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The cartographic paradigm in contemporary Australian landscape painting: concepts of ownership, belonging and place 1950-2014.

Sarah Willard Gray
University of Wollongong

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The Cartographic Paradigm in Contemporary Australian Landscape Painting:
Concepts of Ownership, Belonging and Place 1950-2014.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

from

University of Wollongong

by

Sarah Willard Gray. B.C.A. (Hons.) M.C.A-Research.

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts.

School of the Arts, English and Media.

2014

Declaration

I, Sarah Willard Gray, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

.....
Sarah Willard Gray

4th March, 2014.

Warning

This thesis contains names and accounts of the deceased that may offend some people.

List of Contents.

Declaration.....	2
List of Contents.....	3
List of Figures.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	11
Abstract.....	12
 Chapter One: Introduction.....	 13
Chapter Two: Mapping the Southern Highlands' Landscape in Paint: 2006-2013.....	 29
Chapter Three: Overlays, Connections and Memorial Mapping.....	43
Chapter Four: Mapping the Cultural Landscapes of the Southern Highlands, New South Wales, Australia.....	 54
Chapter Five: Cartography in the Upper Palaeolithic Era in Europe and Pre-Historic Australia.....	 77
Chapter Six: Perspective.....	106
Chapter Seven: Cartography in non-indigenous Australian art: 1950-2013.....	 144
Chapter Eight: Cartography in Australian Aboriginal art after 1970.....	181
Conclusion.....	214
Exegetical Appendix.....	217
Works Cited.....	224
Bibliography.....	238

List of Figures.

Chapter One: Introduction.

Chapter Two: Mapping the Southern Highlands' Landscape in Paint: 2006-2013.

1. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>The Wingecarribee River</i> . 2011. Acrylic on canvas 90x120cm.	29
2. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>Sutton Forest No.1</i> Oil monotype 25 x 18cm. 2006.....	30
3. Idris Murphy. King Street Gallery on William. Exhibition: <i>I-Thou</i> , 2009.....	32
4. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>The Hanging Tree</i> 2007. Acrylic on canvas. 120 x 90cm..	33
5. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>Bayoong Bayoong</i> 2012. Acrylic on canvas 1.80m x 2.49m.....	34
6. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>The River Wingecarribee</i> 1. 2011. (Section) Triptych. oil on canvas 90 x 360cm.....	35
7. The Wingecarribee River at Bong Bong. Photo: Sarah Willard Gray.....	36
8. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>Wingecarribee River</i> 2. 2012.Acrylic/oil on marouflaged board 90 x 60cm.....	37
9. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>A Different Point of View. No.1</i> . 2013. Triptych. Acrylic on canvas various sizes.....	38
10. Sarah Willard Gray. <i>A Different Point of View No.2</i> , 2013. Acrylic on canvas 90 x 60 cm.....	39
11. Sarah Willard Gray. 4 canvas painting starts with black calligraphic lines	40

Chapter Three: Overlays, Connections and Memorial Mapping.

1. John Henry Little c1906 with foster family, second from left bottom row	44
2. John Henry on the right and his elder brother Albert on the left. c1903.....	45
3. John Henry Little. Age: approx.22 years. Black and white photo c1919.....	46

4. Map of Lynn David Shepherd's land grant at Bong Bong: Lot 46.....	51
5. Lynn David and Elizabeth Shepherd's Memorial head stone. Anglican Church, Sutton Forest, Southern Highlands of New South Wales. Photo 2013.....	52

Chapter Four: Mapping the Cultural Landscape of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.

1. Flinders' Map of Australia. National Library of Australia. Canberra. A.C.T.....	56
2. Field notes made by Surveyor James Larmer in 1837.	60
3. Map of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.	62
4. Map of Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve.....	63
5. Blanket Return of Aborigines at Bong Bong 1836.....	65
6. A rare photo of an Aboriginal woman of the Gundungurra people.....	67
7. Joseph Lycett. <i>View on the Wingecarabee River. New South Wales</i>	68
8. Conrad Martens. <i>Throsby Park</i> 1836. pencil drawing.....	70
9. Conrad Marten. <i>Throsby Park</i> c1836-7. Watercolour on paper.....	70
10. Looking across a section of Bong Bong Common to Throsby House	71
11. The homestead of Charles Throsby known as <i>Throsby Park</i>	71

Chapter Five: Cartography in the Upper Palaeolithic era in Europe and in Pre-Historic Australia.

1. Chinese Military Map 2nd century BC .Changsha, Hunan Province Museum.....	79
2. An early Western-Han silk map found in tomb 3 of Mawangdui.....	80
3. Similar patterns of entoptic phenomena in different time and cultures.....	83
4. Abstract cave markings in the Cueva de la Pileta, Andalucia, Spain c25000 BC ...	84
5. Valcamonica Rock art.....	86
6. Typological Analysis of the Bedolina Map.....	87
7. An adaptation and analysis of the Bedolina Map by Francisco Beltran Lloris.....	87

8. Christina Turconi's tracing of the Bendolina Map in 1997.....	88
9. Analysis of glacial phrases, techno-complexes and archaeological dates.....	90
10. Boat Painting. The Kimberley, Western Australia.....	91
11. Carved ideogram from Panaramitee in South Australia.....	93
12. Oval petroglyph. 15cm wide. Wharton Hill. Olary Province, South Australia.....	93
13. Designs representing animal tracks used in sand paintings.....	95
14. Designs representing the Walpiri honey ant ancestor.....	95
15. Alma Nungarrayi Granites, <i>Yanjiripirri Or Napaljarri-Warnu Jukurrpa</i> , 2012. Acrylic on linen 122x107.....	96
16. One of nine Tassel paintings (Bradshaw Figures) 39cm-73cm.....	98
17. Sarah Willard Gray <i>Bong Bong Common c1829</i> . 2012. Oil on canvas. 60x150cm.....	99
18. Richard Diebenkorn. <i>Ocean Park 31</i> . 1970. Oil on canvas. 236 x 206cm.....	100

Chapter Six: Perspective.

1. Joseph Mallord William Turner. <i>View of London from Greenwich</i> , 1825. Watercolor and gouache over graphite. 21.3 x 28 cm.....	107
2. Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768) <i>The Grand Canal and the Church of the Salute</i> , 1730.....	108
3. Conrad Martens. <i>Fitzroy Falls</i> 1836. (Southern Highlands of N.S.W.) Watercolour 46.1 x 66.4 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, A.C.T.....	108
4. <i>The Battles of the Hôgen and Heiji Eras</i> . Artist: unknown. Culture: Japan. Period Edo period (1615–1868). Date 17th century Medium Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colour, and gold on paper. Dimensions Overall (each): 154.8 x 355.6cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.....	109
5. John Olsen. <i>River in Flood and Blind Bird</i> . 1982. Oil on canvas	

165 x180cm.....	110
6. Gu Kaizhi c345-406. <i>The Admonitions of the Court Instructress</i> .	
Painted hand scroll. 1 of 9 sections. Jin Dynasty.....	112
7. Leonardo Da Vinci (Italian, 1452-1519). <i>The Last Supper</i> , 1495-98.	
Tempera and mixed media on plaster. 460 x 880 cm.....	114
8. Linear perspective: A mathematical system for projecting the three-dimensional world onto two-dimensional surfaces.....	115
9. Claude Lorrain. <i>Landscape with Aeneas at Delos</i> , 1672.	
The National Gallery, London.....	116
10. Camille Pissaro. <i>The Boulevard Montmartre at Night</i> 1897,	
National Gallery, London.....	116
11. Leonardo Da Vinci <i>Map of Imola</i> , c.1502 Pencil, chalk, pen and wash on paper, 44 x 60.2cm Museo Vinciano, Vinci. Italy.....	117
12. Alfred Hildebrandt. Photo of a pigeon with German camera attached.....	119
13. Arthur Streeton. <i>Land of the Golden Fleece</i> 1926. oil on canvas 50.7 x 75.5cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. ACT....	119
14. Tim Storrier. <i>Incendiary Detritus</i> 2000. acrylic on canvas 183cm x 304.5cm...	120
15. Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). <i>Gardanne</i> , 1885–86. Oil on canvas 80 x 64.1 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.....	121
16. Georges Braque. <i>The Viaduct at L'Estaque</i> , 1908, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 59 cm. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.....	123
17. Georges Braque. <i>Houses at L'Estaque</i> , 1908. Oil on canvas. 73 x 59.5 cm.....	123
18. Pablo Picasso. <i>The Bull</i> . 1945. Lithography. The Museum of Modern Arts, New York.....	125
19. Altamira Cave, Spain. A Bison rendered using three natural pigments.....	125

20. Piet Mondrian. <i>Apple Tree in Flower</i> . 1944. Oil on canvas, 106 x 78 cm.....	126
21. Jackson Pollock <i>No 5</i> , 1948. Enamel paint on fibreboard. 120 x 240 cm.....	127
22. Willem de Kooning. <i>Woman I</i> . 1950-52. Oil on canvas, 192.7 x 147.3 cm.....	128
23. Pablo Picasso. <i>Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)</i> 1907. Oil on canvas 244.9 x 233.7cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.....	129
24. Richard Diebenkorn. <i>Urbana</i> 1953. Oil on canvas, 154 x 120cm.....	132
25. Kazimir Malevich, <i>Untitled</i> , ca. 1916. Oil on canvas, 53 x 53 cm. Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.....	134
26. Alexander Rodchenko. <i>Composition</i> 1918. gouache and pencil on paper 33 x 16.2 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.....	134
27. Yvonne Jacquette. <i>Veering Off 2</i> . 1996. Woodcut in four colours on mulberry paper. Plate 30.2 x 22.9. Paper 42.3 x 33.7. Edition: 20, plus 2 AP, 2PP.....	135
28. Yvonne Jacquette. <i>Little River Farm</i> 1979. Oil on canvas 198 x 162.5cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.....	136
29. Jane Frank. <i>Aerial View No 1</i> . 1968. acrylic and mixed media on canvas. Diptych. 152.5 x 213.5cm.....	137
30. Jane Frank. 1961. <i>Rockscape II</i> Oil and spackle on canvas. 48.5 x 127cm.	138
31. Jane Frank. <i>View From the Meadow</i> , 1968. Diptych 152.5 x 142cm. Acrylic and mixed media.....	138
Chapter Seven: Cartography in Non-Indigenous Australian Art. 1950-2014.	
1. Robert Juniper. <i>Murchison Landscape</i> 2008. Mixed media on canvas 122 x 152 cm.	144
2. Margaret Preston. <i>Flying over the Shoalhaven River</i> . 1942. Oil on canvas 50.6 x 50.6.....	146
3. Sidney Nolan. <i>Aerial Landscape – Circular Contours</i> 1949. 25.4 x 30.5 cm.....	148

4. Sidney Nolan. <i>Landscape 1967</i> . Mixed media on paper. 50.8 x 76.2 cm.....	149
5. John Olsen. <i>Landscape Mediterranean 1957</i> . Oil on canvas. 54.5 x 65.5 cm.....	152
6. John Olsen. <i>The Pilbara on Fire 1984-5</i> . Oil on canvas. 136 x 154 cm.....	154
7. Fred Williams. <i>You Yangs 1 1963</i> . Oil and tempera on composition board 137.0 x 180.3 cm.....	157
8. An in-depth study of the terrain: Fred Williams walking over the landscape of the You Yangs.....	158
9. Fred Williams. <i>Beachscape, Erith Island</i> polyptych 1975-6. Oil on 4 part polyptych (1) 40.5 x 203.3cm (2) 40.6 x 203.3cm (3) 35.6 x 203.3 (4) 48.3 x 203.3.....	160
10. Fred Williams. <i>Trees in a Landscape 1981</i> . Oil on canvas 182.3 x 152.1 National Gallery of Victoria.....	162
11. Fred Williams. <i>Strath Creek Falls 2 1979</i> . Oil on canvas. 183.0 x 152.5 cm.....	163
12. Richard Woldendorp. <i>Lake Hilman</i> , central Western Australia, Australia.	165
13. Richard Woldendorp. <i>Coastal River Pattern</i> , Northern Territory, Australia	166
14. Richard Woldendorp. <i>Scrub Fire</i> . 1981	168
15. Fred Williams. <i>Bushfire 1976</i> . Gouache 57 x 54 cm.....	168
16. John Wolseley. <i>Finke River Drawing 3 Sept 1978</i> (detail) pencil and ink on paper. 33.5 x 24.0cm.....	170
17. John Wolseley. <i>Concerning the passing of the glaciers and the coming of the first lichen. (Tasmania) 1994</i> . Watercolour on paper, 162 x 220 cm.....	171
18. John Wolseley. <i>Scrambling, Climbing, Flying and Moving Through the Cobboboonee Forest, 2006/2009</i> . watercolour, carbonised wood, 56 x 76 cm	172
19. John Wolseley at Papunya 1979. Photograph.....	175

Chapter Eight: Cartography in Australian Aboriginal Art after 1970.

1. A sample of motifs used by Central and Western desert people.....	181
2. Old Mick Takamarra (L) and Old Walter Tjampitjinpa (R) sand painting that carries over into paintings on board.....	186
3. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri <i>Map of Anmatyerre Country</i> , 1988, Pencil on paper, 56.0 x 76.0.....	188
4. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. <i>Warlugulong (Fire)</i> 1976. Acrylic on canvas, 168.5 x 170.5 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales.....	191
5. Map of Warlugulong, 1976.....	192
6. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. <i>Yuutjutiyungu</i> 1979. (section) Synthetic polymer paint on canvas. 231.0 x 365.5 cm. The Kelton Foundation.....	195
7. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's open air studio at Mbunghara, July 1980..	196
8. Dorothy Napangardi. <i>Sandhills of Mina Mina</i> . 2000. Acrylic on canvas 198 x 122 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.....	197
9. Salt on desert clay pans at Mina Mina.....	198
10. Dorothy Robinson Napangardi. <i>Women's Dreaming</i> 2001. Polymer paint on canvas, 183x122cm.....	199
11. Michael Nelson Jagamara. <i>Mikilangu</i> 1984. acrylic on canvas. 122 x 182.5cm. 200	
12. Michael Nelson Jagamara. <i>Five Stories</i> (detail) acrylic on canvas.....	202
13. Professor Ian McLean. <i>Dreaming map of Five Stories</i>	202
14. Michael Nelson Jagamara. <i>Old man Lightning</i> 2011.....	204
15. Michael Nelson Jagamara. <i>Lightning Dreaming at Yamapunta</i> . 2012.....	205
16. Michael Nelson Jagamara. <i>Two Yams</i>	205
17. Tim Johnson and Michael Nelson Jakamarra, <i>Women's Story and Yam Dreaming</i> 1987-1992 acrylic on canvas board. 40.5 x 30.3 cm.....	208

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Abstract

This PhD consists of a painting folio and an independent written thesis that makes a comparative study of the use of the cartographic or mapping perspective in art, with a particular focus on Australian landscape painting made after World War Two. I argue that this recent Australian art is built on a long history of previous art practices and theories, and particularly on the meeting of Western traditions of landscape and spatial representation and Indigenous traditions of representing space and place.

The written thesis also investigates the history of the Southern Highlands and how it has been mapped and represented by Western artists since colonization, which is also the subject of the paintings. While the painting practice is research driven – the paintings are made on the spot and developed from a very personal engagement with the landscape – the investigations of the written thesis inform my paintings from a cartographic and mapping viewpoint with reference to its ancient and contemporary forms.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is primarily a comparative study of the use of the mapping perspective in Australian Aboriginal art, and specific modes of abstraction in contemporary western landscape art in Australia and elsewhere. Through developing comparative analyses between Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art, selected examples of other art and various philosophies and theories, the thesis aims to explain the role of mapping in depicting place and identity. While the focus of the thesis is Australian art made between 1950 and 2014, I argue that this recent art is built on a long history of previous art practices and theories, and particularly on the meeting of Western traditions of landscape and spatial representation and Indigenous traditions of representing space and place from across the world. This meeting occurred when, from the turn of the twentieth century, Western art underwent radical revision due to the impact of Indigenous art. Mapping practices, I argue, proved a valuable way by which some Western landscape artists sought to overcome the limitations of traditional Western approaches to perspective in creating a sense of place. Mapping, I also argue, is a shared form of knowledge and therefore provides a common ground between different human cultures, a means by which each can communicate to the other something about their relationship to a certain place and indeed who they are.

My central thesis is that non-Aboriginal Australian landscape art, as it has developed since 1950, can only be fully explained through an analysis of Western theories of perspective and spatial representation, Indigenous representations of space and place, and what I am calling cartographic mapping perspective. This is the viewpoint seen from an elevation looking directly down (like a satellite photograph) and does not, like a bird's eye view, involve any vanishing points as it is a

flattening of the picture space. In this it is akin to a planar viewpoint as it describes an object as flat or lying in a single geometric plane with two dimensional characteristics.

To achieve this, the written dissertation addresses the following questions:

- What is the cartographic mapping perspective and what is its relationship to aerial, linear and bird's-eye perspective?
- In what ways do the different ways of representing landscape, from the European perspectival systems to Australian Aboriginal mapping systems, limit what can be known about the country?
- What, if any, are the influences of Australian Aboriginal mapping techniques on contemporary Australian landscape painters?
- Are the very divergent Western and Australian Aboriginal ways of relating to country reflected in their methods of representing and depicting space?

Because the studio component of the PhD is based on paintings of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, the written thesis also investigates the history of the Southern Highlands and how it has been mapped and represented by Western artists since colonization. While the painting practice is research driven, this theoretical and historical study of the Southern highlands and modes of landscape representation in Australia and elsewhere has informed my painting (see exegetical appendix).

In this respect my studio painting aims to join a very local experience of landscape and place in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales with much wider histories and discourses on the representation of place. In these art works I am not only painting the landscape but also reacting to individual experiences within the history of a specified cultural landscape. As such, the paintings explore abstraction in landscape painting from a cartographic and mapping viewpoint with reference to its ancient and contemporary forms.

