In-Between: Contemporary Art in Australia
Cross-culture, Contemporaneity, Globalization

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ABSTRACT

This study emerges from the question: what is contemporary art, and mainly what criteria constitute contemporary art in a globalized art world in general? Thus, the focus of this dissertation is on the postcolonial context of Australia and the fact that the contemporary art scene in Australia is divided into Australian and Aboriginal art respectively. This is a division originating from the colonization of Australia that began in the 1770's, resulting in an Australian art descending from a Western art practice, where there is further focus on two categories within this art. The first category is a so-called "young" Australian art created by young artists who are returning to skills of, for instance, wood-carving and bronze casting, emphasizing the techniques of creation, and the finish of the surfaces in a do-it-yourself-aesthetic. The second category is called Asian-Australian art, featuring diaspora artists, a category pointing to the fact that Australia is situated in the Asia-Pacific region and has a large Asian population. Aboriginal art, on the other hand, is regarded to be an unbroken tradition dating back some 40,000 years, featuring art created by indigenous artists living on ancestral land in remote communities, often being called traditional Aboriginal art, and city-based Aboriginal art produced by indigenous artists who have grown up and are living in Australian cities and have been educated in Western art schools. These four categories are represented by four artists whose artworks are analysed and interpreted from a cultural semiotic point of view in order to be used in practical examinations of the viability of the two theoretical concepts cross-culture and contemporaneity, as well as an investigation of whether the contemporary global art scene is truly global or still tends to emanate from a Western perspective. In this context the concept of cross-culture is examined through the history of how primitive art and primitive artists, and non-Western art and artists in general, have been apprehended, indicating that the crossing of cultures, making transformations and influences possible in the arts, have taken place from a Western perspective, thus demonstrating power relations deriving from colonization. Contemporaneity should be understood as an inquiry into how various artistic expressions with different time conceptions appear when produced simultaneously in different, closely connected, yet mutually incomparable cultures. This is art that communicates across the divide between cultures and as such grasps the driving spirit of the contemporary.

Keywords: contemporary art, Australian art, Aboriginal art, cross-culture, contemporaneity, globalization, postcolonialism, diaspora, cultural semiotics, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Fiona Foley, Ricky Swallow, John Young

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To my father

Kent Volmar Persson 1940–2008

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

DYLAN THOMAS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1 *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, Eds. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee, Duke University Press, Durham & London 2008.

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1.

Introduction

"What is Contemporary art?" was a question I started to ask myself a couple of years ago. After completing my master's thesis on the Australian artist and photographer Tracy Moffatt, this question became even more interesting when I realized that the Australian contemporary art scene is divided into Australian and Aboriginal art respectively. This is a divide originating from the colonization of Australia that began in the 1770's, and hence, resulting in an Australian art descending from a so-called Western art practice consisting of works of art created in compliance with Western traditions. On the other hand, as stressed by the anthropologist Howard Morphy, Aboriginal art is regarded to be an unbroken tradition dating back 40,000 years or more and consisting of art made by indigenous artists living on ancestral land in remote communities, who are educated traditionally through initiations, often being called traditional artists and traditional art respectively.[1] But contemporary Aboriginal art also consists of art made by city-based indigenous artists growing up and living in Australian cities educated in Western art schools. This knowledge led me further to question the notion of what is considered art, and foremost, why contemporary art is divided in Australia. To be able to do a proper inquiry I set out for Australia.

On my first journey, I carried out a preliminary investigation crisscrossing the huge Australian continent visiting art galleries and commercial galleries in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin, Cairns and Alice Springs. What I found was a spatial confirmation of the Australian/Aboriginal art divide. In art galleries for instance, which in the Australian context correspond to European and American art museums, the art on display was shown separately.[2] The Australian artworks were, and still are, spread throughout the gallery and presented in accordance with European and American displays, whilst Aboriginal art is placed in specific areas designated for this art, resulting in an Aboriginal gallery within the gallery. This "gallery" is often located on the ground level and sometimes occupies quite vast areas consisting of several rooms. In art gallery shops, the books on sale are also placed separately, either on different shelves headlined Australian or Aboriginal art or, in accordance with the art, in different parts of the shop. The art market,

on the other hand, with its commercial galleries, is a complicated business which I will not go into at any depth other than to superficially comment on the galleries' notion of selling art, their interest being in showing sellable art, which could be either Australian art or city-based Aboriginal art. Aboriginal traditional art, made by artists who live and work on ancestral land, is more often sold in galleries owned and operated by Aboriginal communities. However, in Australia's large cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, there are commercial galleries, not operated by Indigenous communities, specialising in and selling traditional Aboriginal art.

My first journey provided me with information which made me sharpen my inquiry, and to concentrate on the distinctions between Aboriginal and Australian art, two categories very much viable in contemporary art in Australia today. Back in Sweden, I returned to my earlier question: what is considered art? And also why is the art scene in Australia divided, and if this had anything to do with the fact that Aboriginal works of art are made by indigenous artists. Is it because Aboriginal art is considered ethnographical artefacts this divide has occurred? This opinion, deriving from a long lasting discussion on primitivism and primitive art, is discussed further in Chapters Three and Four. However, in Australia both categories, Aboriginal and Australian, are viable as contemporary art, which means that Aboriginal art is not looked upon as ethnographical artefacts, at least not in Australia. In the Swedish context this is rarely the case, of which the exhibition *Vandra varsamt – Aboriginsk konst (Treading lightly – Aboriginal art)* held at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm late in 2007 is an example. With this in mind, I realized that my comprehension of contemporary art in Australia was insufficient. I also realized that my understanding of Australian art history was poor. In fact, what I knew about art in Australia before my journey primarily concerned Aboriginal art, due to the fact that I had read Wally Caruana's *Aboriginal Art* as an undergraduate student in Art History.[3] Although my travels through Australia had given me the opportunity to visit art galleries and commercial galleries, and to look at a wide range of art, it had not made me understand the complexity of the Australian art history. Nor had I comprehended what was happening in the field of contemporary art. In order to widen my knowledge I decided to contact knowledgeable persons working in different areas concerning art in Australia through e-mails, and ask for permission to interview them in person, in Australia. The material received during this, my second, journey would become the main material from which I could continue my investigations.

The interviews

The question of what is contemporary art in an Australian context became my main concern during my second journey. And again I decided to tour Australia, but this time I wanted to ask persons working in various fields of art their opinion on this matter, in order to gain a broader understanding of the actual contemporary art scene in Australia. The informants I interviewed where chosen due to their experience and expertise in their specific field, and consisted of five scholars working at universities, four curators working in art galleries and a private collection, and two directors of two art centres.

The five scholars were:

Terry Smith, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh, USA.[4]

Charles Green, Professor, Faculty of Arts, Art History, School of Culture and Communications, University of Melbourne (at the time of the interview Faculty of Art History and Theory).

Ian McLean, Professor, and Deputy Dean/Graduate Research Coordinator, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts, University of Western Australia in Perth.

Sylvia Kleinert, Associate Professor of Australian Indigenous Art, Charles Darwin University, School of Creative Arts and Humanities in Darwin.

Kate McNeill, PhD student at the Faculty of Art History and Theory at University of Melbourne.[5]

The four curators working in art galleries and in a private collection were:

Vivienne Webb, Curator at Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.

Elena Taylor, Curator of Australian Painting and Sculpture, National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

Daena Murray, Curator at Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory in Darwin.

John Stringer, senior Curator of Kerry Stokes Collection in Perth. John Stringer sadly passed away in 2007.

And finally, the two directors of art centres were:

> Alasdair Foster, Director of Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney.

> Marcus Canning, Executive Director of ARTRAGE in Perth. ARTRAGE is an Art Space working with young emerging artists.

However, during my third visit to Australia in 2008 I was also able to interview Howard Morphy, Professor at the Centre for Cross Cultural Research, Australia National University, Canberra, at the time of the interview. Morphy later became Professor of Anthropology and Director at Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australia National University, Canberra. The questions I asked Morphy primarily concerned his then recently published book, *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories*, and not the ones that I asked the others.[6]

Another person I interviewed in 2008 was Djon Mundine, Indigenous Curator of Contemporary Art at Campbelltown Arts Centre in New South Wales. As with Morphy, the questions I asked Mundine were not the same that I had asked earlier. In this interview, I concentrated on a couple of articles written by Mundine, who is a well-known art adviser, curator and art critic of Aboriginal descent. From 1981 to 1993, he was an adviser mainly at Ramingining, an indigenous community in the Northern Territory, and curator of Aboriginal art at various art galleries, such as The Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and The National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

The locations of the informants during my second journey made me visit Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Perth and Darwin.[7] And as I travelled up the west coast of Australia, I also visited Broome, a costal town in the north, and Kununurra in the inland, both quite remote towns in the Kimberly region in Western Australia, where I visited commercial art galleries. Through this journey, together with the first journey, my aim was to expand my impression of the Australian art scene. Not solely concentrating on Australia's main cities, Sydney and Melbourne, I tried to gain a somewhat varied picture of what was considered contemporary art in Australia. My strategy for the interviews, on the other hand, was to ask all the informants the same three quite broad questions, presented through discussions at a time and location chosen by them, the only restriction being my ability to make the appointments. But as it turned out, my first question was quite impossible, or as mentioned by Terry Smith, "a really terrible" question.[8] However, by starting with a terrible question I was able to have interesting conversations. In order to make myself clear I began each interview with an explanation of what categories of art

I considered contemporary in the Australian context – Australian art consisting of art descending from a European art history made by Australian and more recent immigrated artists, and Aboriginal art.

The questions asked were:

1. How would you define contemporary art in Australia?

2. Have you discovered any specific tendencies regarding contemporary art in Australia?

3. How does the discussion in the arts relate to postcolonial theory and the notions of globalization?

The informants did not receive the questions beforehand, although I had presented myself, as well as the main purpose with the interviews in e-mails to each interviewee. As already mentioned, the purpose was to gain a wider understanding of the actual contemporary art scene in Australia, which was well achieved. But foremost and, as it would turn out, the most significant result of the interviews was the fact that they generated further questions rather than producing answers. This directed my research towards more specific investigations, and primarily to scrutinize two theoretical concept of interest in the Australian contemporary art context. Firstly, the concept of cross-culture, which again brought the distinction Aboriginal/Australian art to the surface, and secondly, the concept of contemporaneity deriving from a philosophical discussion of being in time in a global world, i.e. the complexity of being in time at different places simultaneously, and how all those beings are expressed visually, and take visual form. I further became more aware of the actual art scene, the artists and their practices, where the informants pointed me in the direction of four viable tendencies in the art, which in turn led me towards four specific artists and their art practices. The tendencies that will be discussed are artists working in accordance with traditional Aboriginal art; city-based Aboriginal art, "young" Australian artists whose work is characterized by returning to skill, as well as relinquishing a critical attitude, and so called diaspora artists of Asian descent living and working in Australia. These are tendencies that also could be looked upon as categories, which is another discussion that will proceed throughout the dissertation. The artists that I consider in closer detail are Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Fiona Foley, Ricky Swallow and John Young.

The first question – the definition of contemporary art in Australia

While travelling to meet with the informants I started to realize that opinions on art in Australia were quite similar. This was later confirmed when I transcribed the interviews. Of course there existed a few differing views, which I will try to narrate briefly, but overall the answers described a somewhat homogenous apprehension. However, regarding the first "terrible" question – How would you define contemporary art in Australia? – I was well aware of the fact that it is always a problem with definitions, and that the question in itself was far too complex, which several of the informants indicated. Although, something that stood out in the answers was that there existed two different and diverging definitions of contemporary art. First, the notion of contemporary art as art made now, which was the most common answer amongst the curators. The second idea of contemporary art derives around a more complex apprehension. In order to be able to give an accurate answer, the scholars were mainly of the opinion that you actually have to start by defining contemporary art. A common point of departure in trying to pinpoint contemporary art was that in an art-historical context contemporary art had a similar meaning to the opinion of the curators; it meant art of the present up until the beginning of the 1970s. But as stressed by Ian McLean, in the late 1970s the idea of contemporary art came to replace the idea of modernist art, which meant that the concept of modernist art ceased to be used in Australia.[9] Initially, modernist art was also defined as art of the present, and that eventually came to carry the ideological baggage of modernism, which in the arts was mainly concerned with form alone, without any interest in its content, be it historical or ethnographical. For instance, the incorporation of indigenous art on the basis of form alone neglected its history, as well as the contemporary significance of its cultures of origin, which still very much is the case. When contemporary art replaced modernist art it also incorporated the trappings of modernism. Hence, in approximately the last twenty-five years contemporary art has meant more than just art of the present, it has also come to mean what we used to imply by modern art. The opinion was also that contemporary art incorporates current discourses of, for instance, postmodernism, postcolonialism and new media. The result is a contemporary art in Australia that is caught up in those discourses. But such art could be contemporary art anywhere. In this sense, contemporary art in Australia is subordinate to a Western internationalism in operation, which has evolved over the last twenty years in most countries. Thus, contemporary art in Australia is to be compared to contemporary art everywhere else in the Western art world. However, concerning the notion of modernist art ceasing to be used in Australia, Ian McLean

stresses that by the early 1980s, Australian art Journals, such as *Art and Text* had abandon the word "modern", and began instead to speak of "contemporary art". It was as if the word "contemporary" just appeared at a time when there were many debates about modernism and postmodernism. McLean understands this as a way of stepping outside those debates, to move beyond the discussions on modernism and postmodernism, and talk only about contemporary art.[10]

The need to consider the question of the contemporary was also stressed by some of the informants. What is it to live with time, to be contemporary? According to Terry Smith, contemporary does not mean just up-to-date or to be in the present. To live with time, being contemporary, is in one sense just to be ambiguously in the present. This automatically means that you are not associated with another time, such as the time passed or time to come. Smith continues discussing the notion of being contemporary in relation to other people. He argues that you could actually be in a room with other people and experiencing that you are living in accordance with different times, because the other persons may come form other cultures operating with a sense of time that is different from your own; the temporality is different. This is an ambiguity that would be more common in multicultural societies such as Australia, although in a global world time becomes relative. "The question of the contemporary is a question of being in time, and being is disjunctive, and being moves in different directions." This utterance by Smith makes him conclude that it is as if Einstein's vision of relative times, and relative beings in time, has become normal for everyone in the world now.[11] This is also the point of departure for a discussion of contemporary art in a global perspective that Smith develops in relation to the concept of contemporaneity, which led to one of two theoretical approaches I will try to unfold in this dissertation.

The second question – tendencies in contemporary art in Australia

In the answers to the second question – Have you discovered any specific tendencies regarding contemporary art in Australia? – all the informants mentioned Aboriginal art as distinctive to Australia. But most informants pointed to the fact that the significance of Aboriginal art did not emerge on any broad basis until the 1980s and early 1990s. This is also, as pointed out by Ian McLean, and Terry Smith, when the rest of the world took notice of indigenous art, which happened in two exhibitions.[12] The first was *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, in 1984, on display at MoMA in New York.[13] And as confirmed by the title, Aboriginal art was looked upon as primitive art. In this exhibition, primitive works of art were juxtaposed with modernist works, showing

the affinity between modern art and primitive aesthetics. But the display was also meant to show an indication of how modernist art had been influenced by non-Western works of art, to be discussed further in Chapter Three and Four. The second exhibition *Magiciens de la terre*, was on display in Paris, at the centre Georges Pompidou and the Grand Halle at the Parc de la Vilette in 1989.[14] This exhibition was, according to the curator Jean-Hubert Martin, a departure from the centre periphery discussions in that it wanted "to reflect on contemporary art production on a global, worldwide scale."[15] The aim was also to create an international exhibition that transcended the traditional Western framework, although the title mainly suggests an exhibition showing spiritual works of art made by indigenous magicians.[16] However, in order to reach those goals all the works of art were presented in the same way, as modern art displayed in accordance with the notions of the white cube, without any information about the artists or the works of art. This confused the visitors because they did not have any previous knowledge of how to look at, or understand, the non-Western works of art. And in addition, some of the non-Western art, or the art from the "Third World", as Jean-Hubert Martin named it at the time, were shown in a manner that never had been done before.[17] Both the artists and their works of art were on display. Many artists from the Third World were actually creating their art in the exhibition while it was being held. This was not an option available for the artists from the First World. Nevertheless, *Magiciens de la terre* was regarded as "the first truly international exhibition of contemporary art."[18]

The notion of Aboriginal art being contemporary art in Australia, which all the informants mentioned, is not as obvious as it may seem. First of all, Aboriginal art in itself is quite diverse, depending on which language group, and place of origin, from which the artists descend. Like every other art, Aboriginal art is dynamic, changing and responsive to new circumstances. This means that there is not one specific Aboriginal art. Furthermore, some of the informants where of the opinion that a lot of people in Australia do not regard Aboriginal art as art. For them it is still looked upon as ethnographical artefacts, an art coming out of its own distinctive cultural traditions, which Howard Morphy also emphasized when I interviewed him in 2008. His view of this matter is that there has been a continual battle to gain recognition of Aboriginal art as fine art.[19] Other informants asserted that it is only traditional Aboriginal art that is distinctive, art made by indigenous artists living on ancestral/traditional land in remote communities. Aboriginal art made by city-based indigenous artists, growing up in Australian cities and educated in Western art schools, is not distinctive because they work in a common international

visual language. This attitude was also discussed from a viewpoint of Aboriginal art not fitting into the previous national settler narrative of Australia. A settler narrative where the people of Australia looked upon themselves as descendants from Europe, with a European preconception of art. This preconception called attention to the Western art-historical trajectory with its well-known canon as its guiding role of what was considered art. Hence, Aboriginal art was not art and was regarded ethnographical artefacts, which could be why Australian and Aboriginal art is divided. Although, as put forward by Smith, from an outside perspective it came to a point where interest in Aboriginal art, because of its depths of culture and its specific aesthetics of Western Desert dot paintings, almost wiped out the previous history of white Australian art.[20] One example of this is the fact that only a few artists from Australia are known by name outside Australia, such as Tracey Moffatt, Imants Tillers and Mike Parr, whereas contemporary Aboriginal art is well known as a phenomenon all over the world, and some of the artists are known by name, as for instance Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. This shows how relationships in the Australian art world have shifted during the last twenty years, which has led to an unresolved tension. According to Smith, this is an important reason why it is impossible for him to define contemporary art in Australia, "because the forces that allow you to arrive at something called a definition are at such conflict that they will not let that happen, which is good".[21] This unresolved tension, mentioned by Smith, is always present in Australia. But for Aboriginal art to gain the status of contemporary art in Australia there has had to be an transcendence between cultures, or rather, a crossing of cultures, which led to the other theoretical approach I will try to investigate further in this dissertation.

The greater part of the informants also wanted to stress an Asian-Australian tendency in Australian art, and that Australia should connect more to the Asia-Pacific region. This is a result of the fact that Australia has been on the periphery of the European and American art scenes for a long while. But with the rise of postcolonial theory in the 1990s, Australian artists became interested in notions of postcolonialism, and situated themselves with other postcolonial countries against Europe and the United States. They began to see themselves in a context of either other postcolonial countries, such as Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, or with the region of Asia. This has led to an Asian strand in contemporary art, which started to show in the beginning of the 1990s. This strand is also a result of Australian artists taking residence in Asia rather than in New York, and the fact that a lot of Asian people living in Australia, which has a very strong Asian population, are educated in Australian art schools and graduate as artists. Another

tendency, mentioned foremost by Elena Taylor, curator at The National Gallery of Australia, is a tendency within what could be called the "young" Australian art scene, consisting of an urge of returning to skill.[22] This urge results in sculptural works of art, focusing on the actual medium, and the techniques of creation, with emphasis on the surface and the finish. It seems as if the artists are trying to aim at a kind of slickness of surface, which indicates that those working according to this tendency are not afraid of making works of art that are labour-intensive and time consuming. Unlike the late 1980s and early 1990s with its overtly theoretical works of art, this art practice focuses on a do-it-yourself-aesthetic, using everyday materials.

All those tendencies mentioned by the informants, which also could be looked upon as categories, helped me decide which artists and art practices I wanted to investigate further in Chapter Five. The artists I chose as examples for the contemporary Australian art scene are: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, categorised as a traditional Aboriginal artist; Fiona Foley categorised as a city-based Aboriginal artist; Ricky Swallow categorised as a "young" Australian artist; and John Young categorised as an Asian-Australian artist. However, you do not put anyone in a category. An art historian, or a curator at an art gallery, may work with categories of this kind, and use them as terms in their writing in order to be specific about an artist's origin. In art galleries this kind of categorization could also be useful, as for instance at the Musem of Contemporary Art in Sydney, where curator Vivian Webb stresses that this is a way for the museum to see the overall coverage, to be sure that they are inclusive and display works of art representative of the diversity of the Australian population.[23] But the artists are all Australian, and there is no categorization on exhibition labels. In this sense – and what could be looked upon as specific to a country like Australia where everyone, with the exception of the indigenous population, are immigrants – the labels presents the artist's name, where he or she was born, lives and work, and if the artist is dead, it is often mentioned where he or she died. For instance, born in Beijing, lived and worked in Sydney and Beijing, died in Melbourne. Further more, the artworks discussed in connection with the tendencies, by Kngwarreye, Swallow, Foley and Young, almost presented themselves throughout the process of me becoming aware of what I wanted to achieve. Hence, all the works of art in Chapter Five are described, analysed and interpreted in order to scrutinise the concepts of cross-culture and contemporaneity. These concepts are put to a practical test from four points of views: traditional Aboriginal art, "young" Australian art, city-based Aboriginal art, and Asian-Australian art.

The third question – concerning discussions of postcolonial theory and globalization in Australia

The answers to the third question – How does the discussions in the arts relate to postcolonial theory and the notions of globalization? – were the most divergent. The greater part of the curators working in art galleries and art centres were of the opinion that the legacy of colonialism in Australia is bound to be there. As a matter of fact, some of them considered Australia to be still in the midst of colonialism, although it is a new kind of colonial culture, a contemporary one resulting in works of art exposing the Australian contemporary identity, both cultural and political. This could be looked upon as the outcome of a history of invasion and dispossession, and the need for the population of Australia, with its various cultural backgrounds, to know how to relate to this particular place, which is Australia. Another opinion shared by many curators was that the way in which Aboriginal art has been understood since the late 1980s is related to postcolonial concerns. According to Vivien Webb, a result of this discussion was that the Aboriginal art movement has been reconceived and understood differently because of postcolonial theory, which seems to have provided curators in contemporary art galleries a way of incorporating indigenous art into contemporary art.[24] The notion of recognising different cultural backgrounds derives from postcolonial theory, which also was pointed out as one of the characteristics of Australian culture and society, and which has become a characteristic of Australian art. But there are works of art that are critical and anti-colonial, for instance city-based Aboriginal art often deals with anti-colonial issues. There is also Australian art that challenges ideas of nationhood, emerging from a local engagement, not concerned with the global art world, and as such could be looked upon as a statement of the local versus the global. Scholars on the other hand, tackle the question from another viewpoint. All of them were of the opinion that Australian art is marked by postcolonialism, in similarity with, for instance, New Zealand art and South African art. But, as stressed by Charles Green, postcolonial theory of the late 1980s and the 1990s is old fashioned.[25] At the time of the interviews, scholars in Australia had been studying and writing about postcolonialism for fifteen years, and they needed to go to the next phase, concerning post-identity politics. This is a fact that also could be looked upon as a more contemporary way of theorizing about globalization. Postcolonial art literary emerged from decolonization – art in the wake of the retreat of Europe and the end of Empire, past the ancient imperialism and the classic common system – notions deriving from Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's book *Empire.*[26] Through the concept of Empire, which according to Hardt and Negri

is "characterized fundamentally by a lack of boundaries", they deconstructs the new globalized world order.[27] A world order that took effect with decolonization, and was launched "after the Soviet barriers to the capitalist world market finally collapsed," resulting in an "irreversible globalization of economic and cultural exchange." This makes Hardt and Negri argue that, "Empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world."[28] And in similarity with postcolonial art coming out of decolonization, the discourse of globalization came out of the postcolonial discourse. The Australian art historical informants, in accordance with the concept of Empire, regarded this discourse to be a phase that was over. However, for Australia and many other peripheral countries, i.e. peripheral to the art centres in Europe and foremost New York, postcolonialism meant a way into the international discourse of art, and as such into the networks of Biennales, Triennials and Documentas, which incorporate the notions of globalization.

Disposition and deliminations

Yet another important contribution I received from the informants, and foremost from Ian McLean, but also Terry Smith, was a suggestion on a point of departure for this thesis. In order to provide the reader with a background survey on the art in Australia since colonization, they both suggested 1988, the year of the bicentennial celebration, of 200 years of European settlement in Australia, when several art exhibitions toured the country in an attempt to narrate the history of Australia through art. In choosing to examine two of those exhibitions more closely, *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, and the *1988 Australian Biennale*, I will try to put forward tendencies in the Australian history of art in Chapter Two. However, I am well aware of the fact that to comprehend 200 years of art through exhibitions is but one course of action to reach a general survey. Nonetheless it is quite effective, which is why I have also chosen this course of action in Chapter Three, to be able to unfold tendencies that have been in operation in the contested inclusion of Aboriginal art as fine art. However, unlike Chapter Three, Chapter Two is submitted solely as an extended background survey to give the reader a brief understanding of art in Australia until 1988, and will not be discussed further in this thesis. Chapter Four, on the other hand, presents the two theoretical concepts of cross-culture and contemporaneity.

There is, of course, a considerable number of artists working in accordance with the four tendencies I am about to examine further, and there are other tendencies

in contemporary Australian art as well. However, I have chosen to concentrate solely on the tendencies that evolved during the interviews. The selection of the four artists representing these tendencies has been an ongoing process since my first visit to Australia. As a matter of fact, through their works of art, the artists almost presented themselves in concurrence with my awareness of what I wanted to achieve, resulting in a carefully considered blend of artists and artworks as a foundation for my inquiries, as presented in Chapter Five. Another delimitation made in this volume is the overall decision of leaving out gender discussions. This is, for instance, visible in my choice of not discussing the general images of the Australian male that occurred in connection to the Heidelberg School during the 1880s and 1890s, and during the 1920s, and the 1930s, in contrast with the non-existing position of the Australian female in the arts during the same periods. This could be understood as Australia being a settler country, its harsh environment not suitable for women. At least it was not a category in the depiction of an Australian identity at this time, which of course is an important issue well worth to examine further. But my main focus is on contemporary art. The art and artists presented in Chapter Two are, as mentioned above, solely given as a background survey. The discussion is further finalised through a compilation of the results that came out of the examinations of the two concepts cross-culture and contemporaneity, in connection to the four art practices and the artworks presented, as will be explained in Chapter Six. Finally, necessary concepts and technical terms that occur in this thesis will consistently be explained in their context.

Overall purpose and research questions

The deliminations made it possible to concentrate on the two main situated perspectives of this thesis, where the first perspective is to present the long-lasting discussion about the contested inclusion of Aboriginal art into the fine art category in Australia. This proved to be quite an important part question at issue, impossible to bypass, in order to examine the prospects of reaching a viable cross-cultural category that is more inclusive and surrounded by blurred boundaries that makes the process of inclusion manifold. The second perspective is to present the concept of contemporaneity in accordance with Terry Smith's definition, and examine its ability to embrace the art and art practices of a global art world. Both concepts are then scrutinized through practical tests of their viability in connection with four artists representing traditional Aboriginal art, city-based Aboriginal art, "young" Australian art, and Asian-Australian art. From these points of view, the overall

purpose of this dissertation is to examine what criteria constitute contemporary art in Australia, and in a globalized art world in general. But it is also a question of whether the contemporary global art scene is truly global, or still tends to emanate from a Western perspective. This indicates that this is not solely a dissertation on art in Australia, although the studies are conducted in an Australian context, it would also be possible to perform similar investigations in other postcolonial contexts.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach of this dissertation emanate from the realisation of the fact that to be able to reach a somewhat overall comprehension of contemporary art in Australia, I decided to conduct interviews with knowledgeable people working within various fields of the Australian art scene. The answers to the interview questions pointed to the concepts of cross-culture and contemporaneity, as well as to four tendencies within contemporary art in Australia, which further resulted in close examinations and analyses of the art practices and works of art by Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Ricky Swallow, Fiona Foley, and John Young.

The image analytical approach I assume in connection to the artworks by these four artists is characterized of how the art historians are working at the Department of Cultural Sciences, in the subject of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Gothenburg, where this dissertation is presented.[29] It was notions discussed in connection to art's socio-cultural significance during Professor Eremita Lena Johannesson's leadership and her work towards a more inclusive image concept, not only focusing on works of fine art but also on mass produced images, as well as, for instance, instrumental images, that pointed me in the direction of cultural semiotics.

To be able to conduct viable analyses I had to begin with quite careful descriptions of each and every artwork by the four artists. This helped me map and structure all the details, and to some extent conduct comparisons. As for instance, in conjunction with two of Emily Kame Kngwarreye's works of art this procedure made it possible to expose different layers in her technique of dotting, as well as to structure and map the overall images, and to compare her "sign system", or the Aboriginal iconography, with, for me, more familiar objects. It is further a perspective of cultural semiotics that has inspired the image analytical method I have availed myself of, where my overall perception of the four artists' works is deriving from Roland Barthes notions presented in *Camera Lucida* (1980).[30] How I, the spectator, transcend between the general and the personal, between *studium*, as my field

of knowledge obtained through my culture, arriving at my *punctum*, of what it is in each an every image that haunts my imagination, or rather, what accidentally "pricks me", pointing to the indefinable in the process of interpretation, where my, the spectator's, experiences fill in the gaps in between what I see and what I experience.[31] It is also in the void, in between what I see and what I experience, that the semiotic notions put forward by Umberto Eco, in *A theory of semiotics* (1976), is useful. In this volume Eco stresses that every cultural process can be studied as communications, where art can be apprehended as such a process.[32] Eco is further discussing the concept of similarity in connection to images and works of art, and the fact that similarity is a matter of cultural conventions. In so doing, he is pointing to the notion of how people began "to look at things through the glasses of iconic conventions," which has resulted in a "perceptual cramp caused by overwhelming cultural habits."[33] To clarify his ideas Eco uses examples put forward by Ernst H. Gombrich in *Art and Illusion* (1960), of how Albrecht Dürer in 1515 depicted a rhinoceros with its body covered in armour. This fantasy animal was then serving as a model for instrumental renderings of the rhinoceros in natural history books up until the seventeenth century.[34] But Eco is also addressing the problem of how to perceive the culturally unknown, for instance in a discussion of the way Lévi-Strauss is referring to the theory of art as "iconic signs," where art is "a 'reduced model' of reality."[35] As such Lévi-Strauss is comparing art with verbal language in that figurative paintings are "endowed with meaning" where the iconic signs of the painting represents morphemes. This means that figurative art could be "read" and understood, abstract art on the other hand have no ability to communicate. From this point of view abstract art is culturally unknown and has to be adopted into the culturally known before a new convention can be established. This could be put in relation to the contested inclusion of Aboriginal art into the fine art category, and together with the main discussion in Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*, that "we can never separate what we see from what we know," these are notions that helped me establish the principal departure for the analyses of the artworks by Kngwarreye, Swallow, Foley and Young.[36] Finally, the analyses of the artists' art practices, as well as the semiotic analyses of their artworks, are further used in practical examinations of the two theoretical concepts cross-culture and contemporaneity, in an attempt to verify their viability in a globalized art world.

Theoretical approach

The concept of cross-culture

In order to be able to analyse and interpret the artworks representing the four tendencies pointed out by the informants, the concept of cross-culture has to be defined. Hence, cross-culture derives from the encounters of cultures, and has been in effect since colonization, which means that transformations and influences have always been a possibility in the arts. It is an all-encompassing concept that provides multiple possibilities of various blends. Although in this volume cross-culture will primarily concentrate on analyses of art objects circulating in the midst of the transformation following from colonization, and the voluntarily or forced migration of people. In Australia cross-cultural analysis has a long history, starting in the 1960s with the Australian art historian Bernard Smith analysing how the artists following explorers to the South Pacific in the 1770s depicted the flora and fauna of this, for them, new world, which he did from a Western perspective.[37] This points to the fact that cross-culture has been, and still is, a concept deriving from a Western perspective, often ignored in cross-cultural analyses of indigenous art. This could be looked upon as deriving from the long lasting primitivist debate, of the art world's interest in indigenous artefacts, whilst the primitive artist has been represented as the other in the Western art world. This is discussed further in Chapter Three and Four. How to achieve cross-cultural analysis, as well as a cross-cultural definition not emerging from a Western perspective, is an issue that has to be argued over and over again; the point of departure here ought to be that both Western, and non-Western art, must be able to contribute to the global discourse of art. For this to happen the Western art world would need to incorporate the meaning and significance non-Western art has in its own culture of creation. However, to develop a cross-cultural category of art the concept also has to encompass a cross-cultural art history, which seems to be long in coming. There is also the need to pay attention to the creation of value, because from an Aboriginal perspective this takes place simultaneously in both the production of Aboriginal art locally, in remote Aboriginal communities for ceremonial use, and in the production of fine art for sale on the global market. These are issues that will be discussed more closely in Chapter Four, in which the concept of cross-culture is developed further.

The concept of contemporaneity

In conformity with the concept of cross-culture, contemporaneity also needs defining. This is a concept that Terry Smith has been discussing since 2001. It could

be understood as an exploration of "how cultures around the world conceive of and construct their present and the concept of presentness visually," which from an Australian point of view could be looked upon as how various distinct kinds of art, with different time conceptions, are produced simultaneously in differing, yet closely connected, cultures.[38] Through contemporaneity, Smith proposes different ways of picturing the world that encompasses a wide range of qualities, "from the ideoscape of global politics to the interiority of individual being," which provides a functional all-embracing framework.[39] It is the situations within contemporaneity that shapes the art. On the other hand, contemporaneity itself is shaped by antinominal frictions that resist universal generalisation, for instance globalization's thirst for hegemony in a world with accelerating cultural differences due to decolonization, and the increasing inequity in contemporary life among peoples, individuals and classes, as well as a rift within the spectacle and image-governed economy that confirms this insecure coexistence in the infoscape. The frictions are what drive art and art practices within contemporaneity.[40] But there are also of course many different situations present in contemporaneity, of which Smith distinguishes three tendencies in order to grasp the overall picture. It is through those tendencies; the residual, the prevailing and the emergent, further evolved in Chapter Four, that Smith distinguishes different strands within the contemporaneous global art world.

Basic materials and research tradition

The interviews have proven to be quite important basic material. And as mentioned before, I chose each informant due to their experience and expertise in their specific field. They were then contacted through e-mails where I presented myself, and the purpose – for me to gain an accurate understanding of the actual contemporary art scene in Australia – as well as asking permission to record the forthcoming conversations.

At the time of the interview-sessions I was asking all the informants the three same quite broad questions, which they did not receive beforehand, although I offered all of them to comment on the written result before publishing my thesis. However, depending on the design of the questions, and the discussion that followed, the vast majority were of the opinion that this was not necessary. Nevertheless, Sylvia Kleinert is a Professor of Australian Indigenous Art who has been working with indigenous people for many years, and she pointed to the importance of a consent form, stressing that the Aboriginal people have been researched for two

hundred years without the scholars having asked their permission.[41] I conducted the interview, and afterwards I sent a consent form to professor Kleinert which she later returned to me in Sweden.

I have had the opportunity to observe the vast majority of the artworks reproduced and discussed in this thesis first hand. Furthermore, the choice of artworks presented in connection to the four artists in Chapter Five is aiming at trying to present a somewhat overall coverage of their artistry and works of art. But at the same time, I have endeavoured to give equal emphasis to all of them, which resulted in a variety of numbers ranging from two, up to four reproduced artworks in connection to each artist. The pictures presented in Chapter Two, on the other hand, where all, except from picture 5 and 10, part of the bicentenary celebrations, and on display in *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988* and the *1988 Australian Biennale*.[42] A few of these artworks were already included in the art-historical canon in Australia at the time; others entered the Australian art scene during the bicentenary and have since then become an integral part of the canon. Thus, it seems as if there is a core of artworks consisting of the art-historical canon from the year of the bicentenary that are frequently discussed and reproduced in comprehensive works of art in Australia. But, in similarity with the art divide between Aboriginal and Australian art in art galleries and gallery shops, the comprehensive works are also either discussing Aboriginal or Australian art respectively, at least until 2001. The catalogues accompanying *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988* where Aboriginal art was a late inclusion, together with the catalogue accompanying the *1988 Australian Biennale*, for instance presenting *The Aboriginal Memorial*, were exceptions at the time.[43] Examples on general surveys discussing Aboriginal art are: *Australian Aboriginal Art*, Ed., Ronald M. Berndt (1964), *Dreaming: the art of Aboriginal Australia*, Ed. Peter Sutton (1988), Wally Caruana's *Aboriginal Art* (1993), Howard Morphy's *Aboriginal Art* (1998), and *One Sun One Moon*, Ed. Theresa Willsteed (2007).[44] Examples of general surveys discussing Australian art are: Bernard Smith's *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945), *Australian Painting 1788–1960* (1962), *Australian Painting 1788–1970* (1971), *Australian Painting 1788–1990* (1991), and *Australian Painting 1788–2000* (2001).[45] In the two latter extended editions, however, Aboriginal art is present in additional chapters written by Terry Smith and Christopher Heathcote. Yet other general surveys solely on Australian art are Robert Hughes' *The Art of Australia* (1966), and Christopher Allen, *Art in Australia: From Colonization to Postmodernism* (1977).[46] The first comprehensive work discussing both Aboriginal

and Australian art I have come across, a part from the bicentennial catalogues, are Andrew Sayers' *Australian Art* (2001).[47]

Bernard Smith was the first Australian scholar to write extensively on Australian art. The main theme in his oeuvre is the relationship between past and present artistic influences from overseas and the changing social, political, and artistic environments in Australia. This socio-cultural attitude of presenting the Australian art history has influenced later writings, which is evident in all the above-mentioned comprehensive works – not to mention the two catalogues that form the core of Chapter Two where scholars at the time are discussing individual works of art, which Daniel Thomas link together through his many essays in an attempt of narrating the history of Australia through art. The comprehensive works on Aboriginal art, on the other hand, are designed somewhat differently. They all present overviews of Aboriginal art, often beginning with an historical survey followed by descriptions of the foundation of this art, for instance, religion, the Dreaming, kinship, the totemic landscape, and territorial surveys presenting various artists, their art practices and artworks from different parts of Australia. Many of the comprehensive works are also reporting on Aboriginal iconography, and more or less all relate in some way to the politics of painting in connection to Aboriginal communities, culture and country, as well as to past and present contact with non-Aboriginal Australia. In this context I also want to mention Silvia Kleinert's and Margo Neale's *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* (2000), which is a thorough reference work on Aboriginal art and culture concerned with the notion of giving voice to the Aboriginal people of Australia.[48]

Throughout the discussion of the inclusion of Aboriginal art into the fine art category, I have mainly relied on research by Howard Morphy, Ian McLean and to some extent Terry Smith, all of whom were also very helpful during the interviews. They are further the only interviewees who frequently occur throughout this thesis due to their extensive writings in their specific fields. Howard Morphy is an anthropologist who is conducting research on the transition between anthropology and art history which is why his work *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories* (2008), and the article "Seeing Aboriginal Art in the Gallery" published in *Humanities Research* in 2001 have been useful.[49] The art historian Ian McLean has written extensively on Aboriginality and the reception of Aboriginal art in Australia, however, in this volume I have mainly relied on *White Aborigines. Identity Politics in Australian Art* (1998).[50] In this context I would also like to mention the art historian Terry Smith, although I have not referred to his *Transformations in Australian Art: The twentieth Century – Modernism and Aboriginality* (2002)

in this volume, but this is a book that has inspired my thoughts on the subject.[51] Through the American anthropologist Fred R. Myers's *Painting Culture: The Making of Aboriginal High Art* (2002), I got an insight into the complex story of how "dot" paintings of the Central Desert Movement became "international high art."[52] I should also mention the Australian historian Bain Attwood who has published extensively on the Australian history of colonialism and the treatment of the Aboriginal population, for instance in *Rights for Aborigines* (2003) and *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History* (2005).[53] Despite the fact that I only refer to *Rights for Aborigines* on one occasion in this volume Attwood is important in that his writing have improved my understanding of the colonial history of the Aboriginal population in Australia.

The research tradition in connection to cross-culture in the arts is a field that I have interpreted as a discussion emerging from primitive art and primitivism and the fact that cross-culture derives from a colonial context where transformations and influences have always existed. The research of primitive art and primitivism has a long tradition of which Robert Goldwater's *Primitivism in Modern Art* (1938) is an early example, in which he describes the history of primitivism, from the foundations of museums of ethnology and how they changed from documenting primitive artefacts to a more aesthetic display.[54] He also presents an account for the early anthropological and ethnological attitudes towards primitive art, as well as discussing the affinity between primitive art and modernist artists. There are yet other authors dealing with this topic whom I have only mentioned briefly but who nevertheless have helped me comprehend primitivism and primitive art, for instance the art historian and anthropologist Sally Price and her book *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (1989).[55] The discussion in connection with the concept cross-culture is further influenced by James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture*, also mentioned briefly, but this is a book that initially was of significant importance to me.[56] This is also the case with the many articles published by Rasheed Araeen, a London-based conceptual diaspora artist, curator and critic born in Pakistan, who often criticizes Western notions of non-Western art in discussions deriving from postcolonialism and ethnicity. The sole article I have referred to in this volume is "From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts", published in Third Text in 1987.[57] Another important source was the CIHA conference I attended in Melbourne in January 2008, with the subsequent publication *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence: The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art*, and mainly the articles "Not Just Images but Art: Pragmatic Issues in the Movement towards a More Inclusive Art History," by Howard Morphy, "The Art of Being

Aboriginal", by Marcia Langton, and "Introduction: Indigeneity/Aboriginality, Art/Culture and Institutions" by Jonathan Mane-Wheoki.[58] There are yet other works that I have left out, but that nonetheless have inspired me in writing this thesis, for instance George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers *Traffic in Culture* (1995), Paul S. Wingert *Primitive Art* (1962), Nicholas Thomas *Possessions: Indigenous Art/ Colonial Culture* (1999), Ian McLean "Crossing Country: Tribal Modernism and Kuninjku Bark Painting" in *Third Text* (2006), and the anthology *Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture* (2004).[59] Worth noting is that there is a wealth of literature dealing with cross-cultural notions in other postcolonial contexts as well.

The concept of contemporaneity relates to the question of the development of art after modernism and could be comprehended as a continuation of notions put forward by Hans Belting in *The End of the History of Art* (1987), of how contemporary art no longer carry the history of art forward.[60] This is a comprehension that was simultaneously developed by Arthur C. Danto, published, however, ten years later in *After the End of Art* (1997).[61] Terry Smith himself has written extensively on the concept of contemporaneity, beginning in 2001 with *What is Contemporary Art? Contemporary Art and Art to Come*, and "What is Contemporary Art? Contemporaneity and Art to Come" published in the Swedish Journal *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* (*Journal of Art History*) in 2002.[62] His discussion on this subject then continues with "World Picturing in Contemporary Art: The Iconographic Turn" (2006), "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity" (2006), and *What Is Contemporary Art?* (2009).[63] In *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (2008), the concept is examined in a broader perspective when theorists, artists, critics and curators explore new ways of conceiving the present and understanding art and culture in relation to it.[64] In this context it is also worth to mention Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's, *Empire* (2001), as a foundation for Smith's notions of how the world order has been affected by decolonization, not at least in connection with his prevailing tendency.[65]

The research tradition concerning the artists discussed in Chapter Five is quite diverse. There are extensive writings on the art and artistry of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, mainly works published in connection with various exhibitions such as *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: Painting from Utopia* (1998), *Fluent* published in connection to her being one of three Aboriginal women representing Australia at the Venice Biennale in 1997, *Utopia: Ancient Cultures/New Forms* (1999), *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye* (2008).[66] All the above catalogues include several essays written by scholars presenting, as well as discussing aspects of her life

and oeuvre. But there are also articles that refer to her art and life in connection with discussions on Aboriginal art and Modernism, for instance Terry Smith's "Kngwarreye Woman Abstract Painter" (1998), James Elkins' "Writing About Modernist Painting Outside Western Europe and North America" (2006) and Debora Edwards' "Histories in the making: Aboriginal art and modernism" (2007). [67]

Research of the art and art practice of Fiona Foley is not as extensive as Kngwarreye but there is for instance *Fiona Foley: Solitaire* (2001) by Benjamin Genocchio, who explores her art through various themes such as history, memory, politics and the landscape surrounding Fraser Island.[68] There is also the exhibition catalogue *Fiona Foley: Forbidden* (2009) produced in connection with her solo exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, from November 2009 to January 2010.[69] This is the first major survey exhibition of Fiona Foley's art practice and displays work from 1994 to the present. The catalogue is richly illustrated and contains several essays discussing her political engagement often dealing with issues of indigenous and non-indigenous power relations in Australia's colonial history, although not without strong undertones of humour. But Foley is herself also a writer in, as well as the editor of the anthology *The Art of Politics/ The Politics of art* published in connection with a conference at Queensland Museum in 2006, where Fiona Foley was the convenor of an international forum debating the future of Indigenous art in Queensland.[70] Yet further information on Foley's art and artistry is presented on the home page of Niagara Galleries in Melbourne.[71]

John Young is an artist that I noticed through his *Polychrome Paintings* and the *Double Ground Paintings* on display at various galleries during my tours in Australia, but unfortunately there is not much written about his art and art practice. I have only come across one extensive survey titled *John Young* (2005).[72] Young is further a diaspora artist descendant from Hong Kong, and it is in connection with his artistry and works of art that I have examined the concept of diaspora more closely, mainly through writings by the Javanese professor Ien Ang who is one of the leaders in cultural studies worldwide. Ang is educated in the Netherlands and is herself a product of diaspora culture and she examines notions of migration and ethnicity, as well as the politics of identity and difference, for instance in the article "Migration of Chineseness" (1993).[73] In this context, I have also been influenced by the Indian-British novelist and essayist Sir Salman Rushdie's reflections on diaspora cultures in *Imaginary Homelands: essays and criticism 1981–1991* (1991).[74]

Ricky Swallow was representing Australia at the Venice Biennale in 2005. In conjunction with this exhibition, the Australian Council published *Ricky Swallow: This Time Another Year* (2005).[75] This is unfortunately the only printed information on Swallow's art and art practice that I have found. For further information I have relied on Internet sources, a procedure which is often the case concerning contemporary recent artists.[76]

2.

Imaging Australia through art

In the bicentennial year of 1988, when Australia celebrated 200 years of European settlement, there was an urge to look at art made in Australia from an historical perspective, which was expressed in several exhibitions throughout the country. For instance *Australia Decorative Arts 1788–1988* on display in Canberra, *Terra Australis: The Furthest Shore* in Sydney, *The Face of Australia: The Land & The People, The Past & The Present* toured regional galleries, The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988 toured state galleries, and the *1988 Australian Biennale* was exhibited in Sydney and Melbourne.[1] As suggested by these titles, everything seemed to be about Australia and its history. But there was also an interest in providing an attempt to construct an Australian identity through two hundred years of making art. This mode of procedure, to use art as unification and in a search of a national identity, has become quite common, which for instant, is also evident in South Africa, when in 1995, one year after the first democratic elections, the first Biennale of Johannesburg was on display as an attempt to present the new South Africa. But the aim of this Biennale was also to restore the dialogue between South Africa and the international art scene, ending years of isolation due to the apartheid system. However in both South Africa and Australia the rift between the black and the white South African population and between the white Australian and the Aboriginal population, was not easily overcome. In Australia, in 1988, this was noticeable in the Aboriginal peoples' opposition to the celebrations, which could be seen in *The Aboriginal Memorial*, the Ramingining Artists Community's contribution to the *1988 Australian Biennale*. In this work of art, consisting of 200 hollow logs coffins, the artists from Ramingining, in the Northern Territory, demonstrated 200 years of white colonization, oppression and genocide. The bicentennial year over seas was celebrated with the inauguration of the newly built Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, showing the artist Arthur Boyd. And in the United States, Australia wanted to expand knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal art to a wider public. This was done through the exhibition *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, shown both in New York and Chicago during 1988–89.[2]

By examining two of the above-mentioned exhibitions, I will try to unfold tendencies of the search for an Australian identity, as well as the outcome of Australia's peripheral history, since colonization. The two exhibitions that are further scrutinized are *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, and foremost the exhibition catalogue *Creating Australia, 200 Years of Art 1788–1988*; and the *1988 Australian Biennale*, with its catalogue entitled *The 1988 Australian Biennale: From the Southern Cross: a view of world art c. 1940–88*. The most prominent and comprehensive exhibition throughout the bicentenary was by far *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, with a purpose, as stressed by Daniel Thomas, the director of the exhibition and the editor of the catalogue, to give an all-embracing picture of Australia through art.[3] The catalogue on the other hand, had a somewhat different intention – to focus on new and recent research on art made during the first hundred years of colonization.[4] This was achieved through more than fifty essays discussing specific artworks, written by scholars working in the field of art history in 1988. In the *1988 Australian Biennale* the circumstances were different, in that this exhibition presented 127 artists from fifteen countries. The notion for this event was, according to Nick Waterlow, the artistic director of the Biennale, to view "key developments in world art since 1940 from an Australian perspective."[5] In the catalogue, the essays first and foremost discuss the position of Australian art in relation to art in the rest of the world. For instance, the exhibition puts forth the idea that the isolated Australian art world lacked self-confidence in relation to modernist culture.[6] This statement by Waterlow will be discussed from the point of view of Australia's peripheral location, literary on the outskirt of the Western art world.

