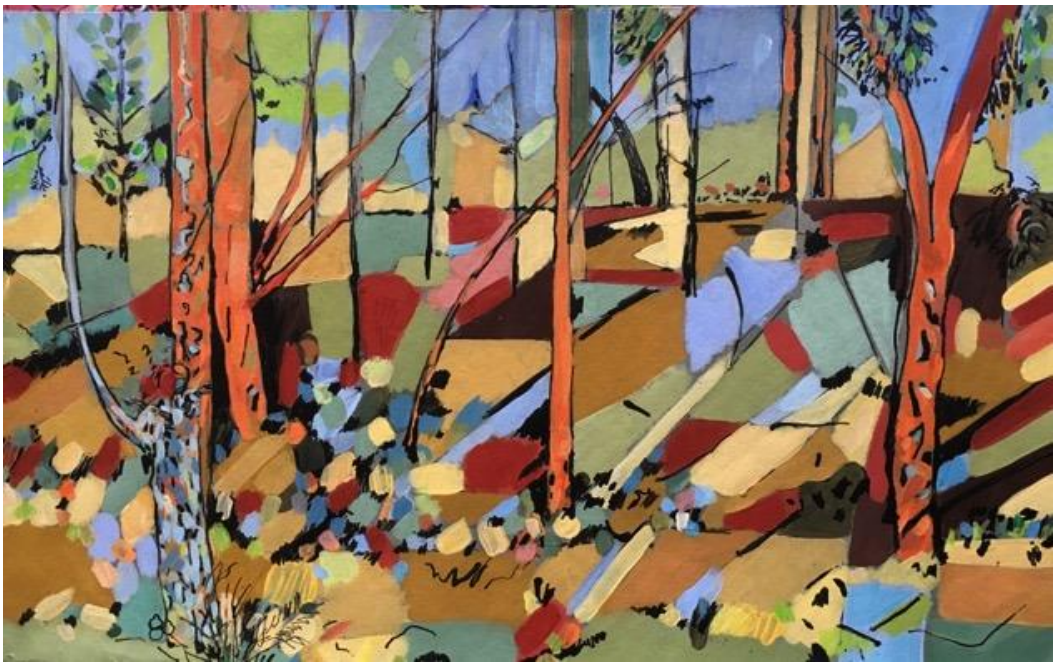


Figure 6.19

Neville Heywood, Bush Scene Through the Mind's Eye, ink, acrylic oil on paper, 26x38 cm, 2017

Figure 6.20

Neville Heywood, Glyphs and Strophs Scape, acrylic on paper, 42x60 cm, 2018

Figure 6.21

Neville Heywood, Bush Garden – My Paradise, ink & acrylic on paper, 28x20 cm, 2018

Figure 6.22

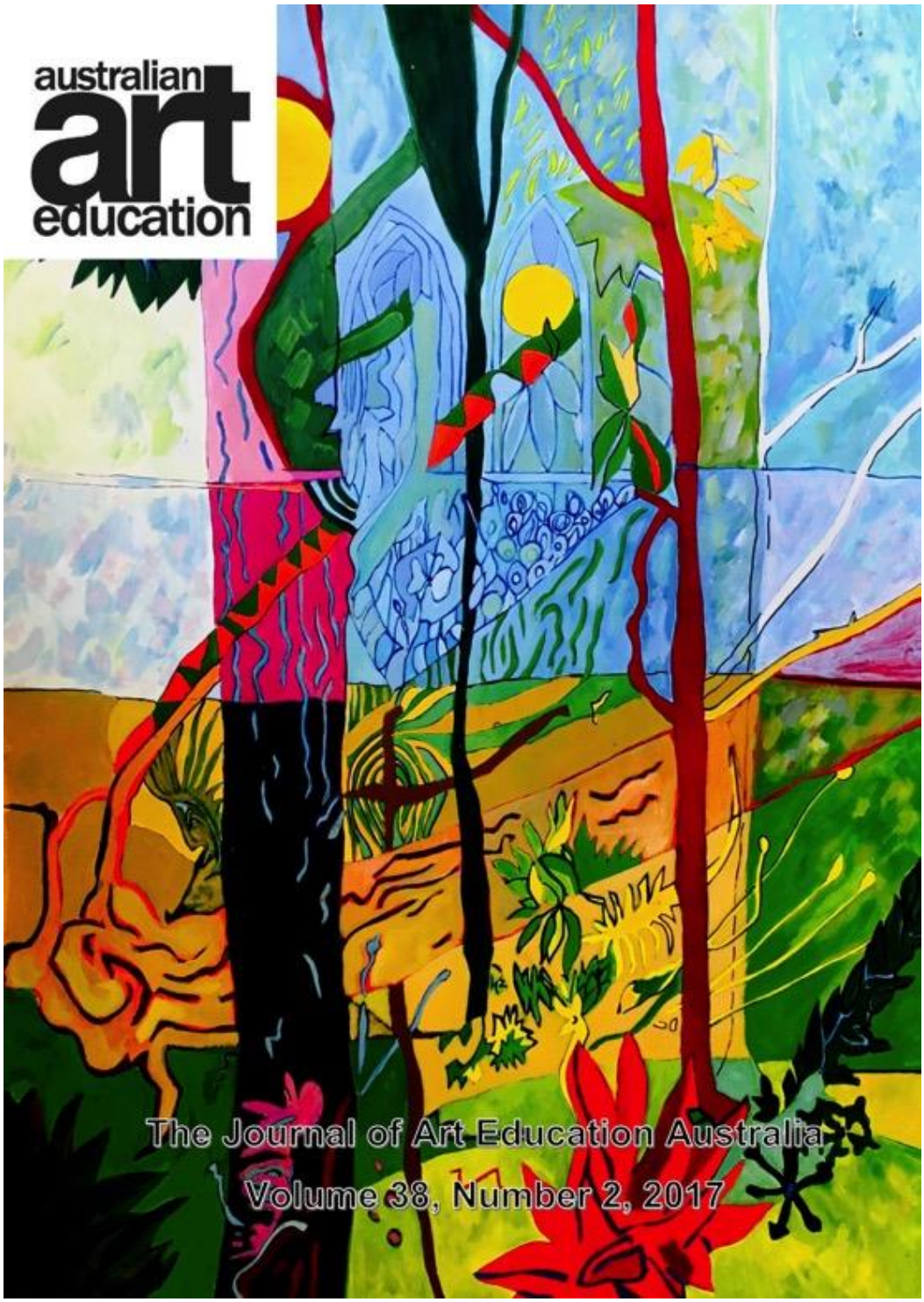
Neville Heywood, Floral Procession: Three Part Harmony, ink, pastel acrylic on paper, 28x60 cm, 2017