Taking as a starting point the claims that European perspectival systems model a way of possessing land and Australian Aboriginal mapping systems model a way of belonging to country, the dissertation asks what are the very divergent Western and Australian Aboriginal ways of relating to these influences and how are they reflected in methods of representing and depicting space? These ideas are tested through a history of a specific place – the Southern Highlands of New South Wales – and its art, and a wider consideration of how mapping has impacted on contemporary landscape art. In addition the thesis investigates the influence of Australian Aboriginal mapping techniques on contemporary Australian landscape painters.

Both the studio and written components of the PhD thesis take their direct departures from a deconstructive approach to landscape painting investigated in my Bachelor of Creative Arts (Honours) in 2006 and developed further in my Masters of Creative Arts-Research thesis in 2008. Both theses served as a platform for this dissertation as I became interested in the various perspectival systems adapted to landscape painting and their role in creating a sense of place. Equally important were issues that emerged during the process of the research in particular the discovery of my Australian Aboriginal heritage and the renewed importance this gave to my own sense of place as a long-time resident of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.

The Southern Highlands of New South Wales, approximately 130 kilometres south west of Sydney, is a geographically distinct area about seven hundred metres above sea level, consisting of three main towns and over twenty villages. The area is isolated from its surrounds by the depth of the gorges with abundant sandstone and fertile forests. The Gundungurra people are the original occupants of this area but are only mentioned briefly in a historical account of the Gundungurra homeland - the Southern Highlands - in 2008 by historian Linda Emery. However, of interest is

Emery's opinion that the willingness of the Australian Aboriginals to share their knowledge of the area with colonial government explorers would eventually lead to their removal and dispossession.¹ Local Southern Highlands historian James Jervis wrote that by the late nineteenth century all full blooded Australian Aboriginals had disappeared from the district.² With this history as my starting point, examined in more detail in the dissertation, the PhD consists of two bodies of work:

1. A written dissertation that investigates mapping and its histories in Western and non-Western art traditions.
2. A painting folio and exhibition.

Both bodies of work in the PhD examine, in their different ways, the use of cartographic approaches in landscape art. Drawing on examples from the Upper Palaeolithic period, Western art and contemporary Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art of the present time, they ask how can the experience of place be depicted in painting? This interdisciplinary investigation which combines history, socio-cultural studies and art history is an accompaniment to a visual art project that involved painting the landscape from a mapping viewpoint while also addressing individual experiences that took place within the history of a specified cultural landscape. The written dissertation, which contains some exegetical sections that reflect on this visual art project, examines mapping as a practice and technique that reveals much about the relationships of different cultures to place.

An important objective in the thesis is to appreciate the impact of Upper Palaeolithic and Australian Aboriginal art on twenty and twenty-first century art, thus suggesting that the power of mapping is a pictorial device used over a wide range of cultures since the first surviving examples of human art.

As noted above a key question is how models of depicting space, in particular the European perspectival and the Australian Aboriginal mapping systems, delimit our knowledge of the place? In addressing this **issue** the dissertation examines the various ways that mapping has impacted on contemporary landscape art and discusses what, if any, are the influences of Australian Aboriginal mapping techniques on contemporary Australian landscape painters.

The first task of my argument is to examine different models of spatial representation. These models, I argue, develop from map-making traditions that are universal in human cultures. Mapping is so ubiquitous in human cultures that one might speculate “whether or not the estimated 200,000 years of the hunting – gathering phase of human existence has left a permanent impression on the human psyche”³ However, such speculation would take me well beyond the scope of this thesis. In order to make my argument that mapping techniques are not neutral practices’ but reflect modes of being’⁴ I seek to show how mapping as a spatial tool reflects social, economic and ecological relationships. Thus I examine connections between European and Australian Aboriginal systems of mapping and knowledge that relate to the ecological and economic use of country: the hunter-gather use of land as opposed to early agrarian and the twenty-first century post-industrial economy with a contemporary painting tradition informed by both hunter-gather and agrarian societies.

When examining these intercultural crossovers I have regarded the dissimilar relationships between Western and Australian Aboriginal notions of country and belonging. Anne-Marie Willis sums up this difference: “on the one hand there is the Aboriginal sharing of material resources within the clan group ... [and] the notion of guardianship of the land and the preservation of its inherent resources” and on the other hand “...the European model of individual ownership of property and a money

economy in which land could be bought and sold.”⁵ This difference also reflects dissimilar spiritual beliefs about the relationship between individuals and nature. European attitudes to nature descend from Biblical texts such as Genesis 1.26:

...and God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”⁶

Conversely, in Indigenous cosmology, individuals are incarnations of country, its landforms, flora and fauna. “From an Aboriginal perspective”, writes anthropologist Howard Morphy, “the land itself is a sign system... the whole of creation, all of human life is mapped on the landscape to which ancestral beings are inextricably connected.”⁷ Further, the relationships embedded in country are repeated in human relationships as Aboriginal art curator Ken Watson expressed: “two of the dominant themes in Aboriginal art are country and kinship: the land and the people. These themes represent the core value of Aboriginal culture.”⁸

In order to support these claims the work of three Australian Aboriginal artists and **five** non-Aboriginal artists will be examined; these are listed in the chapter outlines at the end of this section. In the thesis I examine and develop cross-cultural understandings of mapping as a distinct perspectival technique in the organisation of pictorial space, something I also test in the studio component of this PhD.

Finally, my thesis is comprised of two methodological approaches: the historical and the comparative as defined by Rodney J. Clarke:

Historical methodology is the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events [It] involves: Where the events take place? Which people are involved? When the events occurred? What kind of human activity was involved? [Comparative

Methodology] is often used together with historical research to compare people's experience of different societies, either between times in the past or in parallel situations in the present conducted at a macro level (revolutions) or at a micro level (individual experiences).⁹

The cartographic or mapping viewpoint has been practiced at least since the Upper Palaeolithic era through to the present day. Denis Cosgrove advises that "...an examination of art and cartography in the twentieth century should focus on mapping practices rather than maps as such... some immediate parallels are found between the images of pictorial art and those of cartography."¹⁰

Relatively little, if any, research has been centred on the use of a cartographic or mapping perspective in landscape painting and there is consistent confusion in the small amount of available literature between a mapping perspective and the aerial (atmospheric), bird's eye and linear perspectives.

The correct definition of aerial or atmospheric perspective refers to the technique of creating an illusion of depth caused through moisture and dust in the atmosphere and depicting distant objects as, paler, less detailed and usually bluer than foreground objects.

Linear perspective, on the other hand, is a mathematical system for creating the illusion of space and distance on a flat surface. Like a bird's eye view, the use of linear perspective generally involves vanishing points and should not be confused with mapping perspective which has no vanishing points and is akin to looking straight down at the ground and not from the side.

Cultural history researcher Marie Thebaud-Sorger investigated three of these perspectives: aerial, linear and bird's eye from hot air balloons and airplanes. While

agreeing with aspects of her investigation she makes no recognition of cartography or mapping in visual art which she appears to confuse with aerial perspective. However she notes the curve of the earth does not allow a viewpoint without vanishing points.¹¹ Christine Lodder, on the other hand, acknowledges one of the main influences on Kasimir Malevich and his development of Suprematism may have been deconstructed aerial photographs leading the way to total abstraction. Malevich described his new style of paintings in 1927 as 'non-objective' and "[aerial photographs] might have encouraged the impulse towards deconstruction, simplification and geometricisation."¹²

Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) developed the use of perspective, which revolutionized painting in the late Middle Ages, allowing for naturalistic styles as opposed to the stylized figures of medieval art.¹³ Brunelleschi's system of perspective, projecting a system of converging parallel lines onto a two dimensional surface to produce a mathematical illusion of depth, dominated the construction of space in Western art for the following five centuries until alternative modes of perspective, based on phenomenological experience, were developed at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁴

. The main scholars of the early cartographic and mapping viewpoint include anthropologists such as David Lewis-Williams, Richard Andree and Paul Bahn who pinpoint the beginning of human artistic endeavour and art created by Upper Palaeolithic Europeans as approximately 40,000 years ago though art of a similar age has been found in Australia indicating that "evidence suggests that paintings were being made fifty thousand years ago, ante-dating the Palaeolithic rock paintings of Altamira and Lascaux in Europe."¹⁵

G. M. Morriss-Kay states that the cognitive ability to create art separate from adornment of the body must have originated in Africa at an earlier time and “spread during global dispersal, leading to the regional variety seen in both ancient and recent art.”¹⁶

The connections drawn by the theories of Lewis-Williams and Adolphus Elkins between shamanism and prehistoric mappings in cave art are particularly intriguing when considering the original purpose of mapping. Elkins refers to Australian Aboriginal shamans as Aboriginal men of High Degree.¹⁷ That shamans were perhaps the first mapmakers suggests that the earliest mapping was a teaching tool that related to community health, social control and religious instruction.

Andree appears to have been the first to specifically investigate the origins of mapping and subsequently influenced much of the later literature by drawing attention to the two conditions that account for the cartographic abilities of humans: an unparalleled sense of direction and technical skill in drawing.¹⁸ Historian Catherine Delano-Smith believes that there is clear evidence in the pre-historic art of Europe "that maps, permanent graphic images epitomizing the distribution of objects and events were being made as early as the Upper Palaeolithic."¹⁹

Peter Sutton writes, that in his opinion, all Australian ground paintings [or rock engravings] and the modern paintings on canvas or art board that are derived from them, are meant to be seen as plan views,²⁰ while Judith Ryan claimed that the configuration of circles and arcs in these paintings and petroglyphs are from a bird's eye perspective.²¹ I cannot agree with her statement as the mapping perspective of the Australian Aboriginal artist is not a bird's eye view with vanishing points into the distance from a high or elevated position.

Howard Morphy states that even though some Aboriginal Australian paintings do represent topographical features of the landscape, the analogy between Aboriginal Australian art and maps can be oversimplified.²² Here I would insist that the word topographical is not consistent with the Australian Aboriginal's mapping of country as topography refers to a geographical view of natural features from many angles - however the concept is consistent with Australian Aboriginal people's intimate knowledge and understanding of landforms.

As well as attempts to understand the spatial characteristics of mapping, the idea of mapping has also been used as a metaphor for the European imperialist eye. Terry Smith takes a metaphorical approach to early colonial mapping and claims that a concept of map-stimulated rhetoric during the First Settlement was used to justify colonization. Smith describes a framework of three inter-related visual regimes, described in Chapter Four of this thesis, that were undertaken in this first settler situation to make Australia conform to new colonial order and material progress.²³

In developing my own research driven art practice I have found the advice of Carole Gray and Julian Malins useful. They write that the first three undertakings when commencing an artwork are: Generative: the management of materials in the studio; Selection: the elements of form and pattern identified by the artist and Synthesis: the conceptualisation and planning of the artwork. The following "three patterns are 'analytical and reflective': the articulation of problems arising in the 'generative' phase; the presentation of the art work for comment, followed by critical discussion which may generate new ideas."²⁴

I view my own method of working in the landscape to produce paintings and monotypes as a type of intervention. In realising the abstract aspects of an historical

landscape this intervention consists of a whole series of 'synthesis' approaches using dreams, meditation and solitude to develop an understanding of landscape that engages and reflects on the past. I have placed myself in a field of visual art that encourages me to believe that the documentation and development of life's events have meaning and purpose and to see reality through the process of painting as well as intellectual consideration of issues pertinent to my practice. My aim is to conceive and resolve the paintings visually and not attempt a didactic reading of the meanings that underpin them.

Outline of Chapters.

Having set out the aims, objectives and framework in the introductory chapter the following summary provides a sense of direction in my argument for the reader.

Chapter Two examines how the working methods I have developed in my art practice sustain my political and cultural interest in the historical landscapes of the Southern Highlands. By expanding my knowledge of mapping techniques, I have further developed methods of painting from a cartographic perspective as a way of testing my research questions through creative practice.

In Chapter Three my personal history and genealogical connections to the area that I am using as a template for my mapping paintings are explained as they have been crucial in instigating and framing this thesis. Through this research I have discovered an individual sense of belonging that **is** definitely mine at last.

Chapter Four examines the early Aboriginal and colonial history of Southern Highland areas known as Bong Bong Common and Cecil Hoskins Reserve. I describe the establishment of the first village south of the Cumberland Plains by Governor

Lachlan Macquarie in 1820 and briefly discuss the earliest colonial paintings of this district.

Chapter Five introduces the notion of mapping as it developed in ancient time focusing on Upper Palaeolithic art that depicted spiritual beliefs, cultural identity and ownership of land. This chapter continues the mapping argument by looking at ancient Australian Aboriginal cartography and some ways in which, over thousands of years, these artists have mapped the landscape to document narratives of religion, communication and a sense of belonging to the land.

Chapter Six outlines the development of Western perspectival systems in representation of space. Beginning with the theories of Claudius Ptolemy in the second century A.D., this chapter traces the invention of single point perspective in the fifteenth century and finally the impact of perspective on modern and contemporary Western landscape art, examining changes in perspective and perception **from the late** nineteenth century beginning with French artist Paul Cezanne.

In Chapter Seven representation of space through mapping techniques are examined in the work of key twentieth century Australian landscape artists during the years 1950-2014 - Sidney Nolan, John Olsen, Fred Williams, John Wolseley and aerial photographer Richard Woldendorp. I will consider the influence of the Australian Aboriginals' 'mapping' on the five aforementioned non-Aboriginal artists by a study of their **artwork** and their writing.

Chapter Eight observes the development of contemporary Australian Aboriginal art since 1970. I will determine the role of the 'mapping' viewpoint in contemporary Australian Aboriginal art by discussing the background to the ancient mapping of

country in the paintings of the artists Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Dorothy Napangardi and Michael Nelson Jagamara.

Summary

This PhD aims to bring about a better understanding of a cartographic perspective in visual art during varied inconsistent situations. These situations begin with the period of art in the Upper Palaeolithic through to the present day, albeit in a very shortened form. A particular motivation is to inform and better understand my practice as an artist. In undertaking this research I have discovered a previously untold family secret that explains many factors of influence **at an** artistic and personal level.

Chapter 1.

Notes.

- ^{1.} Linda Emery, *Pictorial History of the Southern Highland*. (Sydney: Kingclear, 2008) 2.
- ^{2.} James Jervis. *A History of the Berrima District 1798-1973*, 3rd edit. (North Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1986) 3.
- ^{3.} Sasha Grishin. *John Wolseley: Landmarks*. (Sydney: Craftsman, 2006) 10.
- ^{4.} John Wolseley in "Interpretations of the Landscape through visual Art–The Cultural Values of the Central Ranges: a preliminary report." 2003. Web 19 April 2013.
- ^{5.} Anne-Marie Willis, *Illusions of Identity: the Art of a Nation*. (Sydney: Hale and Ironmonger, 1993). 95.
- ^{6.} The St. James Bible. *The Book of Genesis*. Chapter 1, Verse 26. (Cambridge U.K. edition. Volume 1: 1.) Web 31 Dec 2011. 26.
- ^{7.} Howard Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*. 5th edit., (London: Phaidon, 2004) 103.
- ^{8.} Ken Watson, in *One Sun One Moon*. Ed. Theresa Willsteed (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007) 17.
- ^{9.} R. J. Clarke, "Research Methods and Methodologies" as presented at the PhD Seminar. (U of Wollongong, Faculty of Commerce 2005) 36.
- ^{10.} Denis Cosgrove "Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century" *Imago Mundi. The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, Vol. 57. Part 1. 135.
- ^{11.} Marie Thebaud-Sorger in Ed. Mark Dorrian and Frederic Pousin *Seeing From Above: The Aerial View in Visual Culture*. (London: I.B.Tauris, 2013) 46-65.

- ¹² Christine Lodder in Ed. Mark Dorrian and Frederic Pousin *Seeing from Above: The Aerial View in Visual Culture*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013) 95-6. .
- ¹³ Manetti, Antonio. *Life of Brunelleschi*. Pennsylvania: P.U.P.1970. 35.
- ¹⁴ William Rubin, *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism* (New York: MOMA 1989) 353.
- ¹⁵ Andree, Richard in Catherine Delano Smith. "Prehistoric Maps and the History of Cartography : An Introduction." Vol.1 Book 1.Chapter 2. (Eds.) J.B. Harley, and David Woodward. Chicago: C.U.P. Web 10 Oct. 2012.45
- ¹⁶ G, Morriss-Kay. "The Evolution of Human Artistic Creativity" *Journal of Anatomy*. J. Anat. 2010 February; 216 (2) Web 12 Nov 2013.158–176.
- ¹⁷ Ronald M. Berndt and Catherine H. Berndt. *The World of the First Australians: Aboriginal Traditional Life: Past and Present*. 5th ed.: Canberra: A.I.A.T.S.I.S., 1999. 307-331.
- ¹⁸ Andree 45-60.
- ¹⁹ Catherine Delano Smith. *The History of Cartography*. Book 1. Vol. 1.Chapter 4. Eds. J.B. Harley and David Woodward. (Chicago: C.U.P. 1987) 92-3.
- ²⁰ Peter Sutton, *The History of Cartography*, Book 3.Chapter 10, Vol 2, Ed. David Woodward and Malcolm G. Lewis (Chicago: C.U.P. 1998) 360.
- ²¹ Judith Ryan. *Fieldwork. Australian Art 1968-2002*. (Melbourne: NGV, 2002) 13-15.
- ²² Morphy 106-7.
- ²³ Terry Smith, "Visual Regimes of Colonization: Aboriginal Seeing and European Vision in Australia." *The Visual Culture Reader*. 2nd edit. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Phaidon, 2001) 483.

²⁴. Carole Gray and Julian Malins. "Research Procedures/ Methodology for Artists and Designers". The Robert Gordon University. (Aberdeen, Scotland: 1993) Web 29 Nov. 2013. 7.

Chapter Two.

Mapping the Southern Highlands' Landscape in Paint: 2009-2014.



Fig.1. Sarah Willard Gray. *The Wingecarribee River*. 2011.

Acrylic on canvas 90 x 120cm. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

Exploring the idea that mapping is an important form of expression in contemporary Australian painting by both Australian Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal artists I here examine these culturally diverse expressions of abstraction and landscape with reference to my own studio practice.