The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988

"Art, we contend, is the principal means by which 'Australia' has been invented and created."[7] This forceful statement was expressed in *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, by Daniel Thomas, director of both the Art Gallery of South Australia and *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*. Thomas also stated that the purpose of the exhibition was to reclaim Australia's past achievements for the widest possible audience, concluding that through art, the past can speak to the present and shape the future.[8] The exhibition, which originated from the Art Gallery of South Australia, managed by International Cultural Corporation of Australia, and presented by The Australian Bicentennial Authority, toured the country through 1988 and 1989. When the exhibition finished its tour in Adelaide,

its point of origin, its purpose of reclaiming Australia's past achievements for the widest possible audience, seems to have been well attained, at least concerning the wide range of venues visited. The *Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988* had been on display in Brisbane, Perth, Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne and Adelaide.[9]

While the first well-known outlines of art in Australia, before the bicentennial, all disregarded Aboriginal art, they nonetheless dealt with the notion of presenting Australia through art. The very first was *Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art since 1788*, written by the Australian art historian Bernard Smith (b.1916) and published in 1945.[10] This is a precursor to the second outline, which is a continuation, as well as an enlarged edition of art in Australia, titled *Australian Painting 1788–1960*, also written by Bernard Smith, and published in 1962.[11] The third outline, *The Art of Australia*, was by the Australian art critic Robert Hughes (b. 1938), and it came out in 1966.[12] This may suggest that general knowledge of art made in Australia was poor prior to the bicentenary events. However, most Australians knew about the paintings of the Heidelberg School, a group of artists following in the footsteps of the French impressionists. In similarity with, for instance, Édouard Manet (1832–1883), Claude Monet (1840–1926), and Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), the artists of the Heidelberg School were painting impressions of the world *en plein air* at Heidelberg, at the time in the countryside outside Melbourne. Founded by Tom Roberts (1856–1931) and Charles Conder (1868–1909), both born in England and arriving in Australia as teenage boys, together with the Australian artists Arthur Streeton (1867–1943) and Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917), the group coincided with the Centenary of 1888. According to Thomas, this was a time of strong nationalism, during which the artists of the Heidelberg School painted realistic and epic depictions telling stories about the Australian way of life.[13] One could think of this as a means of preparing the general public's acceptance of the Australian federation in 1901. In this year, the British Parliament allowed the six Australian colonies; New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland, to federate and become the Commonwealth of Australia.[14]

Although life in the former colonies had been expressed in images before the Heidelberg School, the art of the first hundred years of European colonization was poorly understood, as pointed out by Thomas. Or rather, the research effort concerning art of the first hundred years of colonization had been of minor interest, as is apparent in Bernard Smith's *Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art since 1788, and Australian Painting 1788–1960*, as well as Robert Hughes' *The Art of Australia*, all of them presenting quite short descriptions concerning this

period, at least compared to the presentations of the art during the second hundred years. Smith's account, however, is far more thorough than that of Hughes, who acknowledges that he is indebted to Smith.[15] Accordingly Thomas stressed that *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, focused on new and recent research into colonial art.[16] But this does not mean that the exhibition left out art made after 1888. The narratives concerned provided a knowledgeable and interesting history of two hundred years of white settlement, also embracing Aboriginal art, which distinguished this exhibition from previous presentations of Australian art. Since the beginning of the 1980s, Aboriginal art had been fully incorporated into the consciousness of a wider Australian art world. However, to include Aboriginal art into *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988* was a late decision, as made evident in Thomas' statement that "only at a very late state of planning did it become clear that exclusion of Aboriginal art from so broad a survey would be a continuation of art-as-ethnography attitudes."[17]

Traditional Aboriginal Art

The result of the inclusion of Aboriginal art is visible in the catalogue, which begins with a presentation of traditional Aboriginal art, the only continuous indigenous art tradition in the world dating back approximately 40,000 years.[18] In the catalogue, as well as in the exhibition, the artwork on display contained paintings on bark, grave posts and poles, braided fibre baskets, necklaces of shells and feathers, painted wooden sculptures picturing different animals (pelican, crocodile, snakes, echidna), various painted wooden shields and engraved shell pendants. This were artefacts collected from several Aboriginal kin/language groups from all over Australia, presenting stories from the land and from their way of life.[19]

Most Aboriginal art derive from ceremonial life. Its imagery; the songs, dances, paintings and ceremonies, relates to mythical stories, or Dreamings, but also to symbols and beliefs used in daily life. The spiritual life of Aboriginal people, is, as put forward by Wally Caruana, centred on the Dreaming, which is a European term, used by Aboriginal people to "describe the spiritual, natural and moral order of the cosmos."[20] But the Dreamings are also ancestral beings, who both exist and continue to influence the living generation, in a sense that their spirits are, as stressed by Peter Sutton, "passed to their descendants."[21] As ancestral beings, the Dreamings, which takes many different shapes, for instance; the Yam, the Honey Ant, and the Kangaroo Dreaming, are all part of Aboriginal peoples' spiritual identity. They claim them as their ancestral beings, or totems. As further stressed by Sutton, to falsely claim a Dreaming not belonging to you is "a serious infringement of

Aboriginal Law."[22] The Dreaming is sometimes described as a creation story. In the Dreamtime ancestral beings walked the earth and created everything under the sun; the land, plants, animals, and people, as well as founding ceremonies, rules for marriage, and food taboos. But the Dreaming also founded laws in order to support functional human societies, which in this sense could be looked upon as the Dreaming being the Law.[23]

It is the events of the Dreaming that, according to Wally Caruana, provide the themes depicted in Aboriginal art.[24] This means that Aboriginal art needs to be interpreted in accordance with the Dreaming. The level of the interpretation, on the other hand, depends on the spiritual and ritual knowledge of the artist, and that of the beholder. The understanding of the ancestral landscape reproduced in a painting is also of vital importance. Hence, an Aboriginal senior person who is well educated in ceremonial life, with knowledge acquired through initiations and with access to ancestral history, is going to reach a broad and deep understanding of the spiritual meaning in a painting. A young, or uninitiated Aboriginal individual, on the other hand, will have a shallow understanding, whilst a non-Aboriginal person has to gain knowledge about Aboriginal culture in order to be able to interpret a work of art. Caruana further stresses that to gain status in Aboriginal societies one has to acquire knowledge – material possessions are of no value. One important expression of knowledge is art, because in art the artists use the design they have inherited from their ancestors to "assert their identity, and their rights and responsibilities", as well as "their connections to the land and the Dreaming."[25] And as put forward by Howard Morphy, art is a way of providing access to the Dreaming. Through art, a connection is established to the spiritual dimension of the Dreaming.[26] But art is also the product of the Dreaming, and as such there is a continuous interaction between Aboriginal art and spiritual life.

Knowledge of traditional Aboriginal art in the catalogue is mainly presented through essays discussing specific works of art, such as the Aboriginal artist Mawalan Marika's (1908–1967) bark painting *The Wawelag Sisters and Yulungurr the rainbow serpent*, from 1959 (see picture 1). The story, or Dreaming depicted in this bark painting narrates the doings of three ancestral beings. The two *Wawelag Sisters* travelling through Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, forming the landscape, and creating ceremonies, objects, places, plants, animals and people, through naming. All of the above coming to life, or starting to exist, the instant they were named by the sisters. *Yulungurr the rainbow serpent* is representing the physical powers of the monsoon rains, poring down during the wet season in the tropical northern parts of Australia, balancing both the destructive and

regenerative forces of life and death. The *Wawelag Sisters* and *Yulungurr* are ancestors who are shared, as told by Michael A. O'Ferrall, by "all Dhuwa moiety people in Arnhem Land."[27] Moiety meaning "half", according to O'Ferrall, is a major social and spiritual divide of the Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land, where the people from the other moiety are known as Yirritja. But Dhuwa and Yirritja are also, as mentioned by Peter Sutton, defined as the two intermarrying moieties of the Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land, allowing marriages between the moieties, whilst it is taboo to marry within the same moiety.[28] The rights to the Dreaming depicted by Marika – which apart from being told in his bark painting could also be told through songs, dances, and ceremonies – belongs to the Dhuwa moiety. And as such, they are shared among the kin and language groups belonging to specific Dhuwa territories throughout Arnhem Land. This means that there are many versions of this story, but all of them incorporate the two sisters and the rainbow serpent. The main images depicted in Marika's bark painting show the final events of the Dreaming, when *Yulungurr* swallows the *Wawelag Sisters*. In the bark painting, the two sisters are depicted at the top, dancing in vain, in an attempt to appease *Yulungurr*, whom they have disturbed when sleeping at the bottom of the sacred water-hole Mirraminna, depicted as a square filled with white dots at the bottom of the bark painting. When *Yulungurr* arises in anger above the water hole, he causes strong winds and heavy rain. In Mawalan Marika's painting there are three rainbow serpents, all of them depicting *Yulungurr*; one is showing how *Yulungurr* has swallowed a sister; a second one is painted black and depicts *Yulungurr* raising from the water-hole, towards the second sister whom he is about to swallow; and a third shows how *Yulungurr* has eaten a fish, which according to O'Ferrall symbolizes rebirth.[29] Both the serpents and the sisters are surrounded by different cross-hatching patterns, or *rrark* patterns, which represents the kin/language groups who have the rights to the Dreaming.

The late idea of including Aboriginal art in the exhibition reflects the Australian society's somewhat hesitant attitude towards this art. In fact, Aboriginal art was not fully accepted as art until the 1980s, as far as non-Aboriginal Australia was concerned. In the rest of the world the discussion on whether or not indigenous art falls under the category of fine art is still contested in the twenty-first century. This point is discussed further in Chapter Three. However, this hesitant attitude towards Aboriginal art is visible in a visitor's somewhat critical experience of the bicentennial exhibition when it was on display in Brisbane. Walking through *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, Mr Mudrooroo Narogin, named Colin Johnson before the bicentennial, was first of all wondering what the reason was of

showing two hundred years of artwork. Furthermore, was there really "a uniquely Australian tradition, a uniquely Australian expression?"[30] When he reached the traditional Aboriginal Art section, he continued reflecting whether the catalogue might come to any conclusion of what Aboriginal art is, because he was not able to decide what all those different artefacts meant to him, or to anyone else. He became aware of the fact that there had been a continuing tradition of bark paintings for a long time, but Australia had not paid much attention to this particular art prior to the bicentenary exhibition. Before he entered into the colonial section he passed a bark painting of a Malay boat, juxtaposed with a colonial landscape painting by the English artist William Westall (1781–1850) who accompanied several expeditions to, Australia, China, India and Jamaica. The Malayan bark painting was reproduced without perspective, the sea is absent, and the only thing visible is the boat and the figures standing in it. Westall's oil painting, on the other hand, depicted the sea, the shore, and a shelter built of branches and grass. Narogin further mentions that different artefacts were visible inside the shelter. The only thing not visible are the indigenous people inhabiting this place, which makes Narogin wonder what happened to the builders of the shelter, and the craftsmen responsible for the artefacts inside. He continues reflecting over the colonial world's objectification of Aboriginal people – how the colonial world only saw indigenous people from a distance, observed outside their culture. This makes him state that, from the year of the bicentennial in 1988, art belongs to the colonists and to Europe "and not to these 'savages'".[31]

Colonial Art

The beginning of Australia's colonial history roughly coincided with the final stage of the European Enlightenment's interest in natural science. It also coincided with the era of Romanticism in the Western world, often defined by its opposition to Enlightenment's philosophy of abstract rationalism, both in Europe and elsewhere. In Australia, however, Romantic landscape artists and scientists worked together in joint expeditions, overlooking their opposition in order to explore the new continent. The starting point of such a coalition was the European discovery and naming of Botany Bay, situated south of present-day Sydney Harbour, where captain James Cook (1728–1779) and Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820) landed on their first voyage in 1770.

When the Endeavour, captain Cook's vessel on the first voyage, anchored on the shores of Botany Bay, one of the British citizens first to disembark was Sydney Parkinson (c. 1745–1771). A Scottish botanical illustrator and natural history artist, Parkinson accompanied the scientific expedition on its explorations in order to

document the new colony's strange flora and fauna. He did this through drawings and paintings, which were eventually sent to England.[32] In London artists reproduced some of Parkinson's sketches in oil, which were exposed to an astounded English public, curious the see peculiar specimen inhabiting this New World. One of Parkinson's drawings from 1770, depicting the first kangaroo ever to be pictured, attracted special attention. In 1773 the English artist George Stubbs (1724–1806) painted *The Kongouro of New Holland*, 1770 after this specific drawing. By the end of the eighteenth century, images of strange specimens, such as the kangaroo, had become a symbol of patriotism in New South Wales, and were painted over and over again. And as stressed by Elisabeth Imashev, by the mid-nineteenth century, yet another Australian specimen, the emu, accompanied this patriotic symbol. Together, they "achieved acceptance as colonial emblems and were used as armorial bearers on official and unofficial coats of arms."[33]

Most drawings and sketches by natural history artists during this time were made as documentation, and created to be included with scientific information in Encyclopaedias. As such they where supposed to be plain, straightforward and true to nature. However, in 1819, John Lewin (1770–1819), Australia's first freeborn professional artist, made a watercolour painting of two kangaroos, titled *Kangaroos* (see picture 2), copying sketches by George William Evans (1780–1852).[34] In Lewin's depiction, the two kangaroos, the upright standing Red Kangaroo and the grazing Eastern Grey Kangaroo are depicted together in the same habitat, which does not really correspond to nature. This is actually unreliable scientific information, because, as stressed by Imashev, those two species were not to be found in the same environment anywhere in Australia.[35] The idea, of putting together zoological species that are not found together in their native habitat, is explained in the Swedish dissertation *Habitat Dioramas: Illusions of Wilderness in Museums of Natural History*, by Karen Wonders, a Canadian art historian. According to Wonders, this was one way of expressing "man's effort to classify, define and generally comprehend the natural world by means of an ecological mode."[36] Wonders also confirms the fact that artists in England were forced to use sketches and drawings by shipboards artists such as Sydney Parkinson's as models for their own paintings, because there existed no possibility for those artists themselves to be exposed to live animals. The technical problems of preservation during the long voyages were an insurmountable obstacle. The animals simply died and decayed. Without having seen the animals in the wild, there was one other option, to use kangaroo hides collected during various expeditions and sent back to England. But simply stuffing a skin, or using the hide, did not necessary result in a lifelike, or a scientific appearance, especially

if the animal was as exotic as the kangaroo. In fact, the claim to have "drawn from life," another scientific aim made by the natural history artists, did not really mean that the animal had been drawn whilst alive.[37] The drawing was most likely of a dead animal.

A part from scientific portrayal of the strange Australian flora and fauna, life in the new colonies was expressed in romantic oil paintings, illustrating a search for an appropriate colonial wilderness. In similarity with European artists working in the romantic tradition, artists in Australia with European descent, who had been educated at European art academies, painted grand vistas. But they were vistas depicting Australian landscapes much different from the landscapes they where used to. For artists visiting the colonies during a shorter period of time, and others who had recently immigrated to Australia, the pristine and strange surroundings gave rise to new possibilities. The Australian outback with its sublime waterfalls, huge ferns, various species of gum trees and frightening steep gullies, was idealistic for landscape paintings in the European, and foremost English, romantic tradition. But England is not Australia, and the search for the "specific" national Australian landscape, which the artists did not really know, resulted in picturesque paintings presenting landscapes as if they were placed somewhere in England. John Glover (1767–1849), who, according to Bernard Smith, was a quite well known artist in England, painted such romantic Australian vistas influenced by Claude Lorrain (c. 1600–1682) and Gaspar Poussin (1615–1675). Glover settled in Tasmania, and his depictions of the new surroundings were at times, as further stressed by Smith, reminiscent of these masters.[38] Conrad Martens (1801–1878), also an artist educated in England, painted grand vistas of Sydney Harbour.[39] Influenced by William Turner (1775–1851), he studied the light, and depicted the city of Sydney as a romantic vision. But some artists strived to go beyond the depictions of pure romantic vistas, trying to combine accurate views with highly romantic images.

Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901), also trained in Europe, was an artist that participated in several explorative excursions to the inland of Australia in search of wild scenery untouched by the settlers. Far away from the colonial occupation of the coast, he found the spirit of the land in the vast and sublime Australian outback. And without tampering with the exactness of the view he managed, as further told by Allen, to define "the difficulty of imaginatively inhabiting Australia,"[40] This is apparent in *North-east view from the top of Mount Kosciusko*, an oil painting, reproduced in the catalogue, depicting the climbing of Mount Kosciusko, Australia's highest mountain (see picture 3). As stressed by Tim Bonyhady, this was a true event that took place on the 18 of November 1862, when von Guérard

accompanied the German scientist George von Neumayer (1826–1909) on an expedition to the inlands of Victoria.[41] In the picture, von Neumayer, his assistant, the Aboriginal guide, and von Guérard, who all are visible in the painting, have stopped for scientific measurements, and an outlining of the view. But, although the topographical rendering of Mount Kosciusko is an accurate depiction, it was created in 1863, in the studio, after von Guérard's pen, ink and pencil sketches.

The romanticized conception, which according to Jocelyn Gray could be called "an older sense of vision", was established by artists born in Europe and living in the Australian colonies in the mid-nineteenth century.[42] Artists such as the Viennese-born Eugene von Guérard, who toured Italy and resided in Rome, in addition to studying landscape painting in Düsseldorf before arriving in Australia in 1852. Hawing been raised and educated in the visual culture of Europe, he and his followers brought the "old sense of vision" to the new world. In practice, this meant that, as explained by E. H. Gombrich, the artists were attracted to familiar motifs that they managed to paint properly, which made them picture the vistas of the new world in a familiar European way that they know how to handle. As such, they were using an artistic vocabulary already existing in their perception.[43] This way of perceiving the world was active in the beholders as well, in the sense that these settler views reminded them of their former homes in Europe, which made these works very popular.

In the 1870s, the "old standard of the beautiful" gave way to a new sense of vision. The picturesque and nostalgic works of art portraying Australia as a reminiscence of a long lost Europe were no longer in demand. The new vision emanated from the fact that by the beginning of the 1870s, the native-born settlers outnumbered the immigrants for the first time in Australia's colonial history. The former opinion of the immigrants being oppressed by the weird melancholy of the Australian bush, overgrown with an exotic and strange flora, came from the notion that the settlers had been new to the environment. For the children of the settlers, Australia was home. They did not know any other land and they did not consider themselves to be strangers or intruders. According to Gray, the paintings coming out of this "new vision" served as a starting point for reconciliation of the Australian settlers to their new environment.[44] This could be seen in Louis Buvelot's (1814–1888) painting *Winter morning near Heidelberg*, from 1866, depicting a tranquil and sunny scene at the banks of the Yarra River, in the countryside outside Melbourne (see picture 3). At the left of the painting different species of gum trees, characteristic of the area, are growing over the riverbank. In the centre of the painting, a campfire is kept burning with the help of two men and a woman, who are clearing a fallen tree from

the river, a reminder of a harsh environment when a heavy flood has uprooted a large gum tree, and to the left of the campfire a hollow log is standing as a reminder of the last bushfire. At the far right there is a glimpse of a farmhouse embedded in a lush green setting. In front of the house, cows are grazing in a huge field cleared by the settlers. To demonstrate her notion, Gray chose *Winter morning near Heidelberg*, by Buvelot, which is quite interesting because he was born in Switzerland, and, as told by Bernard Smith, educated mostly in Paris. Before arriving in Australia at the age of fifty-one, he had been living and painting in Brazil for eighteen years, as well as spending time in the East Indies.[45] From this point of view, one wonders how Buvelot's painting could possibly convey Gray's "new vision", which would reconcile the Australian settlers to their new environment? However, eleven years after the *Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, Christopher Allen was of a similar opinion as Gray, when he suggested that Buvelot's depiction of the Australian landscape is a reminiscent of Jean François Millet's (1814–1875) reproductions of peasant labour, and as such *Winter morning near Heidelberg* is a simple images of settler life, of being at home with the land, in familiarity with Australian nature.[46] But already in 1962, Bernard Smith argued that, "[it] is quite untrue to say of him [Buvelot], as is often said, that he was the first artist to paint the Australian landscape with a clear vision unsullied by memories of European landscape."[47] Smith further stressed that Buvelot's images of the settlements in Australia were "more European in quality" than many scenes painted by his predecessors, for instance John Lewin, Augustus Earle (1793–1838) and John Glover. Nevertheless, Smith did admit that Buvelot helped change the approach to landscape painting in Australia, and contributed to the emergence of "an Australian school of painting."[48] The reason for this was that Buvelot ha been educated in the *plein-air* tradition of the Barbizon school, and taught, as well as influenced, many Australian artists, including a group of young men that later would form the Heidelberg School.

Apart from showing how the settlers mastered the exotic Australian environment, prosperity and initial sophistication of the colonial society was also expressed in the arts, in portraits of cultivated and beautifully dressed colonial citizens and their well-managed farms, painted in a neoclassical style, which had been well manifested in Europe since the mid-eighteenth century.[49] The neoclassical style emerged from an interest in antiquity that grew out of the archaeological excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 1748, which inspired artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788) and Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) to execute moralizing historical paintings in order to promote public virtue and integrity in European societies. The ideas growing out of the

Enlightenment age of reason, and its optimistic belief in scientific inquiry, resulted in history paintings depicting subjects deriving from ancient Greece and Rome. In Australia, the artists Augustus Earle, and Richard Read Sr. (c. 1778–1828), both born in Europe and educated at European art academies, also obeyed those neoclassical notions. This meant that the new colonies, with their emerging civilization, were presented in genre paintings depicting the rich and successful white settler appearing in high-minded and moralistic scenes set against backgrounds of classical drapery, Roman columns and classical villas, placed in an Australian environment reproduced in the tradition of British colonial landscapes. This was, according to Ron Radford, an attempt to educate the colonists through art – "to raise the colony above the status of a gaol and to re-create a classically-educated English Georgian society in the South Pacific."[50] As pointed out by Bernard Smith, the long distance and isolation from Europe, however, led to a time lag, which meant that neoclassical paintings appeared quite late in Australia, and their popularity persisted long after 1820s.[51]

Most of the neoclassical portraits were made to confirm prosperity and progress in the New World, which meant that there were no signs of the settlers' descent from British convicts in the paintings. Their presence was, as stressed by Thomas, hidden in the making of the artwork, only to be detected as the newly rich parents paying for the portraiture of their offspring.[52] Aboriginal people, on the other hand, were quite common in colonial art. This is visible in another feature, also confirming the progress and sophistication of settlers, staged through the presence of Aboriginal people in urban scenes where they appeared dressed as servants in front of colonial villas. Or they sanctioned the settler's level of civilization, when they were seen naked in the outskirts of the same cities, further emphasizing opinions of them as poor, primitive and un-enlightened (see picture 5). At the same time, they ensured the beholders of a scene truly Australian. And as neoclassical notions lingering well after 1820s, they coincided with romantic notions in reproductions of the Aboriginal people as noble savages, often depicted in sublime sceneries – performing corroborees in the moonlight, dancing with their bodies painted for ceremony, carrying spears and shields.[53] But despite Aboriginal visibility in the arts they were outnumbered in real life. After years of confrontations with the settlers, ending in cruelty and massacres, Aboriginal people were on the brink of extinction. At least this was the opinion amongst the white Australians at the time. And as noted by Daniel Thomas, when Charles Darwin (1809–1882) published *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* in 1859, no one disputed that Aboriginal people were a dying race.[54]

This is established in Benjamin Dutterau's (1767–1851) *The Conciliation* from 1840 (see picture 6).[55] In this history painting, Dutterau is following the notions of the American artist Benjamin West (1738–1820), who, according to Bernard Smith, was largely responsible of transforming the academic history paintings into a more popular art form.[56] In similarity with West, Dutterau depicted an event that took place in the recent past, dressing his subjects in contemporary clothing, as well as maintaining an air of dignity and nobility. The event was a reproduction of the moment when George August Robinson (1791–1866), a Methodist and a bricklayer, assemble the last remaining "wild" Tasmanian Aborigines, for transportation to Flinders Island.[57] For the Tasmanian settlers, this meant that almost 100 years of fear for Aboriginal attacks was abolished. But the painting also provided a moral lesson for the present and succeeding generations living in Tasmania. For Dutterau, and his supporter, there was a hope that the painting,

> […] would help to strengthen and extend feelings of universal philanthropy, instead of national contentions which too frequently break out in cruelty and diabolic massacre, under the cloak of war and martial tactics – it would in a measure cause a respect for the life of man whether black or white. [58]

Looking at the painting, it seems as if *The Conciliation* was a friendly occasion with no hard feelings from either the Aboriginals or the capturer. Robinson is simply having a conversation with the wild natives convincing them to quit their barbarous life and begin a more civilized one. In reality, the depicted event took place on several expeditions throughout the Tasmanian wilderness region between 1830 and 1834. However, Tim Bonyhady points to the fact that this so-called success of Robinson's was due to the help he got from his "domesticated" black followers. Four Tasmanian natives named Woureddy, Trucanini, Manalargenna and Tanlebiuyer who made the round-ups possible.[59] Bonyhady further notes that by the time Robinson finished his painting, in 1840, half of the dispossessed Tasmanian Aboriginals had already died at Flinders Island, which he thought of as being "at least partly due to Robinson's ineptitude as commandant of the settlement."[60]

Daniel Thomas complements Dutterau's notion of celebrating the heroic moment, when the British and Aboriginal nations came together, with this history painting. Even if Thomas was of the opinion that Dutterau "failed to appreciate the misguidedness of the good intentions."[61] Bernard Smith, on the other hand, almost dismisses Dutterau's painting, stressing that William Strutt (1825–1915) made works "of a much finer quality than Dutterau's *Conciliation*."[62] As for instance *Black Thursday* (1862–1864), a history painting depicting an event that took place in 1851,

when Melbourne was covered in black smoke due to a devastating bushfire sweeping across the state of Victoria. Smith pointed to the fact that Strutt's works of art typified colonial life in Australia, in that they depicted the threat of bush fires, but also the threat of being robbed by bushrangers, which Smith pointed out as fears always present in the settlers' minds.[63] The reason why Smith prefers Strutt's history paintings before Dutterau's is not obvious, but it cold depend on the fact that Strutt's paintings are reproduced in a more romanticised manner, showing influence of both Jean-August-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), and Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), who had been Strutt's teachers at Ecole dex Beaux Arts in Paris.

The Australian way of life

At the first centenary, colonial interest in the exotic flora and fauna of *Terra Australis* had changed into an inward examination of the most familiar, and characteristic aspects of the Australian way of life.[64] This lead to a new search for national symbols, and conveyed newly won independence in the art, resulting in a manifesto exhibition by a group of young artists that opening on the 17 August 1889 in Melbourne. According to Thomas, this exhibition titled the *9 by 5 Impression Exhibition*, showed "Australia's first consciously avant-garde paintings."[65] And Bernard Smith stressed that it was the "most famous art exhibition in the country's history," showing 183 works of art.[66] The greater part of the works were created *en plein air*, directly from the suburban natural setting of Melbourne, in the then rural area of Heidelberg, as well as from urban life in Melbourne. The main notion behind the impressions of the young group founded by Tom Roberts, Charles Conder, Arthur Streeton and Frederick McCubbin, later to be called the Heidelberg School, was a revolt against convention.[67] They achieved this by abandoning traditional form and finished surfaces, and as such many of the artworks were painted on cigar-box lids measuring nine by five inches, which gave the exhibition its title. In similarity with the first exhibitions of impressionistic works of art in Europe, and with the title deriving from Claude Monet's *Impression soleil levant* from 1872, the critics thought the art on display was sketchy and unfinished. This was evident in the Australian papers on the day of the opening, where a critic in *The Age* described the exhibition as "shadows of coming events," and in *The Daily Telegraph* the critic thought the impressions "left too much to the imagination."[68] The review in the *Argus* more or less disapproved towards the whole exhibition:

> Of the 180 exhibits catalogued on this occasion four-fifths are a pain to the
> eye. Some of them look like faded pictures seen through several mediums of

thick gauze; others suggests that a paint-pot has been accidentally upset over a panel nine inches by five. … A few afford something agreeable to the eye to rest upon, but the exhibition, viewed as a whole, would leave a very painful feeling behind it.[69]

The Australian way of life, experienced first hand and in progress right in front of the artist's easel, was the main interest of the narratives depicted by the painters of the Heidelberg School. This is obvious in Tom Roberts' *Shearing the rams* (1888–1890), one of Australia's most well-known paintings, which reproduces one such narrative of hard working shearers producing wool in a wooden shed (see picture 7). This is a painting expressing the foundation of Australia's prosperity, the shearing industry as the essence for a comfortable life made possible in Australia, and as such conveying the Australian dream. In similarity with all settler countries, this was a dream of owning one's own property, and being in control of the fruits of one's labour. According to Virginia Spate, this painting has long been the obligatory illustration reproduced in almost every book on Australian art and history, representing the "authentic" Australia, "so familiar to us that we scarcely need look at it any more."[70] Although the painting has become an Australian icon, Christopher Allen points to the fact that the shearers are lacking individuality. They are depicted as mere prototypes, idealized but anonymous – the hard-working, and idealized Australian male, who would become the hallmark for the Heidelberg School.[71]

While the Australian way of life was hard work, it did not always result in prosperity and wealth. Arthur Streeton's oil on canvas, *"Fire's on"*, from 1891, projects disaster (see picture 8). It is a depiction of a real event, an accident that took place during the blasting of a railway tunnel through the Blue Mountains, sixty kilometres inland from Sydney. From the interior of the mountain a wounded man is carried on a stretcher, a victim of a devastating explosion. And in *Down on His luck* from 1889, Frederick McCubbin portrays failure and defeat, in a melancholy painting of the unsuccessful gold digger, considering his fate and solitary life in the bush (see picture 9). A lonely man in ragged clothes is sitting on a log in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the Australian bush. It seems as if he has given up, staring empty into the almost burnt out fire, with his rolled swag, beside him, and a billy blackened with soot thrown away in the grass.

The paintings, and painters, of the Heidelberg School made a huge impact on Australian art and art history, despite of the fact that the young group existed for a short period. They only worked together one and a half years before splitting and leaving Heidelberg for Melbourne, Sydney and Europe.[72] Bernard Smith,

however, points to the fact that the originally small group of artists had grown into a colony with two camps located in Heidelberg, where artists, and students worked for longer or shorter periods of time. This meant that their influence on Australian painting continued at least between 1888 and 1893.[73] This refers to an earlier, but quite similar, arrangement in France where the *plein air* artist colony of Grèz-sur-Loing was active 1875–1900. Nevertheless, as further stressed by Thomas, impressionistic depictions of the Australian way of life continued to live a life of their own long after the artists had moved on. One reason for this was that they depicted conditions of a long sought-after national identity in representations of characteristically Australian moments during a time of prominent nationalism.[74]

In the 1930s, when the railway reached Alice Springs in the central desert of Australia, the Melbourne landscape watercolorist Rex Battarbee (1893–1973) travelled to the centre of Australia in search for new motifs in the arid, red landscape. He ended up at the Aboriginal community of Hermannsburg, a former Lutheran mission in the desert 125 km west of Alice Springs, where he painted for months and exhibited his watercolours during two days in 1934.[75] This inspired the Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) to try out this new medium. The arrival of the railway also made it possible for a small tourist industry to emerge in Alice Springs, creating a market where somewhat strange watercolours also depicting desert landscape of Alice Springs surfaced. They were created by Albert Namatjira but perceived as white art made by a black man, because they were painted in the Western medium of watercolour (see picture 10). And, although they were reproduced in a conventional style, closely following the teacher Rex Battarbee, the art critics considered them tourist kitsch instead of art. A strange logic, one would think, and one which, according to Howard Morphy, derive from notions on evolutionism, and yet another sign of "colonial domination."[76] Indeed, those watercolours could be regarded as the beginning of a huge tourist industry, but they also confirmed a tribal ownership of the land, and a development of a new code of symbols. The gum-trees, rocks, and desert country in Namatjira's images, embody concealed ancestral beings of the Western Arrernte people, and as such they are expressions for the Arrernte people's identity. Later on, as the interest in watercolour medium spread to other artists in the community, the term Hermannsburg School started to figure. In the 1980s the watercolour views from the Aboriginal community of Hermannsburg were re-Aboriginalized. From now on, the paintings of the Hermannsburg School were to be considered creative variations of traditional Aboriginal art.

In 1920, before Albert Namatjira was inspired and given the opportunity to paint in watercolour, the white Australian artist Margaret Preston (1875–1963)

returned to Australia after ten years of travelling, studying and working in Europe. This journey, and the fact that she had come in contact with European modernism, made her, as stressed by Elisabeth Butel, realise how much modern European art had borrowed from artefacts created by primitive people. This made Preston aware of the untouched powers of Australia's own indigenous art.[77] In a search for authenticity, common to European Primitivism, she started to appropriate Aboriginal art in her own practice from 1927 onwards.[78] But, according to Ian North, it was difficult for Preston to have any contact with Aboriginal art other than as a tourist, due to her being white and a woman.[79] This, however, did not stop her from trying to create a truly Australian art based on the Aboriginal idiom. But it was not until 1941 she was able to argue that "the art of the aborigine has far too long been neglected. The attention of Australian people must be drawn to the fact that it is great art and the foundation of a national culture for this country."[80] Also in 1941, her painting *Aboriginal landscape* (see picture 11), depicting a Cubist landscape in colours from the land, red and yellow ochre, black charcoal and white pipe clay, was reproduced in the *Australian National Journal*, accompanying her article "New developments in Australian Art."[81] In this article Preston notes, yet again, that her interest in Aboriginal art was all about a search for a national art, which she, herself, was trying to establish through paintings such as *Aboriginal landscape*. This is a quite small painting appropriating Aboriginal design in an attempt to achieve the authenticity always present in Aboriginal art.

Preston's *Aboriginal landscape* was part of her war effort, as was her painting *Japanese submarine exhibition* (1942), depicting the display of the Japanese midget submarine that was destroyed in Sydney Harbour in 1942, indicating a real event of Australia being at war with Japan.[82] Australia, however, had been at war before. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, known as the ANZAC troops, participated in World War I, the Great War in the English speaking world, resulting in the death of thousands of young Australian men in Turkey and France. Those dead soldiers, rhetorically perceived as public sacrifices, had become part of the national mythology, described by Anne Gray, as the light horseman formed by the harshness of the Australian bush (see picture 12).[83] A national symbol that was depicted in artworks such as *A sergeant of the Light Horse* (1920), by George W. Lambert (1873–1930), who, according to Christopher Allen, was one of several Australian artists sent to document the war at first hand.[84]

The war supported the manufacturing industry in Australia, which gave way to futuristic beliefs, and an excitement for big-city life and leisure, calling for design and advertising for a new lifestyle surrounded by modern products. In *The Great*

Australian Art Exhibition, as well as the catalogue *Creating Australia, 200 Years of Art 1788–1988*, this lifestyle was exposed in *The lacquer room* (1936), by the Australian artist Grace Cossington Smith (1892–1984), one of many women artists dominating the Australian modernist art scene during the 1920s and 1930s (see picture 13). This stylized, modernist painting depicts the tearoom at Farmer & Company, Sydney's leading department store. Opening its doors in 1932 Farmer's was accompanied by the inauguration of Sydney Harbour Bridge, a modern triumph of Australian engineering. Extending from opposite shores of Sydney Harbour, the bridge was completed in a monumental union at the highest point. This was a construction site that also interested the female modernists. In etchings and paintings Cossington Smith and Jessie Traill (1881–1967) amongst a few others, systematically documented the emergence of this spectacular steel construction.[85] But this interest is not reflected in the catalogue.

Before the Second World War, a new national type, personifying the Australian male, and expressing the spirit of modern Australia, inhabited images of big-city life and leisure. A strong, healthy and athletic male, replacing the former hard working shearer, gold digger and rural pioneer, personified in the *Sunbaker*, from 1937 (see picture 14), by the Australian photographer Max Dupain (1911–1992). In this gelatine-silver photograph, a white man is resting on a city beach. He is lying on his stomach, in the sand, dripping wet after a battle with the rip curl. This is an example of the beach genre that had emerged in the late-nineteenth century, although bathing and surfing were never a subject, which according to Linda Slutzkin, was due to a law prohibiting daylight bathing.[86] When the ban was revoked in 1903, the sport of surf exploded. By the 1920s surfing had become Australia's national leisure pursuit, and in the 1930s, during the Great depression, this cheap form of pastime became even more popular. This is visible in another leisure image by the English painter Charles Meere (1890–1961), *Australian beach pattern*, from 1938–1940, depicting bathers and surfers on a crowded beach (see picture 15).[87] This scene is set on a beach, but it is hard to apprehend the crowd enjoying their leisure time. Instead they seem to be figures of physical perfection, typifying the racial ideas of the time, both in Australia and Europe. Ideas that in Australia were established through the 1901 White Australia policy, favouring immigrants of British origin and excluding non-English-speaking Europeans and people with Asian descent.[88] In this sense, the painting could, as stressed by Allen, be looked upon as a political statement, depicting "the ideal Australian race."[89] Up until the 1950s, when the economic boom required an expanded labour force, the city beach dwellers were

white Australian's, which in similarity with Dupain's *Sunbaker*, were depicted as "bronzed sun gods of the surf."[90]

The Great Depression and the Second World War forced Australia, as well as the rest of the art world, to change their subjects towards more urgent matters of social concern. This is reflected in the Australian artist Russell Drysdale's (1912–1981) work. In his paintings, he sought to reveal the truth of man's relationship to his environment in expressionistic and surrealistic depictions of the Australian rural outback. He did not seek beauty, and instead aimed at naturalistic renderings, which disclose, as stressed by Smith, aspects of life in the outback that the former impressionists had ignored.[91] On account of this, critics apprehended his paintings as a criticism of the Heidelberg School, because of their grotesque and ugly depictions of the arid and vast outback emptiness, where it seemed almost impossible to live. This is evident in Drysdale's *Man feeding his dogs* from 1941, where a Giacomettiesque man is walking in a dry and barren red country, surrounded by dead tree trunks (see picture 16). He is carrying a sack, and is about to approach three emaciated, chained dogs. In the distance another skinny man is leaning against a dead three trunk, close to yet another dead tree with a broken chair hanging from a branch. The sky is coloured yellow, orange and green, as if after an enormous explosion. In this depiction of the outback, one can almost feel a vast emptiness, dry, arid and impossible to inhabit. As such, it could also be described as a trauma of war, which was about to reached Australia. This concept was to be reproduced again and again in Australian works of art by the surrealist James Gleeson (1915–2008), in nightmarish depictions by Arthur Boyd's (1920–1999), and in the art of Albert Tucker (1914–1999).

During the years 1942–1943 Melbourne became a transformed city populated by men in uniforms, as a result of the withdrawal of the Australian divisions from the Middle East to face the Japanese threat, together with 18,000 American soldiers who disembarked in Melbourne in January 1943, staying for six months. This "invasion" of Melbourne, was, according to Richard Haese, captured by Albert Tucker in paintings indulging in a raving, nightmarish nightlife, showing "how modern wars strikes at and corrodes the very heart of the societies it touches, disrupts and often destroys all that once seemed so fixed and enduring."[92] Indeed, in Albert Tuckers *Victory girls*, from 1943, the very moment of the collapse of a culture is depicted (see picture 17). In this painting one can almost touch the decadence generated by the war, reproduced by Tucker as two heavily made-up girls, probably prostitutes, with primitive, mask-like faces, and somewhat distorted, half-naked bodies, pawed by

the enormous hands of two pig-faced soldiers, which just as well could be compared to Otto Dix's, or Max Beckman's decadent pictures of Germany wasted by war.

Also in the 1940s, Albert Tucker together with Arthur Boyd, and Sidney Nolan (1917–1992), formed a group called the *Angry Penguins*, a modernist, literary and artistic movement that stirred the Australian art establishment.[93] In similarity with their literary comrades, the painters opposed against the conservative style at the time, which was strongly influenced by early European Expressionism and Surrealism. For Nolan, the conflict resulted in promoting himself as a self-taught artist, emphasizing the importance of not having any education in the arts, and identifying with the bushranger Ned Kelly, hanged in Melbourne in 1880. In the surreal and naïvist Ned Kelly series, Nolan personifies himself as a twentieth-century outlaw, battling the establishment through the romanticised image of Ned Kelly, clad in a homemade armour, rendering a black, square silhouette (see picture 18). Ned Kelly, the outcast, was, and still is, looked upon as a hero, "a victim of injustice" and a "champion of the oppressed," as noted by Allen.[94] Ned Kelly, as an icon personifying the irreverent Australian attitude towards all forms of authority.

Post-war Australia

Post-war Australia kept up with the modernist styles and continued to produce modern art in accordance with the Western art world. However, Australian artists painting in the style of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s, as well the style of Hard-Edge Abstraction in the 1960s also had the important tendency of expressing the regional culture, whilst Australian Pop Art of the 1960s conformed to the international concept. The 1970s were a time of prosperity leading to the state subsidizing art. At the same time, the experience of, and Australia's participation in, the Vietnam War caused a major shift in Australian society. The former positive stance towards the war was replaced with scepticism, and along with the rest of the world, Australia did not want to be part of, nor support the Vietnam War. According to Daniel Thomas, this led to questioning and the will to change the system in the arts as well as in the real world. Artists in Australia, along with artists everywhere else, were no longer satisfied in presenting status quo work produced for the art market. Instead, they began to create work that raised consciousness in matters of environmental pollution, the risk of nuclear power, women's disadvantages, and especially the question of Australian Aboriginal land rights.[95] This new consciousness regarding Aboriginal land rights was reflected and reproduced in Aboriginal art, but its presence in the exhibition and in the catalogue is of secondary

importance, which could be due to the fact that the inclusion of Aboriginal art was a late decision.

When Geoffrey Bardon (1940–2003), an Australian artist and elementary school teacher, started to work in 1971 at the primary school of Papunya Tula, a Western desert Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory, he introduced the use of acrylic paint, and portable materials, such as cartoon, composition board and canvas. This was the point of departure for the Desert Art Movement, which in a period of about ten years came to change the apprehension of Aboriginal art, both in Australia and overseas, a point discussed further in Chapter Three. The Aboriginal paintings that came from Papunya Tula are often referred to as Western Desert paintings, or "dot" painting. Those designations describe the actual territory, or place of origin, as well as the actual pattern/technique used to create the paintings. As mentioned above, Western desert paintings, like all Aboriginal art, depict stories about the lives of ancestral beings, and could be interpreted as statements about relationships between the indigenous population of Australia and the land. The catalogue referred to here contained a sole essay discussing art from the Western Desert. Written by the Australian artist Tim Johnson (b. 1947), it seeks to describe the poetry of this art, and to understand its iconography, with reference to Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's 1978 painting *Man's Love Story* (see picture 19).

> The complexity of the artist's mind and in particular his ability to depict observations of nature with the equivalent of a bi-lingual fluency, interprets and conveys the poetry that lies in the heart of Aboriginal culture.[96]

A further elaboration of Aboriginal iconography, examined through *Man's Love Story*, by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's, is presented in Chapter Three. This is a necessity in order to understand Aboriginal paintings as an outside viewer. However, as pointed out by Johnson, to comprehend the Dreaming, or the story depicted in a Western Desert work of art, the story has to be told by the artist. Johnson further point to the fact that a viewer with no former knowledge of Aboriginal art and life will be unable to comprehend much of the Aboriginal significance. But if the painting is produced for the Western art market, the artist often presents the overall story in writing accompanying the painting, which gives insight to the painter's world, presenting allegorical characteristics of the ancestral beings and narrating their achievements. Johnson also stresses that what might be perceived as "jigsaw-puzzle shapes are easily identified as desert imagery," when the viewer becomes more familiar with Aboriginal iconography.[97]

For Trevor Nickolls (b. 1949), an urban, or rather, a city-based, Aboriginal artist, art is an investigation into the Aboriginal landscape and ceremonial life.[98] The catalogue does not give much information on this subject. As a matter of fact, there is only one sentence to be found on urban Aboriginal art and Nickolls, in Daniel Thomas comments on Nickolls' painting *Machinetime Dreamtime*, form 1981, describing it as an expression of "bitterness about the loss of nature-based culture" (see picture 20).[99] Being a city-based Aboriginal artist implies multicultural descent, Nickolls' mother is Aboriginal and his father Irish. It also means being raised in the city and educated in Western art schools. But Nickolls has also spent time with, and was educated by, the pioneering artists of the Central Desert Community of Papunya in the late 1970s. For several years he worked as an art teacher in different Aboriginal community schools in the Northern Territory.[100] This has resulted in his experimenting with multiple approaches, where the Papunya painters, and their works of art, has provided a partial key in developing his own distinctive mosaic-like approach to the subjects of his art. In *Machinetime Dreamtime* Nickolls expresses the loss of a traditional Aboriginal life close to nature and contemporary tensions, reflecting the realities of modern Australian society. In this sense, his art is multi faceted. It encapsulates the ironies and conflicts, as well as the contradictions and confusions, that face many artists in Australia who are descendant of more than one cultural art traditions. A further discussion on city-based Aboriginal art is presented in Chapter Five, in connection with the artist Fiona Foley.

At the time of the bicentenary, artists in Australia had been concerned about their peripheral location for a long time, which from an art-world perspective re-sulted in not being able to see original artworks from overseas without delay, and in most of the cases only as reproductions.[101] However, for Imants Tillers (b. 1950), an Australian artist with Latvian descent, mainly working with appropriations, this is not a problem, as can be seen in his *Kangaroo Blank* from 1988 (see picture 21). The original behind Tillers' painting is an earlier discussed drawing by Sydney Parkinson, from 1770, showing the first kangaroo ever to be pictured, which George Stubbs used as an original for his painting *A Portrait of a Kongouro from New Holland*, 1770. This painting ended up being reproduced as a frontispiece in the 1962 publication of *The Endeavour Journal of Sir Joseph Banks*, which was where Tillers came in contact with it.[102] In this case, it is not the Australian artist that is peripheral, but Stubbs, due to the fact that he painted a kangaroo that he never saw, standing in a habitat that he never visited, a common problem discussed earlier in this chapter. As a matter of fact, in *Kangaroo Blank* Tillers turns the peripheral problem inside out. This, however, was not Tillers' main interest. Rather, as stressed

by Nicholas Baume, Tillers refers to the lack of an Australian identity.[103] He is actually pointing to the fact of his and other Australian's – the immigrant, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations – "past reliance" on outsiders' representations of who they are. The case of Stubbs' painting is evidence of a perspective that was, as stressed by Tillers, "well-intentioned but ill-informed."[104] This final essay brings the exhibition back to where it started, in an attempt of creating Australia through art, starting at the time of the first voyage disembarking on the shores of Botany Bay in 1770. This is the end of a journey lasting 200 years, narrating the story of the past in order to shape the future, although Tillers comes to the conclusion that there had been the lack of an Australian identity throughout the country's history, a situation that still prevailed in 1988. Does this mean that the exhibition failed to accomplish what it had set out to do?

The reception of the exhibition

Advertising before the opening of *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, was of massive scale in all the main Australian newspapers, in every city of its tour, praising it as "the greatest celebration of Australian art in 200 years."[105] It was an exhibition never seen before, narrating "the story of a country, its people and their dreams, during the past 200 years. Your country."[106] And once again Daniel Thomas pronounced in an interview that, "the artworks on display have created Australia's identity."[107] Of over 300 works of art on display, 57 were designated as key works, many of them referred to as landmark Australian images, as well as the most recognisable paintings in Australia at the time. The landmarks were for instance, John Lewin's *Kangaroos*, Tom Roberts' *Shearing the rams*, Sidney Nolan's *Ned Kelly* series, and Max Dupain's *Sunbaker*. According to the art critic Tim Lloyd, it was the most successful exhibition of the whole bicentenary.[108] But the reviews did not comment on the fact that the artworks were the source for an Australian identity, and the exhibition was not without criticism. The latter mostly concerned the selection of paintings, and the fact that too many of them were from the Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide, where both Daniel Thomas and Ron Radford worked at the time, Thomas being the director of the gallery and Radford curator of paintings and sculptures. Thomas also commented on the fact that the critics had misunderstood the purpose of the exhibition; that it was not an art historical survey, nor a display of the art movements in Australia.[109] Another general comment was that the major difference between this and earlier exhibitions of Australian art was the inclusion, as well as the appreciation, of Aboriginal art. Thomas continuing stressing that Aboriginal art was the most interesting thing that had happen

in terms of Australian conceptions of art since the mid 1980s, which had led to a more fully understanding of its idiom in the Australian context.

The 1988 Australian Biennale

The 1988 *Australian Biennale* was somewhat different from *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, because, as stressed by its artistic director Nick Waterlow, the biennale had as its core the "attempt to view key developments in world art since 1940 from an Australian perspective."[110] To achieve this purpose, Waterlow juxtaposed a few Australian artists whom he regarded as "Australian antecedents" with artists from overseas, which resulted in an exhibition displaying 127 artists from 15 countries.[111] This was due to happen several years earlier, but did not take place because of the isolation experienced by the Australian art world until the 1970s, which according to Waterlow, conveyed diffidence in Australia's relationship with modernist culture. The exhibition focused on the period between 1940 and 1988, because the 1940s was a time when a specific antipodean imagery began to appear in Australian art, which Waterlow argued, had its own symbols, mythology and metaphorical representations deriving from the Australian landscape. The Australian antecedents represented in the exhibition were Joy Hester (1920–1960), Tony Tuckson (1921–1973), Margaret Preston (1875–1963), Ralph Balson (1890–1964), Ian Fairweather (1891–1974), and Fred Williams (1927–1982), all of whom were chosen because their concerns were still valid for the contemporary artists.[112]

The essence of the Biennale, stressed by Waterlow, was the need for a thorough outline of specific Australian particularities put in a historical context, and to learn from history rather than repeatedly rewrite it. But he did not want to narrate the whole picture. Instead he concentrated on particular strengths, and focused on certain neglected areas to be able to create a new perception that was needed in order to comprehend the significance of Australian artists for expressing the reality of life in Australia. The antecedent artists, later to be called the "Antipodeans," that participated in the exhibition were all from Victoria. They sought to express national experiences, while also wanting to create a visual culture that put forth the experimental ideas of the Heidelberg School which had appeared a century before.[113] In contrast to the Heidelberg School, however, most of the artists working in the 1940s had never been to Europe, which Waterlow regarded to be a particular strength. Not having seen European art first-hand left them free to appropriate from reproductions, texts and hearsay. Moreover, together with visual experiences of the Australian landscape, this was what made the Antipodean's

create their specific imagery, the new context of how to perceive the Australian continent. Frances Lindsay, however, calls attention to the fact that Joy Hester and Tony Tuckson were virtually unknown in Australia during their lifetime. But due to the feminist movement Joy Hester's artworks of the 1940s received great deal of attention in the 1970s, whilst Tuckson's work made an impact on the new Expressionist movement in the beginning of the 1980s.[114] As mentioned above, Margaret Preston, on the other hand, was one of the first white Australian artists to appreciate Aboriginal art. Her admiration emerged in the 1920s, and evolved into a desire to develop truly national art. But it was not until 1940s, when her knowledge and direct experience of Aboriginal art and life had increased, that she put her theory into practice.[115] Nevertheless, it took almost 40 years for Margaret Preston's views on Aboriginal art to find acceptance in Australia, and she was not the only white artist who recognised the beauty and significance of this art. Both Ian Fairweather in the 1950s and 1960s, and Tony Tuckson in the 1970s, appreciated and incorporated elements of Aboriginal art into their own work. Tony Tuckson was especially knowledgeable in this area. He was the Deputy Director at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and the first curator of Aboriginal art in Australia during the late 1950s. He was also responsible for the Gallery's first collection of Aboriginal art acquired solely for aesthetic reasons, and exhibited as art in 1959, to be discussed further in Chapter Three.

By 1988, most of the Antipodean artists were well known in Australia, but remained virtually unknown to the rest of the world. On the other hand, Australian awareness of the art world as a whole was fragmented, due to the fact that both the public and artists, where unable to grasp the whole picture. This disadvantage was a result of Australia's peripheral location on the outskirt of the world, which, as stressed by Waterlow, led to a disruption of the Western art-historical chronology. Unlike in the centre, one "ism" was not inevitably followed by the next one.[116] These were conditions that resulted in Australian artists being shaped foremost by visual experiences in Australia, and more widely throughout the Asia-Pacific region, together with Aboriginal influences. But where does Australian art come from? For Waterlow, this is a troublesome question. Nonetheless, he emphasized that the most important statement of the whole Biennale was *The Aboriginal Memorial* made by artists of Ramingining Arts Community in Arnhem Land (see picture 22).