Figure 6.23

Neville Heywood, Root and Branch, ink & acrylic on paper, 20x49 cm, 2018

Figure 6.24

Neville Heywood, Bush Meditation: Spatial Arrangement with Sun, acrylic on canvas, 59x43 cm, 2015; chosen for cover Journal of Art Education, 2017



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APPENDIX 1

My argument is the bush has endless potential for depiction. It has not been 'exhausted' or rendered 'unviable' as some think but for urban-based audiences it is out of their usual ambit and they are missing experiences only the bush can offer (Mitchell, 1994, p. 5). Fred Williams and the emergence of contemporary Aboriginal art refocused interest in conceptions of landscape through new expressive paradigms. In my work I want to make art resulting from immersion that communicates meaning through a synthesis of design, spatiality, relationships and the intuitive. While this is critiqued in written form, it is important to stress my artworks ultimately represent themselves.

APPENDIX 2

Most holidays I headed to Barraba (where my Heywood relatives lived) or Bonshaw (where Grandfather Thompson lived and near where we now do). Joining Scouts and Cadets also brought exciting adventures in bushland on the fringes of Sydney and at Singleton. My many train journeys north through open countryside brought sheer pleasure and the railway carriage photos showing Australian scenery heightened my earlier memories. Thus as I grew up, my life centred back on the slopes and hills of northern NSW. My relatives, before 1945, were bush dwellers but after World War II some moved to the city. The pull and growth of cities also affected other artists – either by changing the nature of where they lived, (like 'Mobolon' for Lloyd Rees) or offering opportunities not available for Russell Drysdale at the family property in the Riverina.

APPENDIX 3

It is significant that during my art school years I was conscripted for military service with the result it interrupted my posting as a teacher when others were being sent out for a year of compulsory country service. When finally posted after a glitch in conscription, I ended up with a difficult teaching position, but compensated for by the fact I found in the bush endless scenes to paint and the freedom of the Australian bush.

APPENDIX 4

If Australians connect with the land, in unity with Indigenous people, it can bring about greater inclusiveness and meaningful national identity (Yunkaporta, 2009, Rose 1996). In this the arts have an important role to play by facilitating dialogue and understanding between Indigenous and multicultural Australia.

APPENDIX 5

A mix of the individual and cooperative occurred during the 2018 'Landscape and Memory' art exhibition curated by historian Martin Kerby. It involved eight USQ artists who explored themes associated with the battle of Ypres inspired by Frank Hurley photographs. The exhibition catalogue included a scholarly study of each artist's responses and an analysis of the Ypres legacy. Kerby observed of my work that, though I was intellectually aware of the destruction of war, my artistic choices were informed by a "reverence for the Australian bush as a regenerative force" imprinting this tragedy (*Ypres sector: Belgium 25 Oct 1917*, acrylic on paper, 2018, p. 34). My reflections on another war front (*For Glory – Australian Light Horse*, acrylic on paper), the Australian Light Horse in Palestine, was stimulated by a statement by an anonymous soldier whose thoughts were only of home, of "wanting to see an Australian garden instead of an endless desert" (Heywood in Kerby, 2018, p. 36). The practice-led research involved in this project was thus informed by: Hurley's photographs, listening to Paul Ham's *Passchendaele* (audiobook) and watching documentaries on the Light Horse. In these works, landscape and nature provided settings where human drama expressed war's unreality.

APPENDIX 6

Namatjira's watercolours hung as art prints around my primary classroom due to his fame as an artist from sell-out exhibitions and because one of his works was gifted to the Queen. Also, William Dargie painted Namatjira's portrait and won the 1957 Archibald Prize. Namatjira's work became so popular it appeared on Christmas cards, calendars and art prints like those in my Gardeners Road Primary classroom. The Cairns Art Gallery noted of Namatjira that "at the peak of his popularity and success in the 1950s he was so well known that he was arguably the most famous artist in Australia".

APPENDIX 7

Bernard Smith, in his seminal history, *Australian Painting,* dealt with artists (to 1824), the pastoral frontier (to 1851), late colonial (to 1885), and then to 1932 used the terms Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus, where 'Genesis' symbolised the Heidelberg school and 'Exodus' the artists leaving to study in Europe (1991, p. 129). 'Leviticus', (symbolic of priestly law) related to the academic establishment (1991, p. 168) and the stereotypic expectations devolved from Roberts, Streeton and Heysen (1991, p. 170), attacks on Modernism (1991, p. 177), and Max Meldrum's (1875-1955) efforts to "reduce painting to a science" (1991, p. 178). Next was the arrival of Contemporary art (1932, p. 205), figurative art and mid-sixties colour painting (pp. 289, 418). Ideologically Smith applied Marxist based theory to art criticism and from that perspective missed the profound spiritual significance of Indigenous art and culture. Criticism also applies to Hughes and McDonald, with Hughes' *The Art of Australia* (1966) indebted to Bernard Smith's systematic study of *Australian Painting* (Hughes, 1970, p. 21) In his writing Hughes satirised early Australian art from the perspectives of "cultural cringe" (p. 22), "inversion" (p. 27) "weirdness" (p. 30) and domination by the "topographical descriptive" (p. 34).