The non-Aboriginal artist often adopts a map-maker's perspective that looks down from a vantage point at a motif or subject in the landscape. It may be simply looking down from one's own height at the cracks in a pavement or leaves on a forest floor and painting those forms. This cartographic viewpoint is a method of creative visualisation of landscape without using the linear, aerial or atmospheric perspective written about by Claudius Ptolemaeus or Ptomely (cAD 90- cAD168) in the second century and used in the post-Renaissance European tradition through to the present day.

My Honours' suite of nineteen paintings and monotypes were sourced from terrain in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and augmented by historical research of this area along with modern Australian landscape painting. The aim was to develop new relationships with the landscape that were not delimited by the distancing effects of traditional Renaissance perspective, which some critics have argued is the visual regime of colonialism.¹ Instead, I sought a way of painting landscape that was better suited to evoking feelings of belonging and responsiveness to past and current histories. An essential component of this was the investigation of mapping perspectives that produced a more abstracted sense of land surfaces as in *Sutton Forest No.1*. The oil monotype **was** executed on site at Sutton Forest, an historic village a short distance from Moss Vale, which featured in the early settlement of the Southern Highlands.



Fig. 2.Sarah Willard Gray.
Sutton Forest No.1 Oil monotype 25 x 18cm.
Honours exhibition 2006. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

A later body of work completed for my Master of Creative Arts-Research focused on a dispute surrounding the Bong Bong Common in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales a seventy acre site known as the Bong Bong Common which is now separated from the Hoskins Nature Reserve by the present road. This area and its surrounds was the subject of dissent between an incorporated body of people, including professional landscape gardeners, who wanted to develop it as a botanical garden and a section of Southern Highland residents led by the Bong Bong Common Management Committee who wished to retain its important historical significance.

In 2007 the conservation architects and heritage consultants Rappoport Pty. Ltd were called upon by Wingecarribee Shire Council to present a conservation management plan for the Bong Bong Common. The report was necessary because the area was under threat from developers after approval in principle had already been given for a Botanic Garden by the local Wingecarribee Council.

This proposed garden was a contentious issue as it would cover the whole area and remove the early Aboriginal burning grounds and heritage remnants of the first village, Bong Bong. The land has had minimal disturbance through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, resulting in an archaeological record with a high degree of integrity including heritage remnants of the first village, Bong Bong that lie beneath the surface of alluvial deposits that would be disturbed forever by the establishment of a cool climate Botanic Garden.² Finally the outcome was settled in a satisfactory manner for both sides of the dispute.³

As secretary of the Bong Bong Management Committee I felt strongly about the matter and was inspired to use this struggle to highlight, analyse and discuss the idea that a landscape's topography, atmosphere, location and history, can inform a sense of place and generate new creative work.

The exhibition, *A Sense of Place*, comprised twenty-four monotypes and paintings. The scale - no painting larger than 30 x 25 cm - and shape of the works became a crucial factor in achieving my aims. Every work was painted in portrait (vertical), rather than landscape (horizontal) format, acting as an abstracted portrait of the landscape rather than an imitative reproduction of the landscape motif. The choice in scale was influenced by Indris Murphy's exhibition plan in which he hung works of the same size to create a sense of visual equanimity. This composure was carried through again in his *I-Thou*, 2009 exhibition using shadow box format with white limed timber frames and a recessed border around the painting. (fig.3)

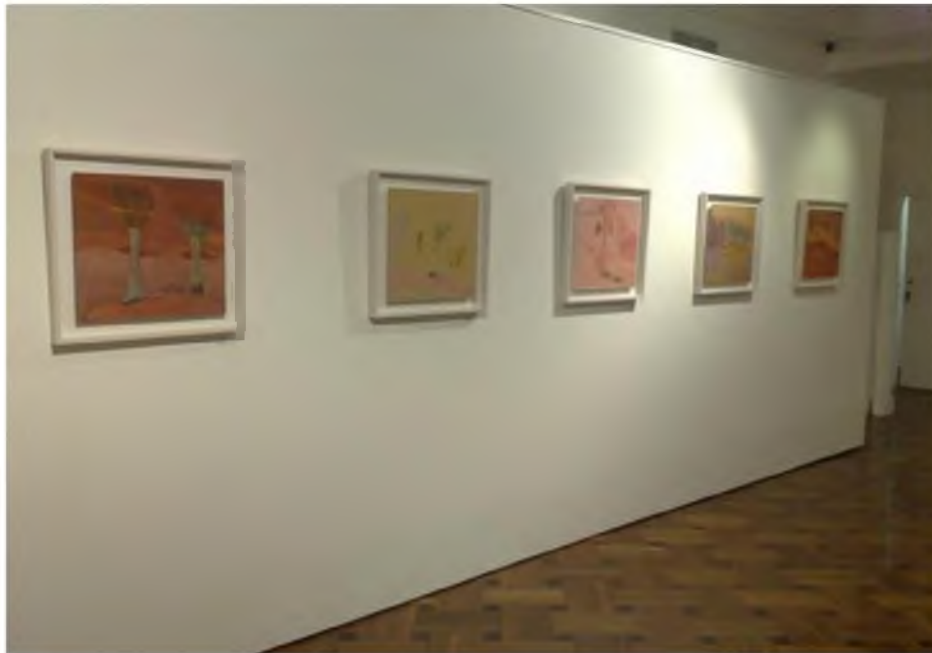


Fig.3. Idris Murphy

King Street Gallery on William Exhibition. 2009. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

My ideal sense of place is not simply the affective response to a particular locale but includes a growing sense of what the place demands of us, in an ethical sense, in our attitudes and actions as was evident in the political and environmental engagement of the Bong Bong case. The Australian landscape is an important part of national and personal identity through both long-standing and more recent attitudes to

place. An example is the *Hanging Tree* (fig.4) which is an expression of my compassion for the Gundungurra people and those who are believed to have been killed on this tree and their land more generally. This was a conceptual starting point for my PhD studio work.



Fig 4. Sarah Willard Gray. *The Hanging Tree*. 2007.

Acrylic on canvas. 120 x 90 cm. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

The pursuit of landscape painting allows the artist to create a connection with his or her environment that can include information such as weather patterns, bird and insect life, environmental changes as well as subjective, personal and official histories. Edward S. Casey, in discussing four different ways of mapping the landscape, names among them 'mapping out' - an idea that resonates with my own work.

Mapping out does not mean tracing out the outlines of mere objects in the landscape; it means following out the lineaments of the earth, putting down its main marks, limning its first features: a procedure of a decidedly non-major or renegade science, since it does not pretend to regulate the representation or even make a representation at all in any conventional sense.⁴

This idea is central to Australian Aboriginal representations of place and space, and as Casey admits, is at odds with Western conventions of representing space:

...mapping the land departs in significant ways from Western notion of mapping prevalent since the Renaissance. There is no longer any privileged sense of looking on from above ...It is a matter, rather, of *going through* - where *going* implies “engaged bodily motion”: “per-motion” as it might be named. But mapping the land is also and equally *going over*, not in the sense of flying over but the sense of becoming acquainted with; going over something to become better acquainted with it... touching with one’s hands, getting the feel of the texture of something, its available surface. This provides a haptic aspect of mapping the land... mapping the land in other words means showing how it feels to look or be on the land, being part of it.⁵

The cartographic viewpoint used in my own landscape painting is not the perspective used by painters of traditional Western landscapes, but the use of a map-maker’s viewpoint delivering instead an impression of a flat, or planar, picture plane. In this regard it evokes Casey's 'haptic aspect' of mapping out.



Fig 5. Sarah Willard Gray. *Bayoong Bayoong c 1825, 2012*.
Acrylic on canvas 1.80m x 2.49m. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

The painting, *Bayoong Bayoong 1825. 2012* (fig.5), bears out the words of Anna Moszniska when writing on the subject of abstraction in art through 'many cultures in history.'

The artist selects a form and then simplifies it until the image bears only stylised

similarities to the original, or is changed almost entirely beyond recognition. This

tendency has been evident in the art of many cultures throughout history...⁶

The warmth of the colours in *The River Wingecarribee. No.1* (fig.6) is generated by the grains of red-brown soil of the Common mixed into the paint and the lyrical curve and flow in the lines of the painting that are part of the natural environment. The mixing of the Common soil into the paint is a sincere reference to a substance from the environment itself, presenting the painting as an index or the haptic map described by Casey, "not as cartographic images of specific sites but as distillations of remembered landscapes ...memorial mapping."⁷



Fig.6. Sarah Willard Gray. *The River Wingecarribee. No 1*. 2011-12. (a section only)

Triptych: oil on canvas 90 x 360cm. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

The Wingecarribee River a tributary of the Warragamba River, south-east of Sydney, was the most integral part of the first settlement at Bong Bong: the river provided drinking water and the alluvial soil on the river banks provided a fertile environment for growing food as it had done for centuries of Australian Aboriginal

populations previously and made the question of where to commence the British settlement on the Southern Highlands an easy decision.

The river played an important role as inspiration in my creative work and is photographed below in a placid state, the weir in the Hoskins Reserve holding back the water. At the bend of the River, in the photograph below, is the historic causeway built to allow Governor Macquarie's carriage to cross over the river in 1820. The basalt rocks and hardwood timber of the causeway are still clearly visible just under the surface of the water.



Fig.7. The Wingecarribee River at Bong Bong. Photo: Sarah Willard Gray. March 2013.



Fig.8. Sarah Willard Gray.
The Causeway at Bong Bong 2012.
 Acrylic and oil on marouflaged board. 90cm x 60 cm.
 Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

I have sought to develop a spontaneous, intuitive and haptic approach, as described by Geoff Bardon in his discussion of the early Papunya Tula painters⁸ as I believed that this was the most effective way to gain a direct phenomenological engagement with the landscape. I experimented with thick acrylic paint and tactile, expressive sepia ink lines used in a perceptive manner when painting on canvas. A feeling of sun on the land or fugitive shadows in purplish blues set the mood of the paintings. A veil of colour sometimes added to become a visual component to enrich the painting's surface as in the painting. *A Different Point of View. No.1.* (fig.9)



Fig.9. Sarah Willard Gray.

A Different Point of View. No.1. 2013.

Acrylic on canvas. Triptych in varying sizes. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

Some of the paintings consist of strong verticals and horizontals with soft passages of paint obscuring and denying the strength of these elements. This veiling use of paint might allude to denial of past histories of this specific area and what took place there in the early nineteenth century, however the painting does not explicitly address this. Rather this history is a starting point for the sort of painterly concerns that I had explored in my earlier studio research its primary aim being to create a phenomenological and effective sense of place that engages the viewer directly through sensations. My mark making is governed by vertical and horizontal shapes in the landscape, tree branches, rocks, crevices and fence lines that divide the canvas visually and conceptually into figure and ground, creating space to invite a subjective reading of the work's meaning.



Fig.10. Sarah Willard Gray.

A Different Point of View No. 2, 2013.

Acrylic on canvas. 90 x 60 cm. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

The politics and history of the Bong Bong Common and Hoskins Reserve has been a common thread running through this series of works. These two special areas of landscape changed the way I approached my creative work as records of history were folded into it while working *in situ* to achieve a sense of place, authenticity and connection to the area in which I reside.

My restricted palette includes the oxides, both red and yellow, even though these oxides could be said to represent the Central Desert colours. When mixed with additional colours the oxides portray the verdant grey greens and deep red soil of the

Southern Highlands. The importance the restricted palette is that it allows the four or five colours, when blended, to hold all elements of the painting together in a movement from complementary to tertiary colours that embody the hues of the trachite rock, red earth and foliage of the locale. A painting starts with the canvas coated with a red oxide ground after which I add black calligraphic lines that weave in and out across the canvas to activate the pictorial space.



Fig.11. Sarah Willard Gray. The beginning of the painting *Bong Bong 1825*. 2012. The start of this 4 canvas painting shows black calligraphic lines over red oxide and white ground.

Summary

Although the historical landscape referred to in the paintings are researched in full I have no concerns with depicting an historical narrative or reviving an interest in traditional landscape painting by producing an imitative reproduction of the landscape motif. As my painting takes shape and form, complex layering and transparent glazes emphasise the texture and drawn markings. At certain stages soil from a particular area

of the Bong Bong Common is added to the paint to acknowledge the earliest inhabitants of this area- the Gundungurra people - many of whom were killed on this land, their own 'burning grounds'. Also, an analysis of mark and mark making would show mark making with palette knife, brush, fingers and rag and in all situations there is a mapping perspective with the art works.

The use of a mapping/cartographic perspective was essential in order to gain the result I required for these works. By flattening the picture plane and mentally manifesting a pictorial expression of a mapping view I allowed the mind to drift above the landscape. Although these are landscape paintings, there are no concerns with reviving the conventional European practices of landscape painting solely through linear or aerial perspective. Instead I investigated spatial effects through the resonance of colours that occur when they are simultaneously joined or disconnected on the picture plane.

The next chapter will examine aspects of my personal history and genealogical connections to the Bong Bong area as these connections have been crucial in framing this thesis.

Chapter 2.

Notes.

- ^{1.} Terry Smith, *Transformations in Australian Art: The Nineteenth century-Landscape, Colony and Nation*. Vol.1. (Sydney: Craftsman, 2002) 20.
- ^{2.} Paul Rappoport, *Bong Bong Common Conservation Management Plan*. (Mascot: Rappoport Pty.Ltd., 2007) 2.
- ^{3.} As a result of the stand taken by interested locals, including elders from the Gundungurra people at Katoomba, the Council has withdrawn its approval in principle for the Bong Bong Common and advised the Botanic Garden group for a viable alternative. The Garden group obtained other Council land and began construction of the garden in 2009 on the acreage site of the Old Woolshed at corner of Kangaloon and Eridge Park Roads, Bowral. At the time of writing this, November 2013, planting of some trees has commenced and the area fenced off.
- ^{4.} Edward S. Casey. *Earth Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) xxii.
- ^{5.} Casey pxv-xvi.
- ^{6.} Anna Mosznska, *Abstract Art*. (London: Thames, 1990) 7.
- ^{7.} Casey. 28.
- ^{8.} Geoffrey Bardon, *Papunya Tula: Art of the Western Desert*. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1991) 128-131.

Chapter Three.

Overlays, Connections and Memorial Mapping.

Maps are graphic notations of remembered experience...The map, and map derived art, is in itself fundamentally an overlay - simultaneously a place, a journey, and a mental concept; abstract and figurative; remote and intimate¹

This investigation into my personal history was driven by a desire to understand who I was, not in a psychological sense, but in terms of the history of the Bong Bong Common: its human and natural history. This journey remains layered, ranging from my own genealogical connections to the place, to Australian Aboriginal and European histories of occupying, dwelling in, seeing and painting place. As such the research attempts to find a visual language that might connect these elements by a better understanding of my identity.

Looking back on my life it seems to have been a voyage through many overlays, “graphic notations of remembered experience, of a journey, a mental concept: abstract and figurative; remote and intimate.” It explains my avid interest in researching the Gundungurra people of the Southern Highlands, map- derived art and the cartographic viewpoint in visual art.

My forbears, on my mother’s side arrived from Bristol, England in 1811 and took up farming on a grant of land that stretched from Wamberal to the tip of The Entrance, a distance of about 12 kilometres, on what is now known as the Central Coast of New South Wales. The family has continued to live in this area and my mother was born in the family home near the Wamberal Lake in 1913.

My father, John Henry Little, was born in Sydney in a year given to him by authorities as 1901, the year of Federation, but was actually born in 1898. At the age of three he was sent by his mother, to Brisbane on a merchant ship in care of the captain

and then be given into the care of his father. This arrangement did not succeed because the father was unable to give them fulltime care and placed the young child and his brother in a series of foster homes.



Fig.1. John Henry Little c1905 with foster family second from left bottom row (photo found 2012)

Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

The casual debonair stance and clothes of the two brothers in the photograph (fig.2) are not indicative of the truth. Both boys, until they went to work in their early teens, were fostered in many different homes of low income Aboriginal families in Brisbane (fig.1). Their father, a newspaper photographer and musician, had taken this photograph of his sons. Albert's demeanour appears to be one of disassociation and John's one of aversion towards the person taking the photo. This dressing up for the camera, business or a social occasion continued to be an important part of my father's life until its end.



Fig. 2. John Henry on the right and his elder brother Albert on the left.c1903.

Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

This slender, nervous person John Henry was, against the odds by age fifteen a fully- fledged violinist later capable of orchestral and solo work in spite of his limited opportunities for tuition. He proudly continued his own education until his death at ninety-seven. The rest of his story was shrouded in mystery and not of the romantic kind, only because he was not encouraged to talk about his past as we grew up. My mother would always change the subject if it arose.

I do know that about age sixteen he toured the shearing sheds west of Maryborough in Queensland playing his violin to the shearers at night before attempting to sell them the new clothing that he carried with him in two suitcases.



Fig.3. John Henry Little

Age: approx.22 years ** Black and white photo c1919. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

** Because my father was given the birth year, 1901, by the authorities he did not realise his correct age until he applied for his first passport at age 75 and discovered he was born three years earlier in 1898.

My father, in later years, was the driving force behind the building of the Gosford District Hospital and its first Chairman of the Board of Directors, a position he maintained for over thirty years, as well as being known for many charitable works and as the father of six children. I remember the man, the violin and the music and the fact that he was a man driven to succeed in everything he undertook. In order to be successful I believe that he denied his Aboriginal origins as those would have deprived him of many opportunities in the business and social life of the time.

I also remember the distorted messages given to me through spoken and unspoken words throughout my childhood and young adulthood. One had to go home every day for lunch when my father picked me up at school – there was no ‘girl’s talk’ with the other students over lunch; there were fears of heights; being in buildings

above ground floor in case of fire; being told to always find an exit in case of being trapped; home was the only safe place to be! The only refuge one had was in books, school work and imaginary friends. That was a refuge distorted completely when, against the headmistress' wishes, my father took me from Gosford High School, without notice in my final year, to work with and for him in his menswear shop six days a week. All of this is perhaps the result of his early childhood fears and deprivation, deserted by both parents and listening to his older brother Albert's cries while being beaten in various foster home.

All this I understand and through all that happened afterwards: I became a Victim of Crime NSW as a result of the treatment I received during my first marriage. The effort to re-ignite my hopes of tertiary education lasted until I entered Wollongong University at age sixty-seven in 2003 with a passion for art and learning.