> Although intellectual nourishment has always been available from Europe, Britain, North and South America or elsewhere, it is the Aboriginal present that nourishes our spirit. Herein lies the divided nature of the non-Aboriginal-artist,

which makes inevitable our hybrid art, straddling a consciousness of two worlds.[117]

John Mundine calls attention to the fact that not everything during the Bicentennial year was about celebration. Most Aboriginal organisations, as well as a considerable number of white ones, were actually boycotting the festivities. The reason for this was that since 1788 several hundred thousand Aboriginals have died due to the white man's invasion.[118] But despite the boycotts, Aboriginal art was represented through *The Aboriginal Memorial*, consisting of 200 hollow-log bone coffins, created by artists from the Ramingining Arts Community. With this work of art, Aboriginal culture was present, as well as represented, without celebrating the occasion, managing instead to make a tangible statement. The hollow logs are part of an age-old ceremonial burial tradition, involving the placing of human bones into decorated hollow-log coffins. Originally the hollow logs were living trees with hollow trunks, which made the two hundred commissioned coffins resemble a forest set in a landscape symbolically representing a large burial ground. And as such it became a memorial to all the Aboriginals who had died during two hundred years of white invasion.

The peripheral discussion

Due to Australia's peripheral location it was impossible to experience a direct stimulus from new art without a delay, and the long distances also prevented both artists and viewers of art from going to Europe often enough to study the old masters first-hand. But this was about to change when in the late 1960s avant-garde art became dematerialised. Art was no longer only embodied in paintings, photographs and sculptures, but included ephemeral objects like body sculptors and performance pieces. Or a wrapped coastline, as in Christo's (b. 1935) and Jeanne-Claude's (1935–2009) *Wrapped Coast, Little Bay, Sydney* made in 1968–1969.[119] As an outcome, the gap between art produced in the art world centres of, for instance, Paris or New York, with delayed viewings in Australia, was now a thing of the past. In a post-object art world it is impossible to import art objects separately from their makers. In the 1970s, there was newly won international visibility of Australian art due to Australia's continuous participation within an international program of art events, mostly biennale participations. This was a result of Australia's new Federal Government arts-developments agency, the Australian Council, and their capacity to provide more funds. The catalogue also draws attention to the fact that the Australian art world changed again in the 1980s, when the Sydney Biennale of

1979 displayed Aboriginal art for the first time. From now on, Aboriginal art was marketed as art and sold for high prices in Australian art galleries.[120]

Despite Waterlow's assertion that the Australian art world was diffident in its relationship to modernist culture, modernism existed in Australia.[121] It actually arrived, as stressed by Terence Maloon, "with a cachet of smartness."[122] The above-discussed *9 by 5 Impression Exhibition*, at the Buxton Gallery in Melbourne in 1889, was an example of such smartness, with the gallery furnished and decorated in the latest aesthetic fashion. The paintings were organised in a setting of "art" furniture, pottery and Japanese umbrellas, suitable for providing modernist taste and a modern lifestyle. Overall, Australia tended to embrace modernism with a positive attitude, although as further argued by Maloon, it resulted in weak expressions in the arts, whereas the questionable, and slightly problematic, approach that the avant-garde showed over seas surfaced late.[123] This is also emphasised by Terry Smith who in his article "The Provincial Problem", first published in 1974, asserts that avant-garde art did not emerge in Australia until the 1960s.[124] It was not until then Australia was in synch with the avant-garde in Europe and America. This became a possibility because, at that moment, modernism had become an institution, with modern artists known by name, and breakthrough avant-garde artworks appearing in museums of modern art all over the world, at the same time. However, the problem Smith was referring to in the article is, according to Maloon, not so much a problem of space, "the tyranny of distance", as "a problem of time." Maloon went on to develop this idea:

> Wherever art is produced, it corresponds to local conditions and circumstances: the momentum of change determines the local time sense. Local circumstances and conditions are linked to those elsewhere, but parts of the world do not change at the same rate.[125]

By 1988 Australia was in synchrony with international trends, but the artists still continued to worry about their provincialism. They still depended on foreign authority for the legitimation and consolidation of their work. The possibility to contribute to various international debates in international forums, journals and magazines, was a progress, but the provincial problem still existed. Or as further described by Terence Maloon:

> In one sense, our conversion to world-time represents progress; in another, it has not affected the fundamental condition of the provincialism problem; the role of time-keeper and pace setters is still not ours.[126]

But, as Ian Burn writes, "A lot can be learned from the way a particular culture invokes and denies influences."[127] Nevertheless, in accordance with the history of dominant modes in the arts, regardless of national origins, which includes making impressions on an international scale, local cultures are always imposed and influenced. In Australia, the artist's limited access to original works of art, which has resulted in a reliance on reproductions for their experience and knowledge of modern art, has often been remarked upon. But the way a peripheral culture, such as Australia, mediates influences and relies on reproductions could, in fact, be seen as a constructed self-conscious process, which can be taken as evidence of an acceptance. On the other hand it could also be viewed as a need to culturally distance the sources of influence. Modern art's blind spot, according to Burn, is the failure to acknowledge the uneven development of modernism in different parts of the world. The Western centre assumes that there exists universal coherence, creating an illusionary understanding of a uniform art history. In Australia, this unevenness resulted in the late arrival of the avant-garde in the 1960s, of a modernism that did not respond to the ongoing overseas conflict "between the Greenbergian quality claim and the iconoclastic and avant-garde styles of Pop and Minimalism."[128] On the contrary, both directions were happily and harmoniously combined. Conceptualism, on the other hand, with its demands of recognising differences, without submission, offered freedom and independence to peripheral cultures. And as further stressed by Burn, Expressionism and Surrealism, as well as Conceptualism, were crucial in forming the basis of a culturally specific Australian modernism.[129] However, style has always been a problematic concept in peripheral cultures. As mentioned above, the art history of the centre arrives in fragments, with styles, or "isms" not following the original time span established by the Western art centre. This instability of stylistic categories, or non-chronological art history, could be looked upon as subordinate the concept of postmodernism. But in reality, the art world of the centre interprets the stylistic instabilities as confirmations of the Western art historical canon, and undervalues art that comes out of the unstable mix. The Australian Art Historian Bernhard Smith wrote about this already in 1945 in *Place, Taste and Tradition*, describing stylistic mixes as mutations, impurities and compromises that originated overseas and were assimilated into Australian conditions, which happens in all settler societies an cannot be regarded as a foundation of a specific culture.[130] From this notion it is possible to argue that the conditions of postmodernity preceded the centre's understanding of a proper development of modernism in Australia. But this is not the whole truth. The fundamental

issue put forward by Burn is rather about the way the centre appropriates qualities characteristic of peripheral cultures.

> These appropriations are then represented in forms integrated into the practice and critical vocabulary of the centre. In other words, they are quoted back to us as 'news', as the latest advancement of the centre. By such means, the illusion is retained intact: the art of peripheral cultures reappears as a mirror held up to theories "specific" to the centre.[131]

The centre's appropriation of peripheral cultures vocabulary, appearing as the latest advancements in the centres, as well as reflecting theories that become "specific" to the centre, could be understood as the moment when Australia, and every other peripheral culture, synchronized with the institutionalized modernism, when modern, and avant-garde, art surfaced simultaneously in museums and art galleries all over the world. However, the essence of time, as it appears in the simultaneous contemporary art, does not, as stressed by Maloon, "change at the same rate." A fact that again reflects the long-lasting discussion of the provincial problem. The new standards set by the post-object art in the 1960s, of a dematerialized art, where no works of art existed without the presence of the artist, becomes interesting as an initial point of departure for Smith's thoughts on the concept of contemporaneity, still viable as part of the provincial problem, which will be discuss at length in Chapter Four.

The reception of the biennale

On 14 May 1988, four days before the opening of the *1988 Australian Biennale*, a photo depicting the Aboriginal artist John Dhurrikayu surrounded by 200 hollow logs, or burial poles, was reproduced on the front page of *Sydney Morning Herald*. The artist is sitting on the sand-covered floor in the centre of *The Aboriginal Memorial*, created by him, with altogether 40 artists from different communities organised in the Ramingining Arts Community in Arnhem Land. The headline above the picture reads, "After 200 years, a silent memorial." One pole for each year of white colonization, like trees standing in a forest where the viewers could stroll. Throughout the Biennale *The Aboriginal Memorial* was exhibited at one end of Pier 2/3 in Walsh Bay, a Biennale venue in Sydney. At the other end there was an installation by the Viennese Actionist Herman Nitsch depicting the remains of a performance, in which Nitsch created an action painting at the day of the opening, covering the walls with animal blood and red house paint.[132] A table with piles of offal was placed centrally, and, as stressed by the art critic John McDonald,

four TV screens, showing videos of "gory previous performances," were running simultaneously.[133] This is an example of Waterlow's juxtapositions which were characteristic of the *1988 Australian Biennale*, where the exhibition, according to an advertisement in *The Age*,

> […] offers audiences the opportunity to see the work of famous twentieth century modern masters such as Bonnard, Braque, de Kooning, Duchamp, Léger, Matisse, Rothko and Warhol side by side with Australian masters such as Nolan, Boyd, Preston, Williams, Fairweather, Hester, Balson and Tuckson.[134]

Most of the critics saw possibilities in the juxtapositions. As further stressed by McDonald, they where inspiring and helped increase the understanding and appreciation of the "individual artists", as well as the "general tendencies in Modernism."[135] However, Jo Saurin, writing for *Sydney Morning Herald* on May 22, had a more critical opinion. She thought that the diversity of the images, covering almost half of a century, made it difficult to grasp what the Biennale was all about. For Saurin, this was ironic, "since the major aim was to make modern works more accessible through reference to past 'greats'."[136] But overall, the reception of the *1988 Australian Biennale* was positive, as pointed out by Edmund Capon, who thought the Biennale was "bigger and better than ever."[137] It was also looked upon as stimulating, amazing, intriguing, and ambitious. Despite the criticism, Saurin stressed that it was the most "important exhibition of contemporary art in the Southern Hemisphere."[138] It was also referred to as an exhibition that "succeeded where other fails," greatly due to Waterlow's notions of expansion and juxtaposition, which according to James Cockington, included "landmarks of the modern movement."[139] This must have been a rare display on the Australian art scene at the time, not being used to gaze upon the artworks of the modernist masters first hand.

3.

Aboriginal art as art – a contested inclusion

In trying to narrate the winding historical exposition of the inclusion of Aboriginal art into the fine art category in Australia, this chapter, in similarity with the former, proceeds foremost from exhibitions. And as mentioned before, I am well aware of the fact that to comprehend this inclusion through a few, albeit distinctive, exhibitions are but one course of action. However, for an outside observer, coming from Sweden, this has proven to be quite an effective way of grasping the overall picture. But in order to understand the process as such there is also a need for a short survey presenting early primitivist notions, which the American art historian Robert Goldwater (1907–1973) put forward already in 1938, in *Primitivism in Modern Art.*[1]

Published notions of non-Western art, defined as primitive art, have been present since the early 1860s, when the German architectural historian Gottfried Semper's (1803–1879) *Der Stil in dem techischen und tektonischen Kunsten oder Praktische Aesthetik* appeared in 1861. In this book, Semper stressed that art made by primitive people derived from an original, and "purely practical need for shelter and protection from the elements."[2] But he also found that there was a certain motif, specific to each culture, appearing in all art. He considered this to be the result of the technical process, of creating the work as such, without any aesthetical considerations from the primitive artist's point of view. The English architect Owen Jones (1809–1874) agreed with Semper in that the foundation of art was purely technical, but he had a much higher opinion of ornament, which he presented in *The Grammar of Ornament* from 1868.[3] Jones considered ornament to be exact naturalistic representations of the flora and fauna, and as such it was the foundation of artistic value.

In Britain, opinions on primitive art were mainly presented by ethnologists and, as stressed by Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) in his 1871 book *Primitive Culture,* their initial concern was to determine "the relation of the mental condition of savages to that of civilized man." But in his research of primitive art, Tylor was not concerned with the objects' "non-material meanings," their function and their significance in their culture of origin, nor is his understanding of the so-called savage's mental capacity overtly positive.[4] Later on, at the end of the nineteenth

century, English ethnologists opposed to Semper and Jones, turning instead to Charles Darwin for influences. In accordance with Darwin's evolutionism they sought evolution in art, characterized through the evolution of ornament. As a matter of fact, they applied Darwin's principle of natural selection to art, pointing out that ornament was not the aesthetic foundation of art, but its historical beginning, and "savage" art was by large the lowest form. The German ethnologist Ernst Grosse (1862–1927) was also influenced by the evolutionist perspective. In 1897 he published *The Beginning of Art*, where he studied primitive art as a social phenomenon, as well as a social function. He believed that primitive art could reveal the beginning of art. But he also put forward the notion that an aesthetic impulse is common to all mankind.[5] This opinion evolved into beliefs that opposed earlier notions of the mental capacity of the savage artists as not being of any appreciable level, and of savage art being the lowest form of art. Instead, he stressed that "savage" artists had developed a sense of beauty, as well as a sense of beautifying, resulting in the opinion that the aesthetic, and artistic ability, of savage people had been underrated.

In opposition to the evolutionist perspective, and to Semper's notion of the foundation of art as solely technical, the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858–1905) published his work *Stilfragen* in 1893, where he defended geometric style, be it naturalistic or abstract. For Riegl it was neither about the ornament nor the technical process as such, instead it was all about aesthetic value, pointing to the importance of all styles, because they were all equal results of "particular wills-to-form," existing in all cultures, not specific to any place, material or method.[6] At the beginning of the twentieth century, and following Riegl, German ethnologists stressed that it was impossible to judge primitive art in concepts of being true to nature, defined through naturalistic ornaments, nor through technically stylized ornaments. Instead the artwork's form, as well as its content, ought to be considered within the framework of its culture of origin. In France, the philosophers/sociologists Jean-Marie Guyau (1854–1888), Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Salomon Reinach (1858–1932), considered the art of primitive people as primarily social, and religious manifestations.[7] Jean-Marie Guyau, for instance, described primitive art as an "extraordinary intense form of sympathy and sociability, which can satisfy itself only by creating a new world."[8]

The German-American anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942) agreed with Riegl in that the will-to-form was the essence of all artworks. But he also emphasized the technical tradition, making a distinction between the "aesthetic impulse and

art," which led Boas to define art foremost as a process of skills, learned by man and resulting in the production of forms. Art meant skills producing forms.

> When the technical treatment has attained a certain standard of excellence, when the control of the processes involved is such that certain typical forms are produced, we call the process an art.[9]

Approaching the 1920s, primitive art was somewhat idealized amongst ethnologists, and again there was interest into the significance the artworks had in their societies of origin. Art critics and collectors also idealized the works, but they had no interest in the context of origin of the objects. Their opinion was that such knowledge actually could impede appreciation. They chose to examine the characteristics of the artworks' formal organization in isolation from their social context of origin, which evolved into the opinion that all art could be compared to primitive art, in the sense that primitive art was the source of all art. According to Goldwater, they gave this primitive art "romantic, undocumented interpretations."[10] Goldwater actually stressing that their opinions were mere chimera, and not grounded in verified documentation. Goldwater concludes his exposé by reflecting on the years between the turn of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the 1930s. He found that until to the 1930s ethnological and aesthetic points of view tended to converge, resulting in art historians starting to take ethnological knowledge into account when they interpreted indigenous objects, while the ethnologists started to take aesthetic considerations into their account.[11]

To give a simplified summary of primitivist notions, one could say that primitivism first of all is the interest in primitive art by modern man, and as such it is not confined to any specific period or time. Primitivism have been emphasized now and again during the last three centuries, but this does not mean that the art always has been understood as primitive. The emergence of primitivism began as a quest for a genuine expression of something elementarily human, a core within all art, independent of form, and common to all artistic expressions. The notion of primitivism was, apart from a wish to expose the origin of the arts, a vaguely definable idea of authenticity, originality and indigenousness that was to be found in different artistic expressions. Furthermore, apart from the earliest primitivists, primitivism was not concerned with primitive form; rather, it was about an attitude towards artistic creation. During the early twentieth century, primitivism was a reaction against the changing society of modernity and the emergence of a specific consciousness, where time was understood as an irrevocably marching

process, favouring ubiquitous progress, and resulting in the continuous transition of the present into the past. In this sense, modernity could be looked upon as always in motion, with expectations of forever-changing works of art. This perennially changing modern art depicting the new, which would always be different from its precursors. In other words, modern art was artistically avant-garde, anticipating the future, but not without the somewhat romantic requirement of a subjective art as an expression of creativity, with a spiritual content displaying the qualities of the primitive. Qualities that emanated from the eighteenth century's romantic notion of primitive life and the noble savage, put forward as always creating authentic works of art by artists uncontaminated by Western influence, and as such completely indigenous and original. In the primitivism of the modern era, prehistory was regarded as coexisting with the future.

Aboriginal Art in early exhibitions

In 1855, indigenous objects from Australia were included for the first time in a large exhibition. This was at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, where six bark paintings were on display. The next event showing bark paintings followed in 1879, at the first *Sydney International Exhibition*.[12] This trend of displaying Aboriginal objects as part of large exhibitions, continued until the beginning of the twentieth-century, when, in Australia, Aboriginal artefacts began to be displayed in exhibitions solely devoted to Aboriginal art. However, it was not only indigenous artifacts made by Aboriginal peoples in Australia that was on display in international exhibitions. As a matter of fact, indigenous objects from various cultures had become common items in exhibitions in both Europe and the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. This is evident in that both Gauguin, and van Gogh, were inspired by indigenous artifacts at the 1889 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, although the main event of this fair was the Eiffel Tower, completed the same year.[13]

In Australia, sir Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929), a university scientist, anthropologist and a connoisseur, was the first known to systematically collect Aboriginal works of art. Spencer started his collection in 1912, when he was sent to Darwin after successfully leading three scientists on the first expedition to the Northern Territory, in 1911, after the Commonwealth government had assumed control of the Territory the same year.[14] During his time in the Northern Territory he visited the Aboriginal community of Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) on several occasions,[15] and commissioned his initial 38 bark paintings, which he considered to be "first-rate examples by first-rate artists."[16] He continued to acquire Aboriginal works

of art, and in 1917 he donated over 200 bark paintings, together with films, wax cylinders containing sound recordings, and 1700 photographic negatives, to the National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne.[17] In collecting those artworks, Spencer believed "that he was perceiving and documenting the culture of an ancient but rapidly disappearing race".[18] This utterance confirmed that Spencer was a social Darwinist of his time with an evolutionist perspective, believing that the Australian Aborigines represented the early stages of the evolution of human society. This was a society inhabited by hunters and gatherers, with no religion or science and, as stressed by the anthropologist Howard Morphy, no art. Morphy goes on to point to the fact that when the colonists thought of indigenous people's ceremonial rituals and spiritual beliefs as magic, rather than religion, the evolutionists positioned indigenous cultures below their own, and gave the population the title of "noble savages." This prevented the rich diversity of Aboriginal cultural life, religion and art from being appreciated, interpreted and understood by the Western world.[19]

The first major exhibition showing Aboriginal objects as art in Australia was named *Australian Aboriginal Art* and held in 1929 at the National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne.[20] As argued by Philip Jones, its aim was to display the artifacts consisting of carved trees, spears and shields, painted ceremonial boards, reproductions of rock paintings, bark paintings and the design from a wooden funerary structure, as works of art, which was something that never had happened before.[21] But its aim was also, as expressed by the museum of "stimulating public interest in the habits and customs of the Australian Aboriginals."[22] In one sense, this exhibition could be looked upon as mirroring what was happening in Europe at the same time, because it coincided with modernist interests in artefacts made by primitive peoples. As such, *Australian Aboriginal Art* was part of the international primitivism discussed earlier in this chapter.

The late 1920s and the 1930s were also when the Australian anthropologist Adolphus Peter Elkin (1891–1979), who opened the 1929 exhibition, was trying to change Australian society's attitudes towards Aboriginal art. He did this through continuously promoting Aboriginal art exhibitions, and through the introduction of a new anthropology in Australia, pointing to the need to expand anthropological research to including the "cross-cultural cultures of many contemporary Aboriginal communities."[23] Late in the 1930s, he further worked for the capitalisation of the word "Aborigine." The meaning would thus change from that of the "lower-case" *aborigine* bearing the notion of "a biological rather than a cultural existence" – a primitive savage, simple and unsophisticated – to that of the capitalized *Aborigine* that would attain an ethnic status. He also tried to change the government's attitude

towards Aboriginal people, in a lobbying "for an assimilationist Aboriginal policy and the recognition of Aboriginal artefacts as art,"[24] which in 1938 led Elkin to pronounce, "a people possessing an art … is much higher in the human scale than had previously been thought."[25] But as Morphy explains, the evolutionist perspective was not easy to get rid of. The notion of Aboriginal people living close to nature, in societies that lacked both religion and art, was deeply rooted. And if Western society had recognized the existence of art in Aboriginal culture, it would have endowed the "savages" with powers and capacities putting them on an equal footing with the colonists themselves, thus making it impossible to continue to deny Aboriginal peoples their rights.[26]

It was also in the end of the 1920s, and up until the 1940s, that A. P. Elkin, together with the artist Margaret Preston, propagated for what Ian McLean calls a new "Aboriginalism."[27] But the notions of this new Aboriginalism was not published until 1958, in Russel Ward's (1914–1995) *The Australian Legend*, which since then has become a milestone in the conception of an Australian national identity.[28] In his book Ward puts into words Elkin's and Preston's search for an Australian identity recognizing Aboriginal art and culture as important features for an Aboriginalism that, according to McLean, "displaces Aboriginality within a white indigenity."[29] In his use of the term "Aboriginality," McLean is referring to the cultural identity of Indigenous Australians. A term that has served as a "key slogan" in identity politics characterizing Aboriginal activism since the 1960s, which is linked to the black power movement in Northern America, which again derived from the writings of Franz Fanon and his notions that "power was an ideological effect of language." Hence, it resulted in the fact that "the abusive slogans of colonialism and racism could, by inverse appropriation become slogans for Black Power."[30] When McLean argued that Ward's type of Aboriginalism is displaced within a white indigenity, he referred to the fact that the white settler, or rather the colonial convict, was appropriating the concept of Aboriginality. In so doing, the settler/convict, now being the native – the child of a white colonist born in Australia, in opposition to the Aboriginal being the indigenous Australian – becomes the indigenous as well as the native, appropriating Aboriginal pride in cultural identity. Whereas Aboriginalism derives from an Australian desert pastoralism, as explained by McLean, or rather "a populist Aboriginalism which saw in the desert, its Aboriginal inhabitants and their culture, unique emblems of Australian-ness". But this Aboriginalism was an irony according to McLean, because Australia, which almost "had brought its Aboriginal population to the brink of extinction," was actually starting to idolize the Aboriginal culture as "an emblem of nationhood." The notions of Aboriginalism

could have led to a change for the Aboriginal population, and a victory, but it would have been a symbolic victory, because the Aboriginalisation of the Australian identity was again an appropriation, paralleling the assimilation policy pursued by the Australian government at the time.[31] A policy that, according to the historian Bain Attwood, was influenced by A. P. Elkin's lobbying, which led the Commonwealth government to shift "emphasis from segregation and protection – and the aboriginal rights these policies could entail – to assimilation and adaptation and development – which came to be associated with calls for civil rights."[32] Accordingly, it led to a displacement of Aboriginality within a white indigenity, resulting in the colonial convict being transformed from "a melancholy figure of exile," into a "*new* person" with a promising future shaped by the special conditions of the colonial settlement of Australia.[33] This new person was to become the new Australian, described by McLean as a *White Aborigine* originating from the land itself.

When McLean deliberately uses the word displacement, he is referring to the forced migration, or coerced movement, of Aboriginal people away from their ancestral land. Resulting in the settler appropriating both Aboriginal culture and their land. Ward's Aboriginalism, in turn, referred to the new Australians – the white Aborigines – white settlers depicted as nomad tribes hopelessly struggling to survive in the harsh Australian environment. It was this harsh environment that formed the white bushmen, in that they had to force themselves to assimilate to the brute facts of the inhospitable Australian geography.[34] Ward writes this description in a Darwinian spirit, yet again confirming the "presumed extinction of the Aborigines whose land it was." However, his incorporation of "Aboriginality" into what McLean suggests to be "the new national mythos" made it possible to appreciate Aboriginal art and culture.[35] This resulted for instance, in the *Exhibition of Australian Aboriginal Art and Its Application* held in 1941, which is discussed later in this chapter. Ward's Aboriginalism, however, refers to a struggle and hardship the Australian geography exposed upon the white settler, a struggle the Australian Aboriginals had underwent quite well, not really being subject to extinction. At least, not according to the environmental factors, hence the labelling *White Aborigine*.

McLean further proposes that the appreciation of Aboriginal art and culture, as well as Australian Aboriginalism, was not only concerned with a search for an Australian identity. In fact, this interest was, as already has been stressed, part of an international primitivism within modernist circles in both Europe and the United States. This is a notion that the German Professor of American Literature and Cultural Studies, Sieglinde Lemke, confirms, as well as extends, when she argues that "there could have been no modernism without 'primitivism' – a term,

I confess, that I detest – and no 'primitivism' without modernism. They are the ego and the id of modern art."[36] The American cultural critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is of the same opinion when he suggests that the primitivism of the 1930s in Europe and America, derived from a fascination of African art.

> One might also wonder whether or not, without black African art, modernism as it assumed its various forms in European and American art, literature, music and dance in the first three decades of the 20th century could possibly have existed as well.[37]

The African art discussed in this quotation consisted foremost of African wooden masks, which had been on display at the Musée d'Ethnographie in the Palais du Trocadéro in Paris since the beginning of the twentieth century. These masks helped develop new forms of representation in modernism. Gates went on to state, "In this sense, it is not too much to argue that European modernity manifested itself as a mirrored reflection of the mask of blackness."[38] With these words Gates hint at and pays homage to Franz Fanon and his book *Peau noire, masques blancs, (Black Skin, White Mask),* (1952), in which Fanon describes the black peoples colonial experience from a psychological and phenomenological viewpoint. This indicates that a convergent cultural practice was possible for the first time, which in Australia resulted in, as pointed out by Mclean, that Aboriginal motifs were incorporated into a Western aesthetic.[39]

Nevertheless, it would be more than ten years before the next major exhibition showing Aboriginal art was on display in Australia, which happened in 1941. In the meantime, there were several anthropological expeditions to the centre of Australia and in the north, into the Northern Territory. Also, there were publications by Australian anthropologists discussing Aboriginal artifacts from aesthetic, arts and crafts, and design perspectives. For instance, in 1932 Norman Tindale (1900–1993) published the article "Primitive art of the Australian Aborigines," in *Manuscripts: A miscellany of Arts and Letters*.[40] In 1935 the article "Inspiration and design in Aboriginal Art" by Ursula McConnel (1888–1957) appeared in *Art and Australia*, and in 1938 Frederick McCarthy (1905–1997) published the first of eight editions of *Australian Aboriginal Decorative Art*. But already in 1925, there was an Aboriginal-inspired painting by the artist Margaret Preston on the cover of *Art in Australia*. In the same issue her article "The Indigenous Art of Australia," propagated that a national Australian art must have its foundation in the arts of Aboriginal Australians.[41] In terms of exhibition, there were Aboriginal artifacts on display in two arts and crafts exhibitions, in 1934 in the *Arts and Craft's Exhibition*, on display

in Sydney, and 1937 at the *L'Exposition Internationale de Paris des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Modern.* In 1938, the first solo exhibition of watercolour paintings by Albert Namatjira was held at the Fine Art Society's Gallery in Melbourne, resulting in the Art Gallery of South Australia, in Adelaide, becoming the first major art gallery to purchase an Aboriginal painting by Namatjira the following year.[42] But as a whole, the years between the mid-1920s and up until the 1940s, when Aboriginal art once more appeared in major exhibitions, could be categorised as a period in search of a national identity, deriving from the harsh environments of Australia and the culture of the indigenous population.

Exhibiting Aboriginal art during the 1940s

Twelve years passed before Aboriginal art was on display again. This happened in 1941 when two exhibitions were staged. The first; *Art of Australia 1788–1941*, toured to twenty-nine venues in the United States, and Canada, during 1941–1945. And according to Steven Miller, "this was one of the earliest inclusions of Aboriginal art as art in a major international exhibition."[43] This shows that Miller extended the notion of Aboriginal art being art to an international context. This exhibition, however, was displayed somewhat different with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art mounted together, with a notion of presenting the history of art in Australia, hence the title.[44] However, in 1941 the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. describes the exhibition as a cycle:

> […] starting with the art of the aborigines, continuing with the dominating styles of 19th-century British art, and ending with the influence of aborigine work as a basis for a new outlook for the national art of Australia.[45]

This description echoes Margaret Preston's thoughts on Aboriginal art as the foundation for a national Australian art, which she once again puts forward in the catalogue of the *Art of Australia 1788–1941* exhibition. Public interest for this exhibition, showing eleven Aboriginal bark paintings from East Alligator River, together with three drawings by Aboriginal artist Tommy McRae (c. 1835–1901), was to be grater than anyone had expected, due to the fact that it was on display at the Metropolitan Museum in New York at the same time the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, on 7 December 1941. This incident led to the United States entering the war and, according to contemporary American sources mentioned by Miller, increased local interest in the art of "our-brother-in-arms from down under."[46]

The *Exhibition of Australian Aboriginal Art and Its Application,* was also on display in 1941. This exhibition, however, was held in quite a dissimilar environment, the Art Gallery of the David Jones department store in Sydney, which gave a somewhat different touch to the event. This was also a venue of some importance, because, as stresses by Morphy, "[t]he Gallery at David Jones was in the forefront of introducing modernism to Australian audiences."[47] Another important fact was the department store's close connection with the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which resulted in David Jones showing travelling exhibitions from MoMA after the Second World War, and MoMA touring and showing the above-discussed exhibition *Art of Australia 1788–1941* throughout the United States, and Canada. This exhibition was also one of the most comprehensive ever shown, with 250 works of art on display at the Gallery, organized "in three main sections: Aboriginal art works, Western artefacts influenced by Aboriginal design, and Western artworks depicting Aboriginal themes."[48] This organization was created by the anthropologist Frederick McCarthy in order to encourage white artists to appropriate Aboriginal motifs in their own design.[49] This was a somewhat problematic arrangement one would think, considering the unstable foundation on which the definition of Aboriginal art rested, McCarthy also including the concept of design. But within ten years McCarthy's encouragement had become a fact, which was visible when white designers appropriated Aboriginal motifs in decorations raging from the lounge rooms of luxury liners, railway carriages, tourist hotels and banks to book illustrations, trademarks for Australian firms, advertisements, commercial Christmas cards and stamps. Aboriginal motifs also framed the scenery for the Ballet *Corroborre,* premiered at Sydney's Empire Theatre on 3 July 1950, to be seen by over 15,000 people.[50] The best-known designers were Margaret Preston, Douglas Annand, Byram Mansell, Gert Sellheim, Eileen Mayo, Nance Mackenzie and Frances Burke, who were all white in an era of "White Aboriginalism". Later on, in 1964, all of them were promoted as "new Aboriginal artists" by Roman Black, in his publication *Old and New Aboriginal Art.*[51]

In 1943 the National Museum of Victoria, together with the National Gallery of Victoria, showed yet another huge exhibition. This time, the art exhibits were not only Aboriginal works from Australia, but also indigenous art from New Guinea, Africa, Melanesia, Polynesia, North and South America, Asia and West Irian Jaya. Yet once again, the apprehension of the objects was as primitive art, due to the title *Primitive Art Exhibition.* This could be understood, as stressed by Philip Jones that a "false dichotomy" between aesthetic and cultural considerations had emerged in Australia in the mid 1940s.[52] For instance, in the foreword of the exhibition

catalogue, Daryl Lindsay, the then director of the National Gallery, emphasized the fact that the exhibition actually contained "genuine artistic value" as opposed to its ethnographic interest.[53] However, in a review of the exhibition in the journal *Man*, written in 1944, one could read, "The object of the exhibition is to show that primitive man has always had his artists, many of them with artistic aims and ideals not far removed from those of to-day."[54] These utterances coincided with an argument made by the German art historian Leonhard Adam (1891–1960), who had come to Australia 1942. In the introduction to the same catalogue Adam stressed that there was an emerging Western interest in primitive art, which had resulted in the Western art world starting to recognize the aesthetics qualities of primitive art.[55] But at the same time, Adam supported the dichotomy by believing in the almost outmoded notion of primitive artists being "motivated primarily by religious rather than aesthetic considerations."[56] In this sense, Adam subscribed to an opinion that had circulated in Europe before the 1930s, of modernist artists being attracted to the naturalistic style, and naïveté in primitive art, trusting it to be the earliest and purest form of art. Or as noted by Adam:

> […] all these different types of primitive art seem to have one feature in common, which makes all the difference when compared with modern European art, namely, the *spontaneity* and absolute *sincerity* of the primitive artists.[57]

The notions put forward by Adam had a significant impact on the perception of Aboriginal art in Australia, resulting in Aboriginal art remaining in ethnographic museums throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Jones, however, continued to explain that the former notion, of emphasizing on the religious and social functions of Aboriginal art, was also cultivated among anthropologists and other fieldworkers active in Australia during this period, which further preserved Adam's ideas.[58]

In 1949, *Arnhem Land Art: Exhibition* marked the starting point of the Australian public's changing approach toward Aboriginal art. The Gallery at David Jones' department store in Sydney was once again the venue, a proper choice for an exhibition that was part of a process for making Aboriginal art known to the public. Until the 1940s, Aboriginal art had been almost unknown, and not at all appreciated for its aesthetic qualities, a part from watercolours by Albert Namatjira which were both appreciated and quite well-known. The Australian National Research Council, and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney backed this process, as they together with the Australian anthropologists and the married couple Ronald (1916–1990) and Catherine Berndt (1918–1994) were the

organizers of the exhibition. From now on Aboriginal art was to become well-known, as well as looked upon with an aesthetic gaze. This was also the first time ever that Aboriginal works of art were attributed to individual artists. However, an early common opinion amongst anthropologists at the time was, according to Jones, that there existed no "true individual artists in tribal societies," an idea supported by the belief of tribal societies being "collectivist entities." Jones continuing more specifically in writing,

> [...] the findings of anthropologists and archaeologists suggested that Aboriginal art revealed highly formalized, intensely local, and long-established styles that apparently constrained the limits of individual expression.[59]

Once again confirming the complicated stance concerning Aboriginal art during the early years, pointing now to the indistinctness of whether or not Aboriginal societies had the ability to generate individual artists.

Anthropology and Art History

In the 1950s there was a change in recognizing individual indigenous artists, and their works of art, at least in the United States. This was due to a difference in attitudes, in turn a result of Westerners becoming more exposed to indigenous art, leading to an insight and an emerging public knowledge about the culture that produced the artworks. This understanding was presented by the American anthropologist Robert Redfield (1897–1958), when he pointed to the fact that in order to apprehend indigenous artifacts as art, one has to have knowledge of the expressed style through which the form emerges. For Redfield, this is what signifies a work of art. It is not until we are able to apprehend the style that we begin to appreciate of the works, and stops perceiving the artifacts as strange. Regarding Western works of art, we already have the knowledge of style and form, and thus have no problem in recognizing them as art.[60]

In Australia Ronald Berndt was of the same opinion as Redfield when he commented on Aboriginal art as appearing bizarre, exotic, and crude to people of European descent, not being used to or understanding the iconography of Aboriginal art. He stated this in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition *The Art of Arnhem Land,* displayed in 1957 at the Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia in Perth. He also concluded that non-Aboriginal people do not have the clues needed to be able to interpret this kind of art. In order to change this apprehension, and

to extend the knowledge of Aboriginal art, Berndt tried to provide as many clues as possible throughout the exhibition. His notion was to name all the artists, and present their language group, as well as their moiety on labels accompanying each of the eighty artworks and sculptures. All of them were also accompanied by thorough and relevant descriptions of the Dreamings that were presented.[61]

In the 1950s, state galleries in Australia began to collect Aboriginal art for the first time. One of the earliest examples is the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, which acquired Yolngu bark paintings from Yirrkala, and *pukamini* poles, or grave posts, by Tiwi artists from Melville and Bathurst Island in 1959, collected during the Tuckson–Scougall expedition 1958–1959, and donated to the Gallery by Dr. Stuart Scougall (1889–1964).[62] This was also on of the first public collections acquired for aesthetic reasons, and not because of its ethnographical value. Tony Tuckson, an artist, and the then deputy Director of the Gallery, and the first curator of Aboriginal art ever in Australia, was responsible for the acquisition, and advocated for the artworks to be displayed as art.[63] However, when the *pukamini* poles were exhibited for the first time, the display was not passing without comments. As a matter of fact it stirred up a bit of a controversy. Given both positive and negative reviews, the controversy was not about, as one would have thought, the quality and form of the art works on display, but rather, as stressed by Morphy, "whether or not they were art."[64] When entering the gallery, the formation of the seventeen *pukamini* poles were perceived as a dramatic exhibit by the audience, as noted by Jones.[65] And it was this exhibit that was to become the centre of the controversy, which the *Bulletin* critic Douglas Stewart confirmed 1 July 1959:

> […] the 17 grave-posts … make a somewhat bizarre display … and most people, admitting that the poles are delightful in themselves, will wonder if the proper place for them is not the [natural history] museum … These Melville Island posts, though they have definite artistic merit of an elementary kind, are really more in the nature of ethnological curiosities than works of art.[66]

However, the critique concerning this exhibit was also about the way Tuckson choose to display both the bark paintings and the *pukamini* poles at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. They were all presented in accordance with modernism's white cube, on display for an aesthetic gaze in an uncluttered and pure space. It was a decontextualized presentation liberated from all unnecessary information narrating the stories behind the work, and as Tuckson himself stresses, "without any knowledge of its particular meaning and original purpose."[67] The exact opposite of what Ronald Berndt tried to attain in *The Art of Arnhem Land* exhibition, two years earlier.

In 1964 Tuckson and Berndt both worked on the same project, an exhibition and a book, both entitled *Australian Aboriginal Art,* in which Tuckson curated the exhibition and Berndt edited the book. During this project the former difference in their opinions of how Aboriginal art should be exhibited, understood and appreciated became obvious when Berndt wrote:

> His [Tuckson's] contention is based on the universality of *all* art, irrespective of provenance. It is important for us to know here exactly what this means. The cultural background is not, here seriously taken into account; the function or use of the object or painting, even the identity of the artist, may be completely unknown.[68]

Again stressing Tuckson's modernist stance towards Aboriginal art, as works of art of which an aesthetic opinion could be formed, without any knowledge either of their cultural or social background.

The American anthropologist Jane C. Goodale was of the same opinion as Berndt, when she stressed in a review of the *Australian Aboriginal Art* exhibition, that for the anthropologist, long labels conveying information on the objects cultural context is necessary in order for him or her to appreciate the art. For non-anthropologists, however, "this knowledge is not absolutely essential."[69] Nonetheless, the American anthropologists Fred Myers argued that for the movement from ethnology/anthropology to fine art to be possible, it seemed that it was necessary to reject both an anthropological context, and the ethnological museum display, which he attributed to what he calls the "aesthetic modernism's official discourse," meaning that it was all about "looking rather than knowing."[70] The fact that Tuckson and Berndt worked according to two differing contexts, Tuckson, the artist and curator working within a modernist context of art, and Berndt, the anthropologist working within the context of anthropology, could be one explanation for their differing stands.

For modernist critics and art connoisseurs, indigenous art, or the so-called "primitive art", was incorporable within the Western canon. But it was looked upon, as discussed earlier, as a search for the genuine expression of something elementary human, a core within all art independent of form, and common to all artistic expressions, which were supposed to generate absolute authentic art. Anthropologists on the other hand, were not overtly concerned with the aesthetic considerations of primitive artefacts during most of the twentieth century. But a new challenge was about to emerge, allowing them to reincorporate the concept of art within their theoretical discourse, resulting in an anthropology of art, albeit somewhat contested.

The anthropology of art seems at times to have been squeezed between – and distorted by – two myths: the myth adhered by the market, and by some curators, that somehow an anthropological approach to Indigenous art created its otherness and separated it from Western art worlds; and the anthropological myth that classifying work as 'art' imposed a Western categorisation upon them.[71]

This myth could be considered as providing Tuckson with arguments for a display of Aboriginal art with a minimum of information in order not to distract the viewer. But as Morphy reminds us, the inclusion of indigenous art into the art category was, by some anthropologists and curators at museums of ethnography, still apprehended as a "license for misinterpretation," because it imposes universal, modernistic aesthetic concepts on to the objects. When the artefact is looked upon as art, there is an incorporation of difference built into the meaning carried by it.[72] This is quite an absurd situation, which is further explained by Morphy arguing that when the Western art world determines works of art from other cultures as being art, which is proven by the willingness of collectors and art institutions to pay a lot of money to acquire the objects for their beauty and aesthetic value, the objects ends up on pedestals in art galleries, separated from their human, historical and political relations. This is a separation that confirms the nineteenth, and twentieth century's Western European concept of art and its value, which in the worst scenario is masking, or even, fails to narrate how, where, and under what circumstances the object was acquired.[73]

On the other hand, Anne-Marie Willis and Tony Fry are of the opinion that "the language of aesthetics" have actually rescued artefacts from ethnographic and anthropological classifications, which have been understood "as lowering the status of the object," reducing it to a functional component within a Western social system.[74] Hence, when the artefacts are displayed in ethnographical museums the objects' use value are removed, and the aesthetic value is of no importance, which means that the object becomes just another labeled item taken out of its environmental context. According to Morphy, however, there were anthropologists, as well as others, who insisted on Aboriginal artefacts being displayed as art. Morphy, though, does not state whether or not labels are essential in this context. Instead, he presents reasons for this position. One reason was to contest the prejudices that followed in the wake of an evolutionist perspective, and the fact that if Aboriginal cultures where able to produce fine art, which is a symbol of high culture, European and Aboriginal societies would have attained equal status. Another reason was that

if the viewers had the possibility to gaze upon Aboriginal art as art, they would, hopefully, also begin to value the culture producing it.[75]

The issue of whether or not Aboriginal art was art in the 1950s and 1960s was addressed in various displays, where anthropologists advocated viable information about the cultural and social background, as well as the original purpose of the objects in their society of origin, being presented alongside the works of art. Curators in art galleries on the other hand, advocated displaying the items in accordance with modernist notions of an uncluttered mounting, which was preferred in order to avoid disturbing the aesthetic experience. This difference of opinion between ethnologists/anthropologists and art historians, has continued in the Western artworld ever since art historians first began to take an aesthetic interest in objects produced by indigenous peoples. And as argued by Robert Goldwater, such objects began to appear in collections displayed in European museums in the early 1870s.[76] But what at first was a varying in opinions culminated in a rather heated dispute in the 1980s, published in two volumes of *Artforum*, in October 1984 and in February 1985. The dispute originated from the exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern* at the Museum of Modern art in New York in 1984, in connection with which the American art historian Thomas McEvilley expressed sharp criticism of William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe, who where the curators of the exhibition.

The exhibition as such is discussed further in Chapter Four. It displayed indigenous works of art alongside modernist works in order to direct attention to the affinities between the modern and primitive artworks, and foremost to Western artists' interest in, and reaction to, the primitive works of art. At this point, however, my main interest is to give a brief account of the dispute, starting with McEvilley stressing:

> How brilliant to attempt to revalidate classical Modernist esthetics by stepping outside their usual realm of discourse and bringing to bear upon them a vast, foreign sector of the world. By demonstrating that the 'innocent' creativity of primitives naturally expresses a Modernist esthetic feeling, one may seem to have demonstrated once again that Modernism itself is both innocent and universal.[77]

McEvilley further points to the fact that the indigenous objects were exhibited without any ethnological/anthropological information, which is to wrench them out of their context. He mainly accused Rubin of lacking interest in what indigenous aesthetics really is about.[78] McEvilley argued further that Rubin made "highly

inappropriate claims about the intentions of tribal cultures without letting them have their say, except through the mute presence of their unexplained religious objects, which are misleadingly presented as art objects."[79] This resulted in Rubin responding that the exhibition was all about primitivism – a primitivism deriving from the reception of tribal objects by, in this case, modernist artists – and as such, the exhibition, as well as the artworks on display, does not refer to the tribal art in itself.[80] McEvilley replied that when Rubin chose not to display any information alongside the objects, nor making any attempt to understand the indigenous works of art, or their artists, on their own terms, he was ignoring the artists' intention in making the objects, and the significance of the artworks in their own culture of origin. This forced, as argued by McEvilley, the viewers to search for a meaning that predominantly will be one that their own cultural conditions embedded in them, which inevitable signalled that Western terms and understandings are supposed to be universal. McEvilley went on to ask Rubin that if we are unfamiliar with what indigenous artifacts are made for, "are we then justified to project our own fantasies onto them?"[81]

The opinion of whether or not to pay attention to the significance of indigenous art in its own culture of origin has also been discussed for a long time, and is still being discussed, as will be apparent later on in this dissertation. However, in 1985 McEvilley further stressed that anthropologists had actually started to comprehend indigenous art from the point of view of their cultures of origin. He also emphasized the notion that indigenous objects fell in between the categories presented by the Western art world of what were to be regarded as works of art. His conclusion was that there is a need for simultaneity when categorizing indigenous work as art, because indigenous people might not refer to the objects as art, and such a category might not even exist in their culture.[82] However, in returning to the Australian art scene of the 1950s and 1960s, and the Aboriginal artifacts presented in this volume so far, it has foremost been bark paintings, but also carved spears and shields, painted ceremonial boards and grave poles, which from a Western point of view were quite unfamiliar art objects at the time. It was not until the beginning of the 1970s, when Western materials began to be used to a greater extent, that the understanding of Aboriginal art really started to change in Australia.

Towards an inclusion

In 1971 Geoffrey Bardon, an Australian artist and elementary school teacher, started to teach at the community school in Papunya, an Aboriginal settlement 250

kilometres west of Alice Springs.[83] In the following year the Papunya Tula Artists was established, a cooperative that is wholly owned and directed by Pintupi artists to promote individual artists, provide economic development for their communities, and to assist in the maintenance of their cultural heritage.[84] The cooperative emerged out of a school project, of Bardon encouraging the children to make art in a traditional way, using acrylic paint and canvas, eventually starting to paint murals to decorate the school walls. At the same time Bardon was trying to interest the elders in accompanying the children in painting their traditional stories, and thus teaching the children the Aboriginal way of life through painting, which had been done in rock paintings, as well as bark paintings, and body paintings, throughout history. In the end the elders completed the mural in traditional rock-painting style, but with the use of powder paint in traditional colours mixed with PVC glue. The decoration of the school was the staring point for the Papunya Tula Art Movement, which would evolve into the Desert Art Movement, also known as the Central Desert Art Movement. It spread the use of Western materials, mostly acrylic paint and canvas, to other Aboriginal communities throughout Australia. It took a couple of years for this "new" Aboriginal art to become subject for art exhibitions, but from 1974 and onwards there have been several exhibitions showing Aboriginal art touring Australia, and the world.[85] This, however, does not mean that the art on display was regarded as art.

As stressed by the American anthropologist Fred Myers, the process to legitimate Aboriginal art as art did not begin until 1980.[86] This was the year when both the Australian National Gallery in Canberra and the South Australian Art Gallery in Adelaide made their first purchases of acrylic Central Desert paintings. The Australian National Gallery acquired Mick Wallangkarri Tjakamarra's (c. 1910–1996) *Honey Ant Dreaming* (1973), while the South Australian Art Gallery acquired Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's (1932–2002) *Man's Love Story* (1978). In Adelaide, the curator Ron Radford placed the new contribution on display in an area of the museum designated for contemporary Australian art, something the historian of Papunya Painting, Vivien Johnson, regarded as "particularly significant."[87] She further stressed that it was the inclusion of these two paintings, together with the *Ancestral Possum Spirit Dreaming* (1980), jointly painted by Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri (1929–1984) and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, into the 1981 *Australian Perspecta* exhibition in Sydney that finally "ended the long denial of Aboriginal art by the Australian art establishment."[88] This denial had not been seriously questioned until late in 1979 when the Englishman Andrew Crocker became the new art adviser at Papunya Tula Artists. He was employed in this capacity by the cooperative,

working for the association on behalf of its members.[89] Not being Australian, or Aboriginal, Crocker had a different orientation, as well as a different style. He was less ethnographically oriented, and mainly interested in helping the Papunya Tula Artists in their financial difficulties. In order to save Papunya Tula Artists from bankruptcy he tried to convince them to produce "museum quality work, " which he thought would increase the demand in both the Australian and the international art market. Fred Myers points to the fact that in doing so Crocker had to persuade the artists to scale down the production and be more aware of the details of their work. He maintained that the artists had to be concerned about the "quality" of the paintings, the way they were executed, and how the material was used. This was an almost impossible task due to the difference in value systems between the Aboriginal community and the Western-oriented Crocker. According to Aboriginal value system, described by Myers, a painting's value is achieved through its truth towards the Dreaming it depicts, rather than in its aesthetic beauty. But when all paintings derive from the same Dreaming, and the Pintupi artists' apprehension was that they all have the same value and deserve a similar price since each one represents "a very important Dreaming," there would be problems. If paintings are neither compared nor evaluated in accordance with Western terms of quality, and no painting is "better" than the other, due to the fact that "categories of evaluation are not discursively established among the painters or within their cultural traditions," how could Crocker and the Western art world demonstrate differences in the mode of production and the economic value?[90] Vivien Johnson, on the other hand, stresses that the quality issue was entirely about the material. The artists' supplies were reduced, but instead of cheap student quality they where given Belgian linen canvases, as well as standard artists' paint, to which the artist responded positively by "putting more work into each canvas."[91] And this was exactly what Crocker had hoped to achieve. Nevertheless, Crocker also made a huge change in emphasizing the aesthetic value of the paintings, consciously neglecting the ethnological content, and insisting on the paintings being looked upon as contemporary art, which is further stressed by Johnson:

> His insistence that the paintings be seen as contemporary art rather than ethnographic artefacts had undoubted effectiveness as a promotional strategy in attracting the art world's attention to works it had previously thought of only in the context of an ethnographic museum.[92]

This was also what finally changed the way the Papunya Tula paintings were considered by the artworld as well as the public, and played an important role in the

way the works were presented and purchased. All in all, this helped increase the company's and the painters' fame and earnings. But, as Myers points out:

> Moving out of the ethnographic museum and more regularly into the art gallery context, these exhibitions still frequently included what looked to be an ethnographic component: the presence of Aboriginal painters, providing demonstration of acrylic paintings or – in some case – of 'ground painting'.[93]

With this statement Myers points to the fact that indigenous artists were on display alongside their works of art, and as such they were presented as ethnographical components, which was a quite common occurrence both in Australia, Europe and the United States alike. For instance in 1988, Billy Stockman Tjapaltjarri and Michael Nelson Tjakamarra created a sand painting during the opening of the exhibition *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia,* at Asia Society Galleries in New York.[94] And an even earlier example was a sand painting executed at the Biennale of Sydney in 1982. Another example is from 1989, during the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* in Paris, where Aboriginal artists were presented in action, creating a huge ground painting. The subtext to this work of art, presented in the catalogue accompanying *Magiciens de la terre,* is "Six artists from the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu," not mentioning the artists by name, nor the name of the artwork, which was *Yarla*.[95] However, according to Vivien Johnson, what literally cemented the Aboriginal art movement's national and international reputation, and success, was the 1986 selection of Papunya Tula painter Michael Jagamarra Nelson's design for the forecourt of the new Parliament House in Canberra, as well as his inclusion in the Biennale of Sydney the same year.[96]

The inclusion of Aboriginal art as fine art in Australia has been contested. One way to comprehend this inclusion is to put forth the fact that the focus on the artworks have been when they already are included and have arrived at the art gallery. Today this means that Aboriginal art is present in the institutions of fine art, such as state galleries, the Australian National Gallery, and contemporary art galleries. But the artworks are often on displayed in specific areas designated for this art, resulting in an Aboriginal gallery within the gallery. This means that Aboriginal art is somewhat segregated from the overall display of the Western art, which is exhibited in accordance with the Western art historical canon and displayed chronologically. This made me wonder, why not have Aboriginal art follow the same procedure, and why are "Aboriginal galleries" often placed on the first floor, which in some cases gives an impression of the artworks being displayed in the basement, depending on through which entrance one arrive at the gallery.