APPENDIX 8

Before Toomelah was established, the NSW government settled Aboriginal people at *Old Toomelah* (Boomi), then *Euraba* (about twenty kilometres east of Boomi), and finally moved them to *Toomelah.* Elder 'Wibble' wrote of these places that there was plenty of wild food to eat, including rabbits (*bina gaarr*), porcupines (echidna) (*bigibila*), goanna (*yurrandaali*) and fish (*thagaay*), craybobs (*girray*), wild honey (*warrul*), goobieyes, naypans, possums (*muthay*), wild duck (*gunambaay*), mussels (*thanggal*), wild spinach, quandongs (*yuwaalaraay*), kangaroo (*bandaarr*) and wallaby (*wan.guy*), but not snake (*nhibi*), because Toomelah's totem was the carpet snake (*yabaa*) (McIntosh, n.d., n.p.). Children were assigned a totem at birth with the second name always the same as that of their mother. These totem names among the Goomeroi were possum, goanna, emu, bandicoot, or snake. Eating or killing the animal of one's totem was forbidden. The totem was integral to marriage and descent and prevented intermarriage between near relations (Howell, 1982, p. 38). This, as the language connection shows, is a relation of intimate connection with the bush even though these artists live communally in the villages of Toomelah and Boggabilla. The bush still supplies some of their food and craft resources, with camping, hunting and fishing widely enjoyed. Their art is thus linked to the bush as a resource and identity source as it is for me.

APPENDIX 9

From the beginning, British settlement brought a cultural cataclysm for Indigenous Australia, in a dichotomy where Kooris thought the early convicts and settlers were “ghost people”, “visitors from the spirit world”, strangers ignorant of traditional protocols (Miller, 1985, p. 15). A further difference concerns the issue of authority in Indigenous culture compared to practices in western art, where today non-Indigenous artists are free to express their ideas except if they clash with copyright or obscenity issues.

APPENDIX 10

Where I live at Atholwood, is traditionally the country of the Bigambul and Goomeroi people and where nearby, the Dumaresque and McIntyre rivers (which have European names) are jokingly termed by the Murris there, as their supermarket, because of the rivers' abundant fish, animals and plants. These waterways flow past Texas and Boggabilla and compose part of the meandering section of the NSW Queensland border. For the local Indigenous people the rivers and their surrounds constitute a lifeline and traditional locus for culture and sustenance. A continual reminder of Indigenous presence is found in the scarred trees where bark was removed to make coolamons, canoes and shelters. There were also some pictographic carved trees, but these have mostly disappeared into museums, keeping places or been destroyed.

As a child growing up, Aboriginal presence for me was nearly invisible. At Ashford, near *Kia Ora*, Aboriginal people were then isolated on reserves or camped out of town. I tell later in this exegesis how an Indigenous friend I met in the 1990s went to the same school as Lyn and I, yet both of us were unaware of any other Indigenous students. Meeting and marrying Lyn, of Eora Durug descent, meant a re-evaluation of my assumptions and included a forceful desire by us to live in the bush. This happened once I finished Art College and thereafter several bush places brought us into significant friendships with Aboriginal people. For example, when I taught at Goondiwindi in 1983, Indigenous students asked me to take them for special art activities even though I was working as an English teacher. Friendships continued to develop with the Aboriginal community through A-Day celebrations and unexpectedly, attendance at a NSW Education Aboriginal History training day even though I worked for Queensland Education.

APPENDIX 11

Roger's band *Euraba* received its name after he was badly burnt in 1981 in a plane crash (See Image 138, Lyn, Isabella, Roger, Myall Creek Remembrance Day, Bingara, 12 June 2016 in *Travelling Edges: An Immersed Land and Art Story*). Roger sometimes stopped by during his travels and talked about his life and Toomelah history, including that he endured two plane crashes on the same day and then was finally rescued by four-wheel drive. Roger received burns to over 70% of his body with healing brought about by oil from the Eurah (Euraba) bush. Roger's love for the bush is epitomised in songs such as *Cooee*. I used his songs when teaching at Toomelah to help children learn to read while accompanying Roger's songs written on cardboard sheets.

Cooee

Cooee, Cooee, blue gum trees I hear you calling me,

Back to where I always feel so free,

To the Land where kangaroos and emus roam,

The bush will always be my home.

I can hear the ripple of a mountain stream,

See the sunsets in my every dream,

I can smell the scent of fresh cooked Johnnycakes,

And hear the cooee of a mate,

Cooee, Cooee, I can hear you calling me back home,

I can hear the click-sticks clapping out a song,

Of my comrade tribe as I dance along,

I can taste the honey from the wild bush bee,

From the blue gum trees that's calling me

Cooee, Cooee, I can hear you calling me back home,

Cooee, Cooee, I can hear you calling me back home.

(Roger Knox, from "Give it a go," Album 1984.)

APPENDIX 12

Once, at *Sky Camp* (during another horrendous drought), Wibble was greatly disturbed because she sensed the groaning spirits of her ancestors. I grasped what she meant from the snippets of local oral history relayed by my non-Indigenous friend; Eddie (decd.) who said the owner of a nearby station would shoot at Aboriginal people from the verandah as they walked up the road. Also not far away is a giant granite monolith known as *The Monument* that, according to John Mayne (decd.), was the place where the last *myall* (term for wild Murri) was shot. Non-Indigenous opinion was that the victim believed the mighty rock would protect him from his pursuers. Thinking on this, after climbing that monolith one hot summer's day, this poem resulted:

The Monument

Fear threshes the hunted, a pause

and the riders come business-like with guns,

cursing the whipping ti-tree

and pine branches, which obscure their view

of the naked Black

hopping kangaroo-like

up indifferent jumbles

of heaped granite.