In 2004, in my second undergraduate year at Wollongong University, to accompany a series of paintings entitled *Connections*, I wrote: The lectures of Visa 221, Early Art and Design in Australia, have made a profound impression on me. When I studied History at school very little Australian history was taught, so the images on video, slides and movies in these lectures had a multi-layered impact on me. My feelings towards the landscape run deeply inside me and I cannot explain the sensation of stirring emotions I now feel.

At this time I still had no idea of my own Australian Aboriginality.

The research for this PhD thesis has a distinct relevance to myself and my three children because I did not realise why there has been a physic link, a genetic link to what I paint and the way that I paint. In August 2009 my children decided that I should know what they had accidentally found out three years earlier. This information brought to the fore the reasons for many things that have occurred in my life and I

found myself grieving the loss of my father anew after they informed me that he was of Australian Aboriginal descent from the Ngunnawal people whose traditional lands are from Canberra to Goulburn and thus closely connected, as neighbours, to the Gundungurra of the Southern Highlands. Understanding why and who I am is a momentous happening as the feelings about my indigenous heritage run deeply, feelings that I have never been able to understand before. Most importantly, I no longer feel dissociated from other people after specialist treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Most mental health professionals believe that the underlying cause of dissociative disorders is chronic trauma in childhood. Examples of trauma included repeated physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. Unpredictable or frightening family environments may also cause the child to 'disconnect' from reality during times of stress. It seems that the severity of the dissociative disorder in adulthood is directly related to the severity of the childhood trauma. Traumatic events that occur during adulthood may also cause dissociative disorders. Such events may include war, torture or going through a natural disaster.²

There are different levels to a sense of place. One can appreciate an area's beauty and peacefulness without any historical knowledge or indeed much direct association with the location. However, the more familiar, personal and private connections one has with a certain site immeasurably deepens one sense of actually dwelling and belonging to it. The growing sense of my own Australian Aboriginal heritage has obviously changed the way I relate to place. So too has my growing knowledge of another side of my heritage which has roots also in the first settlement of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales at Bong Bong village. When I asked the Berrima District Historical Society to assist me in tracing my father's family, they found that my great grand uncle James Shepherd was born near Bong Bong Village in 1831, when it was an army garrison. This was eleven years after it was visited by

Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1820 to officially declare it the first village in the Southern Highlands.

I then discovered that the father of James Shepherd was one of eight soldier-settlers who arrived with their families to take up land grants on the Wingecarribee River slightly north of the Bong Bong village. These soldiers had been part of the NSW Royal Veterans Companies taken from British regiments and many had served in the Napoleonic wars. Emery writes that only one of the men succeeded who had settled at Bong Bong as “one was murdered, another charged with highway robbery and sent to Norfolk Island and another was lost in the bush, never to be seen again.”³ Emery is not correct in her dismissal of the settler sent to Norfolk Island as this soldier, wrongly imprisoned, was Lynn David Shepherd, my great-great grandfather.

The following excerpt is taken from *The Shepherd Book*, an account of Lynn David and Elizabeth Shepherd and their descendants by Helen Jamieson, 2001:

Lynn David Shepherd was 17 years old in 1812 when, on 13th February, he enlisted in the British Army. He joined Captain Culyer's Company, 2nd. Battalion of 69th Regiment of Foot...From his station in Ireland, late in 1813, Lynn's division 6,000 strong, was sent to South Beverland to combine with Russian and Prussian armies and corps to relieve Antwerp. Napoleon had escaped from Elba and had regrouped his armies to defeat the British and the Duke of Wellington. On 15 June, 1815, the 69th Battalion was at Quatre Bras, 20 miles south of Brussels. In a swift and secret action Napoleon crossed the Sambre and placed 124,000 men between 113,000 Prussian and 83,000 miscellaneous British troops. The 16th June saw 15,000 Prussian casualties at Ligny, followed by a day of torrential rain. Wellington had brilliantly chosen a familiar, rolling plain, 12 miles south of Brussels, near the village of Waterloo, as an ideal place to engage his enemy. His combined armies defeated Napoleon, on 18th June, in what was an historic battle. Lynn's medical discharge certificate was dated 27th. May 1816. Lynn had served four years and three months and received a credit of a further two years for the Waterloo campaign, showing his total service

as six years and three months. In December 1825, Lynn made a momentous and futuristic decision. He enlisted in the Royal Veterans Corps bound for New South Wales, arriving with his wife and two children on the *Orpheus* on the 19th September, 1826.⁴

On September 8th 1830 a letter from Alexander McLeary, Colonial Secretary of Sydney, addressed to Lynn Shepherd, late of Royal Veterans Companies stated he was allowed to take possession of the 80 acres of land, provided he reside on the land and cultivate it according to the terms of the grant. On 1st February 1831 the fourth son, James, was born at Mt. Pleasant, [now Harby Farm] at Bong Bong village.^{5a}

Due to a later discovered error, Lynn David Shepherd was accused of stealing a set of clothing and committed for trial at the Supreme Criminal Court of New South Wales and this trial of Shepherd took place on the 5th November 1838, with a Military jury. Shepherd was found guilty and sentenced to death, however, the sentence was later changed to life imprisonment with hard labour on Norfolk Island. For the family of Lynn Shepherd this devastating news was made worse when their land at Bong Bong, Mt. Pleasant, was forfeited.^{5b}

Alexander Maconachie, a new superintendent in charge of prisoners on Norfolk, successfully petitioned for the release of Lynn Shepherd, and on 19th September 1840 his release was approved: 'In reply I am directed to inform you that, under the circumstances of the case, his Excellency approves the residue of that sentence be remitted...Shepherd may therefore be returned to Sydney by the first opportunity.' signed E. Deas. Thomson, Colonial Secretary.⁶

In a petition dated 8th February 1841, to Governor Gipps, Lynn stated that a William Lees had confessed to the crime for which he, Lynn Shepherd, had suffered two years on Norfolk Island and for which his Excellency has agreed to issue a free

pardon. He requested that deeds of his 80 acres grant of land be re-issued to him. The petition was successful, however, it was a year before the deeds were issued and five years of his war pension had been unpaid.⁷

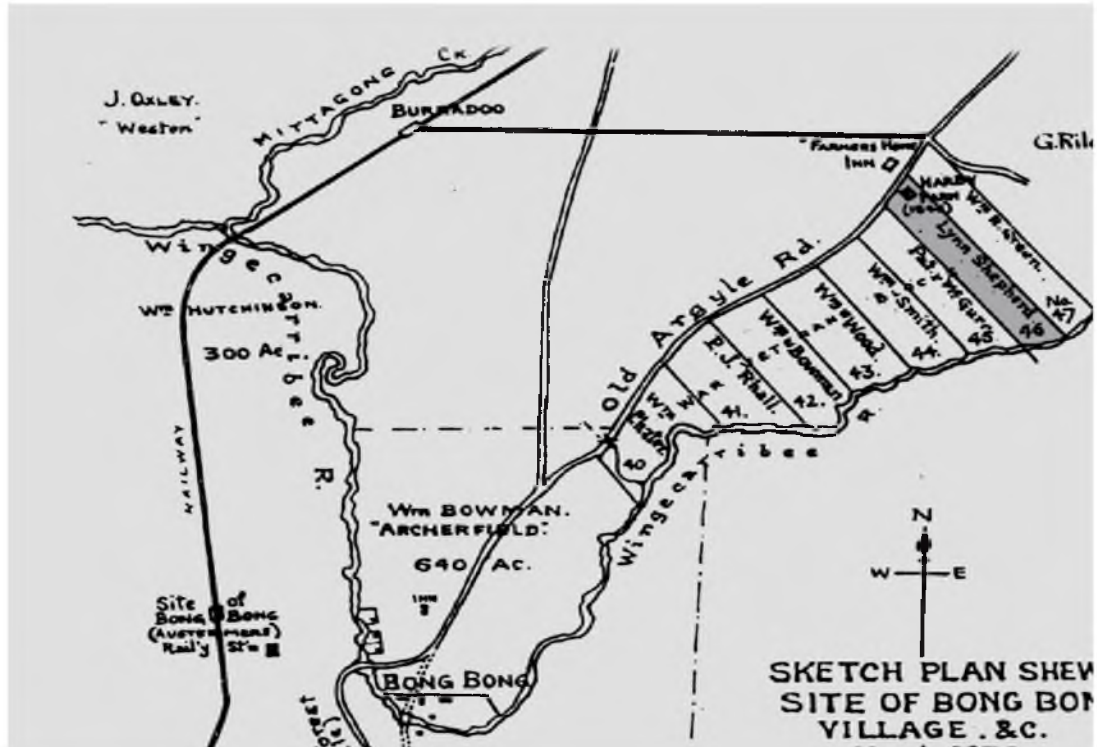


Fig.4. Map of Lynn David Shepherd's land grant at Bong Bong: Lot 46.

Source: Rappoport Report. page 28.

The two years of wrongful imprisonment and wounds from the Napoleonic Wars brought about the early death of this pioneer. Lynn Shepherd died at his home, Mt Pleasant, on 15th August 1845 and was buried in Sutton Forest Churchyard. His pension book (wo22/ 248 folio. 220) shows that his pension rate was 6 pence per day and that a final payment was made to his widow, Elizabeth, of one pound, eight shillings and six pence. Consequently his widow Elizabeth Shepherd sold the Bong Bong land for sixty pounds and a debt of thirty pounds was paid back from this amount and then took the children to live at Windellima near Goulburn where her grandson, my grandfather, was born in 1867.⁸



Fig.5. Lynn David and Elizabeth Shepherd's Memorial head stone at the Anglican Church, Sutton Forest, Southern Highlands of New South Wales. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.2013.

Summary.

Due to my historical connection with the Southern Highlands I discovered a sense of ownership, perhaps even that elusive sense of place and belonging. After all this was the connection of two disparate ancestral lineages. It was where one part of my early colonial family had lived and took part in the early European settlement of this beautiful district. The other part of my connection is with the earliest inhabitants of this beautiful part of Australia who belonged here and the never-ending struggle for their voices to be heard and social justice achieved. Through my painting I have connected these two aspects of my family's past as I am intensely aware of my genealogical relationship with the landscape of the early settlement of Bong Bong and the Wingecarribee River.

Chapter 3.

Notes.

- ^{1.} Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*. (New York: The New Press, 1983) 122.
- ^{2.} Victorian State Health Dept. "Dissociation and Dissociative Disorders: Symptoms and Range of Dissociative Disorders" Web 21 Jan 2012.
- ^{3.} Linda Emery, *Pictorial History of the Southern Highland*. (Sydney: Kingclear 2008) 4.
- ^{4.} Helen Jamieson. *The Shepherd Story*. Self published in print and on CD, 2001.
3-9. C.D.
- ^{5a.} Jamieson 15.
- ^{5b.} Jamieson 17.
- ^{6.} Jamieson 20.
- ^{7.} Jamieson 23.
- ^{8.} Jamieson 24.

Chapter Four.

Mapping the Cultural Landscape of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.

Thousands of years before Europeans passed through the Southern Highlands [of New South Wales] in early 1798, the first inhabitants, the Gundungurra people, walked this ancient and beautiful landscape, their country stretching from Cox's River and Warragamba in the north to Goulburn in the south. The Illawarra escarpment formed a natural boundary in the east between the lands of the Gundungurra and the Wodi Wodi and Dharawal people.¹

The years 1788-1848 were definitive for the new settlement in New South Wales. During this period the colony used all its resources to explore, build, define and make everyone and everything conform to a new European order of reason and material progress. In this respect the colony was heir to the Enlightenment, a test case for its values. There was no place in this scheme for Australian Aboriginal people.

Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), a mid-twentieth century German Jewish intellectual who had to flee Nazi persecution, was of the ethical belief that the Enlightenment, which sought to liberate mankind through the action of reason, only succeeded in enslaving it. According to Andrew Fagan, "Adorno was to argue that reason itself had become entangled with domination: reason had become a tool and device for domination and suffering."² This certainly describes the Australian Aboriginal experience of Enlightenment as they had to confront 'an immutable and inflexible social world' following the arrival of the First Fleet in Botany Bay in 1788. The people on this flotilla of ships, a floating British prison, were to undertake a most daring task: the creation of a prison camp in unexplored territory 12,000 miles from Britain. In this respect, the scheme was similar to the establishment of the notorious Russian Gulag where over sixty-six million people died between 1919 and 1954. The Australian settlement resulted in many British settler deaths and the decimation of thousands of Australian Aboriginal people. It is estimated that the combination of

disease and direct violence reduced the Australian Aboriginal population by about 90% between 1788 and 1900.³ However, the Aboriginal reserves were more like Nazi concentration camps than the Russian Gulag⁴ as they were ethnic based and no one was expected to survive.

True to the values of the Enlightenment, the British Government also had a scientific interest resulting in the depictions of flora, fauna, topography, diagrams and maps, as well as journals and sketches of people. Most importantly it recorded the history of the First Settlement through depictions of its prisoners, soldiers, officials, landscape and the Aboriginal people. Soldiers and naval personnel were trained in topographical drawing at the Royal Military and Naval academies in Britain such as Sandhurst and Woolwich in preparation for voyages to unknown places. This was a product of the English demand, both commercial and official for information of new and foreign lands including documentation of the new colony to encourage settlement there.⁵

In Visual Regimes of Colonization Terry Smith nominates a framework of three inter-related visual regimes that were undertaken in this particular settler situation in varying degrees to make Australia conform to this new colonial order and material progress: calibration, obliteration and symbolization.⁶ In 1803 Matthew Flinders completed the nautical circumnavigation or 'calibration' of the coastline of mainland Australia in the *Investigator*. Flinders, by a method of systematic measuring and rechecking of his readings, produced remarkably accurate charts that were in use until World War II.⁷

Calibration, as undertaken by Flinders, included the mapping of oceans and land, the measuring of distances, property boundaries and the scrutiny of people and their movements. Smith tells us that they are more than acts of noticing and naming, of

fixing position and depicting attributes as they, in fact, initiate processes of incessant refinement, control and order. They are European-style self-replicating requirements of steadiness and order necessary for community framework.⁸



Fig.1. *Flinders' Map of Australia*. Source: National Library of Australia. Canberra. A.C.T.

Obliteration, in this case, is an erasure of many things Aboriginal including habitat, imagery, religion, and language. Some nine hundred different dialects were reduced to approximately ninety. Other modes of obliteration were: The loss of hundreds of thousands of indigenous people through sickness, starvation and murder. Smith informs that of the approximately three thousand Dharawal, Kuring-gai and Dharug people around Sydney less than three hundred remained as the convict period drew to a close around 1850.⁹ The destruction of ceremonial sites and sacred signs, the unauthorised use of Aboriginal designs and the outright attempt to assimilate the indigene to a Western viewpoint created an environment where the native could no

longer exist as before. Smith argues that the obliterating practices range from actual, brutal murder to an equally strong imaginary Othering:

Art tends to serve the latter [imaginary Othering]: it Others the real Other by abstracting the indigene and by figuring 'the native' in kinds of representation at once comfortably familiar and wildly exotic. The actual otherness of the indigene is thereby screened from view.¹⁰

Smith's third regime is Symbolization: the transformation of the world of experience by subjecting parts or connections in it "as a representation of an abstract idea (such as beauty) or of an ideological tendency"¹¹ by means of sculpture, painting, printmaking and eventually photography. Mapping was one recurrent means of doing this in colonial Australia while picturesque were another, albeit more subtle, means of ideological shaping.

Simon Ryan explains how mapping performed an important function not just describing the newly discovered southern land of Australia but also as a means of projecting European uncertainties and desires. Ryan argues that this concept of map-stimulated rhetoric was used to justify colonization. For example, cartographic metaphor described the land as empty awaiting colonial inscription. It is also another way of rendering indigenes as spurious by ignoring their presence.¹²

These same visual regimes were evident in the colonization of the Southern Highlands. The name for the village of Bong Bong was derived from the Gundungurra words 'Toom Bong' and means 'many watercourses' or 'many frogs.' The name 'Wingecarribee' is taken from the Gundungurra name for the area, 'Wingie Wingi Charabie.'¹³

On the 19th March in 1798, an unnamed young man belonging to the first exploration party to visit the area viewed the surrounding countryside from the summit of Mount Gingerbullen, near Sutton Forest.¹⁴ This was a short distance from the future

settlement at Bong Bong, set out by surveyor William Harper on the 14th November, 1821. His journal report was followed by a further visit in 1802 and then no further official movements into the area until 1814. A historical sense of place is gained through reading the Brabourne Papers of 1801¹⁵ and the written report that appears in Harper's journal:

We came into the most beautiful country, being nothing but fine meadows with ponds of water in them: fine green hills, but very thin of timber. We got to the top of this hill, where we had the most delightful prospect of the country, and in my opinion one of finest in the known world. It certainly must be a pleasure to any man to view so fine a country.¹⁶

The Southern Highlands is recognised **as a** prime example of a cultural landscape with strong evidence of historical associations. The theoretical framework that makes a link between landscape, morals, place and aesthetics, according to Australian cultural landscape architect Ken Taylor, belongs to the field of heritage conservation management which is justified by powerful cultural associations and history. He writes: “this [Bong Bong] land is an important landscape. It has Aboriginal layers in it...This has a fabulous sense of continuity, of time, of layers and living history.”¹⁷ Taylor continues:

Landscape is a rich record of human history. It is a storehouse of cultural values... landscape is not what we see but a way of seeing: what John Ruskin called ‘seeing with the soul of the eye’...it is important therefore that we learn to interpret cultural landscapes as living history, not just dead history but history which is with us now and which we need to take into the future.¹⁸

The Bong Bong Common contains the remains of Bong Bong village, the first government settlement south of the Cumberland Plains, which is important in the history of European expansion in the 1810s and 1840s. It is the earliest land grant outside the County of Cumberland and gifted to Dr Charles Throsby by Governor

Macquarie in 1819 as a reward for Throsby's expansive explorations on behalf of the Government. Throsby (1777- 1828) was a naval surgeon, magistrate, famed explorer and member of the First Legislative Council. This grant of 1000 acres ¹⁹ was named Throsby Park and Throsby's own home, was built between 1820 and 1834 on this site near Bong Bong village. This brought Throsby's total land holdings on the Southern Highlands to 8000 acres.