These were questions that I had during my first journey which made me ask a lot of people their opinion on these matters. I finally arrived at the conclusion that this is one way of presenting the art of the first Australians, and as such the earliest art produced in Australia which from this point of view was to be experienced at the beginning of the gallery visit. The way Aboriginal art is present, but segregated, could be comprehended as consolidating the contested inclusion. This is also evident in the answers to the interview questions which point to the fact that there are still a lot of people in Australia who do not regard Aboriginal art as art. They still believe that Aboriginal art are ethnographical artefacts with its own trajectory, not consistent with the art historical canon of the West. However, in order to be able to grasp the Aboriginal iconography present in most paintings of the Central Desert Movement, I am about to describe how one could interpret traditional Aboriginal art through Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's *Man's Love Story,* from 1978, on display in the *Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988.* And finally, this long journey of inclusion is imbued with the crossings of cultures, which is a concept that has become unavoidable and quite important in regard to indigenous art in a global context. But what does cross-culture really connote, and is it a viable concept in the interpretation of non-Western art? To be able to answer these questions there is a need to further examine this concept, which I am about to present in Chapter Four.

Aboriginal Iconography

Some knowledge of Aboriginal iconography is needed in order to comprehend Aboriginal art. For Aboriginal people, their paintings are maps of the land, but they are not maps according to a Western point of view. Rather, they are conceptual representations of how a landscape is understood from an Aboriginal perspective. Aboriginal paintings are often produced on the ground, with the canvas placed directly on the soil, with the artist sitting beside the painting, or on top of it, filling the canvas as he or she moves around, which means that there is no correct way of viewing a depiction of an Aboriginal landscape because there is no top or bottom, nor right or left, any more than north or south on the canvas. From this way of painting follows that the canvas is painted in sections, each section often presenting geographical features without actual geographical relations, and hence, as stressed by Morphy, the features of the landscape often appear as if they where out of place, or out of proportion to each other.[97] This is because the features reflect mythological proportions depicted in accordance with their mythological

significance. The necessity of comprehending the paintings as mythological and conceptual depictions of the land also provides the possibility of reading each and every one as representations of their totemic geographies. This way of painting in sections is, for instance, why an Aboriginal painting can contain several different mythologies narrated in one and same painting. The origin of the mythologies, also named Dreamings, or sometimes stories, derives from ceremonial use. As told by Vivien Johnson, these "maps" were for instance drawn in the sand in order to teach youngsters about their ancestors journeying in their country of belonging, a form of instruction to be prepared for the ceremonial initiation when the Dreamings are painted on to the initiates' chests, and as such they are an important and intrinsic part of Western Desert culture.[98]

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's *Man's Love Story* from 1978, which was included in *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988,* is an example of an Aboriginal painting depicting more than one mythology – in this case three stories are told (see picture 19). The painting is primarily about Ngarlu, one of the key sites in Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's "ancestral estate", containing a large rock hole. This is a place owned, as well as kept, by the descendents of the Tjapaltjarri family, from Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's patrilineal side, as well as the descendants of the Tjungurrayi family.[99] This is also the site where the *Love Story* Dreaming took place, a mythology that Possum depicted seven times between 1972 and 1997, naming five of those paintings *Man's Love Story* and two *Love Story*. In the painting from 1978, and in most paintings depicting more than one Dreaming, the image at the centre of the canvas, dominating visually, is presenting the key story, in this case Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's ancestral love story. The other main depicted site is Yinyalingi, a place quite close but geographically distinct from Ngarlu. The two Dreamings, the key story as well as the main story, tell the mythologies of a man of the Tjungurrayi family and a Nungurrayi woman, both descendants of sub-section groups and keepers of the two sites.

In deciphering the iconography of this painting, I have relied on Vivien Johnson's description, which the artist himself told her, as well as comparing this description with the one accompanying *Man's Love Story* in *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988,* by Tim Johnson.[100] In this work, a dark oval shape, created out of black dots, is painted in the centre of the canvas, and as such it narrates the key mythology. This oval symbolises an area of land known as "Kanala", where young men are thought the mythology of *Man's Love Story,* as well as the "Law" associated with this mythology before their initiation, in a ceremony named "Malliera".[101] This mythology is painted to the right in the Kanala, showing Tjungurrayi's brown

footprints, when he was walking to Ngarlu, coming down from the top of the painting. At his campsite, represented by the white and brown concentric circles, he is sitting down, which is depicted with a brown U shape, outlined in white. He is spinning a hairstring with the help of a cross spindle, in order to gain the attention of a woman. The spindle is called a "Wirrakurru", and is represented by a black oval shaped formation pierced through by a yellow stick, with four additional smaller slightly curved yellow sticks attached to the oval. The Wirrakurru is placed in the centre of the concentric circle depicting the campsite at Ngarlu. With the cross spindle: "Clifford said that Tjungurrayi sent a 'Telegram' to a Napangati woman whom he desired but who was the wrong kinship subsection group for marriage to Tjungurrayis."[102] The Napangati woman was lured to Tjungurrayi's campsite by his singing, but when she approached he became distracted and the hair string was blown away by the wind, which is reproduced as small uneven brown patches painted beneath the brown U shape. Four Nungurrayi women, of the right kinship for Tjungurrayi in marriage, arrived during the night and sat down around Ngarlu site where the lovers spent the night. In order to try to break this wrong love spell they kept on singing until the morning broke. The women are represented by four U shapes, painted with black dots on a brown U shaped background. Beside them, they have placed their digging sticks, also painted with black dots on a brown background.[103] The Law put forward in this story is to maintain the right kinship in marriage.

The mythology painted to the left in the Kanala depicts yet another woman of Nungurrayi kinship who was walking from Yuelamu, situated west of Yinyalingi, the destination of the woman's journey in her search for honey ants. At Yinialingi she found a white sugary substance called "Lurrka" on the leafs of a Mulga stand, which indicates the presence of honey ants beneath the ground where they live in chambers.[104] The iconography of this mythology shows the Lurrka, represented by a formation of small white maggot-like shapes depicted above the Kanala to the left. Beneath the Lurrka, the Nungurrayi woman is seated, represented by a white U shape outlined in light brown. The white and light brown concentric circles to the right, in front of the seated woman, represent her campsite at Yinyalingi. This is also where she dug a whole in order to reach to the ants. Below the concentric circles, towards the centre of the Kanala, the woman has laid down her "Tjipala", a stick used to disturb the honey ants in their chambers, depicted as quite a long and narrow white hook, also outlined in light brown.[105]

The third mythology depicted in this canvas tells the story of the goanna man "Arrumai". Arrumai walked through this country during mythological times in

chase of a woman whom he managed to capture and decapitate. The white foot-prints occurring in between the Kanala and the Mirrawarri, represented as two long black and white horizontal bars above and below the Kanala and described by Vivien Johnson as mirages associated with the love magic, depict his journey, which passes through the site of Yarumayi, represented by the black and white concentric circles.[106] The somewhat wavy brown and beige line in the upper left part of the painting depicts the trail of a smaller goanna ancestor, named "Kulluntjirri", on its way to the lake site Mutjuku. And finally, the background with its dots in various colours, is referred to by the artist as the seeds from the Mulga and Witchetty bush, which were traditionally collected and grounded into flour, then blended with water and baked on hot coals to make a nutritious damper.[107]

In Tim Johnson's description of *Man's Love Story* in *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988,* the three mythologies are somewhat altered, but the main understandings and the depictions are the same.[108] For instance in T. Johnson's narration of Tjungurrayi, the man who used the cross spindle to send a "telegram" does this to a woman he was already in love with, whilst Vivien Johnson refers to Tjungurrayi desiring the woman. Another difference is that in T. Johnson's version the ancestor who finds Lurrka when searching for honey ants is a man from the Tjungurrayi subsection group. In V. Johnson's story on the other hand, it is a woman from the Nungurrayi subsection group who finds Lurrka. Also in this part of the story T. Johnson provides more information on how the man finding Lurrka reached Yinyalyingi, which he did by foot, walking from Yulima, a journey depicted by the strait white line, outlined in light brown, leading from the painting's left short side towards the white and light brown concentric circles representing the site of Yinyalyingi. Yet another difference is the four Nungurrayi women arriving during the night, and sitting down around the Ngarlu site in V. Johnson's version. T. Johnson describes the women as Nangala, the correct marriage partner for Tjungarrayi, who also came during the night, but they sat down around the Kanala, where both stories are presented, which means that the women sat down around both campsites. And finally, the goanna man named Arrumai is represented by the white and black concentric circles in between the Kanala and the Mirrawurri in T. Johnson's story, whilst V. Johnson describes this concentric circle as the site of Yarumayi. However, there also seems to be a somewhat different apprehension of the meanings of the Mirrawarri, because Tim Johnson stresses that Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri did not reveal what those bars mean or bring to the mythology. Nor did he describe the meaning of the beige wavy shapes in the form of small worms spreading out on the right side of the painting. He only mentioned that those shapes

are "Kapatadi", which is the name for edible green caterpillars.[109] V. Johnson on the other hand does not mention those Kapatadi at all. Other minor alterations are differences in the spelling of some of the sites; T. Johnson writes Ngalu, Yinyalying, Ylima, where V. Johnson writes Ngarlu, Yinyalingi and Yuelamu. There is also a differing in the spelling Wirrakurru, as in V. Johnson's account, whilst T. Johnson writes Wurrakurru.

As mentioned above, the described mythologies correspond in all the significant details depicted in the painting. However, many symbols occurring in this painting also correspond with symbols depicted in Aboriginal paintings from other parts of Australia. One such common representation are the concentric circles depicting a campsite, which often is associated with an existing place in reality. But this character can also depict the main site from which the Dreaming got its name, and as such it exist as an important site in the Australian landscape. Another common representation is the U shape depicting a person sitting down. If there are several U shapes, there are several persons gathered, the number often corresponds with the exact number of seated people presented in the mythology. Footprints are another common symbol representing an ancestral man or a woman walking across the land, sometimes ending up at a campsite. Mimetic animal tracks, for instance of emus, goannas, crocodiles, other birds or kangaroos are very common partly because they indicate the animals living in the habitat depicted in the mythologies, but also because they could represent a totem animal significant for the artist.

4.
Two theoretical concepts and the complexity of the global art world

The theoretical concept of cross-culture surfaced during the interviews when the distinction between Aboriginal and Australian art was repeatedly brought up, which resulted in the need for a more profound examination into what it is that constitutes cross-culture. The concept of contemporaneity on the other hand, derive from the interview with Terry Smith, but also from an early article by him entitled, "What is Contemporary Art? Contemporaneity and Art to Come," published in the Swedish Journal *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* (*Journal of Art History*) in 2002.[1] Contemporaneity, as defined by Smith, emanates from a philosophical discussion of being in time in a global world, and as such it is pointing to the complexity of being in time at different places simultaneously, and how these states of being takes visual form. But it is also an attempt to come to terms with, and define, art after modernism when there are no master narratives, and art seems to evolve outside history.

Cross-cultural notions

Cultures have always been encountered and crossings of cultures have appeared since colonization, which means that the expression of transformations and influences always has been a possibility in the arts. One Aboriginal artist expressing such crossing of cultures was, according to Jaynie Anderson, Tommy McRae (c. 1835–1901), who in a drawing from c. 1890, *Corroboree or William Buckley and Dancers from the Wathourong People,* depicts the Irish convict William Buckley dancing together with Indigenous people in Victoria.[2] In this drawing Buckley is outlined in fine lines of brown ink, which makes him stand out from the eleven Aboriginals fully depicted in brown ink. Both Buckley and the Aboriginals are decorated with body paintings and dance in front of a ship, the three-master *Calcutta* which brought convicts to Australia. This is an Aboriginal artist depicting the European colonization in relation to his own culture, in that both the content and the execution are presented in a Westernized way. McRae used ink on paper and figuratively narrated the event

as it happened in front of him. The event, on the other hand, is all Aboriginal and quite powerful. But it is also a reproduction of cross-cultural transformations in the arts, and as such rather unusual. It was often the other way around, as we have seen in Chapter Two, where the encounter is depicted from a Western point of view, demonstrating the power relations of colonization in the New World. The result was sketches and works of art reproducing a strange flora and fauna, as well as noble savages, by European artists accompanying the explorers.

As a concept, cross-culture derives from the encounters of cultures, which means that it is all-encompassing and provides multiple possibilities of various blends. However, and as has been pointed out before, in this volume cross-culture will foremost concentrate on analyses of art objects circulating in the midst of the transformation following colonization, and the voluntarily or forced migration of people. Cross-cultural analysis has a long history in Australia. Jaynie Anderson stresses that the concept developed in response to the Australian society due to its population, where everyone are considered immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Even the Indigenous people are regarded immigrants by Anderson, in spite of the fact that they arrived in Australia almost 50,000 years ago, Anderson's point being the actual arrival.[3] Bernard Smith's *European Vision and the South Pacific* published in 1960 is the first written example of an Australian art historian conducting a cross-cultural analysis. In this book Smith is investigating how the professional artists first arriving in the South Pacific in the 1770s perceived and reproduced this, to them, new world.[4] What Smith created was the first Australian example of a cross-cultural analysis of sketches and paintings depicting the landscape, flora and fauna of the Pacific, following the norm of a cross-cultural analysis emanating from a European perspective. Concerning the opposite, for instance Aboriginal depictions of the flora, fauna and the landscape, as will be discussed in connection with Emily Kame Kngwarreye's works of art, the analysis is also conducted from a Western perspective, leaving out a viable cross-cultural analysis, which in this respect seems to be missing.

The primitivist debate

The absence of cross-cultural analyses of indigenous art is a fact that could be regarded as deriving from the long-lasting primitivist debate, of how the "Other" has been represented in the Western world. During the Enlightenment, in the early writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), this "Other" was looked upon as a Nobel Savage, an essentially happy and good man when still in a natural state before civilisation made mankind unhappy and corrupt. By the mid-nineteenth

century these notions were paralleled by ideas of primitive people who were soon to become extinct due to evolution, following social Darwinist notions. Later, during modernity, the American anthropologist Fred Myers as well as Sally Price, an anthropologist and art historian, amongst others, stressed that the modernist understanding of the primitive was of a being living a traditional and unchanging life in irrational collective societies guided by rituals and locked in ancient time – existing in timelessness.[5] But the primitive was also, as Rasheed Araeen, a Pakistani diaspora artist, curator and critic suggests, regarded as a "pure" existence admired for what had been lost in modern Western culture.[6] It was through the gaze of the dominant West – the gaze of the individual heroic modern person living a rational and self-conscious life in constant change towards a progressive future – that the primitive was defined and valued.[7] Modernism's notions of placing primitive cultures in the past affected the opinions on the works of art. In order to be interesting for collectors, and to gain value in the art market, the art objects were supposed to be authentic. This meant that they had to be produced by cultures that had not been in contact with the Western world, that were uncontaminated by Western influences. The objects themselves had to be made for the sake of the culture, for use, for instance, in rituals, and not made to be sold to outsiders.[8] But still, it was artefacts made by the "Other" and valued by a primitivism that, as pointed out by Araeen, is a Western construct not rooted in the culture or the people it refers to.[9] It is interesting how Araeen compare the concept 'Primitivism', which has been used as a categorization of all non-European cultures up until the end of the 19th century, with Edward Said's "Orientalism" from 1978, as both being systems of knowledge about the "Other" – the "Other" in a dichotomy of what is not Western, where the European identity is always superior. He also points to the fact that both concepts comprise specific boundaries, Said enclosing the Orient, whilst primitivism by the mid 20th century mainly enclosed cultures in Africa and Oceania.[10] However, it could also be of interest to mention that Orientalism is but one current of ideas dichotomizing the world. For in response to Orientalism, and as a foundation in a search for a Muslim identity, Occidentalism, characterized by its resistance to everything Western, grew in significance in the Orient. Furthermore, in conformity with Orientalism, Occidentalism also calls attention to the immutable difference between the West, as the "Other", and the Orient, as well as presenting the "Other" as a threat that must be controlled and pacified.[11]

Nevertheless, and as has been discussed earlier, a culmination of the primitivist debate in the arts took place in the 1980s with the discussions surrounding the 1984 exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern*

at MoMA. In this exhibition, modern works of art, such as those of Picasso or for instance Gauguin, were juxtaposed with works by anonymous primitive artists in order to expose aesthetic affinities. With this exhibition, the curator William Rubin wanted "to understand the Primitive sculptures in terms of the Western context in which artists 'discovered' them."[12] He was not at all interested in the objects' function or significance in their cultures of origin, i.e. cultures in Africa and Oceania, in accordance with the concept of primitivism at that time. Instead, the interest was mainly concerning the way primitive objects had influenced Western artists' work and working processes, which had led to the Western artists experimenting with new and different materials, as well as investigations into the non-Western artists' assemblage of different materials. As stressed by James Clifford, these affinities were displayed in accordance with modernist terms, "concerned only with artistic invention, a positive category separable from a negative primitivism of the irrational, the savage, the base, the flight from civilisation."[13] From this point of view, the primitive objects shown could be considered as staging the "Other", their primary purpose being to broaden the notions of modern art, and to present Western artists reactions to, and interest in, these objects. In this sense, the exhibition put forward the primitive as "an aspect of the history of modern art", in which there was no interest in the history of primitive art.[14] Araeen protests against Rubin's display and the content in the catalogue, which he thinks is "an imperialistic enterprise" of the Western world's notion of primitive culture as being admired, but also protected, whilst the modernist artist, which obviously has to be Western and male, as well as the Western visitors to the exhibition, were reminded of their "historical role as an advancing force".[15] Here Araeen is pointing to the core of modernism's apprehension of the primitive, where the "Other" never could become a modernist because it is the difference in itself between the modern and the primitive that upholds the Western perspective. In addition, Western perspective did not regard primitive art objects as art from a Western point of view, they were ethnographical artefacts not looked upon with an aesthetic gaze, which makes it difficult for cross-cultural analyses of indigenous art to be viable.

Cross-culture in Australia

How to reach cross-cultural analysis not emerging from a Western perspective is an issue that has to be argued over and over again. As long as this discussion still derives mostly from Western notions the question whether non-Western art is considered art or not is bound to remain unresolved. From this point of view, it is interesting that there seem to exist special events as from when marking the point

from which there remained no doubt whether or not Aboriginal art was regarded art in Australia. According to Vivien Johnson, this took place in 1986, two years after the MoMA exhibition, with the selection of Michael Nelson Tjakamarra's design of a mosaic decoration for the forecourt of the new Parliament House in Canberra, as well as the inclusion of his paintings in the 1986 Biennale of Sydney.[16] But as has been discussed earlier in the introduction, this was an inclusion that took place only in Australia, because there Aboriginal art was, and still is, part of the art discourse, which is not the case anywhere else in the Western world. For it to be regarded as art in an Australian discourse there must have been changes in the conception of art, which made it possible, as the anthropologist Howard Morphy stresses, to reach a definition that is more encompassing of differences.[17] What has happened in Australia is that the conception of art has moved away from the Western canon, hence allowing and comprehending differences within the arts of differing cultures to remain within a more inclusive category, and also to accept constant changes over time that occur in all art. But if we take a closer look into the inclusion as such, the focus on the artworks was when they already are included, when they have arrived at the gallery.

The global art discourse

To reach a viable cross-cultural definition, Western and Aboriginal art must both be able to contribute to the global discourse of art. Until now, the art world has been defined in accordance with Western notions on art. Eventually, in Australia, it opened its doors and invited Aboriginal art to be part of its context. But this does not mean that Aboriginal art have been invited to contribute to the overall global discourse of art. For this to happen, the Western art world has to start to pay attention to Aboriginal notions of art, and what is regarded art from an Aboriginal point of view, which would then result in influences on both Aboriginal and Western art practices. If Aboriginal notions of art are not taken into account, there is a risk, as Morphy stresses, that changes occurring in this art and its practices will always be perceived as if they were dependent on the movement of Aboriginal art into the Western context, rather than actually being a result of its own trajectory.[18] This is not to say that Aboriginal and indigenous art in general has never been, nor is influenced by Western notions on art and its artistic expressions, an influence that would become more obvious if going both ways.

For non-Western art to be able to contribute to the global discourse it has to be understood on its own terms. This means to incorporate the meaning and significance of the work in its own culture of creation as part of the display when shown

to an audience who is unfamiliar with this art. From a modernist point of view, this could be regarded as a reactionary display presenting the objects in accordance with ethnographic notions with the aesthetic dimension overlooked in favour of function. One way of contemplating this logic could be to relate to the American art critic Clement Greenberg who advocated approaching a work of art with eyes closed, not open them until right in front of the object, which would allow the ideal aesthetic experience, a fresh and unbiased impression without context. This aesthetic experience would provide the means to decide whether or not the artwork in front of the viewer was good. From being a practical exercise Greenberg's notion has led to the attitude that good art always stands out to be recognized by anyone.[19] It is as if this modernist remnant still prevails, although in Aboriginal art the question is not if it is good art, rather than if it is art at all, and hence able to provide an uncluttered aesthetic experience from a Western point of view. On the other hand, viewing art without any information, being non-Western or Western will create an unequal relationship in relation to more well-known works of art. But with Western art this is almost never the case because it has become customary to accompany exhibitions with interpretative writings in order to make a more interesting display, which makes one wonder why information about indigenous art would disturb the aesthetic experience and change the perception from a work of art to an ethnographic artefact? As Morphy points out, if indigenous peoples' own conceptualization of their art were to be observed more closely by the Western art world, this knowledge should constitute the foundation of historical-writing on Aboriginal art. This could then increase the possibilities of art-historical writings on indigenous and non-Western cultures in general, which would lead to new juxtapositions of, and new relationships between, for instance Aboriginal art and other cultures, as well as revealing synergies that have so far been an impossible outcome in an art history that has perceived art from a Western perspective.[20] In order to carry out viable cross-cultural comparisons, the requirement is to understand indigenous art on its own terms. But to develop a cross-cultural category of art, cross-cultural comparisons are not enough. To make this possible the concept of cross-culture also has to encompass a cross-cultural art history, which seems to be long in coming. This is a field of research that has been overlooked for a long while, and that will require new research into the history of indigenous art all over the world. In Australia, Morphy stresses that this is going to require research efforts into collections both in art galleries, and in ethnographic collections of museums of natural and social history, because it was not until the 1980s that art galleries started to collect Aboriginal art to any greater extent.[21] From an art-historical point

of view, a cross-cultural category of art must be of interest, by no means least in relation to the far-reaching notions of developing a world art history. It is to be hoped that the intentions for this new category are not to extend already existing inequality, or to force indigenous traditions to be adjusted and added to the Western framework. For Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, head of Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland, it is imperative that indigenous art and art history be given the possibility to develop globally before forging the development of a world art history.[22] However, there must also be hope for this new category to be more inclusive of differences in addition to having blurred and flexible boundaries.

Nevertheless, regarding works that are designated fine art, there exist an almost built-in problem regarding indigenous art, which could be defined as the dual nature of the process of creation. According to the anthropologist Jacques Maquet, this dual nature takes effect when he distinguishes between "art by destination and art by metamorphosis," signifying respectively indigenous art created to be viewed as fine art according to Western definitions, and art that has a function in the artists' own societies, for example art created for ceremony. The former is already destined for the fine art market by the artists during its creation, while the latter is metamorphosed into the Western art category through artist, collectors, dealers and art galleries of the West, which according to this process become the actual creators of this art.[23] For Aboriginal people, this has never been a problem which Morphy exemplifies with a work produced by a Yolngu artist that could be categorised as both art by metamorphosis and art by destination. The work described is a body painting, made on men's and boys' torsos in a circumcision ceremony, as well as painted in acrylic on a canvas destined for the Queensland Art Gallery.[24] For Aboriginal artists, the creation process and the value of a painting is not concerned with whether or not it is created for ceremony or for sale in the art market. Instead, the painting is valued according to the Dreaming presented on the canvas.[25] As noted by Marcia Langton, an Australian anthropologist of Aboriginal descent, it is difficult to establish the value of Aboriginal art which is in circulation on the global market, because Aboriginal art "holds multiple values simultaneously."[26] To establish value both the market value and the non-market value have to be identified in order to understand the work of art in its own terms. Thus, to be able to determine the value of Aboriginal art it is necessary to understand both the history of the work of art and the history of the artists, the significance of the work of art in its culture of origin in addition to having an understanding of the Aboriginal society and the artists' encounter with the rest of the world. But when an Aboriginal work of art is displayed either as art or an ethnographic artefact the work will

never be given the possibility to be analysed and interpreted cross-culturally. This means that the question of defining art cross-culturally intersects with how value is created, and when the creation of value takes place simultaneously in the production of Aboriginal art locally, in remote Aboriginal communities for ceremonial use, and in the production of fine art for sale on the global market, the Western art world is confronted with a complication that remains to be solved. Nevertheless, and as has been discussed earlier, the creation of value from a Western point of view is dependent on the willingness of art collectors and various art institutions to pay a lot of money to acquire these objects for their beauty and aesthetic value to be exhibited in art galleries and museums of fine art. Until the first decade of the twenty-first century, this has not encompassed a viable cross-cultural definition. When, or if, we reach a cross-cultural definition of art emerging from both a Western and a non-Western perspective, hopefully it will be a matter of course to conduct cross-cultural analysis going both ways. But regarding the fact that Aboriginal art has been regarded art in Australia since the 1980s, does this mean that the concept of cross-culture is valid for contemporary art in Australia today? To be able to verify the validity of this discussion I will try to examine the concept of cross-culture more closely through the art practices and artworks by four artists from Australia, who have been, or still are, working in an Australian context.

Contemporary art and contemporaneity

According to Arthur C. Danto, it was the "unimaginability of future art" that made us continue in thinking about art in periods, forming a master narrative for Western art history.[27] After modernism, when the great narrative defining traditional, as well as modernist art, came to an end, it was succeeded by contemporary art which does not allow itself to be represented by any master narratives. Or as Hans Belting stresses, contemporary art "manifests an awareness of a history of art" but does not carry it forward, again pointing to the fact that contemporary art no longer subscribes to a great narrative as marking the historical sensibility of the present, which is what defines the difference between modern and contemporary art.[28] Freed from the pale of history, or rather "outside the pale of history," in an Hegelian sense, contemporary art is without narrative direction, meaning that everything is possible and permitted, and that contemporary artists could make art any way they like, without concern for former historical unfolding, and "for any purposed they wished or, for no purpose at all."[29] Hence, the intention and realization of contemporary art could be understood as too pluralistic to be captured in

a single dimension, which is why "it's a condition of perfect aesthetic entropy."[30] But what critical principles can there be when everything is allowed, and how can one define contemporary art other than through what is estranged from former traditional and modernist art?

Contemporary art, as it appears from Danto's and Beltings discussions, as well as from the answers to the first question I asked in the interviews, is a concept that is quite hard to unfold. Continuing both Danto's and Belting's attempts to define contemporary art, Terry Smith proposes that contemporary art is the general category for art of the present and the resent past that describes as well as replaces both modern and postmodern art. It functions as a default term for a persisting modernism and a residual postmodernism. Hence, artists of today are working, and making art, in accordance with the cultures of modernity and postmodernity. Both are cultures that, according to Smith, are predominantly visual, and "driven by image, spectacle, attraction and celebrity", which is what contemporary artists have to deal with to a much greater degree than their predecessors had to do.[31] By no means least has contemporary art become an institutional and international network through which art of the present is displayed all over the world. It communicates via its own network, has its own discourses, museums and markets, and generates its own value.

One word that needs to be defined in this passage is spectacle, deriving from Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* published in 1967, where Debord criticizes the modern society from a Marxist point of view, and mainly commodity fetishism in relation to contemporary mass media. In modern societies, modern conditions of production have prevailed and therefore present themselves as mere clusters of spectacle, where the spectacle is "both outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production."[32] The manifestation of the spectacle itself takes place through advertisement, news, and propaganda, as well as the consumption of entertainment, which sums up as the model for social life. Hence, what was once directly lived now presents itself as representations in a society of spectacle, and as such has become the core of unreality in those societies. This means that in a society of spectacle everything is mere appearance. These are notions that Smith applies on the art of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when many artists began to be drawn to advertising and the superficial and hyperreal world of media. A so-called spectacle art created a new strand in contemporary art that submitted to the media spectacle and as such became only entertainment. This was, for instance, obvious in Great Britain with the "yBay", or Young British Artists, who were exposed with the help of the Saatchi Gallery in London. Jeff Koons is another artist whose art

Smith presents as an example of contemporary art that has surrendered "its critical impulse" and become "just another hot item in the shop window of current visual culture."[33] But needless to say, this spectacularization is what made contemporary art popular, and the fact that this art also started to appropriate the visual language of fashion, made it even more catchy.

What is contemporary art?

As has been stated, contemporary art is a replacement for modernism and postmodernism; it is art made now as mentioned by the curators in the interviews, but also the art of the present that carries the ideological baggage of modernism, and as such it has become a general category. Because the term "contemporary art" also describes both modern and postmodern art, it represents something more than just the art of the present. This, however, does not mean that contemporary art is the dominant style of the present period. Contemporary art is not a style, and contemporary could never be a period. Contemporary is always contemporary, always present, whenever in time. As a matter of fact, Smith states that there has not been a dominant style in art since the 1970s, since Minimalism and Conceptualism. In the late 1980s people in the art world started to question whether there was ever going to be a dominant style again. Had art reached the end of art? as Arthur C. Danto proposes in *Art after the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History.*

> So just as 'modern' has come to denote a style and even a period, and not just *recent* art, 'contemporary' has come to designate something more than simply the art of the present moment. In my view, moreover, it designates less a period than what happens after there are no more periods in some master narrative of art, and less a style of making art than a style of using styles.[34]

From this point of view, contemporary could be looked upon as periodless which could be understood as not being subject to historical progress, a condition that is "out of time" and only exists in the present. On the other hand, one of the central meanings of the word "contemporary" pinpointed by Smith is "'at the same time,' coeval, contemporaneous, simultaneous."[35] This forwards the discussion to an Australian context, focusing on contemporary as synonymous with simultaneous, in that Australia experiences various distinct kinds of contemporary art with different time conceptions, produced simultaneously in cultures that are closely connected. In this sense, he could be referring to Aboriginal art and non-Aboriginal art, but also to hybrid art that is emerging in between them. This is contemporary art because, according to Smith, it communicates "across the divide between cultures,"

and as such it grasps the driving spirit of the contemporary.[36] Its contemporaneity lies in the fact that it exists in double-time, in the void of temporal differences between two cultures that are incomparable. This is an interesting discussion, and I wonder if this is the point of departure of defining, and setting in use, the concept of contemporaneity, because this simultaneity of indigenous and non-indigenous art is also something that Smith wrote about approximately at the same time in his book *Transformations in Australian Art: The Twentieth Century – Modernism and Aboriginality*.[37]

The concept of contemporaneity

The concept of contemporaneity, on the other hand, could be understood as an exploration of how the complexity of being in time is expressed visually, or rather "how cultures around the world conceive of and construct their present and the concept of presentness visually," which makes this concept no less hard to unfold than contemporary art.[38] The bigger picture of contemporaneity, which Smith has discussed since 2001, consists of different ways of picturing the world, where Smith is of the opinion that contemporaneity provide the most evident characteristics in that it encompasses a wide range of qualities, "from the ideoscape of global politics to the interiority of individual being."[39] In this sense, contemporaneity provides a functional all-embracing framework, which the achievements and failings of modernist, colonial and indigenous art never were able to provide. It is the situations within contemporaneity that shapes the art. However, contemporaneity in turn is shaped by antinominal friction that resists universal generalization, as stressed by Smith. The antinominal friction is what Smith is trying to pinpoint in order to grasp the bigger, but not generalized, picture of what drives the art and art practices within contemporaneity. In doing so, he sets out to describe three antinomies which he thinks is dominate contemporary life.

The first antinomy concerns globalization and its thirst for hegemony in a world with accelerating cultural differences due to decolonization, which accordingly has led to an increased differentiation of the conception and experience of time, because temporalities in cultures vary, a fact globalization seeks, but has not yet succeeded to control. Another struggle within globalization is the ongoing exploitation of natural and virtual resources, which are two reasons among others that will eventually overturn globalization. The second antinomy points to the facts of how the increasing inequality in contemporary life among individuals, peoples and classes is threatening the desire of domination maintained by states, ideologies and religions, but this also threatens the unceasing dreams of liberation

upheld by individual and peoples. The third antinomy points to a rift within the spectacle- and image-governed economy that confirms the insecure coexistence in the infoscape – or the regime of representation, between specialised but "closed-knowledge communities," and open fundamentalist associations in the age of information.[40] This antinominal friction points to a globalized art world that is far from stable. It is subject to constant tension and as such it provides Smith with a point of departure that makes the concept of contemporaneity open to various possible interpretations on the one hand, while on the other hand there is a danger that it will become insipid and risk missing the mark.

The residual tendency

There are many different situations present in contemporaneity, but in order to grasp the overall picture Smith has distinguished three strong tendencies: one residual, one prevailing and one that is emergent.[41] The residual tendency was shaped in the 1980s, in economically advanced societies committed to spectacle capitalism locally as well as globally. The artists working according to this tendency constantly return to the notions of Modernism in that they are recycle modernist values both in their practices and in their works of art.[42] But it is foremost the efforts of the institutions of modern art, or of contemporary art as they often are labeled today, and their initiative to revive and renovate these modernist notions that influences contemporaneity in art. Smith further suggests that in this tendency there are two kinds of artists working according to parallel art practices, which eventually merge into a third. The first group consist of artists that tackle their experiences of living in contemporaneity through creating personal works of art mixing different mediums, as well as video and new media, resulting in installations, performances and environmental works of art.[43] He also stresses that these works of art could sometimes be sensational, through an engagement in "spectacular repetitions of avant-garde shock tactics," which is primarily visible in the art of Damien Hirst, and as such this strand could be called "retro-sensationalism."[44] Jeff Koons is another artist that Smith mentions as a retro-sensationalist in that he parodies consumption, and similar art practices has been taken up by young artists in Japan, such as Takashi Murakami. The paralleling of art practices has been going on since the 1980s, but the second practice is older than the former and called "remodernism." The artists within this group are not as contemporary as the retro-sensationalists in that they transform traditional mediums such as sculpture together with a recycling of for instance minimalist notions, as in Richard Serra's work *Web List* from 1966–67 and *Torqued Ellipses* from 2000.[45] The third art practice has occurred through a

merging of the two former ones, which according to Smith results in "the aesthetic of globalization." He goes on to name Matthew Barney as an example of this unification, and for the consummation as such he suggests using the term "Spectacle Art" or "Spectacularism."[46] Smith also stresses that there are several architects that work according to this fusion, for example Frank Gehry and Santiago Calatrava.

When Smith stresses that "the aesthetic of globalization" derives from the merge between remodernism and retro-sensationalism he is situating this aesthetic within a Western context, because, as pointed out by the Swedish art historian Charlotte Bydler, the aesthetic ideals of modernism, fixed by the West, was conceived as an universal language, which makes "the aesthetic of globalisation" all Western.[47] This fact is stipulated further, as Smith's context also includes the spectacle, which is manifested in advertisement, consumption, entertainment, propaganda and news, presenting itself as representations – the core of unreality – where everything becomes mere appearance.

The prevailing tendency

The prevailing tendency focuses on major cultural changes taking place world-wide due to decolonization, which, according to Smith, has resulted in a postcolonial turn. The works of art coming out of this tendency question local and national values, such as endangered national identities depending upon the facts of dislocation resulting in diasporic cultures, as well as the possibilities of independence, and issues of dispossession, identity and diversity, from an anticolonial point of view. But they also deal with thorough and critical investigations of globalization in general. Almost all the works of art deriving from these postcolonial issues circulates on the international art circuit, or the global art market, consisting of Biennales, Triennials and Documentas, which means that these artworks participate in a constant and ongoing dialogue between the local and global.[48] The artists are mostly from countries and cultures that have been part of former "Euramerican empires," for instance in Africa, Oceania, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, which all have been subject to decolonization since the 1960s. Due to the fact that China has also been subject to rapid and revolutionary cultural changes since the 1980s, artists in China are aiming to profile themselves as individual artists within the global art world. But there are also artists from advanced economies that, as Smith stresses, "critically trace and strikingly display the global movements of the new world order and disorder," and others that focus on environmental issues, both social and natural, that undermine the ecological balance. Yet others are exploring the conceptual, social, material and economical structures of the World Wide Web.[49]

Another aspect, put forward by Smith, of how artists question contemporary life today originated in the years surrounding 1989, when the shift from modern to contemporary art became evident all over the world in a way he thinks most of us remember, but might not yet have fully grasped its outcome. This shift emerged out of long-lasting conflicts that erupted during 1989, beginning on 4 June with the massacre in Tiananmen square in Beijing; continuing on 9 November with the opening of the Berlin Wall and spreading to Czechoslovakia and the collapse of Soviet communist rule with Václav Havel, a former playwright writer and politician becoming the first president of the free Czech Republic and finally culminate in December with the revolutionary week in Romania, ending with the ousting of Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife. Those events, Smith argues, has inspired artists working in "the advanced economies" to criticize spectacle capitalism and globalization through tracing and displaying the changes that constantly appears in the world today. Smith exemplifies this tendency with works by, for instance, the South African artist William Kentridge, the Australian artist Gordon Bennett, the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson and the Scottish artist Andy Goldsworthy.

The international art circuit with its nomadic exhibitions touring the world seems to be a global phenomenon but this does not mean that this is the case in reality, or that the concept of contemporaneity could be applied on all art, all over the world, or could it? Both the art circuit and contemporaneity are, in similarity with the concept of cross-culture, constructed from a Western perspective, and as such they might benefit from a critical scrutiny from a non-Western perspective. However, the notion of a postcolonial turn, widened also to include Chinese art, is an interesting fact that probably needs to be expanded even further in concurrence with the all-embracing changes constantly taking place all over the world. But does this automatically lead to a dystopian new world (dis)order?

The emerging tendency

The artists in the emerging tendency are the result of generational change set in motion after the former two tendencies have unfolded. The artists are often young and inspired by the tendencies already mentioned, which sometimes lead to more sensational works of art, as those by the Young British Artists. But this blend, as well as the possibility of working in between the former tendencies, also results in artists committing more to political action in their works of art that are often very recent and up-to-date. For them, it is all about the immediate and to grasp the rapid changes concerning the nature of time, place, media and mood – four thematic issues that Smith discerns within all three tendencies with which most artists working

within contemporaneity are concerned. When taking a closer look at these themes they evolve as; Time – what is it to be in time? To live in the present overloaded with past times and future times. What is the nature of time in a world where there are different speeds and different time conceptions, as discussed above, according to indigenous and non-indigenous art? Place – a situated ethics of being in place settled or to be stuck and locked out, or to be threatened to become dislocated, exiled, deprived one's roots. Mediation – what happens when all communication is transmediated through virtual communicative networks and becomes hyperreal? Mood – expressed as affect/effectivity by Smith – a question of what is the feeling of this as opposed to the analysis of this, of being in these situations? The experience of the above themes can never be universal; they are always personal and symbolized or manifested by the artists, individually or through temporary alliances that are to be found in one place and as such they are located, but they can also be nomadic. The affect with an outcome in effect sometimes shifts the circumstances of these themes.[51] According to Smith, it is mainly young artists that make visible their feelings of the strange sense of being that we are experiencing in the world today. In their art they raise for instance questions about the nature of time and different temporalities, of the right to belong to a place or the risk of being dislocated, and the constantly alienated hyperreality, as well as being concerned with antiglobalization.[52] Apart from the yBay artists Smith also mentions The Yes Men activist duo of United States, addressing antiglobalization, and the time capsules by Mariko Mori from Japan.

It seems as if Smith is trying to cover every angle of art made in the present, all over the world, in his definition of contemporaneity. Throughout his writings, he makes an effort to verify his notions with the help of artists and their work, as well as architects and their buildings in his latest work. I think the concept of contemporaneity is an interesting approach of how it might be possible to interpret the time in which we all are living trough art, as well as the other way around. But Smith has been unfolding his notions on this concept for nearly ten years, and every so often he still finds it necessary to define it, which could be an indication of the fact that it has not yet been sanctioned in art historical circles. Nor am I entirely convinced that his definition and interpretations apply universally, which is why I will try to scrutinize the concept of contemporaneity more closely, and in similarity with the concept cross-culture, I will do this through art practices and artworks of four artists who have been, or still are, working in an Australian context.

5.
Four artists and their work

The four artists that I have chosen to discuss, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Ricky Swallow, Fiona Foley and John Young, represent the tendencies pointed out by the informants in the interviews. Through this method of selection I have been able to reflect on the current art scene in Australia at this time, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This selection has also made it possible for me to investigate further various topics of interest, which differ with each artist, making the presentations quite different in length and content. For instance, the main discussion concerning Emily Kame Kngwarreye and her work deals with her being a traditional Aboriginal artist, who worked in a remote community in the Northern Territory. Her art is all about her country and depicts her ancestral Dreamings, which for a Western observer, if not having any knowledge of Aboriginal life and society, or of the iconography used in the artworks, could be quite hard to unfold and understand. Ricky Swallow, on the other hand, represents a young white Australian artist working within a Western context, which might be why the presentation of him and his artworks is shorter in length, although not in content, because this is an art practice that I as a Swedish, and hence Western, art historian, am familiar with. Fiona Foley, in turn, represents a city-based Aboriginal artist, her art and art practice locates itself both in an Aboriginal and a Western context, giving me possibilities to combine notions from these differing cultures, although Foley provides her own blend, often quite subversive and political. Finally, John Young is an artist of Chinese descent, and as such represents an Asian-Australian tendency. He is also a diaspora artist, a concept that is common in the global art world, which I was interested in examining further, as well as more closely scrutinizing his art practice leading up to the *Double Ground Paintings*, through which his double bind of being both Chinese and Australian could be highlighted.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye

Emily Kame Kngwarreye (c. 1910–1996) could be categorised as traditional Aboriginal artist who worked on ancestral land. After having seen a lot of traditional Aboriginal works of art during my journeys crisscrossing Australia, I was astonished when I first saw Kngwarreye's black and white Yam Dreaming series in a commercial art gallery in the costal town of Broome, in the far north of Western Australia. These canvases were different from what I had become accustomed to. It was as if she had developed Aboriginal traditional art further, taking a step away from the "traditional" iconography depicted by the Central Desert Movement. At the same time, however, they narrated her Dreamings, as well as depicting her everyday life, and her duties to her own Country. However, as mentioned by Jaynie Anderson in connection with the CIHA (Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art) conference held in Melbourne in 2008, Australia is a country where everyone is considered an immigrant.[1] From this point of view, Emily Kame Kngwarreye could be looked upon as an immigrated artist working within a cross-cultural context, like every other immigrated artist working in Australia. The only significant bearing upon this assertion, however, would be the fact that Kngwarreye could not have been able to create her paintings without being provided with Western materials such as canvas and acrylic paint. But this does not mean that there were no cross-cultural notions in her artworks or her art practice. To try to perceive Kngwarreye's oeuvre from the perspective of contemporaneity seems to be slightly harder, but I will nonetheless examine it where possible.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye was an Australian indigenous artist who lived and worked on ancestral land in the remote community of Utopia, in Northern Territory. She belonged to the Anmatyerre language group spoken in the Country of Alhalkere, one place or Country of five integrated in the community of Utopia. The other four Aboriginal Countries constituting Utopia, named after the ancestors who formed them, are Rreltye, Thelye, Atarrkete and Ingutanka. The families living on ancestral land are custodians of their countries, elucidating the Aboriginal custom of belonging to a particular place. Kngwarreye's Country of Alhalkere is located in the desert 230 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs, and according to Margo Neale, the source for all Kngwarreye's artwork.[2] She belonged to this Country, which was reinforced by her traditional upbringing teaching her, as a custodian, the responsibilities that she, and every Aboriginal person, has for their Country.[3]

Emily Kame Kngwarreye began her artistic carrier late in life. In 1988, when she was in her mid-seventies, she made her first acrylic painting. Before this, Kngwarreye, together with the women of the community of Utopia, had been creating batik for more than ten years as members of the Utopia Women's Batik Group. This group was one of many integrated in a broad adult education programme which sought to teach Aboriginal people living in remote communities various skills such as sewing, tie-dying, wood-block printing, how to drive a car and how to make silk batik.[4] The programme, active throughout Aboriginal Australia and supported by the Australian Government, was the result of a long struggle for land rights, which in 1976 led the Government to shift its policy, to finally give Aboriginal people, mainly in the Northern Territory, rights to their land.[5] This made it possible for the people descendent from Utopia to move back to their traditional land, which also gave the women the opportunity to start making batik in 1977. The Utopia Women Batik Group was, as pointed out by Wally Caruana, a communal project "operating on an egalitarian basis", meaning that all the women worked on the same terms, all of them equally encouraged to create artworks in batik.[6]

In a similar spirit of working on egalitarian basis, Christopher Hodges describes how Rodney Gooch, the manager of the CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association) shop, an Aboriginal-owned and operated organization in Alice Springs, launched a large project in the late 1980s with the Utopia Women's Batik Group called "A Picture Story". The idea for this project was that each woman would tell her own story, hence the name, and depict it using silk batik. Everyone who wanted to participate was welcome. The batiks narrated different aspects of the women's lives as lived in the small Aboriginal communities constituting Utopia. Christopher Hodges had the advantage of seeing all the artworks, and of listening to the women tell their specific stories while identifying "their myriad of motifs." This resulted in documentation where he writes about how he could identify the women's families and peers, as well as depicting animals and designs deriving from the women's body painting, to be explained further below.

> Picture planes were filled with plant forms, and animals and their tracks presented narratives. Bold designs derived from body painting combined with abstracted forms to create startling images, and around the edge of most were border designs also derived from body painting.[7]

Ultimately, 88 silk batiks were completed and exhibited in Adelaide, Perth, Sydney, Paris, Bangkok and Dublin.[8] The last time "A Picture Story" was on display was in 2008 at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC.[9] After the success of

"A Picture Story" back in 1988, another project began in the same year. This time the material was acrylic paint on canvas, due to the fact that painting was considered high art selling for a higher price, while batik was more expensive to make and sold for less money.[10] The name of the new project was "A Summer Project", and like "A Picture Story," it was also organised by CAAMA and carried out in the communities of Utopia. "A Summer Project" was arranged around the idea of getting the women in the Utopia Women's Batik Group to create artworks on canvas instead of batik. Late in 1988, one hundred blank canvases were delivered, which resulted in feverish creativity amongst the women and, as told by Margo Neale, as many as 81 canvases were finished just in a few weeks.[11] One of those canvases was *Emu Woman* by Kngwarreye.

Emu Woman, 1988–1989, (see picture 23)

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 92.0×61.0 cm. The Holmes à Court Collection, Heytesbury.

The *Emu Woman* by Emily Kame Kngwarreye is considered her first painting on canvas – synthetic polymer paint on canvas. When it was on display for the first time, in Sydney, it was immediately recognised as an interesting canvas and compared to modernist abstract works of art.[12] But how could this elderly Aboriginal woman, in her seventies, living in the central desert without Western schooling, and little knowledge, as well as interest, in modernist art, create this astonishing abstract painting? One answer could be, as pointed out by Terry Smith, that Aboriginal cultures are visual and performative, based on images and not on written text, which means that Aboriginal people have long experience in visualizing and performing their stories through ceremonies.[13] Hence, as an elder woman Kngwarreye had been creating art in different mediums for a long time. She had learnt to uphold Aboriginal law and her Country from a young age through painting her Dreamings on to the body and in the sand, which first became permanently visible in her batik on silk, and later in her paintings on canvas. The visuality of Aboriginal culture results in images depicting conceptual maps of the artist's country. They are reproduced reflections of mythological proportions, and not depictions of the landscape like maps in according with a Western point of view, and as such do not reproduce real features of terrain or depict any actual geographical relations. This, however, does not mean that Kngwarreye reflects on its abstractness. For her it was all about painting her Country.

Whole lot, that's whole lot, Awelye (my Dreaming), Arlatyeye (pencil yam),
Arkerrthe (mountain devil lizard), Ntange (grass seed), Tingu (Dreamtime pup),
Ankerre (emu), Intekwe (favourite food of emus, a small plant), Atnwerle (green
bean), and Kame (yam seed). That's what I paint, whole lot.[14]

This statement made by Emily Kame Kngwarreye in 1990 is often referred to
when her art is discussed. "Whole lot" – which could be translated as everything
under the sun in her country – has almost become a distinguishing mark for
Kngwarreye's oeuvre.

Like all Aboriginal artists making art deriving from traditional life, Emily
Kame Kngwarreye created her paintings sitting on the ground. If the canvas was
large she would sit on top of it, filling it with her story according to her reach and
slowly moving around it as the story became visible. This is also a good description
of how narration is presented in Aboriginal paintings made by artists living and
working on ancestral land. There is no actual beginning or end to the story that is
being told. The presentation meanders back and forth from ancient times up to the
day the painting is made. This is also why the presentation of a painting can vary.
Sometimes the one and the same painting could be presented vertically – standing
on its edge, and on other occasions horizontally – lying down. However, late in
Kngwarreye's life, when the Queensland Art Gallery commissioned the *Utopia
Panels* in 1996, which was to become her last major commission, the blank canvases
were all made one meter wide. This was as told by Neale, "out of consideration
for her advancing years," because she was no longer able to sit on the ground and
move around the canvas. Her old age made it necessary to sit on a chair, and to
paint on upright canvases that had the exact "width of her reach from a seated
painting position."[15]

Before I try to describe and interpret the painting *Emu Woman,* there is a
need to further discuss what made Kngwarreye such an interesting artist. Since
the beginning of the 1970s, when the "dot" painting movement, or the Central
Desert Movement, started in the Aboriginal community of Papunya Tula, dots
and a specific sign system are what signify a traditional Aboriginal painting. Dots,
together with an Aboriginal iconography, described earlier through a painting
by the artist Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, consisting of "signs" that according
to Roger Benjamin depict "seated persons, animal or human tracks, implements,
water, clouds, and – above all – the concentric circle and track motifs which mark
interconnected physical features of the land..."[16] These are the most significant
signs that structure paintings from the Central Desert of Australia. Kngwarreye,

on the other hand, takes this iconography to another level, or rather releases this iconography with her vigorous brush strokes, multiple layering of dots, and vivid explosion of colours.

In the painting *Emu Woman,* it is the richness of colours and patterns totally covering the rectangular canvas, when displayed placed on its end, that capture the eye. One way for me to comprehend and visualize this painting is through layers, where the uppermost layer consists of a swarm of circular dots in yellow, ochre, black, and white. The most visible formation in the layer beneath the dots is a doubling of two curved lines in yellow/white and black/yellow. They are depicted almost in the centre of the painting and form two semicircles with the circular formation facing down. Yet below the two semicircles, straight stripes create three patterns, each with one long line pointing in a somewhat vertical direction, from which several shorter lines emanate almost at right angles on both sides. The pattern to the right, as well as the one on the left, both continue upward beside the two semicircles. The colours used in these patterns are mostly white and yellow, with a few of the shorter stripes painted in black. Above the semicircles there are several shapes, smaller in size but very much like the three patterns below the semicircles covering the surface. In the uppermost right corner of the canvas there is yet another formation in yellow, consisting of a yellow circle divided into two halves. Inside each half there are shapes resembling the figure one. On the left the figure is turned the right way round, and to the right the figure is inverted.