The chase, (a hot sweaty necessity

for subduing a wilderness),

whips up its own frenzy,

an annoyance preventing

mercy towards the one now shouting

and protesting,

dancing a finale of rebellion

on the edge of Doom.

Standing today, where he stood then,

(he hoping that day would end

as one wakes from a bad dream),

a dreary silence hallows the rock,

a forgotten camera case

lies weathering amongst the hot strata

and in the distance

a lone car traverses a delicate ribbon

amidst a sea of trees.

No bones catch the eye.

Nothing remains save this monumental rock,

enduring witness without eyes,

unhearing and indifferent to a past

which might today see a kangaroo slump,

with spreading stain leaking life;

though then it was a man,

a sharp shooter's sport

staining the earth,

forsaken.[25]

[25] Neville Heywood, p. 26, *Studio,* Number 36, Spring 1989.

APPENDIX 13

For instance during the 1840s, nine miles from Bonshaw on the NSW side of the Dumaresque, a massacre took place at Schneider's Lagoon, where the water ran red with the blood of massacred Aborigines (Howell, 1982, p. 155). But injustice is not confined only to the distant past. In 1982 nineteen-year-old Ronald McIntosh was shot and killed at Moree and in 2003[26] Theresa Binge's body was hidden under a concrete culvert ten kilometres south of the Queensland border, her homicide still unsolved. There are many other examples of conflict that highlight the continuance of racial enmity, such as the 1987 Goondiwindi riots, which brought the Human Rights Commission to Toomelah and exposed "the appalling conditions endured by its residents due to years of official neglect" (Milliss, 1992, p. 731). I can therefore understand why musician Roger Knox entitled his 2013 album *"Stranger in My Land."*

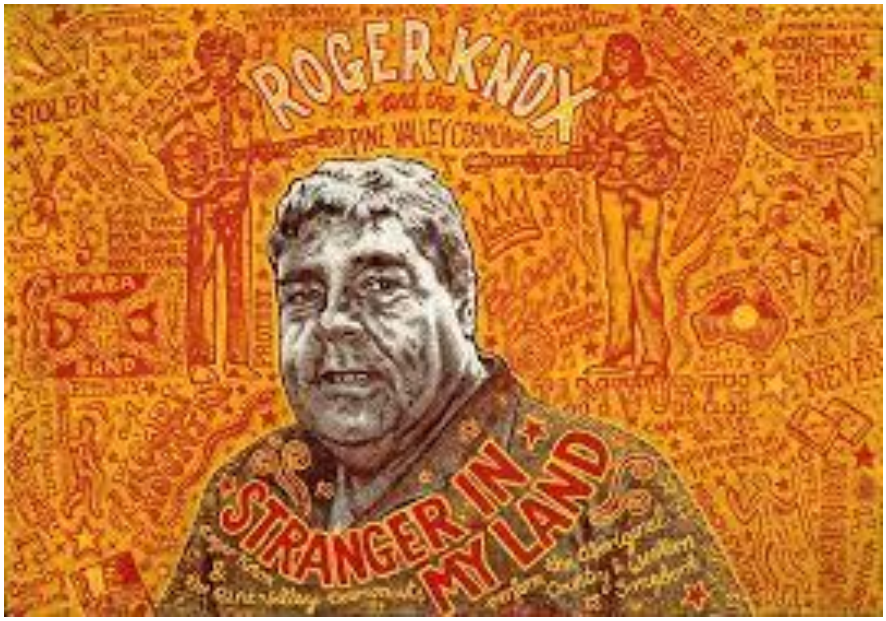

Figure A13.1 Roger Knox, Stranger in my Land. [Album cover] 2013

[26] See Father Dick Buckhorn in Milliss, Roger. (1992). *Waterloo Creek.* UNE Press, Armidale.

APPENDIX 14

Later, I discovered a kind of destiny. After relocating from North Queensland my aunt told me this place we called *Sky Camp* had figured early in my life. Showing her photos, Auntie said I'd been there as a baby when Uncle worked at Yetman mill and Mum left me with them awhile. It turns out Uncle travelled (to what later became our property) to shoot, but one time an argument broke out over me. Uncle was desperate to hunt but Aunt was upset because the creek beside the house was in flood and she was fearful of me getting drowned if they tried to cross. Over the years we've seen the creek flood many times and it's fearful and virtually un-crossable. Ironically a number of my forbears were drowned trying to cross flooded rivers, or swim for medical supplies. A story like this is important because it shows my linkage to the bush early in life, yet simultaneously underscores nature's unpredictability in the dangers and rigours of bush life that artists like William Strutt, Frederick McCubbin, Russell Drysdale, Sydney Nolan, Clifton Pugh and Arthur Boyd expressed in a number of their works. William Strutt's *Black Thursday* (1862-64) for instance conveys through high drama the kind of danger that can arise seemingly out of nowhere to threaten human life.

APPENDIX 15

Beginning teaching was a confused start. Initially I was conscripted for National Service then two years later rejected on medical grounds, followed by a transfer to teach at Armidale. The irony of this rejection unravelled after Dad's death in 2001, when Mum revealed what really happened. As a wily 'old digger', having lost his brother (my namesake) in an army mortar training accident in 1943 at Moora WA, (where 13 other soldiers also died), Dad secretly wrote to the Conscription Board telling them I had two toes joined together and would not be able to walk any distance. The army believed him. Unaware of this though, when I finished College, I caught a train to Murrundi then hiked to Inverell (with occasional lifts) out through Gunnedah and Barraba, drawing as I went, enjoying the country before compulsory army service. At Inverell I received a telegram informing me of my rejection and was, after Education Department disbelief, posted to a country teaching position. Ironically the NSW Department of Education failed to pay me for some months but I did receive the subsidy of my army pay, because the Education Department still thought I was in the army and that helped pay my living expenses, perhaps explaining their tardiness in paying me.