The establishment of the first military settlement outside Sydney was on the banks of the Wingecarribee River in 1817 as the outcome of the British 46th Regiment's involvement in an Aboriginal uprising at Appin in 1816. On this same site the first settlement on the Southern Highlands, later to be named the village of Bong Bong, was first visited by Governor Lachlan Macquarie, according to his journal, on Wednesday the 18th of October, 1820.²⁰ After Macquarie's 1820 visit army barracks, a police post with four constables, a school house with resident teacher, the Argyle Inn, a Commissariat store, gaol house, blacksmith's shop, post office, and a cemetery were gradually added to the Common.²¹

R. Ian Jack's 1993 written report to Wingecarribee Shire Council on the proposed future of the Bong Bong Common gives an idea of its beginnings as a village:

The decision to lay out a township at Bong Bong on the north side of the great bend in the Wingecarribee River was taken in March 1821 and the site was surveyed in November of that year...Already by 1820, when Governor Macquarie visited the area, [Charles] Throsby had moved south of the Wingecarribee to the property which Macquarie named Throsby Park and was grazing a substantial herd of cattle there. His [Throsby's] hut to the north of the river remained but otherwise the site of the township was undeveloped when it was reserved by the government in 1821... On the 18th October 1820 the Governor noted in his journal that 'the country we passed through to-day, called Mittagong, is generally a very poor soil and not very fit for

small settlers but a tolerable good grazing country. It improves however as we come nearer the Wingecarabie River and immediately at that river it becomes really beautiful, being fit for both cultivation and grazing²²

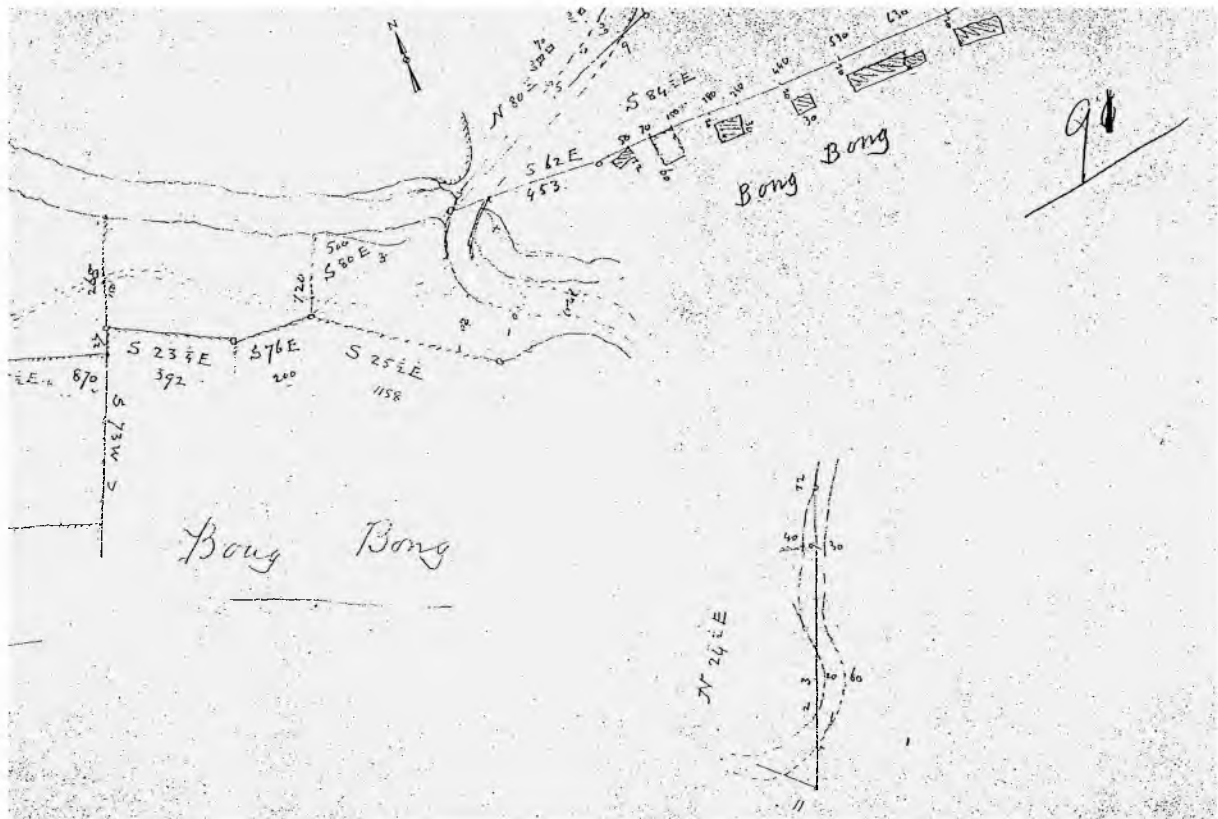


Fig 2. Field notes made by Surveyor James Larmer in 1837 show the location and relative size of the buildings at Bong Bong: locksmith, military barracks, commissariat store and blacksmith's shop.

Hoddle, 1837, FBK 467, p91. Source: Rappoport Report, Fig 12. page 31.

The Southern Highlands was an area of interest for the early settlers at Port Jackson from the first exploration in 1798 led by First Fleet convict John Wilson. The colonists were attracted to the area by reports of park-like grazing grounds and a climate similar to parts of Britain due to its altitude above sea level. Governor Macquarie was impressed with the progress of land ownership at Sutton Forest attracting influential men with money to invest. Emery quotes Macquarie's enthusiasm with his own words in 1820 "[the farm holdings are] particularly beautiful and rich –

resembling a fine extensive pleasure ground in England.”²³ The results of the colonial plan to create a place inhabited by 'gentlemen farmers' still exist to this day.

After 1816 the hunter gather and fire stick farming of the Gundungurra people was replaced by European crops such as vegetables, apples, potatoes and cattle grazing and increased pastoral expansion by Surveyor General John Oxley and Surgeon-General Charles Throsby. It is interesting to note that the Brabourne Papers contain evidence that the 'fine large meadows' and 'very thin of timber' in the above quotation are the result of Aboriginal burnings to clear the land around water sources. An example of the fine large meadows is still seen beside the Wingecarribee River at the approach to Moss Vale now known as Hoskins Reserve and the Bong Bong Common. Many colonial writers had commented on the park-like grounds that required no alteration and compared well with the English idea of a gentleman's large garden similar to those built in the mid-eighteenth century by famous landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Like Brown's English landscapes these Southern Highland parks were not natural but the result of the Aboriginal people using fire repeatedly to flush game out of bush and bracken and to encourage new growth to attract animals for food.

The population of the Wingecarribee Shire in 2011 was approximately 45,000 and "the ethnic makeup is overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic."²⁴ The landscape consists of long smooth organised pastures at Sutton Forest, olive and lime green trees of Burradoo and the tilled furrows of soil at Robertson Village, ready to embrace a new potato crop. Robertson, with red earth rich in texture, surrounded by lush green countryside that comes from one of the highest rainfalls in Australia is separated from the coastal plains of Wollongong by the Illawarra Escarpment. To the south is the Shoalhaven River and to the north the Nepean River.

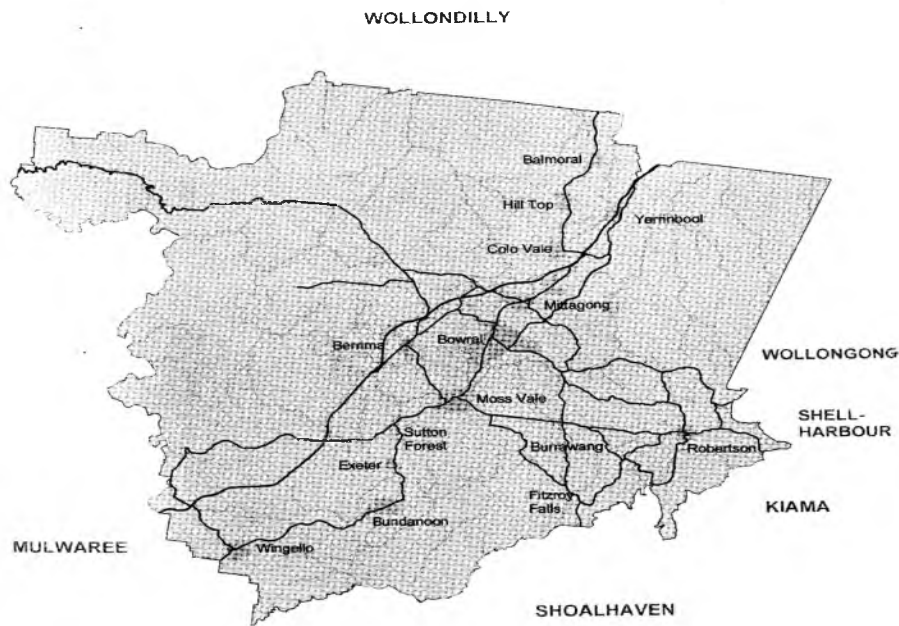


Fig.3. Map of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.

Source: The Wingecarribee Bio-region.

The Cecil Hoskins wildlife sanctuary and nature reserve, named after Sir Cecil Hoskins, a long time resident of the area, adjoins the Bong Bong Common was the site of Throsby's hut built in the early 1800s. It lies now within the land of the Bong Bong Aboriginal tribal group now within part of the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council area. This area represents all facets of Aboriginal culture including the water, plants and animals that are connected to the Dreaming stories. The Bong Bong weir built in the 1920's has caused a back up of water that has subsequently joined the chain of existing ponds to form a large lagoon that is the habitat of over ninety species of native and wetland birds. The Cecil Hoskins Reserve, separated only by a road from the Bong Bong Common, is a wildlife space of 46 hectares, and the responsibility of the NSW Parks and Wildlife Services. The historic *Throsby Park*, the former home of

Dr Charles Throsby, built between 1820 and 1834, is now owned by the Historic Houses Trust.

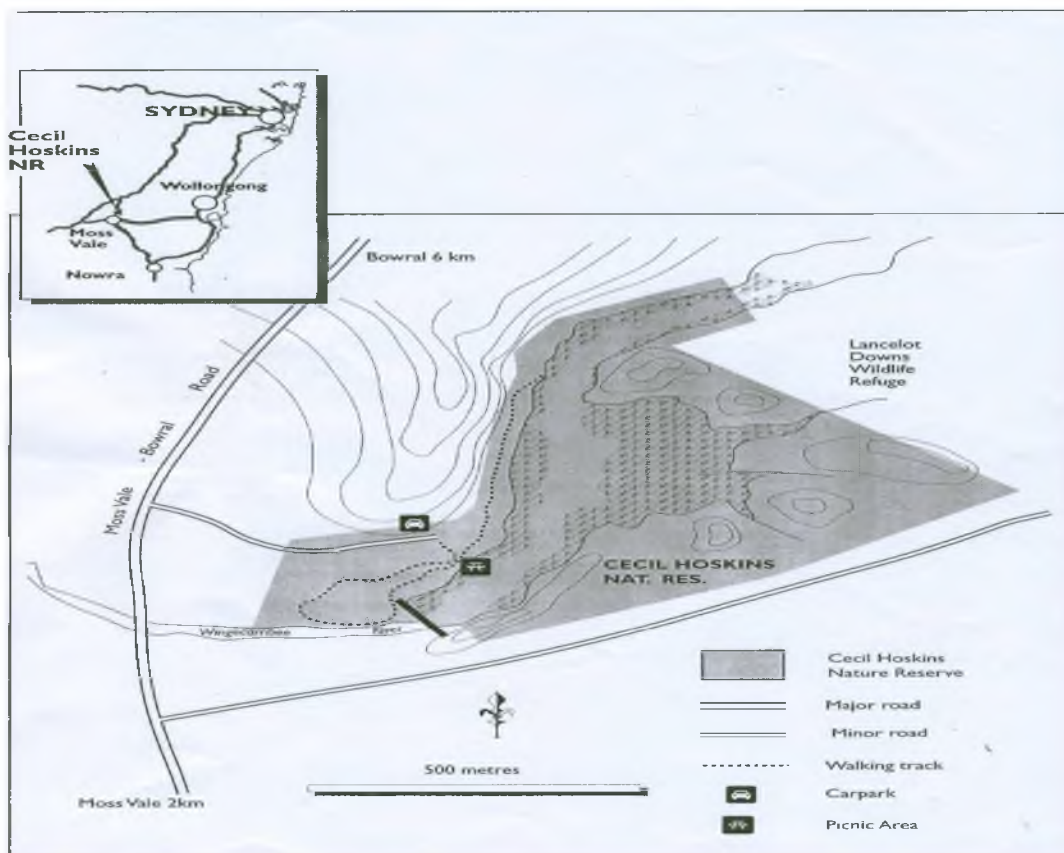


Fig.4. Map of Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve

Source: The N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service at Fitzroy Falls.

The Wingecarribee Bio-Region document informs the reader that this area contains four main native plant groups and one of these is the ‘Fire Climax Tall Eucalyptus Woodland’ that is based on the early colonial explorer documentation that speaks of an ‘English woodland or park’ likeness created by ‘fire stick farming’ practices of the original indigenous inhabitants.²⁵

In his work, *Prehistory of Australia*, D.J. Mulvaney writes that “forests, scrub and grasslands were torched to keep open travel corridors or pathways and provide more general access to hunting and gathering area.”²⁶

Kim Leever confirms this:

This deliberate clearing technique created a mosaic of areas, at varying stages of recovery from the fires, which provide food and shelter for a wide variety of birds, reptiles and animals ... as well as establishing a system of fire breaks in case of a major fire...the dispossessed Gundungurra people, whose fire stick farming practices helped create these verdant fields, so reminiscent of the old country [Britain].²⁷

Bill Gammage discusses the finely cleared forest and waterside edges commonly depicted in early colonial paintings: for example in Joseph Lycett's *View on the Wingecarrabee River* (1820-24). He quotes Ludwig Leichhardt "the natives seemed "to have burned the grass systematically along every watercourse and around every water-hole, in order to have them surrounded with young grass as soon as the rain sets in".²⁸

The Aboriginal sense of place is connected to a particular part of the country in both a physical and social sense. The social sense is seen as a position in the moral, kinship and religious system of the Indigenous society that is disrupted by leaving their particular area of country. Aboriginals had lived for over 30,000 years in the Wingecarribee area before their customary life was shattered in the early 1800s. This dislocation continued throughout that century and into the mid twentieth century. Historian, Linda Emery writes about the Gundungurra people in the Southern Highlands: "...evidence of their occupation of the area remains in many places. Hand stencils in rock shelters, grinding grooves, stone tools and flakes have been recorded throughout the Southern Highlands" ... she adds that "the willingness of the Aboriginals to share their knowledge of the area with government explorers "would ultimately lead to their dispossession."²⁹

Levers adds weight to this:

The early British explorers recorded meeting family groups of Gundungurra people as they traversed the area, though no population figures are compiled. The report of the

1830 Battle of Fairy Meadow suggests that several hundred warriors (or up to 1500) of the 'Bong Bong tribe' (Gundungurra) and Wodi Wodi people took part...but by 1833 the Gundungurra people as recorded in the Blanket Returns comprised only 180 people from Picton to Goulburn...a rapid decline in the population over a relatively short period together with an absence of recorded resistance of the Gundungurra people to the pastoral expansion in 1818-1825.³⁰

Return of Aborigines at Bong Bong							
15 November 1836: Return of Aboriginal Natives at Bong Bong. This return also includes Aborigines from Shoalhaven and Kangaroo Ground (AONSW, 4/2302.1)							
Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Bong Bong on 15th Novembr. 1836							
No	English Names	Native Names	Prob Age	No. of M wives	Child F	Place or District of Resort	
1	Ellis {Bong Bong tribe}	Ellis	26	2	1	1	Bong Bong
2	Jackie {Bong Bong tribe}	Terrang	35	2			Sutton Forest
3	Charley {Bong Bong tribe}	Yamiang	25				Bong Bong
4	Billy {Bong Bong tribe}	Morola	40	1	2		do
5	Johnny {Bong Bong tribe}	Berrima	32	1			do
6	Billy Barton {Bong Bong tribe}	Buddong	45	1			do
7	Jackie {Bong Bong tribe}	Boondar	45	1			do
8	Cobann Jackie {Bong Bong tribe}	Cobann	40	1	1		do
9	Charley {Bong Bong tribe}	Marago	20	1			do
10	Jimmy {Mittagong tribe}	Koringron	27	1	1	2	do
11	Joe Wild {Winjecarrabe tribe}	Ugo	28	1			Mittagong
12	Charley {Bong Bong tribe}	Yawonder	14				Winjecarrabe
13	Jimmy {Bong Bong tribe}	Malong	40	2			Bong Bong
14	Jacko {Curroghbilly tribe}	Coolondilly	35				Winjecarrabe
15	Niddy {Berrima tribe}	Bunjarora	25				Bong Bong
16	Jenkins {Kangaroo Ground tribe}	Coonggoody	24				Kangaroo Ground
17	Harry {Kangaroo Ground tribe}	Yanungla	15				do
18	Jackie {Kangaroo ground tribe}	Bulworra	18				do
19	Broughton {Broughton Creek tribe}	Tho tho it	40	2		3	Shoal Haven
20	Cobann Jack {Broughton Creek tribe}	Yaanullit	30	1			Bong Bong
21	Charley {Broughton Creek tribe}	Tyndal	21	1			Kangaroo Ground
22	Dick {Broughton Creek tribe}	Bathong	22				do

Fig 5. Blanket List at Bong Bong 1836.

Source: Michael Organ. Library of the University of Wollongong, New South Wales.³¹

The document above, dated 15th November, 1836, lists the recipients who had received Government issued blankets, stamped with the Aboriginal owner's name, at Bong Bong. By this time the total population of Bong Bong (Wingecarribee) Aboriginals had been drastically reduced to thirty-seven with only five male and three female children noted in the total.