The dots in the uppermost layer seem to be scattered in an arbitrary fashion throughout the whole canvas, but upon closer examination they actually follows the shapes and patterns below. However, at the bottom end of the canvas, in the centre, dots in yellow, black and ochre are densely painted together without any direction due to the fact that there are no stripes beneath the dots. The background and bottom layer of the painting are covered with reddish-blue/violet paint.

When looking at the canvas, the first shapes to be noticed are the two semicircles, or bowl formations, practically in the centre of the painting. Then the patterns of almost vertical stripes with shorter stripes attached to them at almost straight angles become visible. In order to make an interpretation of this work one has to ask what these shapes refer to. It could be bowls, or a depiction of women breasts, and the formations of stripes could depict human ribcages, or feathers from the emu, which leads the interpretation towards a ceremonial painting on a woman's body. Together with the formation in the uppermost right corner of the canvas – the yellow circle divided into two halves, which could be emu footprints, and the title *Emu Woman*, suggesting a woman as well as the emu to be involved, this painting

probably narrates "women business." Women business is the Aboriginal way of naming women's ceremonies, and in this case honouring the emu ancestor, with women painting the Emu Dreaming on their chests. This is also an interpretation made by Margo Neale.[17]

For me, the shapes of the breasts and the human ribcages indicate that this painting is all about a women's ceremony. Concerning the title, *Emu Woman*, knowing that the emu's only habitat is Australia, and the fact that it is present in the coat of arms of Australia, together with a kangaroo – the official symbol of Australia – my interpretation started out in a political direction. My first notion was of Kngwarreye showing that she as an Anmatyerre elderly belonged to the country of Australia, and in a broader sense this is the case, but for her the country she belonged to was foremost Alhalkere. In this regard, Wally Caruana puts forward an event supporting a possible political connotation when he explains how the Utopian women used traditional body painting in a political action in the late seventies. In order to present their claims to their land in legal proceedings, the women of Utopia painted their bodies for ceremony and appeared in court, a successful action eventually gaining the people of Utopia title to their land.[18]

The colours used by Kngwarreye in *Emu Woman*, black, red, yellow and white on a violet undercoat I also trace back to political events. Except for violet, they are all natural colours of the land. Black from the charcoal from campfires, red and yellow ochre dug directly from the earth in Alhalkere, and white from pipe clay and chalk, also from the Country of Alhalkere. For Aboriginal people, black, red, yellow and white have significant meaning. Part of this significance can be seen in the colours of the Aboriginal flag, designed in 1971 by the Aboriginal artist Harold Thomas belonging to the Luritja language group spoken in the Australian Western Desert. This flag with its yellow circle placed in the centre on a black and red ground and equally divided horizontally into two fields with the black field above the red, was originally designed as a protest flag for the land rights movement of Indigenous Australians. In this context, there is the common apprehension that black symbolizes the Aboriginal peoples' black skin, red the dry earth, and yellow the burning sun. Today, this flag still bears political connotations, but it has also become a general symbol for Aboriginal people in Australia. White is not connected with politics; instead this colour often symbolizes the spiritual connections with, or the spiritual presence of, the ancestors in most traditional Aboriginal art. In this case white, mostly in the stripe formations, which also could be regarded as feathers from the emu, Kngwarreye's Dreaming ancestor, could be interpreted as representing the spiritual presence of the emu making the women strong when

painted on their bodies, as well as a representation of Kngwarreye's country. And again it could be interpreted as a political act, in accordance with an utterance stressed in 1993 by the Yirrkala leader Galarrwuy Yunupingu who stated: "We paint to show the rest of the world that we own this country and that the land owns us. Our painting is a political act."[19] A political act in the shape of a painting reproducing body art that derives from visual and performative Aboriginal culture.

Margo Neale, however, connects this painting with the Yam Dreaming, to be discussed further below, in describing the formations of stripes as the "growth pattern of the yam," referring to them as "white skeletal linear forms." These structures are also suggested by Neale to be interpreted as "plants used by women to make a substance for cleansing the body before animal fat and then ochres are applied in preparation for women's ceremonies."[20] She goes on to comment on the juxtaposition with the breast formations and other shapes she compares to plants "and related body markings." According to Neale, they reveal Kngwarreye's "exploration of Yam Dreaming and other Dreamings" mostly performed in women's ceremonies named *Awelye*.[21] Overall, marks made on the body for ceremony always relate the person thus marked to her or his clan, their Country and their Dreaming ancestors – in Kngwarreye's case the emu.[22] The connection Neale finds with the Emu Dreaming is through the overall design mimicking the marks made on women's chests depicting the emu's favourite food of fruit and seeds, painted in abstracted formations on the breasts in homage to the emu ancestor.[23]

After Rain, 1990, (see picture 24)

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 211.0×121.8 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest.

After Rain is also a rectangular canvas placed on its end, but this painting is almost twice the size of *Emu Woman*. The way I choose to visualize and comprehend the shapes and patterns in *Emu Woman* is also viable for *After Rain*. As in *Emu Woman,* the uppermost layer in *After Rain* consists of a swarm of dots in various colours, mainly different hues of green, a lesser amount in yellow and black, and a few dots in ochre. The overall impression is a glimmering greenish-yellow due to the amount of green dots, and the fact that the yellow dots are painted densely together creating a yellowish pattern, with sprinklings of black dots. The greenish-yellow swarm covers a vast area stretching alongside the upper, right and lower sides of the canvas. The left-hand side and the centre of the canvas are in a more reddish tone since the dots in this area are mostly of ochre with streaks of yellow and black. In the layer beneath the dots, a pink pattern in a grid formation can be

seen dimly. It consists of almost straight lines running in two directions. A few vertical stripes stretch all across the canvas, with a myriad of shorter horizontal stripes in between, from the bottom to the top. The background is painted in a greenish-brown hue, or rather it could be another set of dots creating the overall appearance of a background upon which the pink pattern appears, like a network of roads in green lush country, as if covered by green and yellow plants.

However, Emily Kame Kngwarreye's country is placed in the middle of the red desert in Central Australia, so what is it we are looking at, knowing that Kngwarreye always refer to her country? The title, *After Rain,* must be of considerable importance in interpreting this painting. In the Central Australian red desert it hardly rains, but when it does the red dirt is instantly transformed into a lush growth of vegetation. Seeds scattered in the sand all over the desert await the rain, and when it comes they can bloom for a short while, totally changing the scenery. It can be asked if the pink pattern appearing like a network of roads represents dirt roads crisscrossing the remote community of Utopia, and especially the Country of Alhalkere in the Northern Territory? Or does the pink grid represent something of which I have no knowledge, not being Aboriginal, and coming from Sweden? Are the more reddish areas the red dirt shining through the lush green in sparse zones with not enough seeds to bloom?

The green and yellow dots giving the canvas its glimmering impression probably derive from Kngwarreye's major Dreaming story, the *Arlatyeye*, narrating the importance of the pencil yam.[24] The significant of the Yam for Emily Kame Kngwarreye is not just present in her artwork, but also in her name. According to Margo Neale, *Kame* is the Anmatyerre word for yam seed.[25] From the seeds, the Yam grows beneath the ground into an edible large, tubular sweet potato. Above the ground the yam is visible as a creeper trailing in the red dirt, with bright green leaves and small yellow flowers, hence the green and yellow glimmering. The pink grid pattern below the dots also derives from the Yam Dreaming, but this special pattern is something Kngwarreye have developed from her earlier batiks, for instance the *Emu Dreaming* from 1988, as pointed out by Neale.[26] This specific batik is framed with a stylized pattern of the yam depicted as organic lines of energy. The yam as live-giving force in the harsh conditions of the red desert is executed in a stylized pattern. Concerning the reddish areas, I keep to my first assumption of red dirt shining through the lush green vegetation in sparse zones with not enough seeds to bloom. Overall, this painting could be looked upon as being all about her country, showing how it changes after the rain, highlighting the specific importance of the yam.

Yam Dreaming, 1996, (see picture 25)

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 110.4×126.6 cm. Private collection.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye's paintings from the *Yam Dreaming* series consists solely of two colours, black and white – black wide brushstrokes on a white background. In *Yam Dreaming,* from 1996, the black brushstrokes float across the surface creating an irregular, abstract pattern, almost like a continuous but tangled grid, forming amorphous shapes. It is as if the black pattern had been created out of one prolonged brushstroke. But upon taking a closer look, I realize that this is impossible because the artist would have had to refill the brush with paint again and again in order to continue the stroke throughout the canvas. In some places the brushstrokes are thick in deep black, after which they slowly fade as the paint runs out. Kngwarreye does not always continue with a full brush, picking up a fading stroke, instead it seems as if she starts at the deep black end, resulting in areas rich in contrast between black and white, while other areas consist of continuous fading strokes.

Regarding this canvas, one could think that the importance of the yam for Kngwarreye, and the people of Alhalkere, is mainly visible in its title. At first glance the painting seems to depict the dry landscape of the desert, with the ground cracking due to the drought constantly present in Central Australia. In conformity with *After Rain*, and the majority of Aboriginal paintings, it is a landscape reproduced from above, as if the artist and the viewers are gazing down from a bird's eye perspective, or from an aeroplane. However, if *Yam Dreaming* depicts the landscape of Utopia, the colours would rather be red and black instead of black and white, would they not?

Nevertheless, the painting is all about the Yam Dreaming and the presence of the yam. The black tangled grid visualizes the cracked ground where the yam grows. The black brushstrokes becomes signs defining, or as described by Neale, "mirroring the network of arterial roots below the surface."[27] In my interpretation, this painting reproduces the last stage in the growth of the yam. In *After Rain* we saw the signs of the yam as shooting tendrils above the surface, making a greenish/yellow pattern. In this painting the yam tubers have ripened under the ground, growing bigger and expanding to a size that bursts the earth above. They expose a network of cracks that become marks for the Aboriginal people showing them where to dig, using the cracks in order to harvest the yam. For Neale, the growing of the yam becomes a concept depicting "the holistic nature of the Aboriginal world view." She sees the surface of the earth as a membrane "through which power passes," awakening "ancestral connections that transcend the physical, embodied

in the expression 'as above, so below'."[28] Whichever interpretation is favoured, it is a painting reproducing the life force of the ancestral yam, still viable today, reinforced again and again through ceremonial life with paintings on the body, or in the sand, and in artworks on batik and canvas, but also through daily life, digging and carefully harvesting the yam. It is all part of a cycle in Kngwarreye's custodianship of her Country, taking care of the land through her Dreaming.

This is a canvas exclusively in black and white, where Neale stresses that the black colour often is used as an undercoat by Kngwarreye, and in so doing she refers to "body painting on black skin," the black skin being the "undercoat" for the body paint.[29] Yet, in this canvas where the black is painted on to a white undercoat, does it still refer to black skin? Is there any specific reference to the country of Alhalkere or the Yam Dreaming in connection with the colour white? Could this colour refer to the white "meat", the edible part of the yam, laid bare after peeling off the rough skin. If this is the case, it is almost as if the black skin marks the yam, or growing it, visualizing the importance of yams for the livelihood of the people of Utopia. But white is also interpreted as a scared shimmering, showing the presence of the ancestors in the Dreaming and the painting. On the other hand, Kngwarreye is known for her use of multiple colours in dotting, striping and her wide brushstrokes, not knowingly explicitly referring each colour to a specific ancestral or Aboriginal meaning, which means that I may be forcing this interpretation too far.

For Kngwarreye it was all about her Country, the "whole lot" – that's what she was painting, as she explained in 1990.[30] But eventually old age made her grow tired of painting. However, due to the customs of traditional Aboriginal life as a collective way of living, Kngwarreye's substantial earnings had become an important source for survival in her community. During her relatively short career as a painter, her income had been equally distributed among her kin, which, as noted by Caruana, "galvanised her role as the great provider."[31] Even if she longed for retirement, the expectations and pressure from family and dealers to continuing making art made this impossible. In the end, she kept on working right up until her death. According to Neale, she finished her last series of work containing 24 small paintings in three days during the last two weeks of her life.[32]

Conclusions

In an attempt of interpreting three works of art by Emily Kame Kngwarreye it is necessary to start by describing what one sees. In following the description and trying to relive the appearance of the painting, one almost gets lost amongst the crisscrossing dots, patterns, semicircles, and straight, curved, long and short stripes

or brushstrokes. If I had ended my writing after describing the visual appearance, and not getting further into interpretations seeking resemblance in the Australian flora and landscape, or Aboriginal ceremonial traditions, and not comparing what I saw with Margo Neale's descriptions and explanations, the paintings could present themselves as abstract works of art. But is this not to relate Kngwarreye's work to a Western tradition of which she had no knowledge?

When *Emu Woman* first was shown to a wider public, the artworld recognized it as abstract, and since then this has become a recurring comparison to all of Kngwarreye's work.[33] However, it is not just the abstractedness of Kngwarreye's work that has been compared to the work of mostly male Western modernist artists. Wally Caruana, for example, notes the much-written-about universality of Kngwarreye's paintings, referring to art critics who see "the layers of her saturated colour" as being "compared to waterlily paintings of Claude Monet" and "her expressive gesture to Jackson Pollock's drip paintings." He goes on to recall that "the sparse asceticism of her body design images could be related to the spirituality found in the works of Mark Rothko or Barnet Newman." At the same time, however, he makes it clear that her paintings do not seem to be dependent on "knowledge of the traditional visual lexicon," nor do they show any understanding "of the narratives that underpins it," with reference to the fact that Kngwarreye was unaware of Western art history.[34]

The American art historian James Elkins is critical towards such comparisons when he points to the fact that in global art-historical practice it is "less than optimal" to search for "concepts and qualities that are recognizably North American or European in origin" in order to reach a further understanding of non-Western art.[35] Elkins also discusses the concept of "definition by negation" propounded by the Slovenian scholar Tomaz Brejç – a way of defining non-Western art by emphasizing what it is not. For Elkins it is a promising concept but he does not think that it should be used as a model, nor is it the best solution for describing non-Western works of art.[36] As a concept, "defining by negation" seems to derive from a modernist way of describing what is not art in order to try to come to terms with what art is.

Defining by negation, as well as comparison through likeness, is how Margo Neale compares various modernist painters to Kngwarreye's work. For her Monet's, as well as Sonia and Robert Delaunay's exploration of "pure colour as form and subject" resulted in works of art that "look uncannily like a number of Emily's 'colourist' works," but she emphasizes that there is no connection whatsoever, because "Emily's vision is entirely (Ab)original."[37] On the other hand, Neale is of the opinion that Kngwarreye's brushstrokes can be compared to de Kooning's work. Both painters' strokes "could deliver at once, line, shape, colour, contour, depth,

touch, and crucially scale."[38] But there is also a difference here; Kngwarreye's strokes consist of a flow of lines, appearing to be organic in their shapes when stretching out like caterpillars, meshing and weaving, depicting a wholeness, which is lacking in most Western abstractionists' works.[39] Concerning Jackson Pollock, Neale points to the fact that he, in similarity with Kngwarreye, used the canvas "as an arena on which he performed," but again unlike Kngwarreye, he was not creating his action paintings from a collective cultural knowledge, nor from a sense of belonging.[40] In Kngwarreye's final series consisting of 24 small paintings, executed in only three days during the last two weeks of her life, Neale compares her work with Kazimir Malevich's painting *White on White* from 1918. In this respect, Neale suggests that like Malevich, Kngwarreye is painting herself out of the picture, because these paintings are almost without colours, covered in layers of beige and white nuances, and very different from her previous works that were exploding with strident colours. "It was as if she were signing off. Her end was a new beginning."[41]

When the exhibition *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye* was on display in Japan Neale mentioned that the audience saw elements of Japanese calligraphy in Kngwarreye's brushstrokes,[42] while Neale herself sees a correspondence to work by Paul Klee in the lines defining the roots of the yam plant – "Emily's progression from dots to lines resonate with the twentieth-century Swiss painter Paul Klee's phrase, 'a line is a dot going for a walk'."[43] And like Caruana, Neale also refers to the Impressionists in Kngwarreye's "sea of dots" as well as Rothko's colour studies.[44] In this regard, she comments on the fact that viewers experiencing art from other cultures than their own for the first time search for similarities or connections within their own cultures, or experience they recognize, in order to try to understand. In other words, they are doing exactly what Elkins criticizes, although Neale is not referring to scholars of art history. She also calls attention to the fact that Kngwarreye challenges "our fundamental Western assumptions about the nature of art."[45] In referring to Kngwarreye's designs as deriving from her everyday life, and her duties to her Country informing the abstraction of her art, Neale uncovers a contradiction with common notions of Western abstraction. But for Kngwarreye and to Aboriginal people in general, indigenous works of art bear significant meanings that go beyond the Westerns world's comprehension. For indigenous people, art could never be abstract in the way the Western art world defines abstract art, whether the work of Kandinsky, Pollock or de Kooning. Kngwarreye's so-called abstraction with its reference to ancestral worship and country makes her work loaded with content which in reality makes her paintings incomparable to Western notions on abstract ideals.

Nevertheless, the Australian art historian Roger Benjamin stresses that there was an "established connection between Western abstract painting and the 'spiritual'," pointing to the fact that Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and Kazimir Malevich confessed to unorthodox spiritual beliefs, most notable Theosophy, which influenced Central Europe during the first decades of the twentieth century.[46] Benjamin stresses further that concerning Mark Rothko and Barnet Newman the situation was similar, although Benjamin also acknowledges that the modernists' spirituality differed from Kngwarreye's ancestral worship. This is a somewhat uncommon comparison, because it actually fails, and hence the comparison as such becomes pointless. This calls attention to a willingness to find juxtapositions between Kngwarreye's work of art and the modernist painters, resembling the long-lasting primitivist debate discussed earlier, which makes one wonder if the comparisons put forward so far are an outcome of not knowing how to interpret Aboriginal art on its own terms.

Terry Smith also searches for qualities that could be recognized as Western in Kngwarreye's art, as well as defining by likeness, when he compares Kngwarreye's black and white *Yam Dreaming* series to artworks made by the American minimalists Sol LeWitt and Al Held.[47] He admits, however, that this is a somewhat superficial similarity due to the fact that Al Held's complex geometry derives from an "irrational mathematic", and the fact that Sol LeWitt's repetitive curves are not created by himself, but by others according to his precise instructions, resulting in a "play between the mechanical and the human," which is absent from Kngwarreye's art. [48] Also, concerning the abstractedness in the *Yam Dreaming* series, Smith describes how the former body paintings are enlarged when painted on canvases in order to cover the whole surface, resulting in a "reduced sketching of the yam body markings," which almost makes the ceremonial markings on the women's chests unrecognizable, thus leaving abstracted patterns. This abstraction is further emphasized by Smith, when he explains that the paintings were made for sale and not for ceremony, and as such they lack the essence emerging from "ritual behaviour," an essence that would unfold over several days during a secret sacred ceremony. In this context, Smith is able to argue "that Kngwarreye did abstract her body design."[49] However, Smith is well aware of the fact that he is referring to the "language of abstraction within Western Modernism," although his aim is "to move beyond it."[50] He is also aware of the fact that the history of modernism is expressed from a Western perspective and that many modernist innovators, such as Matisse, Picasso, Mondrian, Klee, Malevich and Nolde, among many others, relied on non-Western aesthetics in order to reach beyond their cultural confines. But

on the other hand, does one really have to compare, make sense of or understand Kngwarreye's art? Could it not be as described by the Australian art critic Robert Nelson, writing for *The Age* in 1996?

> You see all the technical things: overlap, striation of brush work, variation of density, energy of application and so on. Amid this formalism, you forget that you don't know what 'dreaming about yam' is, much less what it might mean in such a representation.[51]

This is an interesting description as well as a conclusion reminding us that from a Western point of view we do not really know what "dreaming about jam" is. In order to try to understand Kngwarreye's oeuvre, the discussion surrounding her work has been similar to the discussion related to the exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern* shown at MoMA in 1984. Scholars and critics still use comparisons between indigenous art and modern art as a tool in order to describe and interpret non-Western art, although nowadays there is greater awareness of the problems in doing so.

From a cross-cultural point of view, one could say that art history is repeating itself. If there is going to be a cross-cultural category of art history there is a need to understand indigenous art on its own terms. For this to happen, there have to be interpretations that try to go beyond comparison as well as definition by negation, and move on to investigating, as well as incorporating the meaning and significance the work has in its own culture of creation, and to present this information alongside exhibitions as part of the work itself, which is already the case concerning the display of Western art. There is also the requirement of research into the history of indigenous art for this new category to be viable.

Concerning the descriptions and interpretations presented in this volume of Kngwarreye's work, I have tried to lay bare the difficulties of describing works of art depicting a visual language that is unfamiliar. To put forward in words what is perceived on a canvas results in definitions of various forms, eventually depicted as recognizable items. But without any knowledge of the culture in which these paintings were created, as well as some knowledge of the iconography of Aboriginal art, I would not have got very far, although an Aboriginal interpreter would have been able to present more profound information. However, the brief information concerning Kngwarreye's biography, and the exposition of the Aboriginal iconography presented earlier, as well as the history of inclusion described in Chapter Three, are yet further information put forward as an attempt to provide for a possible cross-cultural category.

Kngwarreye's art is contemporary because it was made in the present, in an art tradition that has continued for almost 40,000 years. But there is not just one specific Aboriginal art; it is quite divers depending on which language group and place of origin the artists are descendent from, and it is dynamic, changing as well as responsive to new circumstances. However, Kngwarreye's art is also contemporary because it communicates across the divide between cultures, and one could say that her contemporaneity exists in the fact that she, like Foley, is living in double time. But it is a double time from an outside perspective, because as a traditional Aboriginal artist Kngwarreye was living on ancestral land and made art traditionally, which confirms the other, non-Western, temporality that her art practice was subject to. This means that there is a problem in applying notions of contemporaneity on Kngwarreye's works of art. Her art subscribes to traditional Aboriginal art and does not exist in a void of temporal differences, in between incomparable cultures. To fit traditional Aboriginal art into the concept of contemporaneity, as defined by Smith, is not a matter of course. This is further evident in the fact that traditional Aboriginal art upholds traditional notions and values which in one sense makes it static when it is exposed to the possible movement, towards an evolvement, that is built into the notions of contemporaneity. Using Smith's terminology, it is not meant for an artist to stay in one tendency. From this point of view it seems impossible for a traditional Aboriginal artist to evolve and make art in accordance with, for instance, "Spectacle art." Kngwarreye was, however, exposed to dislocation and forcibly removed from her country, which is an effect of colonization. But through political actions involving the women of Utopia appearing before court with their bodies painted, the people of Utopia eventually gained title to their ancestral land and were able to move back, which could be said to be an effect of decolonization. This means that it is possible to subordinate Kngwarreye's works of art to the postcolonial turn, and the prevailing tendency. Furthermore, the way in which Kngwarreye's oeuvre has been compared to modernist abstraction could be comprehended as if her art is subordinate "Remodernism", but this is impossible because Aboriginal art cannot be compared to Western notions of abstract ideals. On the other hand, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Yvonne Koolmatrie and Judy Watson, all traditional Aboriginal artists, represented Australia at the Venice Biennale in 1997, which integrates traditional Aboriginal art with the global art world as being part of the international art circuit circulating the world through the biennale system.

Ricky Swallow

Ricky Swallow (b. 1974) could be categorised as a "young" Australian artists, being a descendant of European immigrants. I first came into contact with Swallow's works of art at an exhibition in Melbourne in 2003, and later, when his name was mentioned during the interviews with mainly Elena Taylor, Curator at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, I became interested in finding out how his art, described as a practice that was "returning to skill" by Taylor, would fit into the theoretical approaches I have chosen for this dissertation.[52] From the perspective of contemporaneity, Swallow's works seem to fit into some of the notions suggested by Smith, but what about cross-cultural notions? If we agree with Jaynie Anderson's statement in connection with the CIHA conference – that all Australians are considered immigrants or descendents of immigrants – there would be no problem tracing cross-cultural notions in Swallow's art and art practice.[53] But nothing usually fits perfectly within theoretical notions, be it contemporaneous or cross-cultural, and this is mainly why I have chosen to look closer into Swallow's practice.

Ricky Swallow was born in San Remo, Victoria, a coastal town southeast of Melbourne. He has a Bachelor of Fine Art (1993–1997) with a major in drawing, from Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. Since 2002, he has been living outside Australia for long periods; in the United States 2002–2003, in England 2003–2004, in Australia 2004–2006, and then back to United States in 2006 where he currently lives. His career began in 1997 when his first solo exhibition *Diorama* was on display in Melbourne, at the 200 Gertrude Street Gallery. In 2005, he was the youngest artist ever to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale. Swallow often works in the classical techniques of sculpture, mainly wood carving, but he has recently started to work with bronze casting and watercolour.

When Swallow first started to exhibit, he created life size replicas of ordinary things in less sustainable materials such as PVC, plastic and cardboard, for example a BMX bicycle made out of PVC Pipe, Plastic and Epoxy, and his family's telescope also made of PVC Pipe, Plastic, Epoxy and Spray Paint. In other early sculptures, he used cardboard and paper, as in a pair of sneakers made out of Binders board, paper and glue, and a replica of his family's tape recorder made of grey cardboard. Almost all his early works are designed as realistic prototypes mimicking early Pop Art's interest in every day objects, the difference being that Swallow focused on their superficiality as well as their materiality, hence the monochromatic imagery presented as empty objects deprived of their ordinary function.

Other early sculptures are four *iMan Prototypes,* life-size skulls made of plastic, imitating one of the first iMac computers in using Apple's pale double colour settings of red/white, blue/white, turquoise/white and grey/white, with a logotype on the top of the skulls confusingly similar to Apple's own. The skull's back parts also replicated the rear part of the iMac with its specific handle. Skulls and whole skeletons, later carved in wood, are recurring objects for Swallow; they are reminiscences from his teenage years, deriving from heavy metal posters on his big brothers' walls.[54] But the skulls could also be looked upon as recycling of an often-used symbol common in popular culture, or they could be a result of Swallow following a trend in the fashion industry. In this sense, Swallow's work of art is up-to-date, and his art practice is subordinate to the spectacle culture with its commodity fetishism in both popular culture and the fashion industry. Swallow, however, maintains that his early sculptures are about memories that kept coming back to him and through the process of creating them he was able to hold on to them.[55] Another so-called prototype from his teenage period is a *Model for a sunken monument* made of painted composition board.

Model for a sunken monument, **1999,** (see picture 26)

Synthetic polymer paint on composition board, 108.2×222.0×242.2 cm (overall). Accession number: DC3.A-L-1999. In the National Gallery of Victoria Collection, Purchased through the Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Joan Clemenger Endowment, Governor, 1999.

Model for a sunken monument is a sculpture I came across at the Ian Potter Centre of the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne in 2003. Before this, I had never seen any of Swallow's work, nor read or heard anything about this young Australian artist. I have to admit that at first I did not know what to think. In the middle of a room, surrounded by other objects, was a huge black three-dimensional formation looking as if it was about to melt and expand all over the floor. I started to walk around the sculpture, but still I did not understand what I was looking at. It was not until I took another turn, this time at a longer distance that I realized that it was the head of Darth Vader from *Star Wars* descending in front of me.

This sculpture is made out of composite board, or rather it is built out of more than one hundred composite boards placed on top of each other. All of them are painted black, but they are all sawn in slight different forms, the one below differing from the one above, creating a topographical depiction resembling Darth Vader's head, from the top down to the grille-covered mouth, with the chin and neck floating out onto the floor. The bottom board is the largest in circumference

and constitutes the foundation for the others, with diminishing perimeter upwards, finishing off with a small square-shaped board at the top of Vader's helmet. His characteristic mask and helmet actually resemble a skull, but overall, the total blackness of *Model for a sunken monument* makes this sculpture quite hard to comprehend. It is in need of sufficient lightning in order to reveal its complex structure.

In Swallows own words, *Model for a sunken monument* is about "trying to fix things against time."[56] Again it is about memory, of rescuing the object from being forgotten. But it could also be perceived as a Memento Mori of Darth Vader, the central antagonist in George Lucas' original *Star Wars* trilogy. Its first film *Star Wars* was released in 1977, the second, *The Empire Strikes Back* released in 1980, and the third *The Return of the Jedi* released in 1983.[57] These films tell the story of the slave boy Anakin Skywalker, who becomes a Jedi Knight fighting for the good side. But Anakin Skywalker is eventually manipulated into betraying the Jedi, turning to the "dark side" of the mystical force, and hence becoming Darth Vader. For many children growing up during the 1970s and 1980s, the *Star Wars* trilogy was of immense importance, which might be why Swallow depicts Darth Vader in *Model for a sunken monument,* trying his best to fix him and *Star Wars* against time, but not really succeeding. On the other hand, he did not need to, because *Star Wars* and its heroes began to live lives of their own through dolls produced by Kenner Toys from 1978 and until 1985, with 111 different action figures on the market alongside the films.[58]

Memento Mori, or Vanitas, symbols are often mentioned in relation to Ricky Swallow's work, not at least in connection with his different skulls. In this respect, Swallow reminds us of our mortality, and life's brevity, and the fact that the only thing left when we pass away is our skeleton. This is also visible in his sculpture *The Exact Dimensions of Staying Behind* from 2005, depicting a seated full-size skeleton with a pilgrim's staff in the left hand, and the head leaning backwards as if it were gazing up into the sky.[59] In this sculpture, carved out of lime wood, Swallow has left the surface rough, with the marks of the carving knife still visible, as if he is showing us how nature is taking its course, slowly decomposing the body. But he also points to the vanity of our materialistic society, when he leaves us with a first-rate reproduction of a Memento Mori, obsessive in its wealth of detail. In similarity with the skulls and skeletons depicted in popular culture and the fashion industry, for instance on T-shirts, gloves, wallets, handbags, caps and jewellery, the superficiality and the loss of connection to our mortality in our materialistic society is as present in Swallows sculptures as in these fashion items. This is accentuated by the fact that Swallow's works are monochrome; if painted they are all black or all white.

But mostly they are unpainted as in his wood carvings, leaving the material bare, which makes them very unlike seventeenth-century still-life paintings of Vanitas symbols. With the material bare, or monochrome, the observers miss out on the experience of the objects' decomposition; whereas in the seventeenth century one could almost smell the decay.

Apart from being Vanitas symbols, Swallow has always thought of his sculptures as "propositions, as prototypes of preserved form."[60] This, however, does not exclude the importance of traditional craftsmanship and skills. For him, the time consuming process of carving is a way of "maintaining the closeness to the work through the participation of it's making, literally being responsible for a form from its conception to completion."[61] In this sense, it seems as if Swallow is reproducing objects that are all about immaculate surfaces and superficiality, without any content. This craftsmanship with its perfection in the execution is, for instance, evident in his sculpture *Come Together.*

Come Together, 2002, (see picture 27)
Laminated jelutong, 66×63.5×81.3 cm. Collection of Peter Norton, Santa Monica, USA.

Placed directly on the floor, *Come Together* depicts a life-size beanbag carved out of jelutong (*Dyera costulata*), a hardwood that is easy to work and popular in model and pattern making. Tucked deep into the bag is a life-size skull, also made out of jelutong. This sculpture consists of two parts, but they are made of one piece of jelutong, which could be why it is called *Come Together.*

Both the beanbag and the skull are immaculately carved. The bag seems to be made of smooth leather, sewn together from eight pieces. The bottom of the bag depicts one large round piece onto which six rectangular pieces are attached, all of them joined by padded seams on three sides. At the top of the bag the rectangles are narrower than at the bottom and attached to a smaller round piece, also with a padded seam surrounding it. The beanbag is reproduced in sunken form, as if the force used to get the skull deep into the bag made the top fall forward, folding upon itself, bearing marks of the movement which created deep pleats on both sides of the forward-leaning top. The skull is tucked deeply into the bag and visible in profile, with the left side up. The appearance of this sculpture is almost hyper-realistic, with its craftsmanship of wood carving almost making the beanbag come to life.

At the Venice biennale in 2005 the Australian pavilion present Swallows works of art in semi-darkness, with the pieces placed directly on the floor, each one dramatically illuminated. This is where I was exposed to *Come Together* for the first time, in an exhibition where the space between the objects was almost in total darkness, and if one got too close to the objects a member of the exhibition staff would appear from the darkness, telling one to step back. This effect, and the contrast between light and darkness, brought another level to the work; it was as if the sculptures were set on a stage. For Swallow, however, this is not the case, the setting of the light is all about "bringing out the form in the sculptures." [62] He also refers to the setting of the light as deriving from seventeenth-century still-life painting, and the notion of emphasizing the materials and the surfaces of the objects depicted, as well as the surface of the paintings. He further stresses that he has an "intuitive attraction to objects," and that he sees a resemblance in his way of trying to render real life in his still-life sculptures in the same way a seventeenth-century still-life painter is able to depict naturalistically "how old the fruit is", or "how long the lobster has been out of water."[63] But then again, Swallow's sculptures are unpainted and monochrome in their materiality.

Most of Swallow's sculptures are presented directly on the ground. For him, his sculptures are prototypes in a static form best viewed without any distraction, such as pedestals or any other display devices. In this sense Swallow follows Rosalind Krauss' notions discussed in 1979, where she stresses that sculptures placed directly on the ground contrast the inner logic of historical sculpture, and as such they also contrast the logic of the monument. Without a pedestal, the sculpture is not created for a specific place, nor does it bear any symbolic meaning of that place, like for instance the statue of Marcus Aurelius placed in the centre of the Campidoglio in Rome does. However, while Swallows sculptures might not be created for a specific place, they do subscribe to Krauss' notion of the sculpture as "a commemorative representation" in that several of his sculptures are preserved memories which he tries to fix in time.[64] Without pedestals, Swallow's sculptures become prototypes for Krauss' notion of modernist sculptures that are "fading the logic of the monument," and as such they are nomadic. They have absorbed the pedestals into themselves which displaces them from an actual place – "through the representation of its own materials or the process of its construction, the sculpture depicts its own autonomy."[65] This autonomy is to be found in their gravity, which is a major part of his work, and hence would be lost if not displayed directly on the ground. This is obvious, for instance, in his bronze cast *Caravan*.

***Caravan*, 2008,** (see picture 28)

Hand finished Bronze, Edition of 2+1 AP, dimensions variable.

Caravan consists of three balloons made of bronze. They are all depicted as "ordinary" blown up balloons, often used to decorate children's birthday parties. But they are far from ordinary because the idea of a balloon with its airiness, rubber filled with air made to fly, is conversed in Swallow's sculpture. They are made of bronze and heavy, resting directly on the concrete floor, similar to Jeff Koons' red and blue *Balloon Dogs* of porcelain from 1995 and 2002. But unlike Koons' balloons, the ones by Swallow's are not in bright colours; they maintain the materiality of the bronze, although their surfaces are smooth and shiny. Two of them are placed close together with the round end of the first balloon close to the white wall, and the other end, the blowing end where the knot is, almost touching the round end of the middle balloon. The third is slightly further away, leaving a gap between the middle balloon and itself. All three balloons are decorated with sea acorns, as if they have been in the sea for a long time leaving the bronze overgrown. In this respect, *Caravan* could be a shining reminiscence of one of Swallow's earlier sculptures, *Killing Time* from 2003–2004.[66] This is a three-dimensional still life, carved out of laminated jelutong and maple, depicting a life-size table covered with different kinds of fish and shellfish, two buckets, two pieces of cloth, a knife and a peeled lemon with the skin falling over the edge. For Swallow, *Killing Time* is a reproduction of his family's table, and of all the sea creatures that members of his family or he himself caught when he was growing up. But it is also an attempt to make yet another reference to the still-life tradition, and as such he wanted to make a still-life deriving from his own history, in this regard he choose to create a portrait of his father's occupation as a fisherman.[67]

The sea acorns are also visible in the sculpture *Younger than Yesterday* from 2006.[68] This is another life-size skull in profile, lying directly on the floor with its left side up, carved in English lime wood with huge sea acorns growing between the eyes, out of the left eye socket, on the temple, and on the back of the head, as well as on the chin and inside the skull. In similarity to *The Exact Dimensions of Staying Behind,* with its rough surface where the marks of the knife are visible as signs of decomposition, it is as if Swallow again wants us to remember our mortality, but this time the decomposition is taken one step further.

Conclusions

Swallow is a young Australian artist working mostly in traditional mediums such as woodcarving and bronze casting. But is there anything particularly Australian

about his works of art? In comparison with Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Swallow's work does not seem to belong to any specific place, nor does he speak of the importance of belonging or place. Although this is not absolutely true, because in *Killing Time* from 2003–04 he emphasizes childhood memories of his father catching fish, which ended up on the family table. On the other hand, Swallow could be looked upon as belonging to a generation of Australian artists, which is quite young and not particularly interested in exploring issues of heritage, identity, gender and ethnicity, which could be verified through another "young" Australian artist who also keeps away from these issues. The Sydney-based Lionel Bawden, born in 1974, also focuses on the surface as well as the execution in his artworks, which in similarity with Swallow is quite time-consuming. This is for instance visible in his *ésque – thought brought forth by our fingers*, consisting of 30,000 colour pencils glued together one by one into blocks, then carved into amorphous shapes, and finally finished by hand into smooth and shiny patterns reflecting the materiality of the pencils.[69] In this sense, both Swallow and Bawden are contradicting artists working in accordance with more critical art practices. For them, the superficiality of the object, deprived of its content, with a beautiful finished surface of, in Swallow's case of bronze and woodwork, and for Bowden his pencil shapes are of greatest significance.

However, I do not agree with Swallow's simplified explanation of his work of art only being concerned with an empty object finished into an immaculate surface with the help of time-consuming craftsmanship. In this sense, one wonders if Swallow is doing what Andy Warhol did when he stressed: "If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."[70] Swallow's art practice often presents itself in accordance with art history, for instance when he refers to the still-life tradition during the seventeenth-century, and when he recycles modernist notions on the loss of pedestals, as well as Pop Art's interest in everyday objects. I am also of the opinion that Swallow conducts his art towards postmodernism's questioning of high and low art in his constant repetitions of skulls as an often-used symbol in popular culture and the fashion industry, as well as his appropriation of Darth Vader, rendering him into a three-dimensional Memento Mori. He is, however, distancing his art from postmodernism's fragmented identities and issues of gender and ethnicity, as well as the notions postcolonialism concerning hybridity and multiculturalism, but this does not mean that his artworks are deprived of their content.[71]

Since 2002, Swallow has been living outside Australia for long periods of time, supporting himself in various residency programmes, making him a nomad artist

who sometimes lives in one country, work's in another, and exhibits in yet other countries. This could be why, in comparison with Kngwarreye, it seems as if Swallow is lacking a significant reference to the land. But it could also be that he is a contemporary international artist who works and exhibits in a global context, where location or place of origin is of less or no importance. On the other hand, he is from Australia, and Australia has been regarded a peripheral country, on the outskirts of the Western world, and by no means least of the art world. When Gerald Matt, the Director General of the Kunsthalle Vienna, asked Swallow: "How does one establish oneself, on the international art market as an Australian Artist?" Swallow responded that, "I'm sure there is not a usual course of an Australian artist's career internationally."[72] With this question Matt is referring to the problematic of centre and periphery: he living in Vienna, in the center of Europe, and reflecting on the peripheral position of Australia. Swallow confirms this when he goes on to say, "It's frustrating that Australia is isolated geographically, because I think it's a hurdle in terms of work affecting an audience outside its immediate one."[73] Although Swallow himself thinks he is fortunate because he has had support for his art from an early stage, which has enabled him to exhibit in Europe, Australia as well as in Japan. Or it can be put differently and Swallow could be looked upon as confirming the norm of an artist creating up-to-date works of art, making use of the visual language of popular culture and the fashion industry and not problematizing political issues, which has enabled him to be supported and to exhibit world-wide. From the perspective of contemporaneity this resembles Debord's notion of the society of the spectacle as applied by Smith, in that Swallows works of art have surrendered their "critical impulse."[74] In one sense, Swallow's early life-size replicas, as well as the *iMan Prototypes*, and *Model for a sunken monument* could be regarded as commodity fetishism, where the emptiness Swallow is referring to could concern these artifacts as representations, and as such they are unreal. Like everything else in the society of the spectacle they are mere appearances. Other facts supporting Swallow's art practice being "Retro-sensational," are *Caravan* with its shiny bronze balloons resting heavily on the floor, and the reference made to Koons' *Balloon Dogs* and his mocking of consumption, which alludes to Smith's residual tendency and "Retro-sensationalism". However, Swallow could also be regarded as a "Remodernist" when presenting his sculptures as prototypes in a static form best viewed without pedestals, the latter being absorbed into the sculptures and becoming prototypes for Krauss' notion of modernist sculpture as "fading the logic of the monument."[75] In this sense Swallow's art practice is engaged both in "Remodernism" and in "Retro-sensationalism", and as such it subordinate

"Spectacularism," which means that Swallow's art practice is also engaged in "the aesthetics' of globalisation."[76]

From a cross-cultural perspective Swallow is a descendant of immigrants, and hence a cross-cultural artist. But this does not make it any easier to perceive his art cross-culturally, as it has been defined in this volume. He might be a descendant of immigrants, but his ancestors are European, and he is creating art in a Western tradition following the Western canon, which he makes comments on through his artworks. He could be regarded as a contemporary international artist participating in the global art market where place of origin is unimportant, and therefore it is almost impossible, and somewhat pointless, to pursue a cross-cultural interpretation.

Fiona Foley

Fiona Foley (b. 1964) could be categorised as a city-based Aboriginal artist, and this is why, apart from her being an interesting artist, I have chosen to look closer into her work and art practice. From a cross-cultural point of view, the entitling "category" of city-based Aboriginal artist indicates that she is both city based and Aboriginal which hint at a crossing of cultures. But is it a crossing of cultures on equal terms? In her work, Foley often questions the power relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia, both historically and in modern Australia today. This makes her work allude of the possibility of a cross-cultural category of art. However, from the point of view of contemporaneity, Foley could also be considered an international artist working in accordance with postcolonial issues, and exhibiting internationally. Is this possible?

Fiona Foley was born in Maryborough and grew up in the nearby town of Hervey Bay, situated on the east coast of Australia in South Queensland. She is an Indigenous Australian woman, belonging to the Badtjala language group from Fraser Island in Queensland. In 1983 she completed a Certificate of Arts at the East Sydney Technical College, and in 1986 she finished her Bachelor of Visual Arts at the Sydney College of the Arts, finally completing a Diploma of Education at the Sydney Institute of Education of the University of Sydney in 1987.[77] With this background Foley is, as mentioned above, categorized as a city-based Aboriginal artist, because she was raised in a city and not on traditional land, and also because she was educated in "Western" art schools, and not traditionally by the elders in a remote community. Emily Kame Kngwarreye, on the other hand, is

categorized as an Australian indigenous artist who lived and worked on ancestral land, or traditional land in a remote community, who was educated traditionally through initiations and had no Western education. This designation is often given in shortened form as "traditional artist." There are always problems with categorizations, and they often change over time. For indigenous people, the change is about re-empowerment, to taking back power through naming, which harks back to colonial times when the colonialist renamed places and individual Aboriginal proper names, and in so doing took power. In this regard, the Aboriginal people of Australia have changed the categorization of Aboriginal artists to the naming mentioned above. Previously, Kngwarreye was regarded as tribal Aboriginal artist and Foley as an urban Aboriginal artist.

Foley was one of the first Aboriginal artists to attend an art school in Sydney. During her time as a student at Sydney College of the Arts, she visited Ramingining, a remote Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory. This is a community with a strong cultural leader, which is common in most remote communities, as stated by Foley:

> The experience of travelling to Ramingining in 1985 was very important for me. Before that, in some ways, I had romantic ideas of what traditional Aboriginal communities and traditional people were like. But once I got to the community I had to work through all that, and once I experienced traditional life I started to realise that you have similar people in all indigenous communities. It doesn't matter how dysfunctional a community is or how much it has been affected by colonisation – as pretty well all Aboriginal communities have been, some quite severely – you still have strong cultural leaders, people who give hope and strength to those struggling to survive bi-culturally in Australia. This helped me realise that I had a choice too, that I could make a difference.[78]

During her visit to Ramingining, and later to other remote communities, Foley came in contact with well-organized, and active artist cooperatives. This led her, and an additional six young Aboriginal art students in Sydney – Fernanda Martins, Michael Riley, Tracey Moffatt, Avril Quaill, Jeffrey Simons and Raymond Meeks – to form a city-based artist cooperative in 1987. They named it Boomalli which, according to Djon Mundine, is "a Wiradjuri word meaning *to strike*."[79] They also chose to spell Co-operative with a *K* so that they could get the abbreviation BAARK (Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Residents Ko-operative), alluding to the sheets of bark traditionally used for paintings, all in order to elucidate their Aboriginal heritage. Fiona Foley explains how Boomalli, in the beginning, was a meeting place for

Koori artists, "we were facing the same problems in terms of marketing our work and we wanted to form a group and have discussions about similar things that were facing us… We had grand plans and still do."[80] The Ko-operative strived for recognition and to incorporate city-based Aboriginal art into the commercial gallery system and the museum institutions, in which they were successful, according to Benjamin Genocchio. Genocchio notes further that what had started out as a venue for city-based Aboriginal artists evolved in a few years' time "into one of the most dynamic exhibition spaces in the country."[81] In the 1990s, when interest in Aboriginal Art was growing both in Australia and overseas, Boomalli helped enhance knowledge of the rich diversity of Aboriginal art.[82]

As an artist, Fiona Foley works in different media, ranging from pastel, watercolour, ink on paper and photography to installations in different materials and artefacts such as sand, rat traps, flour, axes, glass bottles, scissors, concrete and sandstone etc. In her art practice, Foley also uses a different mode of procedure, but she always calls in question racial issues, be it Australian or international, and how indigenous people in Australia have been treated since 1788. Or as told by herself, "It's about putting indigenous people up front in the world, in every way – in fashion, in exhibitions, and in the gallery system."[83] One of her interests is to "write Aboriginal people back into the history" of the Australian nation. In this sense, she sees her role as an educator in mainly educating Queenslanders about their own history.[84] However, in resemblance to Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Fiona Foley's works of art also grow out of a fundamental sense of place. This place is primarily Fraser Island, or K'gari in the Badtjala language, situated off the east cost of Australia in South Queensland, and initially the land of the Badtjala people of which they were dispossessed in the 1850s.[85] The reason for the dispossession was the heavy logging and sand mining which Fraser Island has been exposed to since the 1860s, starting with logging from 1863 to 1991. In the 1950s, the first leases for sand mining were granted by the Queensland Government, which it continued to issue until 1977.[86] In 1992, the island was listed as a World Heritage site, considered to be the largest sand island in the world, with an area of 1,842 square kilometres, and in 1975 it became a National Park.[87] Today, tourists in Four-wheel drives camp on the island, threatening its unique environment. For Foley and other descendants of the Badtjala, taking care of this land is essential, which made her decide to move back to Hervey Bay in 1995 "in order to take part in Native Title negotiations," hoping to gain title to a small strip of shore that initially belonging to her ancestors.[88]

The importance of her ancestral land is visible in most of Foley's art. She has a detailed knowledge of the flora and fauna on and around Fraser Island. Yet, in her paintings she often chooses to depict stylized versions of the objects from this environment, such as animals, leaves, flowers or the landscape as such. In a way, it is almost as if Foley has her own symbolic, and witty, language, which she sometimes decodes for the uninitiated, as for instance in her work *Too a Black Cock,* an anagram for *Black Cockatoo* – an additional work of art providing substance for *Too a Black Cock.*

Too a Black Cock, 1993, (see picture 29)

Postage stamps on paper, thirteen panels each 27×19.5 cm.

Too a Black Cock is made of thirteen sheets of black paper with a considerable number of 45-cent Australian postage stamps glued directly on to the black surface, shaping letters. Each sheet consists of one letter, forming the sentence *Too a Black Cock* divided into four rows. Altogether Foley used 239 stamps, amounting to the sum of AUSD 107,55.

The stamps derive from *Black Cockatoo* from 1992, a work in pastel also by Fiona Foley, (see picture 30). This painting ended up on a stamp when the artists for Australia Post needed new works of art to be printed as stamps in recognition of the World Indigenous Year of 1993. Fiona Foley was one of twenty artists who were asked to submit an image for this occasion, and in the end four works of art from four artists were chosen.[89] Foley's *Black Cockatoo* is a pastel on paper, 56×38 cm, depicting a black cockatoo, in stylized form, sitting on a branch of a lifeless tree, with its head facing to the left. A huge cockatoo feather, larger that the bird, painted in red, black and yellow, the colours of the Aboriginal flag, is reproduced alongside the tree to the right. The background is uniform and painted in a hue of yellow/reddish ochre, like the sandy surroundings of Fraser Island.

To gain the title *Too a Black Cock,* Foley tossed around the letters used in the title of the original painting made for the stamp. With this ironic twist, she changes the original connotations of *Black Cockatoo* into an allusion to the Black Cockatoo, native to Fraser Island, and as such a common symbol in Foley's work on behalf of the flora and fauna of the region surrounding Fraser Island. But the Cockatoo is also a symbol for Foley herself, which is evident when she explains, "There was something about the soul of the animal I was attracted to. It is not my totem, but the more I think about and look at the image, I guess I was painting myself."[90] When changed *Too a Black Cock*, the implications that is brought to mind, could be as suggested by Genocchio, alluding to the idea of "the *black cock,* a potent

symbol of black male sexual prowess and thus also the black man's supposed ani-malism."[91] However, in *Black Cockatoo* there is an emptiness that often appears in Foley's work depicting Fraser Island, which is enhanced by a reproduction of a lifeless tree. It is as if Foley is showing us a static portrait of a bird sitting in a tree, its feather, depicted in the colours of the Aboriginal flag, falling dead on to the sandy surroundings, a depiction of an empty landscape symbolizing an empty island deprived of its indigenous inhabitants.

Foley rewrites history in her work, or rather, highlights a history that often has been overlooked by the settler society, and, as told by her, is not even taught in the primary school system:

> From when we are children most of us have had our traditional culture taken away from us. We're forced to live by two laws, which oppose one another. We are forced to adapt – we have to go to Western schools, and have to learn about history, which usually begins in 1788. … Aboriginal people get a one-eyed view of history, and the old history before 1788 that you grow up with through the form of oral history is contradicted.[92]

In her aim to narrate this untold history, Foley is piecing together information from various sources. One important source has always been her mother, a Badtjala woman "who spent twenty years researching and recording Badtjala language and culture."[93] Foley, however, is also conducting research, visiting anthropological and ethnographic museum collections and state libraries around the country, in addition to exploring government documents, fiction novels and academic texts. This is a time-consuming process, resulting in complex works of art, which have been called both an "archival" and a "custodial" aesthetics.[94] *Lie of the Land from* 1997 is an example of this working process.