APPENDIX 16

The following incident shows why. When I was four, Pop mustered sheep for three days for shearing. After he finished mustering I went to the yards and let them out so I could practice herding them in again with Pop's kelpie. Instead they scattered to the hills. Mum said, "Pop wants to see you." I approached him shakily. Pop leaned forward in his chair and asked: "Did you let those sheep out boy?" "Yes Pop", I confessed. Immediately he replied, "Well here's a bag of jelly beans and don't do it again."

APPENDIX 17

This slower pace to life in the bush also elicits memories of Nana Thompson; a skillful embroiderer who fancy-worked by lamplight and won prizes at the Sydney Royal Easter and regional shows. Also my Heywood schoolteacher Nana and aunties painted floral and landscape watercolours, although in childhood I wasn't aware of this. Nana Heywood valued a large oil landscape I painted at art school, keeping it until her death in 1979.

APPENDIX 18

Cypress (*Callitris preissi*) as a name is derived from the Greek *kallos* (meaning beauty) while *gurraari* is the Gumeroi name, the *gurraari* used for resin (*dhani* - glue), canoe poles, fish spears, torches, food from seeds, leaves for medicine and smoke for healing (McKemey & White, 2011, p. 57). Symbolically for me these trees represent the harmony possible between two cultures: native and introduced. Nevertheless a *gurraari* tree after settlement would be unlikely to survive in the grasslands where they now flourish, because Indigenous people thinned them because of 'fire-stick' burning to grow grass for attracting kangaroos. For the settlers planting the Pepperina trees, they provided shade, fodder and a pepper substitute, hence the name *peppercorn* tree.

APPENDIX 19

It was in that toilet, blasted by sun, where Mum was once kept hostage for hours by a rogue bull maddened by an open horn hole. It just waited for her to try the fifty-metre dash, imprisoning Mum till Pop returned and drove it away. These rich memories are integral to my love of the bush and deeply inform my work, being associative influences on my artistic expression.

APPENDIX 20

Ironically sometimes it was possible to live without this awareness. In the 1950s and 1960s in NSW, a booming 'industrialisation of agriculture' resulted in the displacement of many white farmers from small family properties to the quarter acre suburban blocks that changed radically Australian attitudes to land (Goodall, 2008, p. 314). During this time large numbers of Murris (which is a generic term used by Indigenous people and their ancestors of the central coast of New South Wales for identifying themselves) (Miller, 1985, p.viii) scattered across non reserve camps also lost their employment sources and were forced into towns where a number of non-Indigenous residents felt threatened and sought to protect their 'blocks' and 'power structures' and ensure these displaced Aborigines "had no claim to secure residence", or to "really belong" (Goodall, 2008, p. 337). While my childhood and early adult experiences in the country brought me into contact with displaced Murris, during my youth in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, I now realise there was an invisibility to those Kooris living there. This drove home to me at Boggabilla in the 1990s, when I became friends with the Indigenous manager of Toomelah's Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). We discovered we both went to the same 900-student high school at Mascot yet were unaware of each other's existence. Large school numbers fostered this anonymity; reinforced by the fact my future wife Lyn, of Koori descent, went to the same school without our knowing each other either.

APPENDIX 21

Australia was not settled in a *terra nullius* vacuum whatever some thought, nor was Aboriginal culture obliterated, because despite conflicts, there were also positive interactions that resulted in significant reciprocities in: identity, art, technology, language (Miller, 1985, pp. 42-46), cultural knowledge, farming practices such as firestick farming, (Rose, 1996, p. 63), bushcraft, attitudes to land and ethics. If the bush was formative of Australian identity as Ward argued, a parallel embryonic strand has been the imprint of Indigenous culture on settler society. While the combative nature of frontier relations was sadly the norm, protest by sympathetic whites and persistent struggle by Aborigines meant some points of positive contact enriched both cultures to result in some equitable relationships (Rose, 1996, p. 4).

APPENDIX 22

As earlier mentioned, frontier conflicts were severe in the northern NSW and border areas. Significantly the Heywood family oral account identifies a forbear, believed a sailor, in 1792 "jumping ship" from a fourth fleet vessel (Smee, 1992). He then disappeared into the colony leaving no details until 1837 at Jondaryan, where his grandson Joseph Thomas Heywood, was born. Among my mother's forbears though, her grandfather George Irving Thompson, was transported in 1828 as a convict and his son Irving Bendigo, born in 1852 at Bonshaw, fathered my grandfather, Robert George Ruby in 1902 at Barraba. Their lives oscillated between southern NSW and Barraba, Bingara, Emmaville, Inverell, and Bonshaw with the latter central. It is in proximity to Bonshaw that I have been drawn to live. And because of this familial heritage in the bush my art orients to the lived experiences of immersion, creating art and living through the challenges devolving from life there. This is significant because until my parents' post war move to Sydney, the other family intermixtures, such as Fraser, Atkinson, Frost, Beaton etc., along with the Thompsons and Heywoods, had pioneering and rural backgrounds that form the basis for our family identity, despite the fact my parents moved to the city for some years. These roots in the country finally drew me out of Sydney and shaped my sense of self and the motivation for making art. In fact this particular circle of country where my forbears lived from Jondaryan to Barraba, Armidale to Bonshaw is really a descriptor of the country that has formed the subject area of much of my art making. In part of this area Judith Wright also felt a similar bonding, signifying it as "South of my day's circle, part of my blood's country" in a love relationship I also hold (online 2016, p. 127). I thus consider Wright's poetic descriptions of land and nature, textual equivalents to my visual art.