The following is a description of the Blanket Lists from the history collection of the State Library of New South Wales:

Traditionally, animal skin cloaks were the main form of insulation from the elements for Aboriginal people from much of the cooler, southern parts of the Australian continent. The cloaks were made from either kangaroo, wallaby or possum skins with some being fashioned from up to 80 pelts, taking over 12 months to acquire and make. In 1814, Governor Macquarie initiated the official distribution of blankets to Aboriginal people. He hoped the adoption of blankets would encourage civilised habits and cooperation with the settlers. In time blankets were usually distributed by magistrates or police annually on 1st May, the Queen's Birthday.

Over time Aboriginal people came to depend on the issue of blankets and rations from Government. Especially since their traditional lands were being taken up by white settlers and preventing them from pursuing traditional food-gathering and hunting as well as their usual cultural practices.

To account for expenditure on Aborigines, Government officials created what are 'Blanket lists', that detailed people's English name, Native Name, Probable Age, Number of wives, Children, Tribe, and District of Usual Resort. Police were also required to report annually on the conditions of the Aboriginal people in their districts. Some of these were quite detailed returns or censuses on individuals and communities. Although these records marked the westernisation of Indigenous culture they now provide one of the most valuable and reliable bases for family and community history research. For many Aboriginal family historians, the blanket list or return is literally the end of the line in terms of the written evidence.³²

James Jervis explains that the death of ‘Billy Blue’ (listed on the 1836 Blanket return as one of the Bong Bong people with the English name-Billy, Native Name – Morola, probable age 40, with one wife and the father of 2 male children) occurred in 1868 and he was buried in the cemetery at Sutton Forest. “His widow, in traditional fashion, pipe-clayed her head and legs to denote the loss of her husband. By the 1870’s no pure-blooded Australian Aborigines were still living in the district.”³³



Fig. 6. A rare photo of an Aboriginal woman of the Moss Vale Gundungurra people. She was named Coondan. Photo L. Emery, *Pictorial History of the Southern Highland*. (Sydney: Kingclear, 2008).

The settlement of Australia forced changes upon a people, unprepared for the results of intrusion into their lives. In many early colonial paintings most representations of the landscape include Australian Aboriginal people as bizarre elements no longer a people in control of their land to ineffective observers of

European civilisation in Australia. The comprehensive extinguishment of Australian Aboriginal people on the Southern Highlands was assisted in part by some colonial landscape artists whose paintings impressed the notion, on people in Britain and in the new colony, that Aboriginals were a doomed people rapidly disappearing. Two of these were among the most prolific artists of their time, Conrad Martens (1801-1878) and Joseph Lycett (c1774-c1825).



Fig. 7. Joseph Lycett

View on the Wingecarabee River. New South Wales. c1820-24.

Aquatint on paper. Source: State Library of New South Wales.³⁴

The painting *View on the Wingecarabee* by convict artist Joseph Lycett (c1774-c1825) is the earliest known image of the Southern Highlands and the Wingecarabee

River. This view was published in England in 1824 and the original painting is in the State Library of New South Wales. The painting was probably taken from a sketch of the river and the sandstone cliffs when Governor Lachlan Macquarie carried on his tour of the area in 1820, the same year of his visit to Bong Bong. The romanticized, stylized view also indicates a British soldier and an Aborigine in pursuit of a kangaroo. Tim Bonyhady adds his opinion: "The manner in which the immense foreground trees extend out of the aquatint also reduces the rocks to modest proportions."³⁵ Gammage is of the opinion that the scene was copied from a drawing by George Evans or James Taylor, surveyors with Governor Macquarie's exploratory group.³⁶

Martens, while painting in the English landscape manner of the late 18th century, illustrated the picturesque, pastoral landscape of the Wingecarribee area. This encouraged further migration to the new colony of New South Wales once his, and other, landscape paintings were viewed in England. Of interest to this study is Martens' 1836 watercolour of Throsby Park which shows that there has been very little change to this landscape over the past 162 years. Martens' pencil sketch and painting of Throsby Park, at Moss Vale, indulged the English viewer in an Arcadian image of rolling meadows and gracious homesteads that was not far from the image that Governor Phillip had requested from the pastoralists and which the gentlemen farmers also wanted for themselves. The Governor encouraged them to re-create their British homeland to the exclusion of the landscape that already existed. Martens' pencil drawing in 1836 of Throsby Park near the Bong Bong Common is now in the Mitchell Library, Sydney and preceded the watercolour painting of the same subject. This drawing has been made use of in the *Rappoport Heritage Report* to Wingecarribee Shire Council³⁷ to illustrate the fact that at the time of settlement of this area there were vast expanses of clear land, evidence of its environmental values.



Fig. 8 Conrad Martens. *Throsby Park 1836*. Original Pencil drawing unsigned, dated 10th August, 1836 from his "Scenes of Sydney & NSW, 1836-1863" (obtained directly from the Mitchell Library on C.D.) unfortunately this 178 year old pencil drawing shows the ravages of time, but is still of great importance.³⁸



Fig.9. Conrad Martens
Throsby Park c1836-7. Also known as *Throsby Park, Mittagong, Sydney*.
Watercolour on paper taken from the pencil drawing in fig.8.³⁹

The following two photographs, taken in 2013, show the beautiful, now protected, Bong Bong Common looking across to *Throsby Park* from the site of the old Argyle Inn.



Fig.10. Looking across a section of Bong Bong Common to *Throsby Park* in the distance.

Photograph Sarah Willard Gray, 2013



Fig.11. The homestead of Charles Throsby known as *Throsby Park* built from 1820-1834.

Photograph Sarah Willard Gray, 2013

Summary

The picturing of landscape through cartographic mapping, topographical drawing or other means is not just a European colonial practice.⁴⁰ It is universal to all cultures in some form as a way of illustrating cosmological beliefs about land, place and identity. To return to art historian Terry Smith who suggests mapping as well as the colonial landscape painting tradition was a means to project European uncertainties and desires, to justify colonization and effectively use cartographic allegory to describe the land as uninhabited, awaiting colonial ownership.⁴¹ While Smith is making a postcolonial criticism, artists continue to ingrain themselves in and imagine place through artistic means, be they cartographic or topographical. My own work borrows from these traditions of landscape painting and attempts to reprise, from the current landscape, the memory of the Southern Highland country as it was at first contact.

Chapter 4.

Notes.

- ^{1.} Linda Emery, *Pictorial History of the Southern Highland*. (Sydney: Kingclear, 2008). 2.
- ^{2.} Andrew Fagan, "Theodor Adorno," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web 2. 16 June 2009.
- ^{3.} Robert Hughes *The Fatal Shore*. (London: Collins Harvill, 1987) 2.
- ^{4.} The Nazi concentration camps and the GULAG differ in a very important way. Nazi camps were used to exterminate whole groups of people, most notably the Jewish population of Europe. The GULAG was used as a weapon of ongoing political control over one country. The GULAG system did not target any particular group of people: in fact all ethnic groups, nationalities and religions were imprisoned. Moreover, if a prisoner managed to somehow survive his or her sentence, he or she would be released at the end of it. There were no plans for releasing any of the prisoners of Nazi concentration camps.
- ^{5.} Anne-Marie Willis, *Illusions of Identity: the Art of a Nation*. (Sydney: Hale and Ironmonger, 1993) 66.
- ^{6.} Terry Smith, "Visual Regimes of Colonization: Aboriginal Seeing and European Vision in Australia." *The Visual Culture Reader*. 2nded. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Phaidon, 2001) 483-4.
- ^{7.} State Library of South Australia. "Encounter 1802-2002: Flinders" Voyage' Web. 9 March 2013.
- ^{8.} Smith 483.
- ^{9.} Terry Smith, *Transformations in Australian Art: The Nineteenth century-Landscape, Colony and Nation*. Vol.1. (Sydney: Craftsman, 2002) 20.

^{10.} Smith, 2001. 484.

^{11.} Smith, 2001. 484.

^{12.} Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia*. (Cambridge UK: Cambridge U.P., 1996) 10-11.

^{13.} "Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment of Bayoong Bayoong (Bong Bong) Common, near Moss Vale" 2008, *Draft Plan*: Northern Illawarra Aboriginal Collective Inc. East Corrimal. 2.

^{14.} Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*. Crows Nest, N.S.W. Allen and Unwin, 2011. 197. Print. I must disagree with Bill Gammage when he states that the same quote by explorer John Wilson's diarist was written from "Mt. Towrang east of Goulburn" in March 1798. The Brabourne Papers state that this quote was made at Mount Gingerbullen, Sutton Forest, not far from Bong Bong.

^{15.} This journal was included in the *Brabourne Papers* sent to Sir Joseph Banks by ex- Governor Hunter in 1801. These *Brabourne Papers* are listed under the editorship of F.M.Cambage, in the Historical Records of New South Wales.Vol.3, printed in Sydney by the Government printer, Charles Potter, in 1895.

^{16.} F. M. Cambage Ed. *Historical Records of New South Wales*. Vol.3. Sydney: Charles Potter-Government Printer, 1895. 286.

^{17.} Ken Taylor. "Reading Between the Lines: Understanding Cultural Landscapes and Their Protection." *National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)* 8 March, 2004. 27. Web. 21 March 2008.

^{18.} Taylor 25.

- ^{19.} Paul Rappoport, *Bong Bong Common Conservation Management Plan*. Rappoport Pty.Ltd, Conservation Architects and Heritage Consultants. (Mascot: Rappoport Pty.Ltd., 2007) 19.
- ^{20.} Governor Lachlan Macquarie. "Journal of a Tour of Inspection to the Western and Southern Countries some time since discovered by Chas. Throsby, Esqr.-- in Octr.& Novr.1820.L.M." *Journeys in Time*. Web 31 Oct 2011. 5.
- ^{21.} R. Ian. Jack, *Bong Bong Township: A Report to Wingecarribee Shire Council*, (Moss Vale: Wingecarribee Shire Council, 1993) 1.
- ^{22.} Jack 2.
- ^{23.} Emery 17.
- ^{24.} The Wingecarribee Bio-region. 1-6. Web. 14 April 2009. 1-6.
- ^{25.} The Wingecarribee Bio-region.1-6.
- ^{26.} Derek John Mulvaney and Johan Kamminga. *Prehistory of Australia*. (St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin) 1999. 71.
- ^{27.} Kim Leever. *First Contact/Frontier Expansion in the Wingecarribee Area Between 1798-1821: Exploration and Analysis*. (U of Wollongong thesis 2006.) 20.
- ^{28.} Gammage 62.
- ^{29.} Emery 3.
- ^{30.} Leever 81.
- ^{31.} Michael Organ. Blanket List at Bong Bong 1836. U of Wollongong Library.
- ^{32.} *State Library of New South Wales*. "Blanket Lists" Web 10 Jan 2013.
- ^{33.} James Jervis. *A History of the Berrima District 1798-1973*, 3rd edit. (North Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1986) 3.
- ^{34.} Jeanette Hoorn. *The Lycett Album: Drawings of Aborigines and Australian Scenery*. (N.G.A: Canberra, 1990) 11.

^{35.} Tim Bonyhady. *The Colonial Earth*. 2nd edit. (Melbourne: Melbourne U.P. 2002) 71.

^{36.} Gammage 63.

^{37.} Rappoport. 45.

^{38.} Rappoport Report. Conrad Marten's drawing reproduced with permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Original: call no PXC 296 no.30.Digital a1567031: File no ML 08/13. C. D. Also in Rappoport Report, fig. 19. 45.

^{39.} The only information obtainable was from an art auction site was as follows: *Throsby Park, Mittagong, Sydney*. (also known as *Throsby Park*.) Watercolour, 1836. H.18.1 in.; W26.6 in. / H. 46 cm.; W. 67.5 cm <www.artnet.com/artists/conrad-martens/past-auction-results>

^{40.} William L. Fox, *Aereality: On the World from Above*. (Berkeley C.A.: Group West, 2009) 6.

⁴¹ Smith 2001. 484.

Chapter Five

Cartography in the Upper Palaeolithic era in Europe and Pre-Historic Australia.

I look at maps as subjective reflections of the world and the culture of the mapmaker.

In this sense they are paradigmatic. They reflect cultural patterns and world views and therefore offer a medium for inquiry that reveals the interdependence of world view, pedagogy and planning. Maps can help to create a sense of place, provide space for dialogue, and bridge personal knowledge to community learning and planning.

Mapping is also a tool for narrative, for storied residence, and, when applied in a community context, it can facilitate creative and engaging expression. Overall, maps have significant spatial power, reflecting social, economic, and ecological relations that influence communities and patterns of development worldwide.¹

Over thousands of years artists have mapped the landscape to document narratives of religion, communication and a sense of belonging to the land. This cartographic viewpoint was used initially by people of the Upper Palaeolithic era, which in Australia has been carbon dated back over 40,000 years. This chapter also investigates a certain congruence between the mapping perspective of Aboriginal Australian art and specific modes of abstraction in contemporary western landscape art but begins with an overview of mapping in European pre-historic art from the Upper Palaeolithic era, approx 40,000BC – the time of Cro-Magnon man and the Holocene era formed in the second and most recent epoch of the Quaternary period, which began 10,000 years ago at the end of the last Ice Age. The European Upper Palaeolithic epoch is chosen for this part of the investigation because it has been more intensely studied than any other period.

Mapping is not just a European colonial discourse as it is evident in all cultures. However European, African and Australian Aboriginal cartography in the pre-historic period as often been overlooked as Catherine Delano Smith argues:

The study of prehistoric mapping in Europe and in other continents, requires a new beginning. In the past scholars have been handicapped not only by a severe shortage of evidence but also by misguided attitudes toward the intellectual capacity of early man. In addition, they have failed to consider either the diagnostic characteristics of prehistoric maps or the principles developed for their identification and study.²

Delano Smith writes that Richard Andree seems to have been the first to specifically investigate the origins of mapping and subsequently influenced much of the later literature. He commenced his monograph *Die Anfänge der Kartographie* in 1877 with a comment on the way many 'primitive people,' lacking the benefit of the magnetic compass, are nevertheless able to produce maps of surprising exactitude and accuracy. Andree then draws attention to the two conditions present among 'primitive peoples' that account for their cartographic abilities: first, an unparalleled sense of direction, related to their knowledge of the terrain; second, their technical skill in drawing.³ William L. Fox writes:

Petroglyphs and pictographs, images respectively pecked onto or painted on rock – include representations of landscape features from as early as forty thousand years ago. Elements of terrain in plan, such as rivers and the placement of habitats, appear in rock art as early as the Upper Palaeolithic and by the Bronze Age in Europe simple maps in plan appear to have become widespread.⁴

It wasn't until the middle of the twentieth century that the significance of other forms of cartography were appreciated. In 1949 Robert W. Brown remarked that "map making is perhaps the oldest variety of primitive art . . . as old as man's first tracings on the walls of caves and in the sands."⁵ Delano Smith states that in 1951 Leo Bagrow belatedly drew attention to the fact that, notwithstanding these prehistoric origins, actual information about early maps is hard to come by and early maps have a much shorter history than many other products of civilization. Bagrow himself wrote very little on the subject and prehistoric cartography remained neglected until the 1980s.⁶

The reasoning behind these European Palaeolithic cave-paintings and engravings, despite world experts' investigations, still remains a mystery. Many often interesting theories have been developed to explain the origins and development of the art. So what I have been able to draw, even from experts that I believe are foremost in their field and who present the most extensive research on art in the Upper Palaeolithic era at this present time, is open to conjecture.

As noted previously mapping in rock paintings and carvings can be traced to early cultures in many parts of the world. Brown cites mapping of different civilizations from China to Mexico, on rock, in caves and on other objects such as the Tepe Gawra Landscape jar from Baghdad dating from the 4th or 5th millennium BC which features landscape in geometric and linear patterns. According to Brown: "maps sculptural and graphic, are still found in cultures from the south-west Pacific, particularly the Marshall Islands, and in Native American and Inuit cultures"⁷

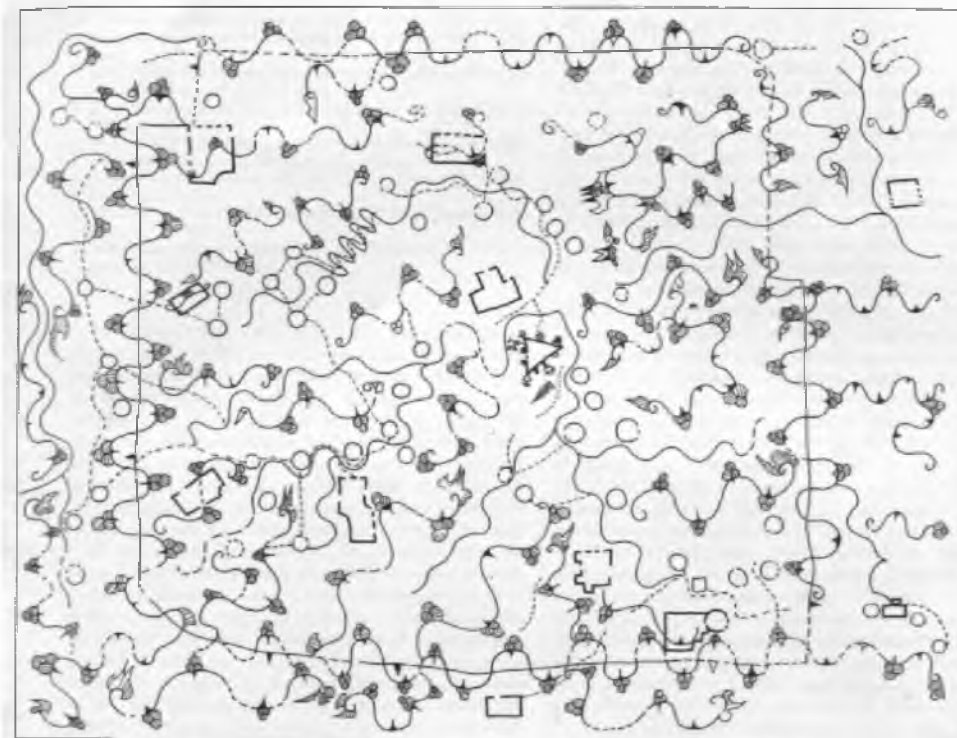


Fig. 1. Chinese Military Map 2nd century BC. Tomb 3 Mawangdui site near Changsha.
(this is a simplified drawing of the damaged original silk map) Source: Robert W. Brown in *The Dictionary of Art*. Vol.31 McMillan, 1996.