Lie of the Land, **1997,** (see picture 31)
Engraved sandstones, 300×100×50 cm, installation with sound.
   This monumental work of art, consisting of seven engraved sandstones and sound, is the result of a collaboration between the artists Fiona Foley and Chris Knowles, together with members of a local community consisting of people of varied ethnic backgrounds. It is a collaborative work with Chris Knowles as the artist behind the sound, while Fiona Foley initiated the rectangular sandstones standing on its edge. Like gravestones, they are all cut level on two sides, leaving smooth surfaces, while the more narrow sides are left untreated and rough, showing

the structure of the stones. The installation is constructed to be walked around, and in between the pieces, which means that there is no back or front of the stones or the installation as such. However, all the smooth surfaces are engraved with words. One particular word is repeated several times on each stone. The number of repetitions varies with each word on each stone, but they are written in capital letters with the same typeface on both sides. The word BLANKET is repeated seven times, the word FLOUR six times, the word KNIVES five times, the word BEADS four times, the word SCISSORS three times, the word TOMAHAWKS twice, and the word LOOKING GLASS occurs once.

Lie of the Land was commissioned in 1997 by the City of Melbourne as a gift to the people of Melbourne to coincide with the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC), which was held in order to give the nation a possibility to improve the future for indigenous Australians.[95] It is a public work of art, designed to be located outside Melbourne Town Hall in Swanston Street in the heart of the city. Originally, it was to be on show for a period of three weeks, but the display was extended to two months. During this extension, the City Council decided to purchase the work and move it to its current permanent location, within the Museum of Victoria, later renamed the Melbourne Museum.[96]

To understand the installation as a whole, with sound and stones together, more information about the concept is needed. The artwork reproduces, both in written and spoken words, the transaction of 600,000 acres of land in Victoria, now occupied by the city of Melbourne. The transaction was made in 1835 between the rich pastoralist John Batman from Tasmania and the indigenous people of Wurundjeri, the former owners of the land.[97] The payment for this enormous stretch of land was made in blankets, knives, looking glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors and flour, which was recorded by Batman in his journal,

> After a full explanation of what my object was, I purchased two large tracts of land from them – about 600,000 acres, more or less, and delivered over to them blankets, knives, looking glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, flour, as payment for the land; and also agreed to give them a tribute, or rent, yearly.[98]

The items provided for the land are inscribed into the seven sandstones, whilst the sound recalls "tracks of readings of the John Batman quote in seven languages; English, Wurundjeri […], Indonesian, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Chinese." Other sound tracks are present as well, recalling the seven items of payment and the sound of two birds; the Crow and the Eagle, totems of the Port Phillip area in which Melbourne is situated.[99] As one walks through the installation the sound

embodies everything around the viewer. It moves inside the artwork with every sound appearing from loudspeakers placed in various locations, and programmed with the possibility to be "shaped and moved in space," changing from a murmur to a shout or a chant, as well as responding differently to various times of the day and the night, all in order to "suit the requirements of the environment."[100]

The *Lie of the Land* is not the first work of art in which Foley used the historical record of Batman's purchase. In 1995 she made *Land Deal*, utilizing all the items mentioned in Batman's journal again, but this time the objects represented were real objects. The installation was first installed at Savode Gallery in Brisbane, and it is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. In this work, nine tomahawk's, seven knives, seven looking-glasses, seven scissors, a box with beads and one blanket are mounted directly on the walls, and fifty kilograms of flour forming a spiral are spread on a circular board placed on the floor. The story behind *Land Deal* is the same as in *Lie of the Land*, but in *Land Deal* the focus is on the flour, which can almost be understood due to its great amount and its placing in the centre of the artwork. In this installation, the flour represents a dreadful chapter in Australia's colonial history known as "The betrayal of Trust", when flour and sugar laced with arsenic was given as payment for work, or as payment to Aboriginal people by the state governments and settlers for the use or acquirement of land. This betrayal took place several times, which might be why Foley choose to make yet an additional two artworks dealing with the same issue, *Velvet Waters* and *Laced Flour* both made in 1996.[101]

Fiona Foley is often described as a political artist, a label placed on her by others as her career grew, but Foley herself prefers the word "subversive".[102] As we have seen, this subversiveness is directed towards important historical events, and dispossessions of the indigenous people of Australia. However, she also questions contemporary events, often of an ambiguous nature, dealing with how it is to live in Australia today, but never without points of contact concerning Aboriginal history and dispossession. This is evident in the photographic series *Nulla 4 eva* from 2009, which was on display at the Niagara Galleries in Melbourne from 31 March to 24 April 2009.

Nulla 4 eva #4, 2009, (see picture 32)
Ultrachrome print on Hahnemühle paper, 80×120 cm. Photographer Carl Warner.

The *Nulla 4 eva* series consists of seven photographs portraying a mixed multicultural nation. In picture number four, a sandy city beach somewhere in Australia is

depicted. In the centre of this photograph, as well as in the foreground, ten persons are gathered. They are placed in the sand, forming a semi-circle. Nine of them are standing and one is kneeling. The group seems to be divided into two antagonistic parties. On the left side there are seven male persons, probably of Aboriginal descent, consisting of three young men, one boy and two grown-up men. On the right there are two, most likely young white Australian men, and in between the two groups a woman dressed in a burqa is standing slightly behind them. Lying in the sand, in front of each group, are two flags. The flag on the left is the Aboriginal flag with a black and red background equally divided horizontally into two fields with a black field above a red, and a yellow circle placed in the centre, on top of the black and red fields. The flag on the right is the Australian flag, which is understood from its marine blue background and the depiction of a small Union Jack in the upper left corner, as well as six stars depicting the constellation of the Southern Cross, with five stars to the right and one large star below the Union Jack. On top of this flag's upper left corner there is a beach ball, also made of the Australian flag. And behind the ball, yet another item made of the Australian flag, a beach bag, is to be glimpsed. The two flags, together with the other items, are what made me believe that the group on the left is Aboriginal, and the two young men on the right are white Australians. The two groups seem to be arguing, at least three of the men are, the two Australian men to the right and one of the older Aboriginal men standing directly to the left of the burqa-clad woman. The rest of the men in the left group are standing back, watching and listening critically.

In the background the scenery varies. To the left the blue ocean is visible, and in the center the environment is changing from sand to green vegetation and then into several housing estates. To the right, huge green trees tower above a yellow and white building placed directly on the beach.

The title *Nulla 4 eva*, indicates that this photograph depicts a specific city beach and suburb in Australia, Cronulla, a southern coastal beachfront suburb to Sydney. "Nulla" is the local abbreviation for Cronulla, the beach where race riots took place on 11 December 2005. The Cronulla riots were on the news all over the world, with images of aggressive young white male Australians stripped to the waist with racist slogans such as "Fuck Allah, Save Nulla", "Love it or Leave it", "We grew here, you flew here" written on their bodies, and on t-shirts which they were waving over their heads. This ethnically motivated violence, mainly directed against the Muslim population, escalated into a mob mentality after two Middle Eastern youths attacked Cronulla lifesavers earlier in the week leading

up to 11 December. The violence later spread to other Sydney suburbs during the following weeks.

> The notification of the gathering was sent via mobile text to people all around Sydney, inviting them to join in the fight for "Australians" right to reclaim their beaches. Violence broke out due to a combination of mob mentality and alcohol and many "ethnic" individuals were attacked and assaulted.[103]

In this photograph, Foley contests the notion of Australia being a truly mixed multicultural nation. She is pointing to the fact that Australia has become a racist nation, where young white Australian men are fighting for the right to their beaches, and foremost for the right behaviour at these beaches, which they think Muslin immigrants do not respect when attacking lifesavers. However, in this picture it is not just the Muslim confrontation that Foley depicts. This is an ambiguous photograph, also highlighting the conflict between young white Australians and young Aboriginals, showing a racist undertone running back to the years of colonization. A part from the actual riots in 2005, Foley has also chosen to depict yet another conflict, maybe not as noticeable if one does not know the Aboriginal history of dispossessed land around Sydney, but no less important, because this picture also illustrates the fact that all coastal beaches of Sydney have Aboriginal names, as pointed out by Djon Mundine:

> The Cronulla incident was one of contestation; historically as well as physically. Contestation of the site – contestation of the beach as an Australian social interactive space – for many a sacred place. Aboriginal people were never asked for comment – white Australia simply claimed the site. No reference has been given to Aboriginal people's history or view, yet all Sydney's costal beaches carry Aboriginal names – Bondi, Tamara, Coogee, Clovelly, Maroubra, Kurnell and Cronulla. Successive waves of migrants have washed upon our shores – equally challenged as they arrived by the previous wave, vilified and to an extent subsumed and then dismissed. They are all strangers to us (Aboriginal people).[104]

Conclusions

Fiona Foley is not the first Aboriginal artist who indicates the importance of using art as a political tool. As already mentioned, in 1993 the then Yirrkala leader Galarrwuy Yunupingu claimed: "We paint to show the rest of the world that we own this country and that the land owns us. Our painting is a political act."[105] In the late seventies the women of Utopia painted their bodies in a political action.[106] However, the very first time Aboriginal art was used politically was also in Yirrkala in 1963,

when the people of Yirrkala, in eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, presented two bark petitions to the House of Representatives on the 14th of August of the same year. These were "the first documents bridging Commonwealth law as it then stood, and the Indigenous laws of the land."[107] The bark petitions were a protest against a grant made by the government and the Prime Minister Robert Menzies to a French company for leasing and mining bauxite deposits in an area of more than 300 square kilometres in Arnhem Land. This meant that this land was removed from the Arnhem Land reserve, and that the French company was allowed to start mining without consulting the people of Yirrkala.

> It [the petitions] protested about secrecy, the government's failure to consult and the likely effects of the mining on the people's livelihood, and concluded by requesting a parliamentary inquiry. The petition was presented in both Yolngu and English and was signed by 17 leaders. It was typed on paper and glued to a sheet of stringy-bark on which a border of traditional symbolic motifs had been painted.[108]

The painted design on the petitions proclaims the Yolngu law and depicts the traditional relations to the land in Yirrkala. The inquiry, on the other hand, ended in a report which presented evidence that Yolngu people had been living on the land of Yirrkala "for tens of thousands of years and that their law was based on intricate relations to land."[109] Founded on this evidence, the Parliament was recommended that a payment of compensation was to be made to the people of Yirrkala, and that the sacred sites were protected. But Parliament was also set out to create a permanent parliamentary standing committee that was urged to acknowledge the Yirrkala people's "moral right to their land," and to oversee the developments that were planned at Yirrkala.[110] Despite these recommendations, the petition failed. It was, however, an important step for Aboriginal people all over Australia in their claim for land rights. This is evident from the fact that the petitions still remains on display in Parliament House in Canberra.

From a cross-cultural perspective this information is important because it provides a historical background of how Aboriginal art has been used as a political tool during Aboriginal history. When Fiona Foley presents herself as subversive, her art presents itself in accordance with an ongoing historical struggle of dispossession, which she depicts through contemporary events such as the Cronulla riots. But Foley also makes use of historical facts, and hence becomes a historiographer providing viewers with viable information, making it possible to conduct cross-cultural interpretations. Once again, without any knowledge of Aboriginal political history

it would not have been possible to grasp the complexity of the contemporary situation. Nevertheless, together with the narration of Foley's personal history – being of Aboriginal descent with a close connection to her family, her language group, and to Fraser Island her country of belonging, as well as the information presented in connection with *Black Cockatoo* – this forms an attempt towards making it possible to understand this specific Aboriginal art on its own terms.

As a city-based Aboriginal artist, Foley lives in two cultures, Aboriginal and Western, and in between these cultures. With regard to Terry Smith's distinction, this means that she is to be considered a contemporary artist. The contemporaneity of her art, on the other hand, exists because it is caught up in double-time, in between, or in the void of temporal differences. It is, however, also contemporaneous because it communicates across the divide that exists between Aboriginal and Western culture.[111] Furthermore, the critiques of contemporary multicultural Australian society presented by Foley derive from postcolonial theory, and the struggle of indigenous people making their voice heard. In this sense, both Foley and Kngwarreye are Australian indigenous women performing their "authenticity" through their art in accordance with their native context, as is expected of the postcolonial subject. Foley's position of postcolonial subject, however, is also contested in that she lives and makes art from a Western city-based position which makes her "inauthentic", a double position deriving from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notions in her essay "Can the Subaltern speak?"[112] This makes Foley's art engaged in the postcolonial turn, and as such it fits in Smith's prevailing tendency. However, as pointed out by many of the curators in the interviews, Aboriginal art was understood differently because of postcolonial theory, resulting in an incorporation of Aboriginal art into art galleries in Australia, and hence making it possible for Foley to be part of the contemporary Australian art scene. But Foley also exhibits internationally, which makes her part of the global art market.

John Young

John Young (b. 1956) is an Asian-Australian artist, representing a strand in the contemporary Australian art world that all the informants describe as an important tendency, because of the fact that Australia has close connections to Asia in terms of distance, and because of the large numbers of immigrants from Asia. Having been born in China, or rather in Hong Kong, and working in Australia, also makes him a diaspora artist, a common concept in the global art world in which I was

interested in taking a closer look. The mass of details depicted in Young's *Double Ground Paintings,* and especially in the *On Liberty* series, reproducing historical encounters between China and Europe, upon which a layer of category paintings consisting of nudes, landscapes and various still-lifes are depicted, made me curious of the story behind these paintings. Together with the fact that Young seems to be working both within the concepts of cross-culture and contemporaneity this was a reason why I wanted to investigate his art practice further.

John Young was born in Hong Kong and given the name Young Ze Runge. He was the youngest of four children in a cosmopolitan, Westernized Catholic family originating from the region of Zhongshan, north of Macau. This is a region known for its liberal thinking, and the introduction of free education to all children during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Young's father, an industrialist in petroleum products, and his mother a well-educated woman, the first woman involved in politics in Hong Kong and a Cantonese opera singer, raised their family according to a Westernized way of life. They also conveyed, however, respect for the cultural heritage of China. In the spirit of the latter, Young learnt the art of Chinese calligraphy from the age of four, and to write Chinese poetry, while living among works of Chinese art in his home, which made him familiar with the old Chinese landscape tradition and calligraphic works from the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and the vases of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912).[113] However, in 1967, when Young was eleven, his parents chose to send him to boarding school in Sydney, so that he could escape the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China, commonly known as the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Apart from yearly trips back to Hong Kong, Young spent most of his time abroad in Australia, being educated in Western schools. In the years 1974–1977 he completed a degree in philosophy, art history and mathematics at the University of Sydney, and from 1978 to 1980 he studied art, painting and sculpture at the Sydney College of the Arts. With this background, John Young can be considered "a product of the Chinese diaspora."[114]

To be a product of the Chinese diaspora is to be a migrant who has experienced migration, an experience that differs with every individual. But according to Ien Ang, common to all migrants is that they have completed a physical one-way journey from one place to another, which has disrupted a natural sense of home and makes the migrants' identity both linked to and constituted by difference.[115] Or as told by Salman Rushdie:

The effect of mass migration has been the creation of radically new types of human beings: people who root themselves in ideas rather than in places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves – because they are so defined by others – by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves.[116]

It is in Rushdie's strange fusion, resulting in never before experienced unions between what the migrants were and where they find themselves that, as stressed by Ang, "the idea of diaspora, of diasporic identification and imagination, takes on subjective significance."[117] It is in this process the diasporic identification becomes personal, but the idea as such will always be linked to the myth of the lost and often idealized homeland, which according to the editors of Public Culture, leaves "a trail of collective memory about another place and time," in addition to creating "new maps of desire and of attachment."[118]

The attachment to a homeland is common to all diasporas, but the Chinese diaspora is often considered more passionate in their attachment. Why is this? According to Ien Ang, there are several reasons, one of which could be the devotion to the ancestral home and family, and the respect every Chinese shows toward the elder generation, which is looked upon as a fundamental core in traditional Chinese culture, and results in a longing for the lost homeland. Another longing that unites the Chinese diaspora living in the West is for belonging, which is accentuated when one is exposed to exclusion as a result of racial discrimination. In this respect, Ien Ang compares the Chinese diaspora with black people, and the fact that they both have "permanent racial visibility," a reality that makes total integration impossible, hence an exclusion which Ang argues that most individuals of Chinese descent have experienced. Ang also puts forward historical reasons for the Chinese diaspora's close connection with the homeland, and the idea that through history China has been considered the "Other" vis-à-vis the West. In this East-West dichotomy, Ien Ang stresses that China, with its history "dominated by the notion of the uniqueness of the Middle Kingdom," which is looked upon as the great civilization, a conception deriving from Marco Polo's journeys still valid today, has designated all non-Chinese "as 'barbarians', 'foreign devils' or 'ghosts'." From a Western point of view, Western thinkers have also made China the Other by using China both as a positive and negative symbol "for that which the West was not." This has resulted in an opinion of China as not being "an ordinary country."

Everything that happens in China makes huge headlines in Western media, for example the massacre in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989.[119]

The diasporas of the world are always transnational. They all connect the global and the local, as well as the past and the present together in a complex and flexible blend. It is this complexity and flexibility that constitute the very core and "vitality of diaspora cultures." As further pointed out by Ang, diaspora cultures also facilitate and create opportunities for "a critical cultural politics" without any privileges for the host country or the former homeland, and in so doing maintain "a creative tension between, 'where you're from' and 'where you're at'."[120] This last statement derives from Paul Gilroy's article "It Ain't where you're from, it's where you're At… The dialectics of diasporic identification," from 1991, and for Ang, this is what forms the "point of anchorage in every day life."[121] This is interesting as far as Young's diasporic connection to his homeland is concerned, and he having examined and questioned his Chinese heritage – where he is from, but ultimately the most interesting approach is really where you are at, which is visible in Young's works of art.

As an artist, Young, with his cosmopolitan, well-educated and Catholic, as well as traditionally Chinese, background, has used his experiences to examine the double bind that is the foundation of his artistry. But being a Chinese artist educated in Western art schools and practicing art from mostly a Western perspective has also meant that Young has utilized the concepts of an international contemporary artist. Furthermore, being Hong Kong Chinese is different from being mainland Chinese – one is not Chinese but Hong Kong Chinese – descendent from the "Westernized" province of Hong Kong. Coming from Hong Kong makes one less Chinese, or rather as observed by Rey Chow, results in an impure Chineseness in comparison with Chinese people from the mainland who are considered "more 'authentic'."[122] How far away from his Chineseness, or rather his Asian descent is Young, and how does he deal with his diasporic identity in his art?

Young started his artistic career in 1982 with a solo exhibition lasting one minute and organized by himself in Rosroe, Connemara, Ireland. This was an exhibition consisting of one single random photograph depicting "a reflection of a Malevich 'cross' painting in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam," photographed by Young without looking through the camera's viewfinder.[123] His idea in organizing this event was to follow in the footsteps of Wittgenstein. In fact, the actual venue was the front door of a stone cottage in the fishing village of Rosroe, where Wittgenstein had completed his *Philosophical Investigations*, published in 1953. Although this was a work by the late Wittgenstein, Young's single-photo

exhibition, which was part of the series *The Second Mirage,* is a depiction of how things "exist in their incommensurate meanings and states." As such, it was not an illustration but a representation of letting things be without any proposition, "mute, silent and ecstatic."[124] In a way this could be understood as an investigation into the early Wittgenstein, and his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* published in 1921, which according to Wittgenstein was to be used as a ladder that is climbed in order to "see the world rightly."[125] However, upon having seen the world rightly one has to recognize the sight as nonsense and throw it away. Then one will arrive at Wittgenstein's seventh basic proposition: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."[126] For Young this resulted in "aimless" random photographs, mistakes which were "created 'at the moment of forgetting', in the blind spots of thought."[127] This is an example of the thorough theoretically based approach towards art and art-making that Young explored in his early practice. This attitude that continued in his next phase, which he named the *Silhouette Paintings*, lasting between 1986–1989, and presented with a set of framing propositions declaring Young's perspective on art.[128]

The *Silhouette Paintings* consist of acts of appropriation to examine the nature of representation, which Young did in monochrome canvases deriving from photocopied reproductions of André Derain's late work.[129] In this series, Young almost copies Derain's paintings due to the mode of procedure chosen. He enlarges and transfers Derain's paintings with the help of a grid, which is often visible in the finished work. When described as almost copying, this alludes to the enlargement, of Young using an old and common manner of copying, and the fact that he sometimes distorts the representations in the process through silhouetting Derain's depictions. A further element of inappropriate copying is that the paintings are monochrome, only consisting of hues in one colour such as blue, grey or green. In one sense, Young is conducting a modernist investigation into the nature of painting, and in another sense a postmodern one when he appropriates, deconstructs and distort. But he is also changing the preconditions of the representation when he exposes Derain's artistic meaning to a test. However, the main reason for Young to chose works by Derain was the way Derain rejected the avant-garde and favoured, what Young regarded as an "eternal" style, opposing modernism's linear and progressive conception of time. Young compares this with Confucianism's "retrogressive time," because in Confucianism there is no concept of historical progress, a human being cannot change nature or the social order; everything falls back on ancestral cultures and notions.[130] This is quite an early

experiment by Young in crossing cultures by combining his Western art practice with the philosophy of his homeland.

The next phase in Young's artistry, as named by him consists of the *Polychrome Paintings*, created between 1989 and 1993. Like the *Silhouette Paintings*, they are also presented with a proposition written in 1989, a somewhat witty declaration further describing Young's perspective on art.[131] The *Polychrome Paintings* evolved from canvases consisting of multiple, rectangular and quite small colour fields, each one surrounded by a white frame, alluding to yet another modernist strand in painting. In the early works, the paintings consists of as many as 918 different fields in various colours, with the average dimension of 183×168 cm. Later on, the fields became larger and fewer, eight in each painting and without white frames. Towards the end of this phase Young added images, two large pictures placed in two corners or one in the centre, but mostly three pictures in a band above the colour fields. All these images represent fixed categories of art; the nude, the still-life, the landscape, interior decoration and design, as well as scenes from everyday life.[132] The *Polychrome Paintings* were executed as collaborations between different artists. They contain mistakes and anomalies and the colours were chosen intuitively or by chance, all of which were important factors for the creative process. The notion behind the paintings was a critique of the passive spectators that watched instead of looking, referring to increasingly screen based contemporary society where everyone is stuck in front of a screen, either a television or computer screen. But first and foremost, the critique was directed towards art's loss of integrity, the fact that art had become a commodity sold and controlled by the market. Or as described by Carolyn Barnes: "The 'Polychrome' paintings identified the society of spectacle as a major source of cultural anaesthesia."[133] The majority of the sets of three images above the colour patterns originate from photographs, or sometimes reproductions, and as such they are second-hand. The nude category, which occurs most frequently, is often clichéd by Young by reproducing everyday pictures form magazines and news papers of mostly women, and in using them Young also presents a critique of the way women are objectified through photography. The landscapes are reproductions from postcards, while the still-lifes and interior decorations are photographs of flower arrangements placed on design furniture. The images of everyday life depict cute pets, but there are also quotidian scenes found in nineteenth-century paintings of outdoor life. All the images are carefully painted by hand, and in using this traditional time-consuming procedure the artists were able to put their personal and affectionate marks on the canvases, which again hinted to protest against the hectic, digitized contemporary society.

In 1993 Young began to refer to his work as the *Double Ground Paintings,* and, as in the earlier phases this was also accompanied with a proposition, written in 1997.

An investigation

Narrative, patterns, marks digitally printed on the background; areas of painted generic photographic images in the foreground.

The paintings are worked from all four sides. The structure aims to make you feel as if the images in the foreground and the background have belonged together all the while – a sort of necessary dependency. This diabolic structure may naturalise the foreground into the background, or mimic the way that resonance can determine our everyday attitudes towards images. [134]

Before Young arrived at the *Double Ground Paintings* he had, however, come to realize that as an artist he was neither Chinese nor Australian. This led him to question the notion of cultural identity and to explore issues of hybridity and difference from postmodern and postcolonial perspectives. But it was not only his own double ground, or hybrid identity, that he was interested in exploring. In 1992 he attended the conference *Modernism and Postmodernism in Asian Art,* organized by John Clark and held at the Australian National University in Canberra. This conference made Young aware of the Western world's hegemony in defining modern art, in that it neglects non-Western work to be truly modern. This mainly concerned the Western art world's way of perceiving Asian and Chinese modernism as uninteresting replicas of Western originals, and Asian modernism as such would thus have no bearing on art history.[135] In this sense, the *Double Ground Paintings* are an expression of both his own cross-cultural descent as an artist and an investigation into the history of interaction between China and Europe.

The title *Double Ground Paintings* could be considered a metaphor made by Young for the concept of cross-culture. As paintings, however, they are further elaborations of the *Polychrome Paintings.* The images of fixed categories of art reappear in the *Double Ground Paintings* as an upper layer. For the most part, they are placed in accordance with the later *Polychrome Paintings*, in the corners. But there is a difference in that the *Double Ground Paintings* are created with two or more canvases, each measure 200–227×122–161 cm, which means that the number of images representing fixed pictorial typologies varies in accordance with the number of canvases. In the early *Double Ground Paintings* there are often two canvases placed side by side creating a whole painting through the background, which derives from one picture divided in the middle and transferred onto two canvases. In the later works the background image still consists of one picture, which sometimes fills

a single canvas, but it is more common for the picture to be divided two, three or four times and transferred onto the same number of canvases, resulting in quite large paintings, with an overall size of 227×560 cm in a four-panel painting. The images of fixed categories of art often appear in one or two corners of each canvas, which means that the number varies from three, in the smaller ones, up to eight category paintings in the largest paintings.

The background pictures in all the *Double Ground Paintings* derive from different sources, which will be elaborated below. A joint feature of all of them, however, is how they were created, or rather reproduced on to the canvases. For this purpose, Young used a commercial printing technique developed for billboards that allowed enlarged digitized reproductions to be printed on the canvas. The number of canvases used depends on the size of the background picture, where the size of the printouts sets the limits. Finally, the background pictures were painted twenty times with a milky glaze, a process that conceals the often poor quality of the prints due to the considerable enlargements. Another benefit was that the prints looked older, giving them a look similar to the original source. The milky glazed layers, however, also puts the background picture further back, as if placed behind frosted glass, which on the other hand makes the images of fixed pictorial typologies, painted on top of the glaze, appear to be liberated from the background, reinforcing the layered effect of the double ground. However, in the proposition concerning the *Double Ground Paintings* Young stresses that the structure of the paintings aims to make the spectators feel that the background picture and the foreground pictures belonged together out of a "necessary dependency."[136] This is as if the foreground picture were naturalised into the background, although this is not how I apprehend this series of paintings.

The first *Double Ground Paintings* were a result of Young discovering the Jesuit fathers, and foremost the Italian painter and Jesuit missionary Giuseppe Castiglione's activities in China during the sixteenth century. Castiglione was appointed Qing court painter at the Imperial Palace in Beijing, serving three emperors and introducing in this connection Western ideas and techniques of painting, such as perspective, while also blending European styles of painting with Chinese subjects and themes.[137] In the *Double Ground Paintings* Young worked in a similar manner, mixing Western techniques, historical Chinese art, and European colonial art depicting Western scholars in China. This can be seen in his *On Liberty* paintings, consisting of three works of art. One story behind these paintings, put forward by Barnes, is of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci who introduced Copernicus' heliocentric model, with the sun at the center of the universe, to the Chinese Emperor.[138] This is

a possible story in that Ricci spent almost thirty years in China as a Jesuit missionary. During this time, Ricci also became a well-known cartographer who published the first maps of China in 1554 and 1600.[139] However, when taking a closer look at Young's painting, and after a verification with the Getty Museum, the owner of the tapestry from which Young's background painting was reproduced, the seated man with the white beard, whom Barnes point out as Matteo Ricci, could also be his successor, the German Jesuit Father Schall von Bell.[140] He and the Flemish Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest used the knowledge presented to the Chinese by Ricci to develop further the art of mapmaking, as well as the science of astronomy and the design of astronomical instruments, the latter resulting in more accurate calendars.[141] For Young, the *On Liberty* series depict China's double link with the West. This points to the fact that the Jesuit fathers made Western scientific developments available in China, leading the West to believe that China had little knowledge of other countries than their own, as put forward by Antonio Paolucci, the director of the Vatican Museums.[142] On the other hand, the Chinese provided the West with highly regarded cultural artefacts such as decorated porcelain, or "china" as the British named it due to its country of origin, and silk, as well as the art of calligraphy, their knowledge on printmaking, and the skills of making paper and gunpowder.

On Liberty #1, **Winter 1993,** (see picture 33)
Digital print, synthetic polymer paint and oil on canvas, consisting of two panels, 213×122 cm each, 213×244 cm overall. Vizard Foundation Art Collection of the 1990s.

On Liberty #1 is one of Young's first *Double Ground Paintings,* created in 1993. The background print derives from the *Beauvais Tapestry, The Astronomers,* designed by the Frenchman Guy-Louise Vernansal ca. 1697–1705. It is woven by the Beauvais Tapestry Manufactory in the city of Beauvais in northern France and made of wool and silk, with a modern cotton lining, with overall dimensions of 424.18×318.77 cm.[143] *The Astronomers* tapestry is part of *The Story of the Emperor of China* series and depicts a group of seven Chinese and European men, and one boy, assembled on a stone terrace somewhere in China. Five of the men are gathered in the tapestry's lower left corner, they all surround an elaborate mounted globe. In the centre of the group, turned towards the onlookers, stands the Chinese emperor. He is dressed in a red robe and hat, and wears the Chinese imperial insignia of the winged dragon. His right hand rests on the top of the globe while he is gesturing vividly with his left. It seems as if he is in a lively discussion with a seated, white bearded man to his right. This man could be Matteo Ricci as Barnes stresses, or the

German Jesuit priest Father Schall von Bell, as pointed out by the Getty Museum. The man is dressed in a pink robe and hat, and like the emperor, also wearing the Chinese imperial insignia of the winged dragon. According to the Getty Museum, Father Schall von Bell was a well-known Western astronomer "who attained a high rank in the Qing court."[144] In the tapestry this is shown with a pair of compasses held in his right hand with which he is making measurements of the globe. His right hand is resting on a writing table draped in red velvet decorated with golden fringes. The only visible part of the table is one leg, exquisitely ornamented in the shape of a large bird, probably a pheasant, because in China the pheasant is the "symbol of literary refinement," one of twelve symbols of sovereignty and a symbol of imperial authority assuming cosmic significance, representing the emperor as the ruler of the universe, whilst the dragon and pheasant together represent the natural world.[145] The other three men surrounding the globe are not known by name; two of them are also engaged in a discussion one is standing behind the emperor facing the viewer. Concerning the other persons visible in the tapestry, one man is standing in the background, depicted in profile and looking into a telescope, and one is in the foreground, in front of the writing table, bowing above the boy who is sitting on the terrace floor. Visible behind the scene on the terrace, in the background, is a Chinese landscape with trees, mountains and buildings.

In *On Liberty #1* Young does not use the whole tapestry for his background image. His focus is on the men surrounding the globe, with the Chinese emperor in the centre, and primarily on the discussion between the emperor and Father Schall von Bell. The importance of this discussion is accentuated with the images of fixed categories of art painted on top of the reproduced tapestry. They block out part of the already reduced and divided background picture, directing the viewer's gaze towards the emperor. As mentioned above, *On Liberty #1* consists of two canvases placed on end, side by side, leaving a narrow gap dividing the reproduction. On the left canvas all five men surrounding the globe are visible, but the gap is parting Father Schall von Bell in two. Most of his body is visible in the left canvas, while his left arm is shown in the canvas on the right.

There are three images depicting fixed pictorial typologies in *On Liberty #1*, all are rendered rectangular and show a landscape, a nude and a flower arrangement. In the left canvas a Chinese landscape is painted in the upper left corner, totally erasing the head of one of the men surrounding the globe. The landscape is reproduced from above. Black mountain peaks emerge through the clouds. The colours of the clouds vary from white in the upper most ones, to greenish, bluish, yellow, light blue and darker blue. The horizon is painted high, above the white clouds, and almost

touching the highest black mountain peak. In the canvas on the right, in its upper left corner, a flower arrangement is painted on a black background. It is composed of three flowers of the same species, with green stems and white petals from which brownish catkins of seed-vessels hang in front of yellow sepals. This arrangement covers part of the landscape in the background and most of the upper body of the man looking into the telescope. In the lower right corner of the same canvas, the nude – a naked woman depicted in half figure from the head down to the hips – is painted against a black background. She is seated in a semi frontal pose with both her arms lifted and bent backwards, as if she were folding her hands behind the neck. Her head is softly leaning forward, hiding the hands. Her eyes are shut and her left arm casts a shadow on her face. The colour of her skin is almost white and gives a lifeless impression. This image blocks out the seated boy and the body of the man bowing above him. Only his head is visible above the category painting.

In the *Double Ground Paintings* Young examines his diasporic identity, which indicates that he is trying to come to terms with whether he is a Chinese or an Australian artist. When he mixes different background images deriving from, as we could se in the *On Liberty* series – early contact pictures between Europe and China, and later from Chinese history paintings, with fixed pictorial typology images – he addresses another important issue: the position of Chinese artists and Asian culture especially in the Australian art world, but also in the Western art world in general. In the same year, 1993, when Young painted *On Liberty #1*, he also organized the conference *Australian Visual Art in an Asian Context,* which continued and expanded this investigation in addition to recognizing another issue, weather or not Asian culture has had influence on contemporary Australian art.[146]

By covering the background images behind twenty layers of milky glaze, Young accentuates the distance to the original cultural usage, and in the process makes the category paintings more distinguished. In choosing mainly nudes and pictures of nature, such as landscapes and flower arrangements, he examines the visual statements of both the Western and the Chinese art worlds. In Chinese traditional painting, however, there are no nude images, because the Western art-historical concept of the nude as culturally defined anatomical shapes did not exists in Chinese culture, and hence was not depicted in the art, an argument put forward by John Hay.[147] It was not, however, until the nineteenth century, when the West began to look at Chinese and Asian culture as the Oriental Other, concurrent with the western world's increasing obsession with the body, that the absence of this particularly kind of body, defined by the West and depicted as both solid and objectified, manifested itself. In China the body is not represented according to

mimetic notion, but as a process of construction, which means that there was no lack of naked bodies as such, although the body is not presented as a solid whole object, but rendered as metaphors. For instance, a common term for sexual union was the "play of clouds and rain," where a description of a woman's hair is meta-morphosed into evocative cloud imagery, and the wind, making garments swirl, which also is intimately linked with this cloud and rain imagery.[148] If a sexual act is depicted in a work of art, the bodies are not seen as nude figures, and the act only becomes significant in relation to the social context; the act is not an act of individual bodies. In a social context, nakedness is absorbed into the surroundings, which mean that the meaning of the body, even the body as sexual object, is solely social. It is elaborated through ornamentation and clothes. This derives from the idea of China as "fundamentally cultural." China's self image was of civilization – a civilization supported by ornamentation. From a semiotic point of view, this could be understood as "the articulation of pattern in the substance of humanity."[149] And hence, a completely uncoded nude would have been apprehended as not human. The landscape in Chinese traditional painting, on the other hand, was not considered to have any real visible references, an argument put forward by Francesca dal Lago.[150] The notion of landscape painting was to provide a connection between the spirit of the artist – a spirit that was imperative – and the "essence" of the depicted object. As such, landscape paintings were foremost a medium for the artists to express their inner emotions and experiences.[151] Furthermore, the image of the landscape was not, as stressed by Lin Tuang, a visual statement of an accurate representation of the actual topography of a specific place, but coded through intellectual chan-nels. Landscape painting was defined as an art that "conjured up feelings about a place" by the artist, in order to generate feelings in the viewer that they would have experienced in real nature.[152] Or as told by the eleventh century Chinese painter Guo Xi "A [landscape] painting should make one feel these sentiments as if one were bodily there."[153]

In this sense, it seems as if Young presents fragments of his cultural inheritance through the background images and the category paintings. Firstly, in distancing the original background image through the enlargement and the glaze; secondly when he depicts the nude, although the body seems to be absent in Chinese art, while the Western art world has had a fixation on the body through history; and thirdly in his depictions of the landscape which he reproduces according to Chi-nese traditional painting, depicting the essence of the represented object, although the landscapes had already been denaturalised by Young through the process of photography. There was no presence of the artist, and hence no generated feelings

in the viewer. This means that the *Double Ground Paintings* are virtually double-grounded in more than one sense. They point to the fact that there has always been exchange between cultures, which highlights the notion of communication across cultures, and the importance of constantly rethinking cultural differences. This, however, does not mean that reading and understanding meaning across cultures, when appropriated the way Young does, result in mutual comprehension. However, in a globalized world cultural hybridity seems to lessen the distinctions between regions and cultures, which could result in mutual comprehension. On the other hand, the much-evolved hybridity of globalization threatens to make everyone a foreigner, which again brings forth the importance of the local and the attempt to recreate the connection with tradition, which is another important viewpoint for Young with his Hong Kong descent. Nevertheless, when Young started to work with the *Double Ground Paintings* in 1993, he was well aware that the cultural perspectives he presented in the series did not correspond to the Eurocentric Australian perception of art, and the Australian art world was not easy to convince. The notions of an Australian-Asian artist in Australia was somewhat contradictory, in that the public opinion was that the artists did not identify themselves with Australia. This was regarded as threatening and resulted in an almost racist apprehension of Australian-Asian artists being subversive towards the Australian culture.[154] This notion also realized the ideas behind the conference, mentioned above, which had been organized by Young in the same year.

In 1999 Young began to refer to himself as a Hong Kong-Australian artist. This could be looked upon as an indication that he was engaged in, and worked within, multicultural Australian society. But it could also be as Barnes suggests, that Young is trying to reflect what he thinks is "the world's view of him, even if it did not necessarily fit his own perception of himself."[155] In 2003, however, Young expanded the subject for the *Double Ground Paintings* when he started to question the notions of multicultural Australian society in yet another series subtitled *Refugee Patterns,* which dealt with issues concerning boat people all around the world, and foremost in Australia. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a great deal discussion on the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia. One incident that made headlines all over the world was in August 2001 when the Norwegian cargo vessel *Tampa* tried to anchor on Christmas Island, an island belonging to Australia but situated close to the Indonesian territorial waters After rescuing 400 refuges, mainly from Afghanistan, from a sinking ship, *Tampa* requested to land at the island because the ship was unable to provide for all these people. Australia sent soldiers with food and water, and doctors to tend to the sick

and wounded, but they did not allow the refugees to enter the island. They where later shipped to other small islands in the South Pacific and New Zealand, the latter after receiving extensive economical support from Australia.[156] Another point of criticism to which Australia has been exposed is the handling of illegal asylum seekers who have managed to reach the country, "[…] they find themselves facing one of the toughest regimes in the world."[157] In waiting for their cases to be assessed, which often takes several years, they are held in detention centres, established in 1999 after an influx of asylum seekers arriving illegally by boat. The centres are surrounded by barbed wire and several perimeters of fences and situated far away in the bush. The most remote one is in the desert more than 480 kilometres from the nearest town.[158] After 2001 there have been more incidents involving boat people in Australia, of which Young was probably well aware when he created *Refugee Patterns.*

***Red, Blue*, Summer 2003,** (see picture 34)
Digital print and oil on linen, 200×150 cm. Collection of the artist.

This *Double Ground Painting* from 2003 consists of one canvas and has the subtitle, *Refugee Patterns.* The background reproduction derives from a photograph of a polypropylene bag – the zipped, cube-formed carry-all bags, often used as suitcases amongst poor and displaced people – a refugee suitcase. This background picture is a close-up of the check-woven fabric in red, white and blue. The fabric is striped lengthwise with a narrow white stripe along the left side of the canvas, followed by a broader red field woven in light and deep red colours, followed, in turn, by another white stripe broader than the first one. In the next field, which is the broadest, check-woven white and blue threads composes a light blue appearance. A narrow white stripe follows the light blue field and is the last stripe on the canvas.

In *Red, Blue* the images depicting fixed categories of art, and the placing, are different from the earlier *Double Ground Paintings.* First, the three rectangular category pictures are painted beneath and up against each other, in a somewhat meandering vertical row, almost in the centre of the painting. Second, the categories are not as obvious as in Young's earlier work. In *Red, Blue* there are two seascapes and a picture of a woman. The uppermost painting is reproduced from a photograph and shows a raft floating at sea. The raft is anchored both in the front and in the back, and surrounded by a vast expanse of water. The overall nuance is blue. The dark blue raft casts a darker blue shadow on the calm light-blue sea. The second category painting is a close-up of the sea surrounding the raft, and as such also completely blue. The picture at the bottom depicts a woman lying on her

back, on dark wooden floorboards. She is reproduced askew from above, as if the photographer/artist is standing behind her head looking down, solely depicting her upper body, from the head down to her chest. She is dressed in a red Chinese silk shirt with a dragon design. The shirt is unbuttoned, leaving her neck and chest bare. Her arms are spread wide with bent elbows, the arms upwards towards her head with the forearms and hands facing up. Her features are Asian with black semi-short hair falling on to the floorboards. She has a pearl in her left ear and her eyes are almost closed.

In *Red, Blue* Young elucidates the exposed existence illegal asylum seekers are subject to. He narrates a story of vulnerability and displacement with the help of the fabric of the "refugee suitcase", not serving as sufficient protection for the few belongings refugees manage to bring with them, as the background image upon which a picture of the endless sea and an image of a raft, the simplest and most risky flight vessel existing, surrounded by water, together with a depicted woman laying flat on her back on dark floorboards resembling a pier, as if she just has been dragged out of the water, maybe rescued although the picture does not tell us whether the woman is dead or alive.

Conclusions

In this volume cross-culture is defined as encounters between cultures, which means that transformations and influences have always been possible in the arts. Hence, it is not only encounters between indigenous and Western art that are to be apprehended as cross-cultural, but all encounters between art and art practices in different cultures. In this sense the *Double Ground Paintings* point to the long history of encounters between cultures in their examination of historical events between the Chinese and the European world, presenting visual statements as fragments of cultural inheritance both through the background image and the category paintings. This makes the *Double Ground Paintings* metaphors created by Young for the concept of cross-culture. Young further questions why Chinese art, or Asian art in general, in similarity with Aboriginal art, not could be true modern art, but is instead perceived as replicas of Western originals, which he puts forward in a somewhat witty manner depicting the nude category as clichéd pictures of women, and in so doing also making a critique of how images of women are objectified through photography in a Western context, and from a Chinese perspective, he speculates on the Chinese notion of non existing nude images. In this connection the *Double Ground Paintings* are to be regarded as a cross-cultural statement. However, this statement could not have been possible without some

knowledge of the historical encounters between Europe and China. Again it is all about understanding art on its own terms, which provides possibilities for a cross-cultural art history.

Already in the *Silhouette Paintings* from 1986–1989, where Young compared Western thoughts on progress in modernity, with Confucianism's retrogressive time, he investigated his own cross-cultural descent, along with exploring his own cultural identity trough issues of hybridity and difference. From the perspective of contemporaneity this is in accordance with issues of postmodernism and post-coloniality, which means that he is engaged in the postcolonial turn, and as such in Smith's prevailing tendency. In 1993 he began to create the *On Liberty* series, a subtitle to the *Double Ground Paintings,* where he examines his diasporic identity. This indicates that he is trying to come to terms with whether he is a Chinese or an Australian artist. It was not until 1999, however, Young referred to himself as a Hong Kong-Australian artist. From then on, he is to be regarded a transnational diaspora artist, connecting the local and the global, as well as the past and the present, resulting in a flexible blend that Ien Ang thinks constitutes the core and the "vitality of diaspora cultures."[159] This vitality is visible in *On Liberty #1,* where Young puts forward the importance of the local, in a sense of "where you're at," as stressed by Paul Gilroy, while at the same time he is also attempting to create a connection with tradition, "where you're from," and in so doing keeping the tension that Ang argues is the point of anchorage in everyday life.[160] In pointing to the importance of the local in a local/global dichotomy, Young is also criticizing the much-evolved hybridity within globalization that threatens to make everyone a foreigner, which further establishes Young as an artist within contemporaneity. Also viable in the fact that Young's works has not surrendered "its critical impulse."[161] As a diaspora artist he also has an opportunity to express critical cultural-political statements without favouring either his host country, or his former homeland. This is visible in a series of work entitled *Refugee Patterns*, another subtitle to the *Double Ground Paintings.* These paintings could be regarded as critique against the multicultural society of Australian and its treatment of asylum seekers, and the problem of boat peoples. In this sense, he stresses the vulnerability and displacement to which refugees are exposed. But he is also expressing criticism of his former homeland, which forces its people to risk their lives in one-way journeys, disrupting the natural sense of home in becoming refuges, later to be engaged in diaspora cultures where identity is constituted by difference.

However, Young is also engaging in Smith's residual tendency when he is returning to notions of modernism and recycles modernist values, for instance in

the *Silhouette Paintings* where he almost copies André Derain's late works in an investigation into the nature of painting from a modernist point of view. In the early *Polychrome Paintings,* executed as collaborations between different artists, he further explores colour field painting, which means that Young could be looked upon a Remodernist. However, the *Polychrome Paintings* also contain a critique of the society of the spectacle, identified as a source of stupefaction, where art has lost its integrity and become a commodity controlled by the markets. Young also criticizes how the spectators have stopped looking, in a modernist sense, and only watch fixed in front of their computer and TV screens, drowning in the flood of images produced by the society of the spectacle. This means that Young could not be regarded as a "Retro-sensationalist", and that his art is not engaged in the "aesthetics of globalisation."[162] Hence, Young as an artist, as well as his art, is engaged in both the residual and the prevailing tendency, and does precisely what is expected of a contemporary artist who is making art in accordance with notions of contemporaneity, his artistry transforming itself back and forth in between tendencies.

PICTURE SECTION

6.
The meaning of In-Between
– summary and concluding discussion

The overall purpose of this dissertation is to examine what criteria constitute contemporary art in Australia, and in a globalized art world in general. But it also questions whether the contemporary global art scene is truly global, or still tends to emanate from a Western point of view. The main situated perspective, on the other hand, is twofold; firstly, to present the long-lasting discussion of the inclusion of Aboriginal art into the fine art category in Australia, in order to examine the possibilities of reaching a cross-cultural category of art. Secondly, to present the concept of contemporaneity in accordance with Terry Smith's definition and to investigate its ability to embrace the art and art practices of a global art world. Both concepts are then scrutinized through practical tests of their viability in connection with four artists representing the categories of traditional Aboriginal art, city-based Aboriginal art, "young" Australian art, and Asian-Australian art.

My inquiry began after realizing that the contemporary art scene in Australia is divided between Australian art and Aboriginal art, where the concept Australian art is representing the so-called Western art practice, consisting of artworks created in accordance with Western traditions, and following the Western art historical canon. Aboriginal art on the other hand, consists of art made by indigenous artists, or Aboriginal artists, living on ancestral land, in remote communities, and making art traditionally. In their practice, they use knowledge passed down from generation to generation, resulting in an unbroken art tradition that has continued for more than 40,000 years. Aboriginal art, however, also comprises city-based Aboriginal art, by artist of Aboriginal descent, who live in cities and are educated in Western art schools, and often expresses Aboriginality in their works of art. I further started to question why the divide existed. Could it have something to do with the fact that Aboriginal art is created by indigenous artists, and often apprehended as ethnographical artifacts? In order to grasp the overall contemporary art scene, I decided to interview knowledgeable persons working within various

fields of art in Australia. In the end, I conducted thirteen interviews with six scholars, five curators, and two directors of art centres, working in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Perth, Darwin and Campbelltown. In each interview I asked the same three, quite broad questions:

– How would you define contemporary art in Australia?

– Have you discovered any specific tendencies regarding contemporary art in Australia?

– How does the discussion in the art relate to postcolonial theory and the notions of globalization?[1]

The informants' answers confirmed that opinions on art in Australia were quite similar, although there were a few differing views.

Towards contemporaneity

In the discussions prompted by the first question, of how to define contemporary art in Australia, the curators, and directors had quite a uniform answer of contemporary art being art made in the present. The scholars, on the other hand, had to define contemporary art before they were able to reply. From an art-historical perspective, they agreed with the curators and directors of the art centres on contemporary art being made in the present, but there was also the apprehension that this view persisted only until the beginning of the 1970s. After the 1970s, the concept of contemporary art replaced modern art, resulting in the fact that the latter concept was abandoned in Australia. Modern art, however, had been a carrier of modernism's ideological baggage, of art being concerned with form alone, with no interest in its content, whether historical or ethnographical. As contemporary art replaced modern art, it came to incorporate the ideological baggage of modernism, which means that contemporary art comprise more than just the art of the present, it also embraced what we used to mean by modern art. For Aboriginal art, this meant that there was no interest in the significance of the art works in their culture of origin, either historical, or contemporary. However, in accordance with the rest of the Western art world, contemporary art in Australia also incorporates current discourses, such as, for instance, postmodernism, postcolonialism and new media. This means that contemporary art in Australia is subordinated to a Western internationalism in operation, and could be regarded as contemporary art anywhere in the Western world. Nevertheless, when the concept of modern art was abandoned, and the word "contemporary" started to appear in the 1980s,

Ian McLean stresses that it was as if the use of this word made it possible to step out of the ongoing debates of modernism and postmodernism, which meant that the discussion in Australia could move on beyond those debates and focus solely on contemporary art.[2] This is an indication of the peripheral discussion that was pursued in Australia during the 1970s, and the 1980s, which concerned Australia being on the outskirt of the Western art world, where modernism, in similarity with other peripheral, but also non-Western cultures, arrived as fragments, and not as a continuous narrative of one "ism" inevitably following another, as if modernism was anticipated by postmodernism. The art centers of the West, however, did not acknowledge this uneven development of modernism in different parts of the world, which according to Ian Burn, constitutes, modern art's blind spot.[3] It was not until the 1960s that Australia was in synchrony with the art centers of the West, at a time when modernism had become an institution, and avant-garde works of art appeared at the same time, in museums of modern art all over the world. But what had started out as a provincial problem was described by Terence Maloon in 1988 as a problem of time.