APPENDIX 23

Earlier, when teaching at Goondiwindi, we arranged trips, one in particular to Sydney for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, accompanied by community members to see the Bangara Dance Troupe and Indigenous art exhibitions. Relatives from Toomelah had moved to Sydney and linked us up with such events. Later, when teaching at Toomelah and Boggabilla, I was given funding to research Toomelah history at the Sydney Archives and Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Canberra, with Sandy McGrady, a colleague whom I tutored and who became the first fully trained Indigenous teacher in the community.[27] Sandy's success was significant because she became a mentor to her community, encouraging others towards higher education goals. At a later time, whilst I was working for NSW TAFE, another trip was organised to AIATSIS for Indigenous adult students as part of a cultural studies course. These trips were organised for the broadening of experience, to raise awareness and to connect with others, chipping away at the isolation white settlement had imposed on the Toomelah community.

[27] AIATSIS interim council commenced in 1961 and established by an act of Parliament in 1964 consisting of 22 members, the first Aboriginal member appointed in 1970.

APPENDIX 24

This involved school students, Aboriginal boys/men at risk,[28] and elders needing a place to relax from social pressures. Once on such a trip, Wibble found a decaying log she recognised as having been cut by Murris for gathering European honey. Unlike native bees, European bees sting and so holes were cut in the hollow tree trunk to rob the honey. One was down low filled with grass and set alight to smoke the bees and another chopped at the top to exit the smoke. Finally, a cut was made midway for collecting the honey (See Figure A24.1). We also discovered the remains of a stone circle on a traprock hill that Wibble said was made by Murris although she was unsure of why. It was likely too small for a bora ground (usually much larger and flatter) but it did have a commanding view. I have included Wibble's voice here as acknowledgment of her shared knowledge, authority as an elder, and awareness of the need to recover knowledge. Writing about this previous presence of Aboriginal people in the Kwiambal tribal lands, Robyn Howell claimed that its "hilly and undulating country provided many places for ceremonial activities, that were for the men only" (1982, p. 30) and she quoted Violet McIntosh as saying "men used to work away out in … gorges, sort of deep places, ringbarking" (Howell, 1982, p. 186). These statements match the stone circle's environment surrounded by the hills, gorges and creeks of Mandoie Country, 'Mundowey' the Indigenous word for foot. The inclusion of the honey tree log photo then bears material testimony to Violet McIntosh's recollection of men working in isolated places and a reminder of Aboriginal presence and overlooked contribution to rural development. This knowledge of the bush gained from Aboriginal friends added to my experience of it as a living entity, an understanding I seek to communicate in my art.

[28] This all-male camp resulted from an initiative of Scripture Union with government funding to help young Aboriginal men in trouble with the law, or in danger of it, so as to reconnect with Country and learn traditional values. The camp's mentor was Clem (Bucky) Whiteman (decd.) who was given release from his work on the Moree Plains Shire Council to undertake this.

Figure A24.1. Wibble's Honey Tree [photograph]

APPENDIX 25

There they had developed a botanic area for purposes of restoring Indigenous knowledge. Those rangers also called it a "Koori supermarket" just like the Boggabilla Murris, viewing it as a resource rich pharmacy; claiming many plants were of potential significance to modern medicine. Similarly, in the northern Border Rivers catchment (that includes Ashford) a book of traditional Aboriginal plant use was compiled which detailed the trees, shrubs grasses, herbs, and vines suitable for eating, healing, animal habitats, "tool and shelter making", "spiritual obligations" and plants considered dangerous (McKerney & White, 2011, p. 7).

APPENDIX 26

Like others of my generation, I was taught in primary school Dorothea Mackellar's (1885-1963) poem *My Country* (1908), and as an adult I came to realise how well it conceptualised the Australian landscape stimulated by the Gunnedah region. Mackellar wrote:

I love a sunburnt country,

A land of sweeping plains,

Of ragged mountain ranges,

Of droughts and flooding rains.

I love her far horizons, I love her jewel sea, Her beauty and her terror

The wide brown land for me.

She concluded:

All you who have not loved her,

You will not understand

Though earth holds many splendours, Wherever I may die,

I know to what brown country

My homing thoughts will fly.

These are the words of one enamoured of Australia's bush and at ease within it.

APPENDIX 27

Banjo Patterson wrote in *Clancy of the Overflow* (stanza 4):

> *And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him*
>
> *In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,*
>
> *And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,*
>
> *And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.*

APPENDIX 28

Poet Judith Wright articulated the dichotomy of experience between bush and urban life in *The Flood,* saying:

On the other side of the range. Few of us know

that country – certainly people live there.

Not many. Sensible people live in cities.

Some of us have been there when we were children

but never comfortable.

APPENDIX 29

For instance, one art subject required me to travel to the National Gallery in Victoria for a residential, where I had to choose a painting to critique in depth. I realised such protracted analysis was lacking in my initial art training, although not in literature studies. I found the prolonged scrutiny of another's artwork as challenging as creating one of my own. I then comprehended the paucity of my art history training relative to original artworks back at Teachers College and Art School, even though they were about thirty minutes' walk from the Art Gallery of NSW. It seems anachronistic I attended for four years of weekly two-hour art history lectures with pale slides when there were originals on hand at the AGNSW, meaning my lecturers missed many teachable opportunities.