Brown also explains that mapping appeared in Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt and before the 2nd century BC in China. These comprise primitive picture maps of which the earliest is a clay tablet c2500-2300BC held in Harvard University. Featured are two Chinese maps from 206-09A.D. The first (fig.1) is a military map, printed on silk, with an aerial viewpoint of mountains, rivers and military headquarters in the Nanling Mountains found in Tomb 3, Mawangdui site and now in the Changsha, Hunan Province Museum. Fig.2 is an early Western-Han silk map also found in Tomb 3 of Mawangdui, depicting the Kingdom of Changsha and the Kingdom of Nanyue in southern China.⁸



Fig. 2 An early Western-Han silk map.

Source: Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias. Early Western Han Dynasty (202 BC – 9 AD).

Tomb no. 3 contained a silk name banner and three maps drawn on silk: a topographic map, a military map and a prefecture map. The maps display the Hunan, Guangdong and Guangxi region and depict the political boundary between the Han

Dynasty and Nanyue. At the time of its discovery, these were the oldest maps discovered in China, until 1986 when Qin State maps dating to the 4th century BC were found. However the origins of cartography pre-date the emergence of mapping in Western and Eastern Asia.

The earliest known maps are of the heavens, not the earth. Dots dating back to 16,500 BC found on the walls of the Lascaux caves map out part of the night sky, including the three bright stars Vega, Deneb and Altair (the Summer Triangle asterism) as well as the Pleiades star cluster. Cuevas de El Castillo in Spain contains a dot map of the Corona Borealis constellation dating from 12,000BC.⁹

As David Whitehouse indicates above the artistic and scientific aptitude of the Upper Palaeolithic people of Lascaux in central France was exceptional. Whitehouse states that the map shows three bright stars known to-day as the Summer Triangle and seen in the night sky in the northern summer. This map was found in the cave known as the Shaft of the Dead Man while nearer the entrance to the caves is the star map known as The Seven Sisters. Delano Smith writes:

...a number of statements can be made with confidence. There is, for example, clear evidence in the pre-historic art of Europe that maps- permanent graphic images epitomizing the distribution of objects and events- were being made as early as the Upper Palaeolithic. The same evidence shows the quintessentially cartographic concept of representation in plan was already in use in that period. Moreover, there is significant evidence for the use of cartographic signs from at least the post-Palaeolithic period. Two of the basic map styles of the historical period - the picture map (perspective view) and the plan (ichnographic view) also have their prehistoric counterparts...the conclusion cannot be avoided that at least something of man's mapping impulse was manifested in the art of prehistoric man.¹⁰

Brown argues that Palaeolithic art is topographical "viewed from above not from the side, as schematic and symbolic."¹¹ In this thesis I use the term 'mapping or cartographic' to refer to a flat representation of looking down as if from an infinite

point from above. Topographical refers to depictions of terrain relief showing ground elevation, usually through either contour lines or spot elevations representing the horizontal and vertical positions of the features represented. It is a graphic representation delineating natural and man-made features of an area or region in a way that shows their relative positions and elevations. Mapping or cartographic drawing is seen as early as the Aurignacian culture (35,000-15,000BC) of the Upper Palaeolithic era in Europe. The name of this culture originates from the Aurignac region of Haute-Garonne in France and is identified by its use of carving tools of some sophistication fashioned from flint, bones and antlers of animals. By the end of this period hundreds of paintings had been created in caves in areas such as Lascaux and Chauvet in France and Andalucia, Spain. Laura Anne Tedesco states:

Beginning around 40,000BC in Europe the archaeological records shows that the anatomically modern human effectively replaced Neanderthals and remained the sole hominid inhabitants across continental Europe. At about the same time, and directly linked to this development, the earliest art was created...through these early achievements in representation and abstraction we see a newfound mastery of the environment and a revolutionary accomplishment in the intellectual development of humankind...the series of caves at Lascaux are among the most impressive and well known artistic creations of Palaeolithic humans...and in addition to the painted images, Lascaux is rich with engravings of animals as well as abstract designs.¹²

Evidence of pigment use, and thus painting, perhaps on bodies, dates much earlier. The discovery of pigment in an uncontaminated Twin Rivers, Zambia site was dated back to the early Middle Stone Ages as early as 200,000 years B.C. The colours found were brown, red, yellow, blue and pink, but no evidence of cave art remained at the site.¹³

Many anthropologists have also accepted the theories of David Lewis-Williams and the connections he has made between shamanism and the origins of rock art. He also believes that it is the main reason for prehistoric mapping in caves. Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson presented an alternative view of pre-historic art by observing rock and cave art of the Upper Palaeolithic period. They were of the opinion that when homo-sapiens developed abstract thinking and art, it was characterized by two main themes: vivid depictions of animals on one hand and geometric figures such as dots, circles, lines, and curves on the other. Lewis-Williams and Dowson brought forward the unique hypothesis that Palaeolithic art is motivated by subjective ocular phenomena, seen and depicted by shamans or spiritual men and women during transformed states of consciousness. It is thought they developed a model to classify the geometric forms.¹⁴ Nigel Spivey states:

The Lewis-Williams hypothesis is, then, not just that Paleolithic cave painting was shamanic or shamanistic in origin. It is even more momentous; suggesting that the human knack of representational imagery was itself triggered by this neuropsychological process...the Paleolithic painters were displaying what had come to them in an altered state consciousness...even when these had flashed by as a series of abstract patterns¹⁵

ENTOPTIC PHENOMENA			SAN ROCK ART		COSO	PALAEOLITHIC ART			
			ENGRAVINGS	PAINTINGS		MOBILE ART		PREDENTAL ART	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
I									
II									
III									
IV									
V									
VI									

Fig 3. Similar patterns of entoptic phenomena in different time and cultures.

Source: D. Lewis-Williams and T. A. Dowson: in *Current Anthropology*, Vol 29, nr.2, April, 1988.



Fig. 4 Abstract cave markings in the Cueva de la Pileta, Andalusia, Spain c25,000 BC.

Source: Spivey, Nigel. *How Art Made the World*. London: BBC Books Worldwide Ltd. 2005.42.

Per Michaelsen, Tasja Ebersole, Noel Smith and Paul Biro support Lewis-Williams and Dowson's hypothesis following their investigations into the Bradshaw rock art in the Kimberley region of West Australia.

In stark contrast to Franco-Hispanic animal depictions, Bradshaw paintings principally depict human-like beings. Ethnographic studies (e.g. Elkin, 1950, 1977; Lommel, 1952; Eliade 1973; Sales, 1992) show that shamanistic belief systems have been well developed in Australia, including the Kimberley region, where power is received in symbolic form provided by heroic beings, beings, often from the rainbow or water serpents.¹⁶

Robert Layton reviewing Lewis-Williams writings in 2001 states that shamanism is "one of the most pervasive indigenous theories of being to have been discussed in the anthropological literature ... the word 'shaman' comes from the Tungus

[people] of central Siberia ... Shamanism refers to the use of spirits as the guardians and helpers of individuals, contacted through trance”¹⁷

Early written symbols were based on pictograms and ideograms. The ideogram or ideograph, taken from the Greek language meaning an 'idea to write,' is a graphic representation that depicts an idea or notion.¹⁸ Some ideograms that communicate their meaning through illustrative resemblance to a physical item may also be referred to as pictograms. In considering pre-historic art in terms of mapping, it appears that even drawings of animals, which combine symbolism and naturalism, can be considered as a type of ideogram – a carved or written character symbolising an idea without a phrase or a particular word. These could also be viewed as a type of map. The relationship between the painting and carving of symbolic animals and other symbols is a form of mapping – not so much a mapping of a particular place but a mapping of spiritual, totemic and cosmological relationships.

This relationship can be seen in the many cartographic rock carvings at Mt. Bego and Valcamonica, on the French-Italian border, during the Copper era (3500-2000 BC). These have been identified by archeologists Andrea Arca and Clarence Bicknell as walls, houses, paths, weapons and ploughed fields viewed from above. Arca states “the topographic engravings undoubtedly represent the ground, ploughed and settled”¹⁹ and the rock art engravings at Mt. Bego and Valcamonica are not only a portrayal of the actual landscape but are emblematic of cultural implications of ownership of the territory and further show that agriculture and animal reproduction were the key functions in obtaining food.

The filled-in areas of the engraving could represent sown, harvested or ploughed fields as they still appear today in this particular area of the Alpine valley.

The existence of circular lines recall stone walled pens for livestock and the box-like stone grids follow the slope of the land and allow for consolidation of sloping sites.²⁰

Arca explains the importance of this type of rock art:

Essentially, it [rock art] is not so much a representation of the real as it is interpreted topography of territory depicted in an act of ownership...in many a symbolic act, strongly loaded with cultural significance...Thus, these engravings can be interpreted as a topography of territory depicted in an act of ownership... in many cases they represent, without any doubt, the most ancient maps in Europe.²¹

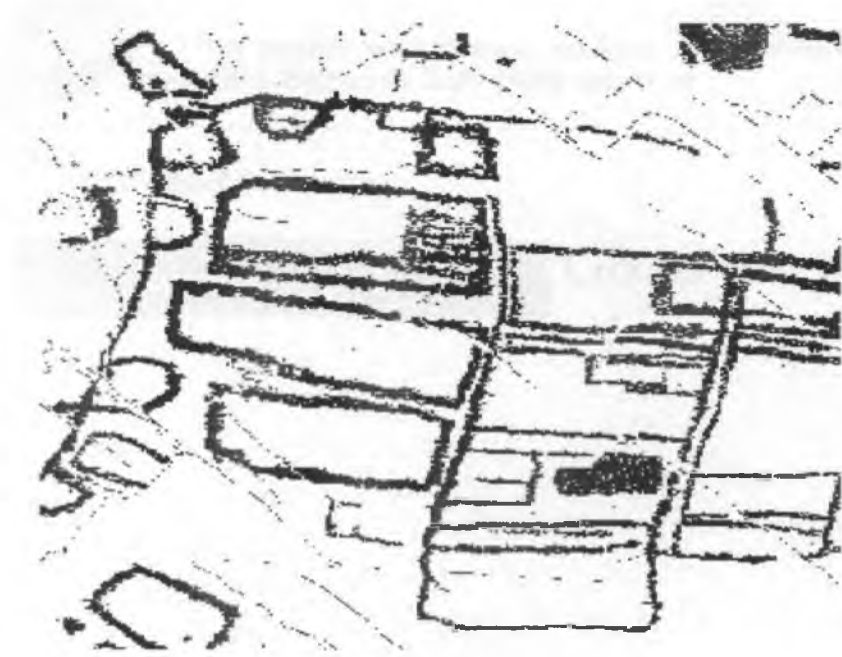


Fig. 5. Valcamonica Rock Art.no.20. Copper Age.

Source: Andrea Arca. Topographic Engravings of the Alpine Arc- Part 4.

The most famous of these outdoor mappings is the Bedolina Map of Valcamonia in Lombardy, northern Italy, is acknowledged by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as a principal element of the world's cultural inheritance.²²

The Bedolina Map is a complex petroglyph of figures, rectangles and small circles measuring 4.3metres by 2.4 metres carved onto a rock in situ. Bicknell spent

twelve summers investigating the rock carvings of Mt. Bego and Valcamonica which both have landscape characteristics viewed from a mapping viewpoint.









	MAIN FIGURE TYPES	"MAP" ELEMENTS
PHASE B	 RECTANGLES	 RECTANGLES WITH REGULAR POINTS  CIRCLES WITH SINGLE POINTS  CONNECTING LINES
	 POINTS	
	 CIRCLES	
	 IRREGULAR SINGLE LINES	
	 "LADDERS"	

Fig.6. Typological Analysis of the Bedolina Map: its main cartographical elements.

Source: Catherine Delano Smith. *Imago Mundi*, Vol 34. (1982)



Fig.7 An adaptation and analysis of the Bedolina Map by Francisco Beltran Lloris (1972) from an earlier drawing by Walter Blumer (1964) Catherine Delano Smith. *Imago Mundi*, Vol 34. (1982) p 14.



Fig. 8 Christina Turconi's tracing of the Bendolina Map in 1997 caused disagreement with those who regarded it as a literal map of a village. Turconi saw the map as symbolical of claims of land ownership. Catherine Delano Smith. *Imago Mundi*, Vol 34. (1982)14.

The Bendolina Map features six identifiable buildings, thirty arable fields and trees. However, this preoccupation with place could have other meanings. Delano-Smith argues that the Bendolina Map could have any of three different meanings: a cartographic drawing of what lay below on the valley floor, the use of these representations of fields and crops to convey a more abstract meaning such as agricultural fertility or the security of the homestead, or a true record of a Bronze Age village on land which now contains the 2,500 inhabitants of the town in Lombardy known as Capo Di Ponte.²³ Emmanuel Anati, an Italian archaeologist, agrees with both Bicknell and Arca when referring to the Bendolina Map wrote in 1958: "it seems clear that the engraving is a faithful representation of what the artist saw in the valley." Furthermore, in 1960 he specifically referred to the engraving as a true map of the region.²⁴

Delano-Smith points out that Walter Blumer, a Swiss cartographer and surveyor, also agreed with this position.²⁵ This carving on rocks in the open landscape are as Arca states “not only a portrayal of the actual landscape but are emblematic of cultural implications of ownership of the territory”²⁶ whereas the Upper Palaeolithic paintings and carvings on rock are hidden away in caves and may therefore relate to religious happenings as suggested by Spivey, Lewis-Williams and Gamble earlier in this chapter. In this they are little different to modern landscape art. However, before investigating modern techniques of mapping in landscape art, I will survey the cartographic practices evident in pre-historic Australian Aboriginal art.

The archaeological evidence from Australia has been used in the past to support two broad based theories of human evolution: the Out of Africa hypothesis and the Multiregional hypothesis...Basically, the OOA hypothesis postulate that *Homo sapiens* evolved once, in Africa, and migrated outward, replacing the earlier forms of human being; while the MRH suggests that human evolution occurred several times in several parts of the world as a result of an African-derived *Homo sapien* group mixing genes with older human forms such as *Homo erectus* Neanderthals. Recent investigation into mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) of Aboriginals and New Guineans, published on May 7, 2007 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* supports the OOA hypothesis. An international research team discovered that mtDNA data of Australian Aboriginals and New Guineans fall within the same mitochondrial branches as other human populations who left Africa between 50,000 and 70,000 years ago. These data suggest to researchers that the settlement of the entire region of Australia and New Guinea was undertaken by one early founder group shortly after the African exodus, and that they were subsequently isolated from the remainder of the world as the water level rose. The isolation of the Australians likely resulted in the divergent morphologies and the limited stone tool industries noted in archaeological assemblages. A third hypothesis about the peopling of Australia growing in importance is called the Southern Dispersal Route holds a great deal of promise, suggesting that early modern humans may have left South Africa

and followed the coastlines to Asia. This is undoubtedly not the end of the discussion about the population of Australia and New Guinea, but it is one more piece of evidence pointing towards understanding the evolution of the modern human being.²⁷

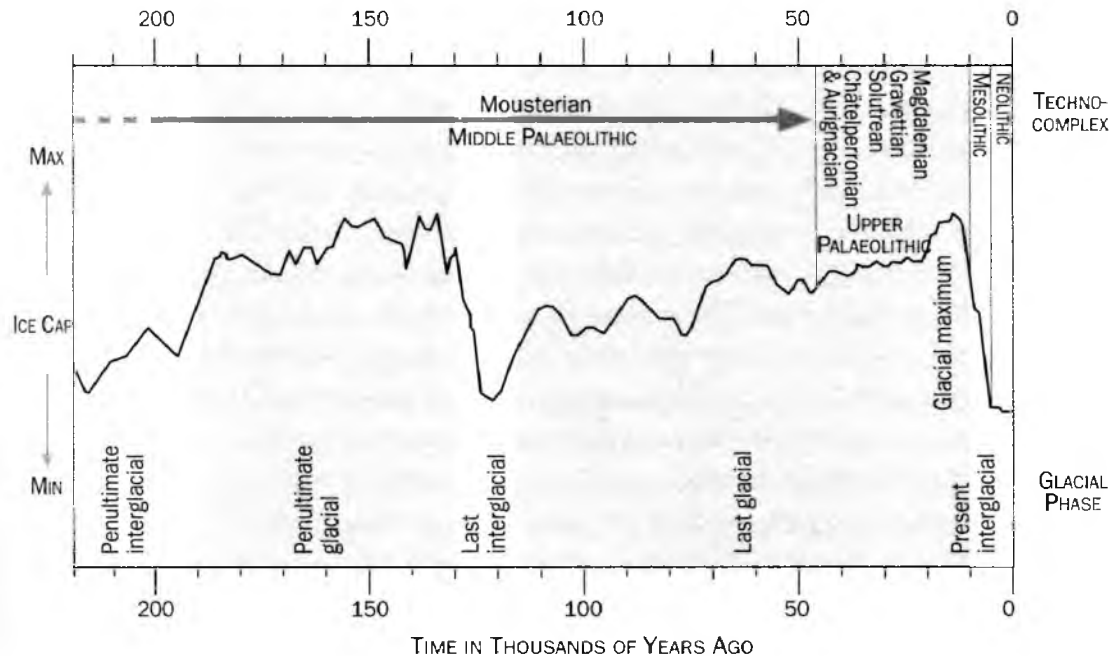


Fig.9 Analysis of glacial phrases, techno-complexes and archaeological dates.

The remote coastline of north Western Australia was probably the first landing site of homo sapiens in Australia. As sea levels were lower during the changes in the last Ice Age the first humans in Australia may have arrived across temporary land bridges between Australia and Tasmania in the south and Australia and New Guinea in the north at least 50,000 years ago.^{28.}

Howard Morphy agrees that Aboriginal people have been in Australia for over 40,000 years and arrived by sea from Southeast Asia but believes that it is near impossible to reconstruct the culture of an ancient society as details may never be found. There is “considerable evidence of trade, intermarriage and the diffusion of languages”²⁹ with the people of New Guinea. Travel by boat from other countries, including New Guinea, is shown in a rock painting (fig.10) of a four man canoe with upswept prow and stern and is quite possibly the world’s first painting of a boat.³⁰



Fig.10 Boat Painting. The Kimberley, Western Australia.