> Wherever art is produced, it corresponds to local conditions and circumstances: the momentum of change determines the local time sense. Local circumstances and conditions are linked to those elsewhere, but parts of the world do not change at the same rate.[4]

In 1988, at the time of the bicentennial, Australia was synchronized with the international trends, but the essence of time was still a problem, because, as stressed by Maloon, parts of the world change at different rates. It is the essence of time that forwards the discussion to the concept of contemporaneity, and what it is to live with contemporary time, which according to Terry Smith is to be ambiguously in the present. This means that you are not in another time, time passed, or time to come. In relation to other people, you can experience the simultaneity of the contemporary when you are spending time with people from other cultures that are subject to another time frame than your own, which becomes an experience of living in different temporalities. This is an ambiguity that probably is more common in a multicultural society as Australia, although in a globalized world time has become relative. Or as stressed by Smith, "the question of the contemporary is a question of being in time, and being is disjunctive, and being moves in different directions," as if Einstein's vision of relative times, and relative beings in time, has become the norm in a global world.[5] The peripheral location of Australia, resulting in the provincial problem, leads the discussion to the question of time in contemporary

life. Smith follows Maloon in the notion that part of the world does not change at the same rate, which pointed this thesis to the concept of contemporaneity and how different cultures "conceive of and construct their present and the concept of presentness visually."[6]

Contemporaneity, as defined by Smith, could be understood as an inquiry into how various artistic expressions with different time conceptions appear when produced simultaneously in different, closely connected yet mutually incomparable cultures. This is art that could be said to communicate across the divide between cultures, and as such grasp the driving spirit of the contemporary. Its contemporaneity exists in the void of temporal differences, between incomparable cultures.[7] Through the concept of contemporaneity Smith proposes various ways of depicting the world, where contemporaneity represents the most evident characteristics in that it encompasses a wide range of situations. And it is the situations within contemporaneity that shape the art, whilst contemporaneity, in turn, is shaped by antinominal frictions that resist universal generalization. Such frictions are, for instance, globalization's thirst for hegemony in a world of accelerating cultural differences due to decolonization, and the increasing inequity in contemporary life among peoples, individuals and classes, as well as a rift within the spectacle and image-governed economy that confirms insecure coexistence in the infoscape.[8] In order to grasp the overall picture, Smith distinguishes three tendencies representing the situations present in contemporaneity. It is through those tendencies, the residual, the prevailing, and the emerging, that Smith discerns different art practices within the contemporaneous global art world.[9]

Tendencies within contemporaneity

The residual tendency was shaped in the 1980s, in economically advanced societies committed to spectacle capitalism locally as well as globally, where everything is mere appearance, sensational and unreal. There are two groups of artists working according to this tendency, in parallel art practices, eventually merging into a third, all of them returning to notions of modernism. This means that they recycle modernist values in both their practices and works of art.[10] The first group of artists tackle their experiences of living in contemporaneity through works that mixes different mediums. This results in video works, installations, performances and environmental works of art that are sometimes sensational, and, in this respect, this art practice is named "Retro-sensational."[11] The parallel art practice is called "Remodernism" by Smith, and contains artworks which are less contemporary than those of the retro-sensationalists. Artists working in accordance with this art

practice transform traditional medium such as sculpture, with a recycling of, for instance, minimalist notions, in accordance with Richard Serra's artwork *Web List* from 1966–67, and *Torqued Ellipses* from 2000.[12] The third art practice is a merge of the two former, and results in "the aesthetic of globalization", a unification that is named "Spectacle art" or "Spectacularism".[13]

The prevailing tendency focuses on decolonization, of world-wide cultural changes, which, according to Smith, have resulted in a postcolonial turn. The works of art coming from this tendency deal with thorough and critical investigations of globalization, dislocation resulting in diasporic cultures, the possibilities of independence, and issues of dispossession, identity and diversity. Almost all the works of art engaged in the postcolonial turn circulate on the global art market, and are exhibited in Biennales, Triennials and Documentas.[14] The artists are mainly from countries and cultures that have been part of former "Euramerican empires," all of which began to undergo decolonization since the 1960s. However, due to rapid and revolutionary cultural changes in China since the 1980s, Smith includes artists from China who are participating in the global art world. There are, however, also artists from advanced economies in this tendency, who "critically trace and strikingly display the global movements of the new world order and disorder," and others that focus on environmental issues, both social and natural, questioning the ecological balance. Yet others are exploring the conceptual, social, material and economical structures of the World Wide Web.[15] Another aspect that has inspired artists working in "the advanced economies" to criticize spectacle capitalism, and globalization, originates from the years around 1989, when long-lasting tensions erupted in open conflicts in China in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, and the collapse of Soviet barriers to the capitalist world market, as well as the opening of the Berlin Wall.

The prevailing tendency could also be apprehended as encompassing answers to the third question of how the discussion in the arts relate to postcolonial theory and notions of globalization in Australia, where the curators were of the opinion that the legacy of colonialism is bound to be there. This, however, is a new contemporary colonialism recognizing different cultural backgrounds deriving from notions of postcolonial theory which results in works of art exposing contemporary Australian identity, both political and cultural. Examples are works by city-based Aboriginal artists who deal with critical, and anti-colonial issues deriving from their Aboriginality, referring to the cultural identity of the indigenous Australians and characterized by Aboriginal activism since the 1960s.[16] Then there is Australian art that challenges notions of nationhood, emerging from local engagement and

not concerned with the global art world, thus becoming a statement of the local versus the global. And in similarity with other peripheral countries, in reaction to the art centres of the West, postcolonialism meant a way into the global art world. The scholars, on the other hand, emphasized that all art in Australia is marked by postcolonialism, as is art in, for instance, New Zealand, and South Africa. But as stressed by Charles Green, scholars in Australia have been concerned with postcolonial theory since the beginning of the 1990s, and need to move on to the next phase with regard to post-identity politics.[17] Green points to the concept of *Empire*, as defined by Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, as a point of departure. *Empire* as a political subject, characterized by a lack of boundaries and regulating global exchanges is, as such, the sovereign power governing the world.[18] With *Empire*, Hardt and Negri are deconstructing the world order that took effect with decolonization, and was launched "after the Soviet barriers to the capitalist world market finally collapsed," which is reflected by the concept of contemporaneity, and the prevailing tendency.[19]

The third tendency in contemporaneity is the emerging tendency, the result of a generational change set in motion after the residual and prevailing tendencies have unfolded. The artists of this tendency are often young and inspired by the two former, which sometimes lead to more sensational works of art. But the blend of tendencies, as well as the possibility of working in between them, also results in artist committing more to political action in their works of art, which all are very recent, and up-to-date. For the young artists, it is all about the immediate, to grasp the rapid changes concerning the nature of time, place, media and mood – four thematic issues that Smith discerns within all three tendencies, with which most artists working within contemporaneity are concerned. The issue of time again questions what is it to be in time, to live in the present overloaded with past and future times. The issue of place questions what it is to be in place, settled or stuck and locked out, or threatened to become dislocated, exiled, and deprived your roots. The issue of media questions the ever-mediated communication of virtual networks becoming hyperreal. The issue of mood questions the feeling, as opposed to the analysis, of this, of being in situations within contemporaneity, providing personal experiences that are manifested by the artists in their work.[20] According to Smith, however, it is mainly the young artists who visualize in their works their feelings of the strange sense of being that we are experiencing today.

When Smith stresses that all the artists, and art practises, in the residual tendency are returning to notions of modernism, and recycling modernist values, he situates this aesthetic within a Western context, and subscribes to the idea of modernism

being conceived as a universal language. He further alludes to the spectacle society, manifesting its aesthetics in advertising, consumption, entertainment, propaganda and news, presented as unreal representations of mere appearance which further stipulate a Western perspective. The prevailing tendency, on the other hand, focuses on major cultural changes, taking place world-wide due to decolonization and results in a postcolonial turn. The artists working in accordance with this tendency depict postcolonial issues in artworks circulating on the global art market, which seems to be a global phenomenon, though also constructed from a Western perspective. And since the emerging tendency is inspired by the former two, the Western perspective still prevails.

I think the concept of contemporaneity is an interesting approach of putting forward possible interpretations of current situations in the world today. But, as has been mentioned before, it is as if Smith is trying to cover every angle of art made in the present, all over the world, in his definition of the concept, with the risk of contemporaneity becoming insipid and missing the mark. However, the only way of finding out if Smith's definitions and interpretations prevail universally is to put the concept of contemporaneity to a test, which I have done through four artists and their works.

Towards cross-culture

The answers to the second question whether the informants had discovered any specific tendencies in contemporary art in Australia were unanimous, all of them mentioning Aboriginal art. However, the notion of Aboriginal art being contemporary art in Australia is not as obvious as the answers may state. First of all, it was not until late in the 1980s that the significance of indigenous art was noticed at any considerable rate, in both Australia and the rest of the Western art world. For instance in 1984 indigenous art was on display alongside modern art in New York, at MoMA, showing *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*. This exhibition focused on the affinity between indigenous aesthetics and modern art, and foremost on how primitive works of art had made an impact on modernist artists. Another exhibition was *Magiciens de la terre*, on display in Paris in 1989, which sought to reflect on the production of contemporary art on a global scale, as well as to create an exhibition that transcended traditional Western frameworks.[21] In both exhibitions, however, the artworks were exhibited in accordance with modernist notions, mounted in an uncluttered manner without any information on the artists, or on the artworks on display. For the indigenous art, this meant not naming the often-unknown artists, and no information on the

significance the art had in its culture of origin, which confused the viewers, because they did not have any previous knowledge of how to interpret, or understand, the non-Western artworks. This fact stirred up a rather heated discussion concerning the above-mentioned MoMA exhibition, which was published in *Artforum* in 1984 and 1985, where Thomas McEvilley, an American art historian, criticized William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe, the curators of the exhibition. McEvilley mainly accused Rubin of "demonstrating that the 'innocent' creativity of primitives naturally expresses a Modernist esthetic feeling."[22] He also stressed that the indigenous objects were wrenched out of their context, because they were on display without any anthropological information. Rubin responded that the exhibition derived from the modernist receptions of the objects, and did not refer to the indigenous artworks in themselves, which meant that the anthropological information was unnecessary.[23] A similar discussion, albeit not as heated, had surfaced in Australia already in the 1950s, between Tony Tuckson, an artist and the deputy director of the New South Wales art Gallery, and the anthropologist Ronald Berndt. This is for instance evident, when, in 1959, Tuckson acquired bark paintings from Yirrkala, and *pukamini* poles by Tiwi artists from Melville and Bathurst Island, for aesthetic reasons, and chose to exhibit them as art, in an uncluttered display without any information on the "original purpose" of the artworks.[24] Ronald Berndt, on the other hand, advocated the importance of displaying information on the artists, the function of the works and the significance in their society of origin alongside the objects. In 1964 they both worked on the same project, an exhibition and a book, both with the title *Australian Aboriginal Art;* Tuckson curated the exhibition and Berndt edited the book. This made their former differing opinions surface again, which became obvious when Berndt wrote:

> His [Tuckson's] contention is based on the universality of *all* art, irrespective of provenance. It is important for us to know here exactly what this means. The cultural background is not, here seriously taken into account; the function or use of the object or painting, even the identity of the artist, may be completely unknown.[25]

This dispute is pointing to the fact that Tuckson and Berndt worked in accordance with two different contexts, a modernist context of art and an anthropological context, which could be an explanation of their differing apprehensions.

Both the discussion going on in Australia, and the ideas put forward by Rubin in New York, mirror long-standing notions concerning primitive art. The first publication expressing the same opinion had already appeared in 1871, by the

British ethnologist sir Edward Burnett Tylor, who wrote that he was not concerned with the objects' "non-material meaning."[26] Again in the 1920s, when primitive art began to be idealized among ethnologists, art historians and critics, the latter and the art historians were of the opinion that knowledge of the significance of the artworks in their culture of origin could actually impede their appreciation. Towards the 1930s, the two differing opinions began to converge, resulting in the fact that the art historians, and critics, took ethnographic/anthropological knowledge into account when interpreting indigenous objects, and ethnologists/ anthropologists, in turn, took aesthetic considerations into account.[27] However, the early opinions and discussions continuing into the 1950s, and in the 1980s, are all reflecting the primitivist debate of how primitive man had been represented in the Western world since Enlightenment, when Jean-Jacques Rousseau put forward the concept of the Nobel Savage; of man having been essentially happy when living in a state of nature, before civilization came about and mankind became unhappy and corrupt. Later on, in the mid-nineteenth century, this notion was paralleled with social Darwinist ideas of primitive people soon to be extinct, due to evolution. While during modernity, primitive man was looked upon as being stuck in ancient time, living a traditional and unchanging life in collective societies guided by rituals.[28] At the same time, however, primitive man was also admired for what had been lost in the modern culture.[29] Concerning art objects, this meant that primitive cultures were understood as situated in the past, and the value of the art objects was synonymous with their authenticity with regard to this past. In order to interest connoisseurs and collectors, these art objects had to be pure and made in cultures that were uncontaminated by Western influences, and solely produced for the sake of the culture, not in order to be sold to outsiders. Hence, primitive art was equivalent to pure authentic objects, valued by a primitivism constructed by the West with no connections to the culture in which the objects were created, nor to the people to which they referred.[30]

The way primitive art has been apprehended through history indicates that the crossing of cultures, making transformations and influences possible in the arts, has taken place from a Western perspective, thus demonstrating power relations deriving from colonization. This also happened in Australia, although as stressed by Vivien Johnson, from 1986 onwards Aboriginal art has been regarded fine art. This was the year when paintings by Michael Nelson Tjakamarra were included in the Biennale of Sydney, and his design came to decorate the forecourt mosaic of the new Parliament House in Canberra.[31] However, for the inclusion to be possible, indigenous art had to be part of the art discourse, which meant that the conception

of art had to change to encompass differences to a greater degree. In Australia, the conception of art moved away from the Western canon, and allowed differences within the art of different cultures to remain, and as such became more inclusive. But as stressed by Morphy, the focus on the inclusion has been when indigenous art already has arrived at the galleries, which does not mean that Aboriginal art has been invited to contribute to the overall global discourse on art.[32] For this to happen, and in order to achieve a viable cross-cultural category of art, the Western art world has to consider Aboriginal notions on art and what constitutes art from an Aboriginal point of view. For non-Western art to contribute to the global discourse, it has to be understood on its own terms, which means that the meaning and significance the artworks have in their culture of origin must be taken into account, and included in displays to audiences unfamiliar with this art. If indigenous peoples' own conceptualization of their art were to be observed more closely by the Western art world, this could, for instance, constitute a foundation of an art-historical writing on indigenous art, and permit new juxtapositions and relationships between art from different cultures, which could reveal new synergies. This, however, is impossible as long as art historians perceive art solely from a Western perspective.[33] To achieve a viable cross-cultural category of art, the concept also needs to encompass a cross-cultural art history founded on new research into the history of indigenous art all over the world. As pointed out by the Maori scholar Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, it is, however, urgent that new knowledge of non-Western art is allowed to develop globally before it is forged into a world art history. This means not forcing indigenous traditions to be adjusted and added to the Western framework, which only would extend the inequality that already exists.[34] Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Aboriginal art has been regarded fine art in Australia since the mid-1980s, some of the informants stressed that a lot of people still do not regarding Aboriginal art as art. For them, Aboriginal art is still apprehended as ethnographical artefacts and as emerging from its own trajectory. Other informants were of the opinion that only traditional Aboriginal art was distinctive. This was not the case for Aboriginal art by city-based artists, because they work in a common international visual language. When discussing Aboriginal art in Australia, however, it is implied that there is not one specific Aboriginal art. In fact, Aboriginal art is quite divers depending on the artist's so-called belonging place and language group. Moreover, like all other art it changes over time, and in response to different circumstances.

Apart from Aboriginal art being a distinctive tendency in Australia, and in this sense it encompasses both "traditional" and city based art, the informants also stressed the so-called Asian-Australian tendency which began to emerge in the

1990s, when artists in Australia addressed notions of postcolonialism. This could be looked upon as a result of the problem of periphery, of artists situating themselves with other postcolonial countries against the art centres of Europe and the United States. But it is also a result of artists taking residency in Asia rather than New York, as well as the fact that Australia has a large Asian population, and some of them are educated in Australian art schools, graduating as artists. Yet another tendency mentioned by the informants, was of "young" Australian artists returning to skills, such as woodcarving, all of them seeming to focus on the actual medium as such, emphasizing on the techniques of creation and on the finish of the surfaces in a do-it-yourself-aesthetic, using everyday materials. The four tendencies mentioned by the informants pointed me towards the artists and art practices I wanted to investigate further in order to scrutinize the concepts cross-culture and contemporaneity. The artists chosen are the traditional Aboriginal artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye, the city-based Aboriginal artist Fiona Foley, the Asian-Australian artist John Young, and the "young" Australian artist Ricky Swallow, all of whom work, or have worked, in Australia.

Cross-cultural interpretations

Cross-culture derives from a colonial context, where crossing of cultures is apprehended as the norm, as well as the point of departure, which is a requirement when interpreting non-Western or indigenous art. If a cross-cultural perspective is left out there is the risk of arriving at what the American art historian James Elkins criticized as a search for "concepts and qualities that are recognizably North American or European in origin," when trying to understand non-Western art.[35] This is what has happened in connection with Emily Kame Kngwarreye's artworks, when several art historians recognized her art as abstract, despite the fact that Kngwarreye had no knowledge of the Western art historical concept of abstraction, nor of the Western art historical canon.[36] As a traditional Aboriginal artist, Kngwarreye painted her country, narrating her ancestral Dreamings, as well as her everyday life. For her, and Aboriginal people in general, works of art bear significant meanings referring to ancestral worship and duty to country, which means that it could never be abstract in the way the Western art world defines abstract art. Furthermore, Kngwarreye lived on ancestral land in the remote community of Utopia, and although she was educated traditionally and had little knowledge of modernist art, her oeuvre is nonetheless often compared to the works of mainly male modernist artists, such as Claude Monet, Paul Klee, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnet Newman and Kazimir Malevich, among others. Another frequent

occurrence in connection with Kngwarreye's works, and non-Western art in general, is that it is defined by negation. This is yet another concept put forward by Elkins, although originally propounded by the Slovenian scholar Thomas Brejç, of defining non-Western art by emphasizing what it is not, something that could only be possible when interpreting non-Western artworks solely from a Western art-historical perspective.[37]

In order to try to understand Kngwarreye's art the discussion has revolved around its affinity with Western modernist art, whether comparison through likeness or definition by negation, in similarity with the discussion surrounding the 1984 exhibition *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern.* From a cross-cultural point of view it is as if art history is repeating itself by not making an effort to understand non-Western art on its own terms. To reach viable cross-cultural interpretations there has to be a will to understand both the history of the works of art, and the history of the artists, as well as the significance of the artworks in their culture of creation. However, as stressed by Marcia Langton, there also has to be an understanding of the Aboriginal society, as well as the artists' encounter with the rest of the world.[38]

As a city-based Aboriginal artist, Fiona Foley often questions the cross-cultural power relations between Aboriginal, and non-Aboriginal, Australia. She uses her art as a political tool in accordance with a historical, and ongoing struggle of dispossession, following the notions expressed in 1993 by the Yirrkala leader Galarrwuy Yunupingu, who stressed that "We paint to show the rest of the world that we own this country and that the land owns us. Our painting is a political act."[39] She regards herself to be an educator striving to "write Aboriginal people back into the history" of Australia, as for instance in *Lie of the Land* from 1997.[40] In this work, Foley narrates the story of how 600,000 acres of Aboriginal land, now occupied by the city of Melbourne, was purchased by the Tasmanian pastoralist John Batman in 1835. In this sense, Foley is retelling a history of dispossession, but her subversiveness is also noticeable in that she comments on current events, contesting the notion of Australia as a truly multicultural nation. For instance in a photograph from the series *Nulla 4 eva* she highlights, as well as questions, a racial conflict that took place in a Sydney beachfront suburb in 2005. In providing viewers with historical facts through her artwork, Foley equips them with viable information making it possible to understand the artwork on its own terms, and to engage in a cross-cultural interpretation, as well as provide a wider understanding of the history of the Aboriginal population.

John Young represents the Asian-Australian strand in the contemporary Australian art world. He was born in Hong Kong, in a westernized cosmopolitan family that greatly respected the cultural heritage of China. This meant that Young was taught Chinese calligraphy and poesy, although in 1967, at the age of eleven, he was sent to a Sydney boarding school, because his parents wanted him to escape the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. Born in Hong Kong, and educated in Western schools and travelling back and fort to China throughout his upbringing, Young could be regarded as a diaspora artist, who, as stressed by Salman Rushdie, has rooted himself in ideas and memories, rather than in places.[41] As a diaspora artist Young is transnational, connecting the global and the local, as well as the past and the present, and he is further obliged to define himself, because others constantly define him through his otherness. As argued by Ien Ang, however, it is in the union of what Young once was, and where he has found himself that the diasporic identity becomes personal.[42] Being a diaspora artist also makes it possible to be critical towards the cultural politics of both his host country and his homeland. In so doing, he upholds a creative tension between where he is from and where he is at, anchoring himself in every day life. In his art practice this is for instance visible in the series called *Refugee Patterns,* where Young mainly criticizes Australian refugee politics. On the other hand, with his painting *Red, Blue* he stresses the vulnerability of boat refuges, which could be understood as critique of living conditions in many countries in Asia, forcing their inhabitants to be dispossessed of their country. When Young, and other Asian-Australian artists criticize their host country in works of art, as he does in *Refugee Pattern,* or in the *Double Ground Paintings,* which was conceived as not corresponding with the Eurocentric perception on art, public opinion in Australia perceived this as if Young, and Asian-Australian artists in general, did not identify themselves with Australia. As argued by Carolyn Barnes, this was threatening and resulted in the opinion that Asian-Australian artists were subversive towards Australian culture.[43]

In the series named *Double Ground Paintings,* Young presents fragments of his cultural inheritance as memories of his lost homeland. But he also points to the fact that there has always been crossing of cultures, which is evident in the background images presenting scenes of early contacts between Western scholars and the Chinese Ming court, and as such connecting the past and the present. In his early work, for instance, in the photographic series *The Second Mirage,* Young is rooting himself in an idea; in this case the works of art being the results of an investigation into the early Wittgenstein. He also embedded himself in ideas in his next phase, called the *Silhouette Paintings.* This series consists of appropriations of

André Derain's late works through which Young examines the nature of representation. The global versus local connection however, is not as visible in Young's art. It is as if his transnationality, the state of being Asian-Australian and constantly switching between cultures, accentuates the importance of the local in that Young's point of departure is based on where he is at. Hence, there are no fixed positions in Young's artist identity, he incessantly defines and redefines himself, expressing his otherness, as if, as an artist, he is neither Chinese, nor Australian. In this sense, he transforms himself between what he once was and where he has found himself, and in so doing making the diasporic identity personal, which makes his art and artistry driven by the crossings of cultures.

Ricky Swallow, on the other hand, is a young Australian artist, with European descent, who has been able to have residences outside Australian for long periods of time. He sometimes lives in one country and exhibits in another, which makes him a nomadic artist. This may be one reason why his works do not seem to express a belonging to any specific place. Nor is he particularly interested in exploring issues of heritage, identity, gender or ethnicity. His art practice is situated within an international Western context, and his works comment on the Western art-historical canon, mainly seventeenth-century's still life tradition, but also postmodernism's questioning of high and low art and Pop Art's reproduction of every day objects. This is, for instance, visible in his immaculately carved skulls; they are sculptures and Memento Mori pieces, as well as memories from heavy metal posters on his brothers' walls. But he also reproduces skulls in imitations of early iMac computers, in his *iMan Prototypes*, with Apple's well-known logotype rearranged into the shape of a skull. However, being a Western artist and working in an international Western context, Swallow has made it quite hard to subject his works to cross-cultural interpretations. As a matter of fact, it was as if the notions put forward in this volume of what could be viable cross-cultural criteria, came across strong resistance when trying to interpret Swallow's works of art cross-culturally.

Interpretations according to contemporaneity

The concept of contemporaneity was more useful in connection with Swallow's artistry and artworks. Swallow could be regarded an international artist who works and exhibits in a global context, where location and place of origin are of little importance. He is an artist who creates up-to-date works of art. He uses the idiom of popular culture and the fashion industry, and keeps away from political issues, which resembles Guy Debord's critique of the society of the spectacle.[44] In this sense, Swallow could be said to manifest the notion of commodity fetishism

with works of art replicating early iMac computers in his *iMan Prototypes,* and a sunken replica of Darth Vader from *Star Wars* in *Model for a sunken monument.* These are empty representations signifying the core of unreality in a world of mere appearances. Following this notion points to the fact that Swallow's artworks have surrender their "critical impulse," which applies to the concept of contemporaneity, and Smith's residual tendency, where Swallow's art practice becomes subordinate to the notion of "Spectacle art", and as such could be said to engage in "the aesthetic of globalisation." But his art practice could also be apprehended as alluding to "Re-modernism's" recycling of modernist values in that Swallow is returning to skill, accentuating the process of creation and the handling of the material, rendering immaculate surfaces in sculptures that are nomadic. In this sense, his sculptures mirror Rosalind Krauss' notions of absorbing the pedestals into themselves, which makes them depict their own autonomy.[45]

The contemporaneous notions in John Young's artistry and works of art are primarily visible in investigations of his own cross-cultural descent. In the *Double Ground Paintings* he is making inquiries into his diaspora identity, which is in accordance with postcolonial issues of dislocation resulting in diasporic cultures. This means that Young is engaged in the postcolonial turn and the prevailing tendency. It would also be of interest, however, to look into his thoughts on time in connection with the *Silhouette Paintings,* and his reproductions of the late Derain's work. In the *Silhouette Paintings* Young conducts a modernist investigation into the nature of painting which could be said to be subordinate to Smith's "Remodernism" and the residual tendency. But it is the fact that Derain is opposed to modernism's progressive conception of time that is the real interest for Young, which he compares to Confucianism's "retrogressive time" where there is no historical progress, everything falls back on ancestral culture and notions. This non-historical progress is confirmed in "Remodernism's" recycling of modernist ideas, which also is visible in Young's next phase, the *Polychrome Paintings,* consisting foremost of colour field paintings. All the *Polychrome Paintings* are painted by hand, created out of up to 918 different fields in various colours, made by different artists who put their personal marks on the canvases through their intuitive choices of colours, as well as mistakes and anomalies that occurred during the time-consuming process. This is again a confirmation of the non-historical progress and the recycling of modernist notions, but it is also a critique of the society of the spectacle. When Young stresses the slow process of creation in the *Polychrome Paintings* he is mocking the hectic society of modernity, as well as the viewer who have stopped looking and only is watching, mimicking behaviour in front of flickering screens. In criticizing the consumption

driven society of the spectacle, where art has become just another commodity controlled by the market, the *Polychrome Paintings* relate to "Retro-sensational" art, although one cannot say that the *Polychrome Paintings* are subordinated to the prevailing tendency.

As a city-based Aboriginal artist, Fiona Foley performs her "authenticity" through her art in accordance with her Aboriginality, which from a theoretical postcolonial point of view is expected of the postcolonial subject. When Foley is "putting indigenous people up front in the world," which she does when she is writing Aboriginal people back into Australian history – retelling in her artworks the history of Aboriginal people not even taught in the Australian primary schooling system, she is making her own and Aboriginal peoples voices heard.[46] As a postcolonial subject, however, Foley's "authenticity" is contested because she creates her art from an Aboriginal city-based position, which according to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak makes her "inauthentic" in that she maintains double positions.[47] This double position makes Foley engaged in the postcolonial turn, and her art practice subordinated to Smith's prevailing tendency. The effect of Foley's double positions is that she finds herself in two cultures, Aboriginal and Western. Following Terry Smith's distinction, this means that she is to be considered a contemporary artist. Her works of art, on the other hand, are caught up in double time, in the void of temporal differences, which makes her oeuvre contemporaneous because it communicate across the divide of closely connected, but incomparable, cultures, and as such grasps the driving spirit of contemporaneity.

To accommodate traditional Aboriginal art, and the oeuvre of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, into the concept of contemporaneity is not a matter of course. In similarity with Fiona Foley, Kngwarreye was living in double time, although she was a traditional Aboriginal artist working on ancestral land, who maintained traditional values through her art. This means that the concept of double time only applies from an outside perspective, confirming the non-Western temporality, and that Kngwarreye's works of art do not exist in the void between incomparable cultures. Nor does it seem as if her oeuvre could be exposed to the movement in between tendencies without compromising her own notions of always painting her country:

> Whole lot, that's whole lot, Awelye (my Dreaming), Arlatyeye (pencil yam), Arkerrthe (mountain devil lizard), Ntange (grass seed), Tingu (Dreamtime pup), Ankerre (emu), Intekwe (favourite food of emus, a small plant), Atnwerle (green bean), and Kame (yam seed). That's what I paint, whole lot.[48]

However, Kngwarreye was subjected to dislocation, and forcibly removed from her ancestral land, though eventually gaining title to her country and being able to move back, which could be said to be effects of both colonization and decolonization. From this point of view it is possible to subordinate Kngwarreye's works of art to the postcolonial turn, and the prevailing tendency.

Conclusions

From a cross-cultural point of view, Western art history has been repeating itself, trying to interpret mainly indigenous art by comparing it with Western works of art in a search for likeness. However, there has also been emphasis on defining non-Western art by negation, through a search for dissimilarities, which also emanates from a comparison with Western works of art. If instead there is a desire to understand Aboriginal art on its own terms, and if comparisons are needed why not examine city-based Aboriginal art in relation to traditional Aboriginal art as a point of departure. If Fiona Foley's historiographical works would have been looked upon as providing information on the history of the Aboriginal society, and the life of Aboriginal people, as well as the artist's encounters with the rest of the world, and had Kngwarreye's oeuvre been apprehended as insights into traditional Aboriginal societies in general, much would have been gained. Yet another confirmation of how the artworld is perceived foremost from a Western perspective becomes evident when the Asian-Australian artist John Young confirms modernism's blind spot of not recognising its own uneven development in different parts of the world. From an Asian perspective this has resulted in Asian art being regarded as uninteresting replicas of Western originals, and as such not truly modern. This is an opinion that reflects the Australian public's recent understanding of Asian-Australian artists and their works of art, in that the artists have to identify themselves with Australia for the works of art to be positively received. If this is not done, the artists are considered subversive towards Australian culture, and their works of art are questioned. Finally, the viable cross-cultural criteria put forward in this thesis found strong resistance when trying to interpret Swallow's works of art cross-culturally. This was unexpected, and an interesting experience that proves the fact that I, as a Swedish art historian, perceive art from a Western perspective.

The concept of contemporaneity seems mainly to be effective through the residual and prevailing tendencies. Both Ricky Swallow and John Young recycle modernist notions in their artworks. Swallow is returning to the skills of woodcarving and bronze casting, emphasizing the finish of the surfaces, in sculptures that have embodied the pedestals into themselves. At the same time, Young investigates

the nature of painting through explorations of colour field paintings, as well as looking into the nature of representation using André Derain's late works. While both artists also relate to "Spectacle art," or "Retro-sensational" art, they do this in rather divergent ways. Ricky Swallow often used the idioms of popular culture and the fashion industry in objects that could be understood as commodity fetishism. John Young, on the other hand, offers a critique of the society of the spectacle when he points to the stupefaction of a society where art has lost its integrity and become a commodity controlled by the market. But Young's art practice is also subordinate to the prevailing tendency. This is visible in the *Double Ground Paintings,* serving as metaphors of the concept of cross-culture, where Young is engaged in the post-colonial turn through his examinations of his diasporic identity. Fiona Foley is also engaged in the postcolonial turn. As a city-based Aboriginal artist, Foley is trying, in her own words, to put Aboriginal people up front in the world.[49] Through her art, she questions the power relations between Aboriginal, and non-Aboriginal Australia, retelling a history of dispossession, and as such making Aboriginal peoples' voices heard in accordance with postcolonial issues. However, it was not as obvious to fit traditional Aboriginal art, and the oeuvre of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, into the concept of contemporaneity. But Kngwarreye, and the people of Utopia, have been subjected to dispossession and deprived of their country, which makes her artistry influenced by postcolonial issues, visible in the fact that she was always painting her country. Hence, in similarity with the concept of cross-culture, there is also resistance within the concept of contemporaneity, although in this context it is in connection with interpretations of traditional Aboriginal art. Finally, a brief comment on the artworks chosen to represent the art practices of Swallow, Young, Foley and Kngwarreye in this volume: the works by Swallow, Foley and Kngwarreye are all subordinate to one of Smith's tendencies, the residual or the prevailing, while Young's works are subordinated to both the residual and the prevailing tendency. This, however, does not mean that their complete oeuvre has to be apprehended in this way. Nor could the presented cross-cultural interpretations be said to be valid for their oeuvre as a whole. It is also worth noticing that I have not been able to find connotations concerning the emerging tendency, although I had the idea of doing so through Ricky Swallow's works of art.

In the end, my investigation adds up to the absence of a non-Western perspective, which answers the question of whether the contemporary global art scene is truly global, or still tends to emanate from a Western perspective. When a non-Western perspective is left out, there is no way of knowing the significance the artworks have in their culture of origin, which makes it impossible to interpret them on their

on terms. This is a criterion that has primarily been put forward in connection with a cross-cultural category in the arts, but it is also one that is viable for all art, independent of descent. In connection with the concept of contemporaneity, it is an obvious assumption that all works of art are interpreted on their own terms, later to be defined in accordance with the residual, prevailing, and emerging tendencies, or capable of moving back and forth between tendencies. I have already stressed doubts whether the structures within contemporaneity are universal, and I have also pointed to the risk of the concept being insipid and miss the mark. Nevertheless, I think the concept of contemporaneity would benefit from a more explicit approach in connection to a cross-cultural perspective, which would make it easier for the concept to encompass all art. At this point, it seems to me as if we are left with an in-between state of yet to be accepted antinomies, in a globalized art world that still tends to be defined according to notions deriving from a Western perspective.

Being a Swedish art historian and educated in accordance with Western notions, I realise my shortcomings of not being able to fully grasp the whole picture. From this point of view, it would be of interest to continue the discussions put forward in this volume in a cross-cultural environment, and maybe test the concept's viability in another postcolonial context. Concerning the question from which this dissertation started out – What is contemporary art? – I have realized that contemporary art could still be defined as art made in the present. However, I am of the opinion that we are still caught up in the "unimaginability of future art," and always will be. During modernity this resulted in the continuance of forming master narratives for Western art history. But, as stressed by Arthur Danto, contemporary art does not allow itself to be represented by master narratives, which means that the structure that resulted in the Western art historical canon came to and end, and everything became possible and permitted.[50] Artists found themselves "outside the pale of history," with the prospect of being able to create art any way they liked, for any purpose of their choice, or no purpose at all.[51] Without being concerned with former historical unfolding, contemporary art became too pluralistic to be captured in a single dimension, and the critical principles were lost. From this point of view Terry Smith makes an effort to restructuring what is impossible to structure through the concept of contemporaneity. However, the contemporaneity of Aboriginal art, as it has been demonstrated in this volume, is still contested. Although everything is possible and permitted in the contemporary art world, the role of time-keepers, and pace setters in the globalization of indigenous art still remains out of reach for indigenous peoples.

ENDNOTES

1. Introduction, pp. 13–35

1 Morphy, Howard, *Aboriginal Art*, London & New York, Phaidon Limited Press, (1998) 2004, p. 4.

2 A museum in the Australian context corresponds with a museum of, for instance history in the European and American contexts.

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4 Smith was also working at the University of Sydney, and it was in Sydney that I was able to interview him.

5 At the time of the interview, Kate McNeill was a PhD student at the Faculty of Art History and Theory, University of Melbourne, later renamed the Faculty of Arts, Art History, School of Culture and Communications.

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9 Interview with Professor Ian McLean in Perth 25 April 2006.

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18 Michaud, Yves, "Editorial", *Third Text*, Volume 3, issue 6, 1989, p. 17.

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21 Interview, Smith, 14 June 2006.

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23 Interview with Vivien Webb Curator at Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney 22 March 2006.

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35 Eco, 1976, p. 229.

36 Gombrich, 2002, p. 331.

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39 Smith, Terry, "World Picturing in Contemporary Art: The Iconographic Turn", *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Art*, Volume 6, Number 2, 2005, and Volume 7, Number 1, 2006, p. 34.

40 Smith, Terry, "Introduction", *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, Eds. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee, Durham & London, Duke University Press, 2008, pp. 16–17; Smith, Terry, *What is Contemporary Art*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 6.

41 Interview with Professor Sylvia Kleinert, Charles Darwin University in Darwin, 30 May 2006.

42 Picture 5 was not included in the catalogue but is included in this volume as an example of depictions of nobel savages reproduced naked in the outskirts of, in this case, Sydney, because there is no such representation in the catalogue. Nor was picture 10, by Albert Namatjira, included in the catalogue, although he was represented with *Ghost Gum, Central Australia*. However, it has been impossible for me to get hold of a printable image of the included picture, which is why I have chosen to reproduce *Ghost Gum, Mt Sonder, McDonnell Ranges*.

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2. Imagining Australia through art, pp. 37–66

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2 *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, The Asia Society Gallery, New York 6 October–31 December 1988, The David and Alfred Smart Gallery University of Chicago, 26 January–19 March 1989. The *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia* was also on display in

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9   *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, touring dates and venues: Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane 17 May–17 July 1988; Art Gallery of Western Australia in Perth, 13 August–25 September 1988; Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, 21 October–27 November 1988; Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery in Hobart, 21 December 1988–5 February 1989; National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, 1 March–30 April 1989; Art Gallery of South Australia Adelaide, 23 May–16 July 1989.

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12 Hughes, (1966) 1970.

13 Thomas, 1988, p. 11.

14 Before 1901 Australia was divided into six colonies: New South Wales established in 1788; van Diemen's Land (renamed Tasmania in 1810) established in 1803; Western Australia established in 1827; South Australia established in 1836; Victoria and Queensland were separated from New South Wales in 1850 and 1859 respectively. The Northern Territory of South Australia was separated from New South Wales in 1863, but was not relinquished to the Federal Government until 1911. The same year, in 1911 The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) was formed from New South Wales to provide a location for the proposed new federal capital of Canberra, Melbourne was the capital from 1901 to 1927 the FCT was renamed the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

15 Hughes, (1966) 1970, p. 21.

16 Thomas, 1988, p. 10.

17 Thomas, 1988, p. 10.

18 All categorizations are problematic due to change in the cause of time. Traditional Aboriginal art was a common designation in 1988, but since then this naming have been under consideration. A common term for this art in the twenty-first century is: Indigenous art made by Indigenous artists who live and work in remote communities, or: live and work on ancestral land.

19 Kinship in Aboriginal Australia involves relationships between people and relationships with the land. In exhibitions of Aboriginal art labels often provide information about the artist's language, kin or social group. The artist may be described as a member of the Manggalili clan, of the Wiradjuri or Djinang language group, of the Yirritja moiety. At the time of English colonization there were over 200 distinct languages spoken in Australia, which divided into 700 dialects. Each dialect was associated with a particular tract of land. Every dialect and its territory are viewed as 'belonging' to each other. For further reading on kinship see Morphy, Howard "Kinship and gender" *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, (Eds.) Kleinert, Sylvia & Neale, Margo, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 60–67.

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25 Caruana, 1996, p. 15.

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44 Gray, J., 1988, p. 49.

45 Smith, B., 2001, p. 60.

46 Allen, 1997, pp. 54–55.

47 Smith, B., 2001, p. 60.

48 Smith, B., 2001, p. 62.

49 Thomas, Daniel, "Colonial Art: Culture", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 50.

50 Radford, Ron, "A Colonial Augustan Age", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 74. Ron Radford was Curator of Paintings and Sculptures at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide in 1988.

51 Smith, B., 2001, p. 26.

52 Thomas, 1988, p. 50.

53 Corroboree, *garaabara* in the Dharuk language of the Sydney region, the meaning of the word is a particular style of dance. Originally Corroborees were public dance events staged by Aboriginal people for a settler audience. Shows originating from Aboriginal peoples tradition of performing songs, dances and stories around the campfire. The entertainments drew upon the richness of ceremonial life, and traditional legends such as the "Dreamtime" stories. However, performed in a Corroboree, the traditional keywords and actions in the ceremonies and stories were often left out in order to keep the deeper ceremonial meaning hidden. In traditional Aboriginal life public performances was also a way of interpreting and appropriating the new. In Australia's early days of settlement

those various performances were witnessed by non-Aboriginal observers. This entertainment was as exotic as the flora and fauna, and as such depicted in drawings later painted in oil, as well as published in journals, books and newspapers. This entertainment became very popular, which led Aboriginal people to compose performances especially for a non-Aboriginal audience – hence Corroborees. For further information on Corroborees see, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, Eds. Kleinert, Sylvia & Neale, Margo, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2000, p 564.

54 Thomas, 1988, p. 50.

55 Benjamin Dutterau was born in England and arrived in Tasmania in 1830.

56 Smith, B., 2001, p. 51.

57 Flinders Island is the main island of the Furneaux Islands, a group of 52 islands stretching across Bass Strait between Tasmania and Australia. In 1833 the last 160 Tasmanian Aboriginals were exiled to live at Settlement Point (named by the Aboriginals as Wybalenna- black mans house's) on Flinders Island. They moved with the misguided belief that they would be protected from the rape and abuses they experienced from the white settlers in Tasmania. By 1847 the settlement had been deemed as a failure and was abandoned, the remaining 45 Aborigines were sent to Oyster Cove on the east coast of Tasmania. www.focusonflinders.com.au/about.htm, accessed 25 February 2007.

58 Bonyhady, Tim, "To quit Barbarous for civilized life", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australian Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 77.

59 Bonyhady, 1988, p. 76.

60 Bonyhady, 1988, p. 77.

61 Thomas, 1988, p. 50.

62 Smith, B., 2001, p. 52. William Strutt was born in England and spent eleven years in Australia between 1850–1861.

63 Smith, B., 2001, p. 53.

64 *Terra Australis* is Latin for the southland, which gave Australia its name in 1810.

65 Thomas, Daniel, "Centenary Art: Nature," *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australian Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 98

66 Smith, B., 2001, p. 76.

67 Thomas, 1988, p. 98.

68 Smith, B., 2001, p. 77.

69 Smith, B., 2001, p. 77.

70 Spate, Virginia, "No Sweat", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 122. Virginia Spate was Power Professor of Fine Art at University of Sydney in 1988.

71 Allen, 1997, p 70.

72 Radford, Ron, "Celebration", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 116.

73 Smith, B., 2001, pp. 78–79.

74 Tomas, Daniel, "Centenary Art: Culture," *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australian Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 112.

75 Hermannsburg School, www.hermannsburg-school.com/index.php?history, accessed 15 August 2010.

76 Morphy, 2004, pp. 265–266.

77 Butel, Elisabeth, "Introduction", *Art and Australia by Margaret Preston: Selected Writings 1920–1950*, Ed. Butel, Elisabeth, Sydney, Richmond Ventures Pty. Limited, 2003, p. 13.

78 The notions of Primitivism will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

79 North, Ian, "Aboriginal Orientation", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 142.

80 Preston, Margaret, "Aboriginal Art", *Art in Australia*, 4th series, no. 2, June 1941. Reprinted in *Art and Australia by Margaret Preston: Selected Writings 1920–1950*, Ed. Butel, Elisabeth, Sydney, Richmond Ventures Pty. Limited, 2003, p. 87.

81 Preston, Margaret "New Development in Australian Art", *Australian National Journal*, May 1st, 1941. Reprinted in *Art and Australia by Margaret Preston: Selected Writings 1920–1950*, Ed. Butel, Sydney, Elisabeth, Richmond Ventures Pty. Limited, 2003, pp. 82–83.

82 On the night of 31 May 1942 three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour. One became entangled in the boom net across the harbour and was blown up by her crew. A

second entered the harbour and fired torpe-does at the cruiser USS Chicago. They missed the Chicago but one hit the barracks ship HMAS Kuttabul, killing 21 naval ratings. This midget submarine disappeared, its fate a complete mystery until it was discovered by a group of amateur divers off Sydney's northern beaches in November 2006. A third midget submarine also entered the harbour but was destroyed by depth charges before it had fired any torpedoes. Australian War Memorial, "Japanese midget submarine", www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/midgetsub/index.htm, accessed 23 April 2007.

83 Gray, Anne, "Long-Limbed, Lean, Reserved", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, pp. 168–169.

84 Allen, 1997, p. 90.

85 Allen, 1997, pp. 102–105.

86 Slutzkin, Linda, "Spartans in Speedos", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p 176. Linda Slutzkin was Senior Education Officer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 1988.

87 Meere, Charles was born in London in 1890, lived in Australia 1927–1930, moving back to live in England 1930 to 1933, and back again to Australia in 1933 where he died in Sydney in 1961.

88 The White Australia policy describes Australia's approach to immigration from Federation, in 1901, until the latter part of the 20th century, favouring immigration from certain countries. Over the years the Australian government grad-ually dismantled the policy, with the final ves-tiges being removed in 1973 by the new Labor government. The Australian Government, De-partment of Immigration and Citizenship, www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm, accessed 30 April 2011.

89 Allen, 1997, p. 96.

90 Slutzkin, 1988, p. 177.

91 Smith, B., 2001, p. 245.

92 Haese, Richard, "The city of night", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 210. Richard Haese was an art historian at the Department of Art History at La Trobe University, Mel-bourne in 1988.

93 The Angry Penguins' movement was run by a group of passionate and "angry" young men – the rebels at that time. Centred around poet Max Harris, the movement took their name from an art and literary magazine first published by Harris in 1940. The Angry Penguins, to quote Max Harris, expressed "a noisy and aggressive revolutionary modernism" and represented the new language and the new painting of Australia. They were forthright and unapologetic, "de-manding" to be heard and seen. The Penguin painting group included Arthur Boyd, Albert Tucker, Sidney Nolan and Joy Hester, the only woman in both the literary and painting group. Australian Government, "The Angry Penguins", www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/an-grypenguins/, accessed 30 April.

94 Allen, 1997, pp. 125–126.

95 Thomas, Daniel, "Twentieth-Century Art: Culture, *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australian Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 146.

96 Johnson, Tim, "Love and the Wind", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, p. 222. Tim Johnson was an artist based in Sydney in 1988.

97 Johnson, T., 1988, p. 223.

98 Although all categorizations are problematic, Urban Aboriginal art, in similarity with Tribal Aboriginal art, was common designations in 1988, but has since then been under consid-eration. As has been explained earlier in this chapter, the designation Tribal Aboriginal art have ceased to be used in favour of Traditional Aboriginal art, with the supplement; art made by artists who live and work on ancestral land, or traditional land in remote communities. The designation Urban Aboriginal art has also ceased to be used in favour of the designation City based Aboriginal art.

99 Thomas, 1988, p. 146.

100 *1990 Venice Biennale, Australia: Rover Thomas, Trevor Nickolls*, Perth, Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1990, pp. 30–35

101 This is a problem that will be discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter, in connection to the *1988 Australian Biennale*.

102 Banks, Joseph, Sir, (1743–1820), *The En-deavour Journal of Sir Joseph Banks*, (Ed.) J. C. Beaglehole, Sydney, The Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales

in association with Angus and Robertson, 1962. Journal from 25 August 1768–12 July 1771.

103 Baume, Nicholas, "Where Truth is no Stranger to Fiction", *Creating Australia, 200 years of art 1788–1988*, Ed. Thomas, Daniel, Sydney, International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited & Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1988, pp. 226–227. Nicholas Baume was and art historian and art critic based in Sydney in 1988.

104 Baume, 1988, p. 227.

105 *The Courier-Mail* 17 and 20 May 1988; *The Adelaide Advertiser* 23 May 1988; *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 and 23 October 1988; *The Age* 1 March 1989; and again in *The Adelaide Advertiser* 27 May 1989. I was not able to find any ads from Perth and Hobart.

106 Advertisement in Brisbane, *The Courier-Mail*, 20 May 1988, p. 6.

107 Lloyd, Tim, "Daniel Thomas's amazing road-show of Australian art", *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 14 May 1988, p. 5.

108 Lloyd, Tim, "Better late than ever", *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 20 May 1989, p. 8.

109 Lloyd, 20 May 1989, p. 8.

110 Waterlow, 1988, p. 9

111 The *1988 Australian Biennale* was presented by the Biennale of Sydney in association with the Australian Bicentennial Authority, and inaugurated at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Pier 2/3 at Walsh Bay in Sydney 18 May–3 July 1988, travelling on to Melbourne and the National Gallery of Victoria 4 August–18 September 1988.

112 Of the antecedent artists Margaret Preston is the only one discussed in *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788–1988*, due to her early and important involvement with Australian Aboriginal Art.

113 Waterlow, 1988, p. 9.

114 Lindsay, Frances, "Antipodean Antecedents: an accent on the present", *1988 Australian Biennale: From the Southern Cross: a view of world art c. 1940–88*, Sydney, ABC Enterprises, 1988, p. 13.

115 Preston, Margaret "The Indigenous Art of Australia", *Art in Australia*, 3rd series, no 11, March 1925. Reprinted in *Art and Australia by Margaret Preston: Selected Writings 1920–1950*, Ed., Butel, Elisabeth, Sydney, Richmond Ventures Pty. Limited, 2003, pp. 60–64.

116 Waterlow, 1988, p. 11.

117 Waterlow, 1988, p. 12.

118 Mundine, John "Aboriginal Memorial", *1988 Australian Biennale: From the Southern Cross: a view of world art c. 1940–88*, Sydney, ABC Enterprises, 1988, p. 230. John Mundine was an Art Adviser at the Ramingining Arts Community in Arnhem Land in 1988.

119 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Wrapped Coast, http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/major_coast.shtml, accessed 10 July 2011.

120 Thomas, Daniel, "The Biennale: How Australian Art Escaped Provincial Internationalism and Joined the World in its Own Right," *1988 Australian Biennale: From the Southern Cross: a view of world art c. 1940–88*, Sydney, ABC Enterprises, 1988, pp. 18–22. Also discussed already in 1974, by Smith, Terry, "The Provincial Problem", from *Art Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1974, in *What is appropriation?: an anthology of writings on Australian art in the 1980s and 1990s*, Ed. Rex Butler, Brisbane, IMA Publishing, 2004, p. 135.

121 Waterlow, 1988, p. 9.

122 Maloon, Terence "The Rope, the Clock & the Gift", *1988 Australian Biennale: From the Southern Cross: a view of world art c. 1940–88*, Sydney, ABC Enterprises, 1988, p. 36. Terence Malone was Senior Curator of Special Exhibitions at the Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney in 1988.

123 Maloon, 1988, p. 36.

124 Smith, T., 1974, in Butler, 2004, pp. 131–138.

125 Maloon, 1988, p. 37.

126 Maloon, 1988, p. 37.

127 Burn, Ian "The Re-Appropriation of Influence", *1988 Australian Biennale: From the Southern Cross: a view of world art c. 1940–88*, Sydney, ABC Enterprises, 1988, p. 41. In 1988 Ian Burn was and still is an artist, author and art critic.

128 Burn, 1988, p. 45.

129 Burn, 1988, pp. 45–46.

130 Smith, B., 1945, p. 21.

131 Burn, 1988, p. 48.

132 For further information on Herman Nitsch se for instance the Swedish doctoral thesis; Sternudd, Hans, T., *Excess och aktionkonst: en semiotisk analys av Hermann Nitschs Das 6-Tage-Spiel- med betoning på första dagens Mittagsfinale*, Lund, Heterogénesis, 2004.

133 McDonald, John, "Gravity amid the offal", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 May 1988, p. 82.

134 *The Age*, August 3 1988.

135 McDonald, John, "A patchwork triumph", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May 1988, p. 77.

136 Saurin, Jo, "Connecting with the '88 Biennale", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 1988, p. 97.

137 Capon, Edmund, "Show will delight, intimidate and inspire", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 1988, p. 2.

138 Saurin, 22 May 1988, p. 97.

139 Cockington, James, "Artrageous", *The Age Magazine*, 13 May 1988, pp. 30–31.

3. Aboriginal art as art – a contested inclusion, pp. 67–91

1 Goldwater, 1967.

2 Goldwater, 1967, p. 18.

3 Jones, Owen, *The Grammar of Ornament,* London, Bernard Quaritch, 1868.

4 Tylor, Edward, *Primitive Culture. Researches into the development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom,* London, John Murray, 1871, p. 59. In Goldwater, 1967, pp. 16–17

5 Grosse, Ernst, *The Beginning of Art,* London, Appleton, 1897.

6 Riegl, Alois, *Stilfragen,* Berlin, George Siemens, 1893.

7 Durkheim, Émile, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse,* Paris, Alcan, 1912*; Reinach, Salomon, *Cultes, mythes, et religions,* 5 vols., Paris, E. Leroux, 1905–13; Guyau, Jean-Marie, *L'Art au point vue sociologique,* Paris, Alcan, 1887.