APPENDIX 30

This began on my mother's side with George Irving Thompson, a convict arriving aboard the *Mellish* in 1829 and in 1838 marrying at Broulee, Jane Hannah Harpur. On my father's side there is mystery. The oral record tells Joseph Thomas Heywood's (1837-1896) grandfather arrived as a sailor in 1792 on the *Fourth Fleet* and 'jumped ship'. Joseph two generations later is the first documented Heywood here. Ironically the *HMS Pitt* had suffered over fifty deaths from smallpox coming out (with more on arrival), meaning this was most probably why my forbear jumped ship rather than return by disease-ridden vessel. I think our unknown ancestor is unidentifiable because jumping ship was desertion, resulting in severe punishment. Thus the cat-o-nine tails was laid on thirteen *Fourth Fleet* convict escapees, including Thomas Watling, who briefly escaped at Cape Town (Smee, 1992, preface, Short, 2021, pp. 132-3). A sailor's desertion was serious, whether signed on or press-ganged, with the press-ganged subject to the same naval discipline as signed on ones (Hughes, 1988, p. 161). So third generation Joseph (1837-1896) settled at Jondaryan Queensland, where my fifth generation grandfather, 'Clarrie' (1894-1985) was born, later moving with his father to Kingston and Barraba. Both the Heywood and Thompson families were bush workers but after World War II some family members were lured to employment in the city. From that resulted tertiary educations for Lyn and I and in time the opportunity to move back to the country as teachers.

APPENDIX 31

Initially the colonial administration wanted the population contained in Cumberland County. But an expedition by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth crossing the Blue Mountains in 1813 (led by local Indigenous guide[29] James Burns[30]) and followed by surveyor Oxley's Road, opened up the inland (Ward, 1992, p. 92). The focus then shifted to land exploration and acquisition. Because of this Aboriginal groups were pushed ahead of the land seeker flood or reduced to dependency, decimated by disease or victimised by punitive action.

[29] http://myplace.edu.au >decade_land… crossing the Blue Mountains
[30] https://www.nma.gov.au >resources Blue Mountains crossing

APPENDIX 32

For us, a condition of buying *Sky Camp* was to erect perimeter fencing within twelve months of purchase, since the old fences were collapsed or non-existent. It was a big task building seven kilometres of fence and rejuvenating three. Our motives were to live in the bush and so fencing was a chore to be able to do that. When I first moved to Atholwood / Bonshaw in late 1977, it was possible to travel freely in many directions. This has changed according to ownership where holdings have been broken up, grids (vehicle by-passes) dismantled and fences installed beside roads.

APPENDIX 33

As well a while back I actually heard a plant growing. Walking by some Black Tea (Ti) Tree (*nguu*, a small shrub) I heard an unusual scratchy sound and moved closer. I could hear the sound of the tree growing, its nutrients moving internally up its branches. Thus all senses come into play in the bush but my richest sensations were really those of childhood, especially the honeyed aroma of the bush.

APPENDIX 34

The most non-vandalistic solution to Australia's energy crisis is not to destroy the bush's beauty to solve an environment problem, but rather to install solar infrastructure on the roofs of all energy-consuming dwellings. Those claiming to want to save the environment by proliferating massive energy projects are really vandalising the environment rather than innovating on or meeting energy needs. This consciousness of the inroads of solar and wind infrastructures, while not a theme in my work, is now a powerful motivation for me in painting the bush. In a sense this dominating incongruent infrastructure has driven me to communicate the beauty, sufficiency and vulnerability of the bush in hopes of changing people's attitudes. I am grieved seeing the bush spoilt by technologies best served by incorporation into the built environment. This is why I lodged objections to the solar farm construction at Bonshaw. In that process the incongruity in the solar industry's city-based approach became apparent when a bureaucrat tasked with responding by phone to my objection, emphasised the government and developer's insensitivity to the environment through admitting he had never been to Bonshaw or knew anything about the place other than its project details. This is the problem, a city need farmed out to country areas underpinned by an inability to envisage the negative environmental changes this infrastructure brings.

The Bonshaw proposed Solar Farm SSD9438,
https://www.ipen.nsw.gov.au>public-submissions PDF

APPENDIX 35

Land art is often appreciated by many from photographic records that document the transformation of the environment as a 'site of transcendental "presence"', an art form synchronous with 1970s 'painting-is-dead' rhetoric (Hughes, 2012, p.384, 386). In Australia the most controversial land art project to be undertaken was by Christo (1935-2020) and Jeanne-Claude (1935-2009) who in 1969, helped by volunteers, used fabric to "wrap up Little Bay", Sydney (Figure A35.1, 1968/9). Land art made dramatic statements about human environmental impacts, yet simultaneously overruled nature's purity by incongruently exploiting nature's materials in constructing the work. This means that land art effectually dominated nature; unlike Indigenous art where nature and art merged in ritual and story with no discernible environmental impact.

Figure A35.1. Christo and Jean Claude, Wrapped Coast, One Million Square Feet, Little Bay, Sydney, 1968-9

https://christojeanneclaude.net/__data/489ba3f81dd3c37a580c51147a586209.jpg

Recently though, another environmental discordance entered the landscape in the form of wind and solar energy infrastructure that in size and quantity dominates the landscape. Environmentalist Bob Brown realised the inconsistency wind turbines presented and opposed a windfarm project in Tasmania "because its towers will affect [the environment's] … natural beauty" and kill "endangered wildlife" (The Guardian, 2019). Similar turbines have been erected between Inverell and Glen Innes as well as a new solar farm near Bonshaw. Along with other artists sensitive to the impact of these infrastructures, I see their proliferation as conflicting with aesthetic environmental care (Wissing et al. quoting Naess) and *Ecosophy T* argued that when people and societies harm the environment "you are in fact harming yourself" (2019, p. 1). This recent inroad into non-urban regions under an energy need banner is Australia's new environmental crisis and the reason why Australian artist, Marion Chapman joined *International artists against wind turbines* to protect the landscapes and wildlife she saw threatened by them. Chapman protested over proposed developments on the volcanic Stockyard Hill landscapes where Austrian born artist Eugene Von Guérard had painted from 1852 to 1882, because those changes would ensure the destruction of its beauty and heritage.[31] Finding alternatives to this outsourced urban domination is thus important because the bush provides more than just a material resource; it also offers a vital holistic retreat from urban pressures. The annual Easter migration from city to country is an example of how embryonic this need is for many.