8 Guyau, 1887, in Goldwater, 1967. p. 26.

9 Boas, Franz, *Primitive Art,* Oslo, Aschehoug, 1927, p. 9, in Goldwater, 1967, p 33.

10 Goldwater, 1967, p. 35.

11 Goldwater, 1967, pp. 41–42.

12 Miller, Steven, "Select chronology", *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia,* Ed. Willsteed, Theresa, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007, pp. 330–331. Steven Miller is Archivist at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

13 Goldwater, 1967, p. xv.

14 Australian Dictionary of Biography, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/spencer-sir-walter-baldwin-8606, accessed 6 December 2007.

15 Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) is an Aboriginal Community situated in the northwest corner of Arnhem Land, about 300 km from Darwin. Before 1900 the main Aboriginal language groups living around Gunbalanya escarpment were a mixture of Mengerr, Erre, Wuningak, Gagudju and the Amurdak. In 1900, European buffalo shooters were present in the area. They brought with them tobacco, sugar and alcohol to trade for buffalo hides, which led other major language groups of Western Arnhem Land to visit Gunbalanya on their wanderings, staying for longer and longer periods and gradually becoming permanently settled. One of the early buffalo shooters was Paddy Cahill who settled in the area in 1906 and took out a dairy lease on the present site of Gunbalanya. In the same year Northern Territory Government took over Cahill's property and established an experimental dairy farm with Cahill as the manager. In 1925 when the Church of England Missionary Society accepted an offer from the Northern Territory Administration to take over the area, the Oenpelli Mission was launched. In 1975 the missionaries were withdrawn, due to the government's self-determination policies of the 1970's, and Gunbalanya became an independent Aboriginal Community with its own governing council. The Kunbarllanjnja Community Government Council was established in 1995, seeking self-management and control of the decision making processes; choosing their own leaders and executive in ways they saw fit. In resent years development at Gunbalanya has been greatly advanced. Today Gunbalanya is a town managed by the Aboriginals themselves, but with the assistance of European advisers in the areas of the council, club, store, health, police and education. *Kunbarllanjnja Community Government Council*, http://www.kunbarllanjnja.nt.got.au/, accessed 27 December 2007.

16 Spencer, Baldwin, *Wandering in Wild Australia,* Vol. 2, London, McMillan, 1928, p. 794. In Miller, Steve, "Cultural Capital: Key Moments in the Collection of Australian Indigenous Art", *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia,* Ed. Willsteed, Theresa, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007, p. 30.

17 Australian Dictionary of Biography*, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/spencer-sir-walter-baldwin-8606, accessed 6 December 2007.

18 Miller, Steve, quoting Spencer, 2007, p. 29.

19 Morphy, 2008, p. 11.

20 The very first exhibition of Aboriginal art in Australia, *The Dawn of Art,* depicting figurative

paintings and drawings, made by prisoners and staff at Palmerston Jail, executed without any help of a master, was held in 1888, as part of *The Centennial International Exhibition,* shown in Melbourne. Morphy, 2004, p. 23.

21 Jones, Philip, "Perceptions of Aboriginal Art: A History", *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia,* Ed. Sutton, Peter, New York, Asia Society Galleries, New York & George Brazillier, Inc., 1988, p. 167.

22 Edwards, Deborah, "Histories in the Making: Aboriginal Art and Modernism", *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia*, Ed. Willsteed Theresa, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007, note 11, p. 53.

23 McLean, 1998, p. 91.

24 McLean, 1998 p. 91.

25 Elkin, A. P., "Foreword", *Australian Aboriginal Decorative Art,* Frederick McCarthy, Sydney, Australian Museum, 1974, p. 10. In McLean, Ian, *White Aborigines. Identity politics in Australian Art,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998 p. 91.

26 Morphy, 2004, p. 22.

27 McLean, 1998, p. 90.

28 Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend,* Melbourne, Oxford University Press, (1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1970) 1974. Russel Ward was an Australian Historian.

29 McLean, 1998 pp. 88–89.

30 Fanon, Franz, *Les Damnés de la terre,* 1961, (*The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. C. Farrington, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967), discussed by McLean, Ian, in Kleinert, Silvia & Neale, Margo, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture,* Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 518–519.

31 McLean, 1998, pp. 81–82.

32 Attwood, 2003, p. 101.

33 McLean, 1998 pp. 88–89.

34 Ward, 1974, pp. 32–34.

35 McLean, 1998 p. 89.

36 In Gates, Louis, Henry, Jr., "Europe, African art and the Uncanny", *Africa: The Art of a Continent.* Ed. Phillips, Tom, Munich and London, Prestler, 1996, p. 28. First published on the occasion of the exhibition *Africa: The Art of a Continent,* Royal Academy of Arts, London, 4 October 1995–21 January 1996. Sieglinde Lemke is a Professor in the American Studies Department at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany.

37 Gates, 1996, p. 27.

38 Gates, 1996, p. 27.

39 McLean, 1998 p. 96.

40 Tindale, Norman, "Primitive art of the Australian Aborigines, *Manuscripts: A miscellany of Arts and Letters*, November 1932. *Manuscripts: A miscellany of Arts and Letters*, was a Victorian magazine published 1931–1935.

41 Preston, 1925, in Butel, 2003, pp. 60–64.

42 Miller, 2007, pp. 332–333.

43 Miller, 2007, p. 29.

44 Jones, 1988, p. 169.

45 National Gallery of Australia, "Art of Australia 1788–1941", www.nga.gov/past/data/exh2. shtm, accessed 1 December 2007.

46 "Australian Exhibition", *Los Angeles County Newsletter,* 15 July 1942. In Miller, 2007, p. 29.

47 Morphy, 2008, pp. 53–54.

48 Jones, 1988, p. 170.

49 Edwards, 2007, note 13, p. 53, note text on p. 62.

50 Edwards, 2007, note 13, p. 53, note text on p. 62. See Catherine de Lorenzo and Dinah Dysart, *A Changing Relationship. Aboriginal Themes in Australian Art 1938–1988*, Sydney, S. H. Ervin Gallery, 1988, and Claire Baddeley*, Motif and Meaning: Aboriginal influences in Australian Art 1930–1970*, Ballarat, Ballarat Art Gallery, 1999.

51 Black, Roman, *Old and New Aboriginal Art,* Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1964.

52 Jones, 1988, p. 171.

53 Lindsay, Daryl, "Foreword", *Primitive Art Exhibition,* Public Library, Museum and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 1943, p. iii. In McLean, 1998 p. 91.

54 J.L.M., "Melbourne National Gallery and National Museum of Victoria: Primitive Art Exhibition. 1943", *Man,* Vol. 44 (Jul.- Aug., 1944), p. 98. The journal *Man* was published 1901–1994 by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

55 Adam, Leonhard, "Introduction", *Primitive Art Exhibition,* Melbourne, National Gallery and National Museum of Victoria, 1943, p. 1.

56 Adam wrote: "… the religious side is so important that a purely aesthetic approach, restricted to formal qualities, is inadequate…" in Adam, Leonhard, *Primitive art,* Melbourne, Penguin, 1948, p. 61.

57 Adam, 1943, p. 2.

58 Jones, 1988, p. 171.

59 Jones, 1988, p. 160.

60 Redfield, Robert, "Art and Icon", *Anthropology and art*, (ed.), New York, The Natural History Press, American Museum of Natural History, 1971, p. 39–65. First published in *Aspects of Primitive Art,* The Museum of Primitive Art, 1959, pp. 12–40.

61 Berndt R. M., and Berndt, C. M., *The Art of Arnhem Land,* Exhibition Catalogue, Festival of Perth, December 1957 January 1958, Perth 1957, p. 4. In Jones, 1988, p. 161.

62 Dr. Stuart Scougall was a Sydney based orthopaedic surgeon interested in Aboriginal health, and a collector of contemporary Australian art.

63 Jones, 1988, p. 175.

64 Morphy, 2004, p. 31.

65 Jones, 1988, p. 175.

66 The *Bulletin*, 1 July 1959. Quoted in Tuckson, "Aboriginal Art and the Western world", *Australian Aboriginal Art,* Ed. Berndt, Ronald, M., London, Collier-Macmillan Ltd, 1964, p. 63.

67 Tuckson, 1964, p. 63.

68 Berndt, Ronald, M. "Epilogue", *Australian Aboriginal Art,* Ed. Berndt, Ronald, M., London, Collier-Macmillan Ltd, 1964, p. 71.

69 Goodale, Jane, C., review on *Australian Aboriginal Art,* by Berndt, Roland, in *American Anthropologists,* New Series, Vol. 67, No. 6, Part 1 (Dec. 1965), p. 1573. Jane C. Goodale was a Professor Emerita of Anthropology at Bryn Mawr collage in Pensylvania. As a social and cultural anthropologist, she focused in her research on the Tiwi of North Australia and the Kaulong of the New Britain Territory of New Guinea. Goodale passed away in 2008.

70 Myers, 2002, p. 199. Fred Myers is an American anthropologist, researcher and author, who has lived among a group of Aboriginal people in Central Australia known as the "Pintupi" for long periods of time on more than one occasion since the early 1970s.

71 Morphy, 2001, p. 38.

72 Morphy, 2001, p. 38.

73 Morphy, 2008, p. 174.

74 Fry, Tony and Willis Anne-Marie, "Aboriginal Art: Symptom or Success?", *What is appropriation?. An anthology of writing on Australian art in the 1980s and 1990s,* Ed. Butler, Rex, Brisbane, IMA Publishing, (1996) 2004, p. 203. First published in *Art in America,* Vol. 77, No. 7, July 1989. Tony Fry has a PhD in Cultural Studies in Design from the University of Birmingham. He has held positions as Adjunct Professor to the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building at the University of Technology, Sydney. Anne-Marie Willis gained an MA honours at the University of Sydney in 1987.

75 Morphy, 2004, p. 29.

76 Goldwater, 1967, p. 5.

77 McEvilley, Thomas, "Doctor Lawyer Indian Chief:" 'Primitivism' in 20th century Art", at the Museum of Modern art in 1984," *Artforum,* November 1984, p. 55.

78 McEvilley, 1984, p. 57.

79 McEvilley, 1984, p. 59.

80 Rubin, William, response to the editor in, "LETTERS on 'Doctor Lawyer Indian Chief:' 'Primitivism' in 20th century Art', at the Museum of Modern art in 1984," *Artforum,* February 1985, p. 43.

81 McEvilley, Thomas, replies in, "LETTERS on 'Doctor Lawyer Indian Chief:' 'Primitivism' in 20th century Art', at the Museum of Modern art in 1984," *Artforum,* February 1985, pp. 48–49.

82 McEvilley, 1985, p. 51.

83 Papunya established in 1960, under an assimilation policy, by the Australian Government as a hub for desert communities.

84 The Papunya Tula Artists was established in 1972. The company's name derives from Papunya, a settlement first established in 1960 as an administrative centre by the government for the Aboriginal people who had moved in from the desert. Since then, many Pintupi and Luritja people have moved back to their homelands and continue their strong ceremonial ties to the Land in the desert hub forming Papunya. Today, the Papunya Tula Artists have met the challenges posed by the homelands movement in the last decade, and now extend their operations into Western Australia, covering an area of 700 km west of Alice Springs. The company is entirely owned, and directed, by traditional Aboriginal people from the Western Desert, predominantly of the Luritja/Pintupi language groups. In 2007 the company have 49 shareholders and represents around 120 artists. www.papunyatula.com.au, accessed 20 November 2007.

85 There were several Aboriginal art exhibitions touring Australia and the world between 1974 and 1980; *Australian Aboriginal Art from the Louis A. Allen Collection* at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, United Sates in 1974; *Art of Aboriginal Australia* toured to twelve

museums in Canada during 1975–1977; *Art of the Western Desert* on display at Universities and Colleges throughout Australia 1975–1980, *The Art of the First Australians* travels in United Sates 1976–1978; Papunya Tula Artists are represented in the Second World Black Festival and African Festival of Arts in Lagos, Nigeria 1977; *Renewing the Dreaming: The Aboriginal homelands movements* on display at the Australian museum in Sydney 1977–1978; *Oenpelli Paintings on Bark* is touring in Australia and Europe 1977–1978, In Miller, Steven, "Select chronology", *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia,* Ed. Willsteed, Theresa, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007, pp. 336–337.

86 Myers, 2002, p. 191.

87 Myers, 2002, p. 193.

88 Johnson, Vivien, "The Origins and Development of Western Desert Art", *The Painted Dream: Contemporary Aboriginal Paintings from Tim and Vivien Johnson Collection,* Auckland, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1990, p. 14. Dr Vivien Johnson is a curator and a regarded scholar of Western Desert art.

89 Myers, 2002, p. 152.

90 Myers, 2002, pp. 80–81.

91 Johnson, Vivien, *The Art of Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri,* East Roseville, N.S.W , Craftsman House, 1994, p. 80.

92 Johnson, V., 1994, p. 79.

93 Myers, 2002, p. 194.

94 Myers, 2002, pp. 256–257.

95 *Magiciens de la terre,* Paris, Musee National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou and Grande Halle, Parc de la Villette, 1989, p. 267. The artists responsible for the work *Yarla,* created in May 1989 at Le Halle de la Villete were Paddy Jupurrurla Nelson, Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Paddy Coockie Japaljarri Stewart, Neville Japangardi Poulson, Francis Jupurrurla Kelly and Frank Bronson Jakamarra Nelson, in Caruana, 1996, p. 101.

96 Johnson, V., 1990, p. 16.

97 Morphy, 2004, p. 105.

98 Johnson, Vivien, *Clifford Possum,* Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia, 2003, p. 79.

99 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 66.

100 Johnson, T., 1988, pp. 222–223.

101 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 232.

102 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 232.

103 Johnson, V., 2003, pp. 118 & 232.

104 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 232.

105 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 232.

106 Johnson, V., 2003, pp. 118 and 232.

107 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 232.

108 Johnson, T., 1988, pp. 222–223.

109 Johnson, V., 2003, p. 232.

4. Two theoretical concepts and the complexity of the global art world, pp. 93–107

1 Smith, T., "What is Contemporary Art? Contemporaneity and Art to Come", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift,* Vol. 71, booklet 1–2, 2002, pp. 3–15.

2 Anderson, Jaynie, "Playing between the Lines", *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence: The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art,* Melbourne, The Miegunyah Press (Melbourne University Publishing Limited), 2009, p. 7. Anderson is Herald Chair of Fine Arts and Head of the School of Art History, Cinema, Classics and Archaeology, at University of Melbourne. In 2008 she was convenor of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art, in Melbourne.

3 Anderson, Jaynie, "Preface", *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence: The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art,* Melbourne, The Miegunyah Press (Melbourne University Publishing Limited), 2009, p. xvii.

4 Smith, B., 1985, p. xi.

5 Myers, 2002, p. 312. This opinion is also put forward in Price, Sally, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places,* Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1989.

6 Araeen, 1987, p. 8. The diaspora concept is discussed at length in Chapter Five in connection with the artist John Young.

7 Myers, 2002, p. 233.

8 Myers, 2002, p. 23.

9 Araeen, 1987, p. 8.

10 Araeen, 1987, p. 13.

11 Discussed by Fazlhashemi, Mohammad in *Occidentalism: Idéer om väst och modernitet*

bland muslimska tänkare, Lund, Studentlit-teratur, 2005. [Occidentalism: Notions about the West and modernity amongst Muslim thinker]. However, in recent years there has been a change in the apprehension of the West amongst post-Islamic thinkers who reject the former Islamist and Occidentalist conception of perceiving the world as a dichotomy. The post-Islamic thinkers express a more nuanced understanding of the Western world, modernity and modernization.

12 Rubin, William, "Modernist Primitivism, an In-troduction", *Primitivism in the 20th century Art: Affinity of the Tribal sand Modern,* New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1984, p. 1.

13 Clifford, 2002, pp. 193–197.

14 Rubin, 1984, p. 5.

15 Araeen, 1987, p. 11.

16 Johnson, V., 1990, p. 16.

17 Morphy, 2008, pp. 3–4.

18 Morphy, 2008, pp. 143–144.

19 Greenberg, Clement, "The avant-garde and kitsch" (1939), *Kitsch: the word of bad taste,* Ed. Dorfles, Gillo, New York, Bell, 1970, pp 116–126.

20 Morphy, 2008, p. 144.

21 Morphy, 2009, p. 61.

22 Mane-Wheoki, 2009, pp. 770–771.

23 Maquet, Jacques, *The Aesthetic Experience: An Anthropologist Looks at the Visual Arts,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986, p. 22. In Morphy, 2008, p. 13. Jacques Maquet is Professor Emeritus at UCLA Department of Anthropology.

24 Morphy, 2008, p. 19. Yolngu are Aboriginal peo-ple whose "belonging place" is in the north east part of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

25 Myers, 2002, pp. 80–81.

26 Langton, 2009, p. 35.

27 Danto, 1997, pp. xiii–xiv.

28 Belting, 1983. In Danto, 1997, p. 5.

29 Danto, 1997, p. 15.

30 Danto, 1997, p. 12.

31 Smith, T., 2001, un-paginated.

32 Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle,* New York, Zone Books, (1967) 1995, p. 13.

33 Smith, T., 2001, un-paginated.

34 Danto, 1997, p. 10.

35 Smith, T., 2001, un-paginated.

36 Smith, T., 2001, un-paginated.

37 Smith, Terry, *Transformations in Australian Art: The Twentieth Century – Modernism and Aboriginality,* Volume two, Sydney, Craftsman House, 2002.

38 *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture,* On-line Journal, University of Pittsburgh, http://contemporaneity.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/contemporaneity/index, accessed 31 January 2011.

39 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 34. The ideoscape is referring to Appadurai's definition as an interconnection of images often political, deal-ing with the ideology of states, as well as being concerned with counter-ideologies of vari-ous movements. The images are composed through elements deriving from the world-view of the Enlightenment, consisting of ideas embraced in terms such as freedom, rights, sovereignty, representation and of course democracy. In Appadurai, Arjun, *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,* http://www.intcul.tohoku.ac.jp/~holden/Mediat-edSociety/Readings/2003_04/Appadurai.html, accessed 19 June 2011.

40 Smith, T., 2008, pp. 16–17, and Smith, T., 2009, p. 6.

41 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 34.

42 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 35.

43 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 35.

44 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

45 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 35.

46 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

47 Bydler, Charlotte, *The Global Art World Inc. On the globalization of contemporary art,* Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Figura Nova 32, Diss., 2004, pp. 240–248.

48 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

49 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, pp. 35–36.

50 Smith, T., 2009, p. 8.

51 Smith, T., 2005, unpublished notes.

52 Smith, T., 2009, p. 8.

5. Four artists and their work, pp. 109–159

1   Anderson, 2009, p. xvii.

2   Neale, Margo, is the principal advisor on Indigenous matters to the director of the National Museum of Australia, and was the head curator of *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*. From 2000 to 2005 she was a senior curator of the Museum's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program and First Australian Gallery. Having worked as an art teacher in Arnhem Land and Christmas Island in the 1970s and 1980s, she also worked at the National Gallery of Australia, the Queensland Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, where she co-established the Yirirbana Gallery and authored the first book on its Indigenous collection. She curated the first major touring retrospective for an Indigenous artist, on the art of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, in 1998, and later curated *Urban Dingo: The Art and Life of Lin Onus,* as a key cultural event for the Sydney Olympic Games 2000. Her academic appointments have included a visiting fellowship at the Australian National University, Canberra (where she is an adjunct professor), and at the University of Queensland. Her publications range from social histories of Christmas Island and the Asia Pacific region to publications on Indigenous art, culture and history. Together with Dr. Sylvia Kleinert, she was general editor of the *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* (2000).

3   Neale, Margo, "Marks of meaning: the genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 217.

4   Brody, Anne Marie, "Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Portrait from the outside", *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: Painting from Utopia,* Melbourne, Queensland Art Gallery and Macmillan Publishing Australia Pty. Ltd, 1998, p. 9. In 1998 Brody was curator of the Holmes á Court Collection, responsible for major Aboriginal artwork.

5   In 1976 The Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act was accepted, which resulted in the return of significant amounts of land to Aboriginal people, among them the Anmatyerre language group of Alhalkere Country in the community of Utopia.

6   Caruana Wally, "Emily Kame Kngwarreye and the palimpsest of experience", *Utopia: Ancient Cultures / New Forms,* Perth, Heytesbury Pty Ltd & Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1999, p. 16.

7   Hodges, Christopher, "A golden age", *Utopia: Ancient Cultures / New Forms,* Perth, Heytesbury Pty Ltd & Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1999, p. 20.

8   Hodges, 1999, pp. 20–21.

9   The University of California, Washington Centre – Capitol Connection: Utopia – A Picture Story, http://ucdc-aboutus.blogspot.com/2008/06/utopia-picture-story.html, accessed 27 August 2009.

10 Hodges, 1999, p. 21.

11 Neale, Margo, "Origins", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 60.

12 McLean, Ian, "Aboriginal Modernism? Two histories one painter", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 23.

13 Smith, T., 1998, p. 24.

14 Kngwarreye in interview with Rodney Gooch, translated by Kathleen Petyarre, 1990, quoted in Neale, 2008, p. 232.

15 Neale, 2008, p. 233.

16 Benjamin, Roger, "A New Modernist Hero", *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: Painting from Utopia,* Melbourne, Queensland Art Gallery and Macmillan Publishing Australia Pty. Ltd, 1998, p. 47.

17 Neale, 2008, p. 50 and 60.

18 Caruana, 1999, p. 18.

19 Yunupingu, Galarrwuy, "The black/white conflict", *Aratjara: Art of the first Australians,* Ed. Bernhard Luthi, Düsseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrheim-Westfalen, 1993, p. 65, in Edwards, 2007, p. 58.

20 Neale, 2008, p. 240.

21 Neale, 2008, p. 240. *Awelye* is the Anmatyerre word for women's ceremonies. *Awelye* also refers specifically to the designs applied to a women's body as part of a ceremony. Central Art – Aboriginal Art Store, http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/, accessed 24 August 2009.

22 Neale, 2008, p. 233.

23 Neale, 2008, pp. 50 and 60.

24 *Arlatyeye* is the Anmatyerre word for Pencil Yam, hence the *Arlatyeye* Dreaming is the Dreaming of the Pencil Yam.

25 Neale, 2008, p. 218.

26 Neale, 2008, pp. 240–241.

27 Neale, 2008, p. 241.

28 Neale, 2008, p. 241.

29 Neale, Margo, "Yam", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 168.

30 Kngwarreye in interview with Gooch in Neale, 2008, p. 232.

31 Caruana 1999 p. 17.

32 Neale, Margo, "The last series", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 201.

33 Tatehata, Akira, "The impossible modernist", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 31. Tatehata is the director of the National Museum of Art in Osaka Japan. Terry Smith is of the same opinion, that Kngwarreye was an "outstanding abstract painter", in Smith, T., 1998, p. 24.

34 Caruana, 1999, p. 18.

35 Elkins, 2006, p. 195.

36 Elkins, 2006, p. 207.

37 Neale, 2008, p. 232.

38 In this description Neale is quoting Peter Schjeldahl, "Different strokes: The late work of Willem de Kooning", *Art Forum,* January 1997, p. 59, in Neale, 2008, p. 240.

39 Neale, 2008, p. 240.

40 Neale, 2008, p. 246.

41 Neale, 2008, p. 201.

42 Neale, 2008, p. 241.

43 Neale, 2008, p. 168.

44 Neale, 2008, p. 241.

45 Neale, Margo, "Introduction", *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye,* Canberra, National Museum of Australia Press, 2008, p. 15.

46 Benjamin, 1998, p. 52.

47 Smith, T., 1998, p. 37.

48 Smith, T., 1998, p. 37.

49 Smith, T., 1998, p. 37.

50 Smith, T., 1998, p. 38.

51 Nelson, Robert, "Political clout with magical affiliations", *The Age Review,* 10 July 1996. Quoted in: Neale, 2008, p. 246. *The Age* is a broadsheet daily newspaper, which has been published in Melbourne, Australia, since 1854.

52 Interview, Taylor , 6 April 2006.

53 Anderson, 2009, p. xvii.

54 Day, Charlotte, "An interview with Ricky Swallow", *Ricky Swallow: This Time Another Year,* Ed. Day, Charlotte, Melbourne, Australian Council, Ease Production, 2005, p. 49.

55 Day, 2005, p. 45.

56 Swallow, Ricky, http://www.rickyswallow.com/texts/view/lesley-vance-talks-to-ricky-swallow/, "Lesley Vance talks to Ricky Swallow", from *North Drive Press-Issue 2,* June 2005, p. 11, accessed 6 October 2009.

57 In 1999, twenty-two years after the first release, the film series continued with yet another trilogy, *Episode I: The Phantom Menace, Episode II: Attach of the Clones* released in 2002 and finally *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* released in 2005.

58 Star Wars Action Figure: Advent, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CLASS/am483_97/projects/pontius/advent.html, accessed 20 October 2009.

59 This sculpture can be viewed at the homepage of Ricky Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/collections/image/sculpture/58/, accessed 19 May 2011.

60 Swallow, "Gerald Matt in Conversation with Ricky Swallow" for the exhibition *Younger Than Yesterday,* Kunsthalle Vienna, November 2007, http://www.rickyswallow.com/texts/view/gerald-matt-in-conversation-with-ricky-swallow/, accessed 5 October 2009.

61 Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/texts/view/gerald-matt-in-conversation-with-ricky-swallow/, accessed 5 October 2009.

62 Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/texts/view/gerald-matt-in-conversation-with-ricky-swallow/, accessed 5 October 2009.

63 Day, 2005, p. 49.

64 Krauss, Rosalind, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", *October,* Vol. 8. (Spring 1979), p. 33.

65 Krauss, 1979, pp. 33–34.

66 This sculpture can be viewed at the homepage of Ricky Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/collections/image/sculpture/60/, accessed 19 May 2011.

67 Day, 2005, p. 47.

68 This sculpture can be viewed at the homepage of Ricky Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/collections/image/sculpture/53/, accessed 19 May 2011.

69 *National Sculpture Prize & Exhibition 2001*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 2001,

pp. 18–21. The exhibition was on display at the National Gallery of Australia, 30 November 2001 – 10 March 2002. This sculpture can be viewed at the Grantpirrie Gallery homepage, http://www.grantpirrie.com/artist.php?g=gallery1&a=2&e=4&s=3&i=1, accessed 19 May 2011.

70   Andy Warhol, Getty Museum, http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artMakerDetails?maker=1625, accessed 14 January 2011.

71   I am well aware of the use of simplification concerning the notions of postmodernism and postcolonialism. Issues concerning the concept of postmodernism have been discussed earlier in chapter 2, while issues of postcolonialism will be discussed in connection to the art of John Young, later on in this chapter.

72   Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/texts/view/gerald-matt-in-conversation-with-ricky-swallow/, accessed 5 October 2009.

73   Swallow, http://www.rickyswallow.com/texts/view/gerald-matt-in-conversation-with-ricky-swallow/, accessed 5 October 2009.

74   Smith, T., 2001, un-paginated.

75   Krauss, 1979, pp. 33–34.

76   Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

77   Niagara Galleries, http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au/artists/artistpages/theartists/fiona_foley/foleyframe.html, accessed 12 November 2009.

78   Genocchio, 2001, p. 83. Fiona Foley in conversation with the author, Hervey Bay, November 1998. Benjamin Genocchio has a PhD in art history from the University of Sydney. He is currently (in 2009) working as an art critic writing for the *New York Times*.

79   Mundine, Djon, "Foreword", *Fiona Foley: Solitaire*, Annandale NSW, Piper Press, 2001, p. 13. Djon Mundine is an Indigenous Curator – Contemporary Art at Campbelltown Arts Centre. He was the art adviser and coordinator at Ramingining and Maningrida in Arnhem Land between 1980 and 1995.

80   Genocchio, 2001, p. 86, quoted from Jennifer Isaacs, "Fiona Foley on Aboriginality in Art, Life and Landscape," *Art Monthly Australia.* May 1990, p. 10. Koori, sometimes spelled Koorie, is an Aboriginal word for the Indigenous Australians who initially lived on the land of current day New South Wales. It has now been adopted by Indigenous people living in all of South-eastern Australia. The word Koori / Korrie is used by Indigenous Australians living in the south-east to distinguish themselves, as a counter word to the generic term Aboriginal. *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture,* Eds. Sylvia Kleinert and Margo Neale, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000, p. xvi.

81   Genocchio, 2001, p. 86.

82   Genocchio, 2001, p. 86.

83   Niagara Galleries, http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au/artists/artistpages/theartists/fiona_foley/foleyframe.html, accessed 12 November 2009.

84   Kuber, Alison, "Fiona Foley in Conversation with Alison Kuber", *Fiona Foley: Forbidden,* Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney & The University of Queensland Art Museum in Brisbane 2009, p. 16. First published on the occasion of the exhibition *Fiona Foley Forbidden* on display at MCA Sydney 12 November 2009 – 31 January 2010 and The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane 19 February – 2 Mars 2010.

85   Foley, Shawn, *The Badtjala people,* Thoorgine Educational and Culture Centre Aboriginal Cooperation, Hervey Bay, 1994, p.15. Quoted in, Genocchio, 2001 p. 29.

86   Genocchio, 2001 p. 32.

87   Fraser Island – UNESCO World Heritage Centre, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/630, accessed 5 April 2010.

88   Native Title is a complex concept deriving from the notion that Colonial Australia was founded on the myth of *terra nullius*, whereby the early settlers did not recognize any system of pre-existing laws by which the Aboriginal people held title to, or had any rights to resources of, the land they lived upon. This myth served to legitimate the early colonists' actions in their dispossession of Aboriginal people. It also underpinned the settler nation's view of itself as conquering the unoccupied wilderness and utilizing its resources for economic and social progress.

Since the 1970s there has been a gradual, but uneven, political recognition of the significance of land for Aboriginal people. This led to the land rights legislation issued in 1976 by the Commonwealth government, "allowing for certain categories of land in the Northern Territory to be granted to or claimed by Aboriginal groups for whom it was their traditional lands."

"... In 1993, the Keating Labor Government introduced the *Native Title Act* which provided mechanisms to bring the recognition of native title into the general Australian land and resource management regime, including procedures through which native title claims could be settled by mediation, rather than litigation,

by agreements of all the parties." *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture,* Eds. Sylvia Kleinert and Margo Neale, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 659–660.

89 Genocchio, 2001, p. 80.

90 Genocchio, 2001 p. 80. Fiona Foley in conversation with Genocchio, in Hervey Bay, April 2000.

91 Genocchio, 2001 p. 80.

92 Moore, Catriona, "Interview with Fiona Foley", *Dissonances, Feminism and the Arts 1970-1990,* Ed. Moore, Catriona, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1994, p. 208. Quoted in Genocchio, 2001 p. 57,

93 Genocchio, 2001 p. 60.

94 Genocchio, 2001 p. 60. Genocchio mentions an archival aesthetics, and Ewington, Julie, "Pir'ri Mangrove", *Fiona Foley: Pir'ri – Mangrove,* exhibition catalogue, Brisbane, Queensland Art Gallery, 2001, p. 5 mentions a custodial aesthetic.

95 The National Aboriginal Conference (NAC) was established by the Federal Government in 1977. Their aim was to provide a forum for the expression of Aboriginal views. However, the official movement toward national reconciliation began in 1991 with the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Some of the key goals set out by this council were to educate all Australians about Indigenous issues, to improve economic and living standards for Indigenous people, and to acknowledge the unfair and often inhumane treatment of Indigenous Australians throughout history. In 1997 Australia took a huge step towards these goals with the Australian Reconciliation Convention, but the events of the conference were overshadowed by the opening address by the Prime Minister, The Hon. John Howard MP, on May 27 1997.
   "In facing the realities of the past, […] we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism […] such approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history."
   By referring to the plight of Australia's Indigenous people as a mere 'blemish', the Honourable John Howard dismissed centuries of dispossession and violence as insignificant. This led Indigenous delegates in the audience to stand up and turn their backs on the Prime Minister in protest.
   Reconciliation Convent 1997, Ergo, State Library of Victoria, http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/ergo/reconciliation_convention_1997, accessed 19 November 2009.

96 Lie of the Land – Australian Sound Design Project Work, http://www.sounddesign.unimelb.edu.au/web/biogs/P000593b.htm, accessed 19 November 2009.

97 Genocchio, 2001 pp. 60–61.

98 Batman, John, excerpt from Batman's journal of 1835, quoted in Kate Davidson, "Fiona Foley: Land Deal", *In Place (Out of Time): Contemporary Art in Australia,* exhibition catalogue, Oxford, Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1997, p. 35.

99 Lie of the Land, http://www.sounddesign.unimelb.edu.au/web/biogs/P000593b.htm, accessed 19 November 2009.

100 Lie of the Land , http://www.sounddesign.unimelb.edu.au/web/biogs/P000593b.htm, accessed 19 November 2009.

101 Genocchio, 2001 pp. 60–61.

102 From Fiona Foley's personal notes on a talk she gave at Heide Musem of Modern Art, February 20 in 2008, given to the author in February 2008.

103 Cronulla Riots, http://cts.hss.uts.edu.au/students06/Group%20Website%20Turning%20the%20Lights%20on/cronulla.html, accessed 6 November 2009.

104 Mundine, Djon, "Invisible Woman – Invisible People", http://cts.hss.uts.edu.au/students06/Group Website Turning the Lights on/cronulla.html, accessed 6 November 2009.

105 Yunupingu, 1993, p. 65.

106 Caruana, 1999, p.18.

107 Documenting Democracy, National Archives of Australia, www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?dID=104, accessed 7 December 2009.

108 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Community Action for Rights, http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/treaty/rights.htm, accessed 7 December 2009.

109 Documenting Democracy, www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?dID=104, accessed 7 December 2009.

110 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/treaty/rights.htm, accessed 7 December 2009.

111 Smith, T., 2001, un-paginated.

112 Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "Can the Subaltern speak?", *Marxism and the interpretation of culture,* Nelson, C. et al. (eds), Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–313.

113 Wright, William, "Foreword", *John Young,* Fishermans Bend, Craftsman House, 2005, p. 17, and Barnes, Carolyn, "Towards a layered imaginary", *John Young,* Fishermans Bend, Craftsman House, 2005, p. 27. William Wright is an art critic and former artistic director of the Sydney Biennale of 1982. From 1982 to 1991 Wright was Assistance Director at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney and in 2005 he was President of the International Association of Art Critics (Australia). Carolyn Barnes has a PhD. (2004) from The University of Melbourne, School of Culture and Communications. In 2010 Dr. Barnes worked as a Senior Research Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne.

114 Barnes, 2005, pp. 26–27.

115 Ang**,** http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010. Ien Ang is Professor of Cultural Studies and the founding Director of CCR (Centre for Cultural Research) at the University of Western Sydney.

116 Rushdie, 1991, pp. 124–25.

117 Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010.

118 "Editors' Comment: On Moving Targets", *Public Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1989: 1. *Public Culture* is a reviewed interdisciplinary journal of cultural studies, published three times a year in Autumn, Winter, and Spring for the Society for Transnational Cultural Studies by the Duke University Press. In Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010.

119 Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010.

120 Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010.

121 Gilroy, Paul, "It Ain't where you're from, it's where you're At… The dialectics of diasporic identification," *Third Text*, Vol.5, Issue 13, Winter 1991, pp. 3–16. In Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010. Dr. Paul Gilroy is the first holder of the Anthony Giddens Professorship in Social Theory, at The London School of Economics and Political Science.

122 Chow, Rey, *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of reading between West and East*, Minnesota and Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, pp. 28–29, in Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010. Dr. Rey Chow is an Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities Departments of Modern Culture and Media, Comparative Literature and English at Brown University, Providence R.I, USA.

123 Young, John, "Recollections", *John Young,* Fishermans Bend, Craftsman House, 2005, p. 21. Young was looking at the artworks at the Stedelijk Museum with his camera hanging around his neck and set to take pictures automatically, without his intervention nor him ever looking through the viewfinder of the cameras. According to Young, he did not conceptualize or interfere with the pictures in any way.

124 Young, 2005, pp. 20–21.

125 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (trans.) C.K. Ogden, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922. Originally published as "Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung", in *Annalen der Naturphilosophische*, XIV (3/4), 1921.

126 Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/#Phi, accessed 20 January 2011.

127 Young, 2005, pp. 20–21.

128 I have chosen to present the framing propositions for *The Silhouette paintings*, written by John Young in 1987 in full. Young, John, "The Silhouette Paintings" *John Young,* Fishermans Bend, Craftsman House, 2005, p. 69.
"The image is silhouetted by the colourfield which is silhouetted by the raw linen which is silhouetted by the stretcher which is silhouetted by the wall.
The deformed zeroxed image is painted in grisaille which is silhouetted by the bright but not intense colourfield, painted in continuous strokes by a two-and-a-half inch brush which is silhouetted by a raw linen sized with rabbit skin glue which is silhouetted by a two-and-a-half by one inch wooden stretcher which is silhouetted by the wall painted with white acrylic paint rolled on.
The appropriated and zeroxed André Derain image, painted in horizontal grisaille using traditional round brushes, is silhouetted by the bright oil colourfield of Riley's Egyptian Series of fugitive colours, painted with an industrial house brush in the manner of Ryman's paintings which is silhouetted by the materiality of the traditional raw portrait linen which is silhouetted by the box-like structure of the transportable wooden stretcher which is silhouetted and framed by the permanency of the gallery walls that being a white cube of late

modernist proportions thus a frame for cultural transactions.

Taking care in understanding the decayed and spectral Derain image and psychologically coming to its being, before requesting its presence on another surface, that surface being a modernist colourfield, which is psychadelic and thus a hyperconformism to the binary system of codes which is then silhouetted by a traditional support of raw linen which your eyes can touch and nose can smell the resonance of history, whilst this is silhouetted by a wooden stretcher of modernist corporeal proportions which is then silhouetted by the white wall and cube of the art of this century."

129 Barnes, 2005, p. 36.

130 Song, Young-Bae, "Crisis of Cultural Identity in East-Asia: on the meaning of Confucian ethics in the age of globalisation", *Asian Philosophy,* Vol. 12. No. 2, 2002, pp. 109–125. Discussed in Barnes, 2005, pp. 36–37.

131 Propositions for *The Polychrome Paintings*, by John Young 1989, are also presented in full. In Young, John, "The Polychrome Paintings", *John Young,* Fishermans Bend, Craftsman House, 2005, p. 87.

"1. These paintings aim to clarify my world, my present and in that sense, they do not cite nor say.
2. The choices of colours and their relation are intuitive, and sometimes by chance.
3. There are irregularities, anomalies, mistakes in these paintings, such as the coarse surface, the precarious lines, blotches of colour – all these anomalies are what may be called unconscious unique gestures in the work.
4. These works exist somewhere between the eye, brain, and what it may remind you or I of. So, it is somewhere between the optic, the concept and the memory.
5. In general more than one person executes these works. They are a relationship based on love, and the spirit for art and between artists. In that sense, these work manifest a passion.
6. The titles of these works, such as *Sanctuary, The Sacred Season* and *Fruit (Happiness),* exorcise the sanctity of this passionate relationship between artists and turn your interpretation of this relationship into banal kitsch. In that sense, once the works are finished they are emotionally exclusive and rejective of the viewer, including the artists involved.
7. The aims of these works are a sense of wonder for art, a sense of guilt about the impossibility of repeating the same, unique relationships between the artists involved from one work to the next, and following a set of predetermined rules of how to proceed with these paintings to give me a safe sense or passage."

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133 Barnes, 2005, p. 38.

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135 Barnes, 2005, p. 41.

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148 Hay, 1994, p. 53.

149 Hay, 1994, p. 63.

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151 dal Lago, 2008, p. 853.

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153 Xi, Guo, cited in Tuang, 1967, p. 75.

154 Barnes, 2005, p. 60.

155 Barnes, 2005, pp. 61–62.

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162 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

6. The meaning of In-Between – summary and concluding discussion, pp. 193–211

1 I asked all the informants I met during my second visit in 2006 the same questions. However, I also made two interviews during my third visit in 2008, when I met with Professor Howard Morphy and the Aboriginal art curator Djon Mundine. This time my questions were different and focused on their specific writings. Morphy had just published *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories,* from 2008, and Mundine had sent me a couple of his latest articles published in various art magazines and exhibitions catalogues.

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3 Burn, 1988, p. 45.

4 Maloon, 1988, p. 37.

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8 Smith, T., 2008, pp. 16–17 and Smith, T., 2009, p. 6.

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10 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 35.

11 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

12 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, p. 35.

13 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

14 Smith, T., 2009, p. 7.

15 Smith, T., 2005 and 2006, pp. 35–36.

16 McLean, 1998 pp. 88–89.

17 Interview with Green 11 April 2006.

18 Hardt & Negri, 2001, pp. xii-xiv.

19 Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. xii.

20 Smith, Terry, 2005, unpublished notes.

21 *Magiciens de la terre: Centre Georges Pompidou, Museé national d'art Moderne, La Villette, la Grand Halle,* Paris, Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1989.

22 McEvilley, 1984, p. 55.

23 Rubin, 1985, p. 43.

24 Tuckson, 1964, p. 63.

25 Berndt, 1964, p. 71.

26 Tylor, 1871, p. 59.

27 Goldwater, 1967, pp. 41–42.

28 Myers, 2002, p. 312. This opinion is also put forward in Price, 1989.

29 Araeen, 1987, p. 8.

30 Araeen, 1987, p. 8.

31 Johnson, V., 1990, p. 16.

32 Morphy, 2008, p. 3.

33 Morphy, 2008, p. 144.

34 Mane-Wheoki, 2009, pp. 770–771.

35 Elkins, 2006, p. 195.

36 Tatehata, 2008, p. 31. Terry Smith is of the same opinion, that Kngwarreye was an "outstanding abstract painter", in Smith, 1998, p. 24.

37 Elkins, 2006, p. 207.

38 Langton, 2009, p. 35.

39 Yunupingu, 1993, p. 65.

40 Kuber, 2009, p. 16.

41 Rushdie, 1991, pp. 124–25.

42 Ang, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/litserv/SPAN/34/diasporas.html, accessed 18 January 2010.

43 Barnes, 2005, p. 60.

44 Debord, 1995, p. 13.

45 Krauss, 1979, pp. 33–34.

46 Niagara Galleries, http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au/artists/artistpages/theartists/fiona_foley/foleyframe.html, accessed 12 November 2009.

47 Spivak, 1988, pp. 271–313.

48 Kngwarreye in interview with Gooch in Neale, 2008, p. 232.

49 Niagara Galleries, http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au/artists/artistpages/theartists/fiona_foley/foleyframe.html, accessed 12 November 2009.

50 Danto, 1997, pp. xiii-xiv.

51 Danto, 1997, p. 15.

PICTURE LIST

1. Mawalan Marika
Yirrkala, North-east Arnhem Land, Northern
Territory, c. 1908–1967.
*The Wawelag Sisters and Yulungurr
the rainbow serpent*, 1959.
Ochres on eucalyptus bark, 48×26×2 cm.
State Art Collection. Art Gallery of Western
Australia, Perth. Purchased 1959.
© Licensed by Viscopy.

2. John Lewin
Born England 1770 England, arrived
Australia 1800, died 1819.
Kangaroos, 1819.
Watercolour on paper, 39.5×56.5 cm.
Rex Nan Kivell Collection. National Library
of Australia, Canberra. Presented 1959.

3. Eugene von Guérard
Born Austria 1811, lived in Australia 1852–
1882, died in England 1901.
*North-east view from the northern top
of Mount Kosciusko*, 1863.
Oil on canvas, 66.5×116.8 cm.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Purchased 1973.

4. Louis Buvelot
Born Switzerland 1814, lived in Brazil 1835–52,
arrived Australia 1865, died 1888.
Winter morning near Heidelberg, 1866.
Oil on canvas, 76.8×118.2 cm.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased 1869.

**5. Edward Dayes after Thomas Watling,
artists Francis Jukes engraver**
*A view of Sydney Cove, New South
Wales*, 1804.
Engraving and aquatint, hand coloured,
39.3×60.3.
Inscribed below image centre: A VIEW OF
SYDNEY COVE, NEW SOUTH WALES.
From an Original Picture in the possession of
Isaac Clementson Esqr. / London.
Published April 10 1804, by F. Jukes, No 10
Howland Street.

6. Benjamin Dutterau
Born England 1767, arrived Tasmania 1832,
dead 1851.
The Conciliation, 1840.
From sketches of 1834, composition of 1835.
Oil on canvas, 119.5×167.5 cm.
Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart.
Friends of the Museum Fund, the General
Fund and State Governments funds.

7. Tom Roberts
Born England 1856, arrived Australia 1869,
lived in Europe 1881–85, 1903–19, died 1931.
Shearing the rams, 1890.
Oil on canvas on composition board,
122.4×183.3 cm.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Felton Bequest, 1932.

8. Arthur Streeton
1867–1943 Australia.
Fire's on, 1891.
Oil on canvas, 183.8×122.5 cm.
Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Sydney. Purchased 1893.

9. Frederick McCubbin
1855–1917 Australia.
Down on His luck, 1889.
Oil on canvas, 114.5×152.5 cm.
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western
Australia, Perth. Purchased 1896.

10. Albert Namatjira
Arrernte people, Hermannsburg, Northern
Territory, 1902–1959.
*Ghost Gum, Mt Sonder, McDonnell
Ranges*, c. 1953–1957.
Watercolour and pencil, image 36.8×53.8 cm,
sheet 36.8×53.8 cm.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

11. Margaret Preston
Born Australia 1875, studied in Europe
1904–1907, died 1963.
Aboriginal landscape, 1941.
Oil on canvas, 40×52 cm.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
D. & J.M. Mortlock Bequest Fund 1982.
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12. George W. Lambert
Born Russia 1873, lived in Germany 1875–81,
England 1881–86, arrived Australia 1887,
lived in Europe and the Middle East 1900–21,
died 1930.
A sergeant of the Light Horse, 1920.
Oil on canvas, 770.0×62.0 cm.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Felton Bequest, 1921.

13. Grace Cossington Smith
Born Australia 1892, studied in England
1912–1914, died 1984.
The lacquer room, 1935–1936.
Oil on paperboard on plywood, 74×90.8 cm.
Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Sydney. State Governments funds 1967.
© Estate of Grace Cossington Smith.
Courtesy Ann Mills.

14. Max Dupain
1911–1992 Australia.
Sunbaker, 1937.
Gelatin-silver photograph, 38×43.2 cm.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council
contemporary art purchase grant 1980.

15. Charles Meere
Born England 1890, arrived Australia late
1930s, died 1961.
Australian beach pattern, 1940.
Oil on canvas, 91.5×122 cm.
State Government funds 1965. Collection:
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.
© Charles Meere Estate, Courtesy Margaret
Stephenson-Meere

16. Russel Drysdale
Born England 1912, arrived Australia 1923,
died 1981.
Man feeding his dogs, 1941.
Oil on canva,s 51.2×61.4 cm.
Acc. 1:0847. Gift of C.F Viner-Hall 1961.
Collection: Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

17. Albert Tucker
1914–1999 Australia.
Victory girls, 1943.
Oil on cardboard, 64.6×58.7 cm.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Purchased 1971.
© Barbara Tucker. Courtesy Barbara Tucker.

18. Sidney Nolan
1917 Australia – England 1992.
Death of Constable Scanlon, 1946.
Enamel on composition board,
90.4×121.2 cm.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977

19. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
Anmatyerre people, Papunya, Northern
Territory, 1932–2002.
Man's Love Story, 1978.
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
214×257 cm.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council
contemporary art purchase grant 1980.
© Artist's estate represented by Aboriginal
Artists Agency.

20. Trevor Nickolls
South Australia Aboriginal people, born 1949.
Machinetime Dreamtime, 1981.
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
122×60.5 cm.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Purchased 1982.
© Trevor Nickolls. Licensed by Viscopy.

21. Imants Tillers
Born 1950 Australia.
Kangaroo Blank, 1988.
Synthetic polymer paint, gouache, oilstick,
oil on 78 canvasboards, overall 213×196 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9
Gallery, Sydney.

22. Ramingining artists
Ramingining, Northern Territory, Australia.
The Aboriginal Memorial, 1987–1988,
(installation of 200 hollow log bone coffins).
Natural earth pigments on wood, height
(irregular) 327 cm.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Purchased with the assistance of funds from
National Gallery admission charges and
commissioned in 1987.

23. Emily Kame Kngwarreye
Anmatyerre, Utopia, Northern Territory,
c. 1910–1996.
Emu Woman, 1988–1989.
Synthetic polymer paint on linen,
92.0×61.0 cm.
Courtesy Janet Holmes à Court Collection.
© Licensed by Viscopy.

24. Emily Kame Kngwarreye
Anmatyerre, Utopia, Northern Territory,
c. 1910–1996.
After Rain, 1990.
Synthetic polymer on canvas, 210.8×121.6 cm.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Felton Bequest, 1990.
© Licensed by Viscopy.

25. Emily Kame Kngwarreye
Anmatyerre, Utopia, Northern Territory,
c. 1910–1996.
Yam Dreaming, 1996.
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
110.4×126.6 cm. Private collection.
© Licensed by Viscopy.

26. Ricky Swallow
Born 1974 Australia.
Model for a sunken monument, 1999.
MDF, acryl, 110×20×150 cm.
Collection of the National Gallery
of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through
the Art. Foundation of Victoria with the
assistance of the Joan Clemenger Endowment,
Governor, 1999.

27. Ricky Swallow
Born 1974 Australia.
Come Together, 2002.
Laminated jelutong, 66×63.5×81.3 cm.
Collection of Peter Norton, Santa Monica.

28. Ricky Swallow
Born 1974 Australia.
Caravan, 2008.
Three parts, hand finished bronze, wax.
Edition of 2 + 1 AP.
2 pieces at 30.5×22.9×24.4 cm and 1 piece
at 35.6×25.4×27.9 cm, all measurements
approximate.
Courtesy the artist and Darren Night Gallery,
Sydney.

29. Fiona Foley
Badtjala people, Maryborough, Queensland, born 1964.
Too a Black Cock, 1993.
Postage stamps on paper, thirteen panels each 27×19.5 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne.

30. Fiona Foley
Badtjala people, Maryborough, Queensland, born 1964.
Black Cockatoo, 1992.
Pastel on paper, 56×38 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne.

31. Fiona Foley
Badtjala people, Maryborough, Queensland, born 1964.
Lie of the Land, 1997.
Engraved sandstones, 300×100×50 cm.
Installation with sound.
Collection: Museum Victoria, Melbourne.

32. Fiona Foley
Badtjala people, Maryborough, Queensland, born 1964.
Nulla 4 eva #4, 2009.
Ultrachrome print on Hahnemühle paper, 80×120cm. Photographer Carl Warner.
Courtesy of the artist and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne.

33. John Young
Born 1956 Hong Kong, arrived in Australia 1967.
On Liberty #1, Winter 1993.
Digital print, synthetic polymer paint and oil on canvas, consist of two panels, 213×122 cm each, 213×244 cm overall.
Vizard Foundation Art Collection of the 1990s.

34. John Young
Born 1956 Hong Kong, arrived in Australia 1967.
Red, Blue, Summer 2003.
Digital print and oil on linen, 200×150 cm.
Collection of the artist. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney and Melbourne.

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