31 www.artistsagainstwindfarms.com protest-groups-06-Artists against Wind Farms, 2012

APPENDIX 36

Questionably, due to unprecedented change, 155-metre-high windmills have been erected across New England (with taller ones planned), thus despoiling large areas of the bush. Roads, ploughed fields, farmhouses and fences have a lower visuality compared to these towering turbines and solar infrastructures. In rural areas these modern technologies likely are a bridge too far to form interesting art subjects, even though the humble farm windmill turns up occasionally in populist art. It appears in Australia that the depicting of windmills is a rarity, although Ray Crooke painted one, *The Windmill* (Figure A36.1) and occasionally Arthur Boyd (1920-1999) (*Horsham Billabong*) (Figure A36.2, 1958/9).

Figure A36.1. Ray Crooke, The Windmill (also titled View through the palms), oil on canvas on board, 17x12 cm

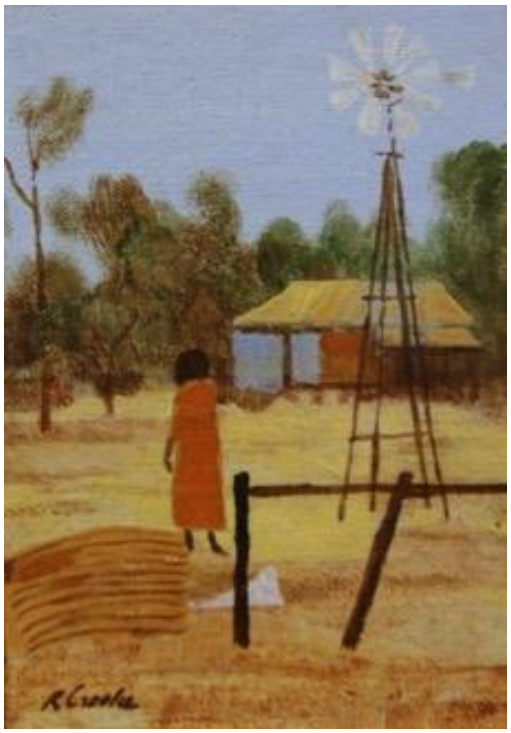

Figure A36.2. Arthur Boyd, Horsham Landscape, 1958/9, oil on canvas on board

Thus in relation to my research questions, a dichotomy has emerged whereby some changes to the bush are challenging because of their visual impact on the environment and because they pragmatically align with profits to disrespect the bush and constitute a new colonial variant.

APPENDIX 37

This was how I experienced the country around Mareeba and Atholwood in the 1970s because at the time large tracts were unfenced and allowed free travel. However in time fences appeared to preclude free movement. In Scotland though, great areas were made "openly accessible to the public" in: "mountains, farm land, forested land, rivers, lochs, reservoirs, coastline, … grasslands, paths, tracks, and woodlands, day and night" regardless of whether "privately owned" so long as basic rules were abided (Crowther, 2019, p. 6). Enjoying that kind of freedom could transform our relationship to Country here as well; especially for Indigenous people often denied access to their traditional lands. Gillian Cowlishaw considers fences and developmental infrastructure as "visually intrusive cultural markers" that change the "way of seeing the landscape" and "profoundly antithetical to Indigenous meanings of country" (Collingwood-Whittick, 2008, p. 68).

APPENDIX 38

A ranger at *Booderoo* national park, Wreck Bay, told me how the old people there once had a cure for snakebite using local plants, but that knowledge was now lost. Wibble also related how some young Goomeroi men had perished near old Euraba (Boomi) in bad weather because they lacked the skills to survive like their ancestors had. She had wanted to pass on those skills as both a necessity and obligation.

APPENDIX 39

For instance Nicholas Smith cites stinging nettles as a 'feral faunal metaphor' promulgating 'the legacy of colonialism' but argues they did have some value in the new colony (2011, p. 15). He links the introduction of nettle seeds to admitting "something valuable … flourished when a new future began to be cultivated in the nascent colony of New South Wales" (2011, p.15). Having not really seen England's green and pleasant pastures (my short UK trip was to London), my consciousness was mainly formed by semi dry uplands and slopes so that they provide the inspiration in my art. For me as artist, both native and introduced plants have their own beauty and their presence together in the bush parallels my own relationship of belonging. To me all of life is sacred, and that includes even prickly things from which I still make art (Image 44, 1978). Some also think of the bush in wilderness terms, as wild places where human impact is non-consequential with humans set "outside of nature", but allegedly this is a transplanted American conservationist idea (Smith, 2011, p.11). However, as people enter more frequently, the concept of being a wild place ceases (Crowther, 2019, p. 16).

APPENDIX 40

However, some in the bush have lost interest in creating art there, shifting instead from making to spectating. Today the profusion of images and information delivered via technology and the Internet has affected regional art and community interests. Reading local histories and comparing past community involvement to that of today is an indicator of this change. Sports, art and crafts, music groups, dances etc. were once numerous in rural communities. The introduction of television brought the first significant change while tarred roads and motorcars brought the second. Declining employment opportunities also changed the cohesiveness of bush towns. This is one reason why keeping the arts alive is important because they enrich life in the bush through exhibitions, travelling tutors, art in schools and galleries like the Local Aboriginal Land Council's at Ashford. Arguably it is art in the community that most authentically expresses the reality of people's lives compared to the broader concepts of national identity.