Source: Peter Robinson, Ed. *Australian Rock Art Archive*, 'The Introduction to the Bradshaw Paintings.'

Derek John Mulvaney and Johan Kamminga suggest that Aboriginal rock art is the graphic evidence of Australia's first human beings - the encoded philosophy of hundreds of generations of people, "the images of their spiritual and earthly world, their material possessions, and their sense of personal and group identity- fragments of prehistory located in place."³¹ Mulvaney and Kamminga go on to note that scientifically supported expert research along with shared knowledge with Aboriginal clan owners was necessary in making these disclosures.

These results, with the assistance of ethnography and archaeological excavations assist in evaluating the culture of an ancient society – its collective social and emblematic changes over time, the methods of exchange and trade, contact with other clans and population concentration in different areas. Also, much of the rock art is pertinent to understanding the importance of relationship to land and the Dreaming.³²

Peter Sutton writes:

All ground paintings [or rock engravings] and the modern paintings on canvas or art board that are derived from them, are meant to be seen as plan views. This is most certainly influenced by the hunting and foraging life styles that the [Australian] Aboriginal once followed and, to varying degrees, still do.³³

Unlike paintings, rock petroglyphs or ideograms are usually found in the open and are part of an ancient technique of engraving seen in other countries such as Italy, France and South Africa. Methods of engraving used in Aboriginal Australian art are also similar including abrading- rubbing a soft stone with a harder one or pecking away at the stone with another hard object. The designs are similar to those of sand art, which is a haptic type of ceremonial ground painting, destroyed after the ceremony is completed. These designs take the form of concentric circles, lines, the outlines of animals, birds, weapons, people, fish, animal tracks, mythical beings and abstract designs that are related to secular as well as religious ceremony, ritual and communication. Australian Aboriginal rock paintings of fish, turtles and other edible animals are not a simple representation of the available food supply but map an enigmatic web of Aboriginal law, ancestry, land and myth. Most rock paintings, ideograms and petroglyphs are connected to religion and ceremony and contain coded information known only to the initiated members of the group.³⁴

Below is an example of Pleistocene rock engraving made by the Aboriginal people of Australia at the Koonalda Caves. (fig.11) These caves, on the western edge of South Australia in the dry Nullarbor Plains, are about 60 metres below the Plain's surface and stretch 250 metres horizontally. Fluted lines made with the fingers on ceilings and walls deep inside the caves are associated with the mining of flint. Carbon dating provides information that these flutings are up to 30,000 years old and are identical with those in several European Palaeolithic caves. In Australia's very dry

climatic areas a thin siliceous film is deposited on rock carvings forming a protective varnish which is tested during a method of dating these art works.³⁵



Fig. 11 Carved ideogram from Panaramitee in southern Australia. c12th-5th Millennium BC.

Source: Paul Bahn, *Journey Through the Ice Age*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997



Fig. 12 Oval petroglyph. 15cm wide. Wharton Hill. Olary Province, South Australia.

Source: Paul Bahn, *Journey Through the Ice Age*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997

The oval petroglyphs or rock engravings from Wharton Hill, Olary Province, South Australia, have been dated using both AMS radiocarbon and cation ratio methods enabling scientists to conclude that they are approximately 42,000 years old and Australia's earliest known artistic expression. It is interesting to note that petroglyphs discovered in 2001 in the Pilbara, Western Australia, are composed of concentric circles with edges that never intersect. These are also recognised as part of an ancient traditional design of rock engravings from the Ice Age in Europe.³⁶

The concept of Aboriginal Australian cartographic portrayals are religious in substance and represent certain areas and geological characteristics that occur in sacred traditions found in their perception of the Dreaming. Sutton discusses the motivation behind this cartography:

The people who make these topographic representations do not do so with cool detachment. In [Australian] Aboriginal terms, all landscape is someone's home.

'Land,' 'country,' 'camp' and 'home' are encompassed by a single term in Aboriginal languages...

Many myths are concerned with spiritual identification between a set of sites and its people...At a certain crude level it is possible to say that those who own the sacred designs (and songs and dances) own the relevant land.³⁷

Sutton adds:

Non-Aboriginal landholders may need a paper system to demonstrate their tenure within their own legal system. [Australian] Aboriginal people often point out that their title deeds, within their own customary law, are not pieces of paper but such things as sacred designs.³⁸

The illustrations (fig.13, 14) below are an indication of some Australian Aboriginal symbols that are viewable by non-Aboriginal people without causing any distress to Australian Aboriginals. Other secret symbols encode age-old oral histories

and rites from the Dreaming passed down to descendants and it is fortunate that non-initiates have little capacity to decipher such sacred symbols.

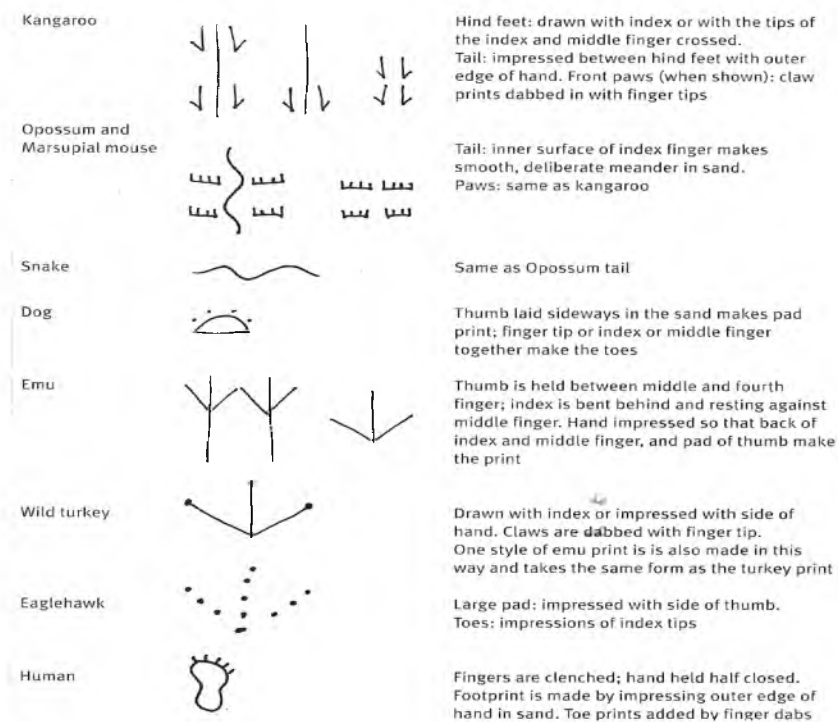


Fig. 13 Designs representing animal tracks used in sand paintings

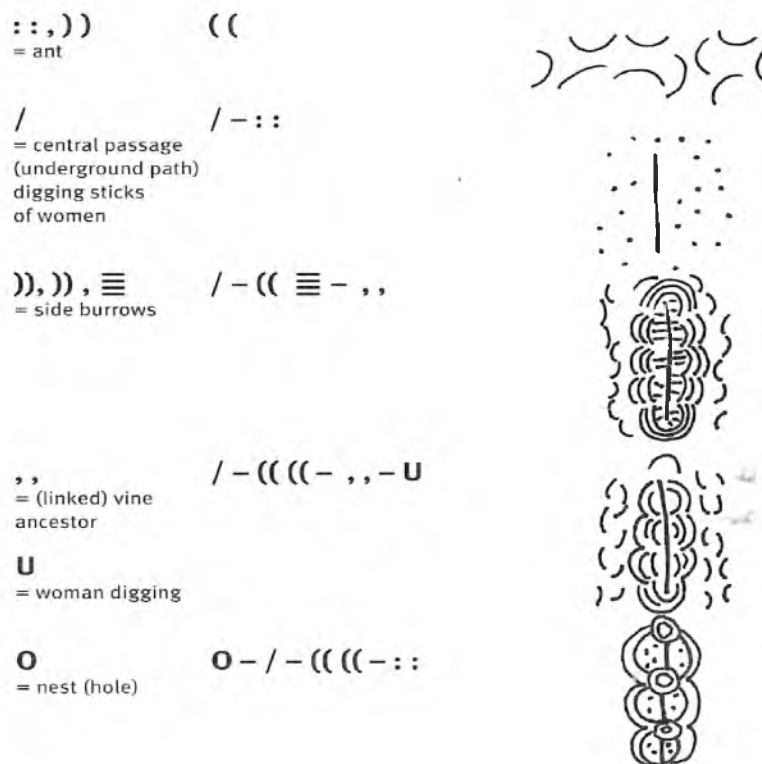


Fig.14 Designs representing the Walpiri honey ant ancestor.³⁹

Aboriginal cosmology is centred on the creation myths of particular sites. This makes country and its cartography an extremely important subject of Aboriginal art. As well as mapping the earth Australian Aboriginals also map the heavens. It is interesting to note the parallels in portraying groups of stars by European Upper Palaeolithic people and Australian Aboriginal people such as those living in Central Australia where the knowledge reaches past a “mythological symbolism for many constellations to a knowledge of two types of apparent motion of the stars and the distinct colours and brightness of different stars.”⁴⁰ The star map Pleiades or the ‘Seven Sisters’ in Lascaux, France appears in different versions worldwide - from France to Australia and remains an important subject in contemporary Australian Aboriginal art as exemplified in Alma Nungarrayi Granites painting *Yanjiripirri* or *Napaljarri-Warnu Jukurrpa*, (*Seven Sisters Dreaming*)⁴¹



Fig. 15 Alma Nungarrayi Granites, *Yanjiripirri Or Napaljarri-Warnu Jukurrpa*, 2012. Acrylic on linen 122x107. Source: Japingka Gallery, Alice Springs. Web 20 May 2012.

The mythological perspective in Aboriginal Australian art makes their cartographic art dissimilar from the expected Western idea of a map. There is no degree of scale or compass orientation as the artist is continually moving around the painting, petroglyph or ideogram as he or she works. Therefore the finished work may have many orientations that are alien to Western concepts of spatiality.

The mythological mapping by the Australian Aboriginal relies on their relationship to the land, their rights and knowledge of its spiritual and mythological significance according to the central Australian Aboriginal concept of the Dreaming. Hence Aboriginal cartography is cosmological.¹⁶ The concept of the Dreaming is central to Aboriginal cosmology. Wally Caruana explains the terms Dreamtime or Dreaming:

[a] term commonly used in Aboriginal Australia to refers to Aboriginal cosmology, encompassing the creator and ancestral beings, the laws of religious and social behaviour, the land, the spiritual forces which sustain life and the narratives which concern these.⁴²

The words 'Dreaming' or 'Dreamtime' are not a factual rendition of a comparable word in all Aboriginal Australian languages but the translation of an Arrente word made by Walter Baldwin Spencer and F.J. Gillen in 1896. For the Australian Aboriginal the word 'Dreaming' refers to a reality, not a dream, and cannot be taken in a general English context. 'Dreaming' is much more than that. It is a reference to a rare and complicated religious belief system.⁴³

The shaman is also an important part of Aboriginal history in Australia. Adolphus Peter Elkin's anthropological study of the Australian Aboriginal shamans, also known as 'Aboriginal men of High Degree' implicates mapping as an early teaching tool that related to community health, social control and religious instruction.

Ronald and Catherine Berndt cite Elkin's studies as particularly important, in understanding the ritual and rites involved in Australian Aboriginal mapping.⁴⁴

Fig.16 below shows a section of a deteriorated isolated panel of at least nine Tassel Bradshaw figures. The alignments and associations of this group's classically left-facing figure are worthy of note, as disconnected compositions depicting apparent scenes or performance are uncommon in Bradshaw Period art. The figures have their right arm hanging and the other has a forearm arched above the head. This stance is most commonly encountered on classic forms of early Tassel Bradshaw figures, and is suggestive of some ceremonial or dance action performed by a shaman or medicine man. The meshed decorative item draped from each figure's shoulder is commonly associated with figures depicted in this kind of stance.⁴⁶



Fig.16 One of nine Tassel paintings (Bradshaw Figures) ranging in height between 39cm-73cm
Source: Peter Robinson, Ed. *Australian Rock Art Archive*, "The Introduction to the Bradshaw Paintings."

However Morphy does not fully agree with Robinson, Lewis-Williams, Lanyon, Elkin and others that these are shamanic figures and describes these painted figures as:

...elegant representations of graceful human figures delineated in red ochre. The figures often seem to be floating or dancing in a trance-like state... But their actual significance so far remains elusive. The Aborigines to-day [this was written in 1998] are unable interpret them, and indeed treat them as if they belong to another era. However, this apparent distancing may be misleading [hiding the truth away from investigations.]⁴⁷

In outlining how artists have mapped the cosmos to document narratives of religion, communication and a sense of place and belonging to the land over thousands of years I have suggested congruence between the mapping perspective of prehistoric art and specific modes of abstraction in contemporary western landscape art. This is seen in the painting below (fig.17) that maps the early settlement at Bong Bong Common. This painting shows the influence of the Valcamonica petroglyphs and a sketch map of Dixon's 1829 survey plan that indicates the settlement at Bong Bong, the line of the Argyle Road and the Wingecarribee River.



Fig.17 Sarah Willard Gray.
Bong Bong Common c1829.2012.
Oil on canvas 60x150 cm. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

This painting also illustrates the idea of flatness within my work which is not a topographical perception but a mapping/cartographic viewpoint that appears in prehistoric rock art and some visual art of the twentieth and twenty first century. Edward S. Casey refers to such flatness when writing about an abstract painting by American artist Richard Diebenkorn *Ocean Park No.31*.

Most conspicuous at first glance are the frontality and severe geometry of this painting in which everything seems to appear on the same utterly flat picture planiformity of that is so often a virtue of mapping has been transferred to painting- here to the distinct advantage of the latter!⁴⁸



Fig.18 Richard Diebenkorn.

Ocean Park 31.1970. Oil on canvas 236 x 206cm.

Source: Gerald Norland. *Richard Diebenkorn*. New York: Rizzoli, 1987.p160.

Summary

A feature of twentieth-century Western art has been its debt to ancient and non-Western art. It is as if there are universal aspects of art making that supports the idea of universalism in human creativity. Lucy R. Lippard states that Minimalist sculptor Carl Andre acknowledged the influences of Stonehenge and other pre-historic sites in southern England, the principles of Taoism, Japanese gardens and Native Indian mounds in the USA:

...abstraction rose in Neolithic times, after Palaeolithic representation, for the same reason we are doing it now. The culture requires significant blankness because the emblems, symbol and signs which were adequate for the former method of organising production are no longer efficient in carrying out the cultural roles that we assign to them. You just need some tabula rasa, or a sense that there is a space to add significance... Perhaps abstract art has occurred in human history every time there has been a total technological change in the organisation of society.⁴⁹

The study of prehistoric mapping shows that, in general, early man used cartographic means for various functions from the cosmological to perhaps more quotidian purposes. Thus the map provides a window into previous ways of thinking and a way to imagine new futures and places.

Chapter 5.

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Chapter Six.

Perspective.

Western mapping and landscape art are noted for their linear and aerial perspectival techniques for which there is a specialized terminology. In Chapter One I noted that terms relating to perspective and aspect are sometimes used in conflicting ways amongst writers. Importantly, for this thesis, I distinguish between a mapping or cartographic viewpoint and the distinctly different terms: aerial/atmospheric, topography and linear perspective.

1. *A Mapping or Cartographic viewpoint.* This is the viewpoint seen from an elevation looking directly down (like a satellite photograph) and does not, like a bird's eye view, involve any vanishing points as it is a flattening of the picture space. In this it is akin to a planar viewpoint as it describes an object as flat or lying in a single geometric plane with two dimensional characteristics.

2. *Aerial /Atmospheric Perspective.* This perspective refers to the technique of creating an illusion of depth by depicting objects lower on the surface so as to appear closer, overlapping objects indicate position, cooler colours tend to recede, warmer colours tend to come forward and objects with greater contrast look closer.

3. *Linear Perspective.* This is a mathematical system for creating the illusion of space, depth and distance by using vanishing points that interconnect at eye level onto a two dimensional flat surface.

4. *Topography.* Topography is a topographical or geographical view of natural features from many angles. All of the following descriptions refer to topography:

a. This is a graphic representation delineating natural and man-made features of an area or region in a way that shows their relative positions and elevations. A topographic map is a detailed and accurate graphic representation of cultural and natural features on the ground.

- b. A detailed, precise description of a place or region.
- c. A description or analysis of a structured entity, showing the relations among its components: *In the topography of the economy, several depressed areas are revealed.*
- d. The surface feature(s) of a place or region or of an object e.g. *the topography of a crystal.*
- e. The surveying of the features of a place or region.
- f. The study or description of an anatomical part of the human body.
- g. That which represents the horizontal and vertical positions of the features represented. Below are three examples of topographic paintings.



Fig.1. Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851)

View of London from Greenwich, 1825.

Watercolor and gouache over graphite. 21.3 x 28 cm.

Source: In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 2000-.



Fig. 2. Giovanni Antonio Canal, or Canaletto (1697-1768),
The Grand Canal and the Church of the Salute, 1730. Oil on canvas 99.6 x 134.3 cm.
 Source: National Gallery of London. U.K.



Fig.3. Conrad Martens. Fitzroy Falls, 1836 (Southern Highlands of N.S.W)
 Watercolour 46.1 x 66.4 cm. Source: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, A.C.T.

'All Art is Illusion' according to Francois-Marie Arouet, a writer and philosopher during the period of the French Enlightenment who used the pen name of 'Voltaire,' It may well describe an artist's attempt to recreate a three-dimensional world onto the surface of a two dimensional support. The means to achieve this employ illusion through simulations of movement, depth and space. This illusion is recognised as 'perspective.'¹

The following paintings show a bird's eye perspective (fig. 4) and then a cartographic perspective (fig.5) that is seen from an elevation looking directly down and does not, like a bird's eye view involve any vanishing points. It flattens the picture space by depicting two dimensions on a two dimensional surface without any suggestions of recession or shading of colours to replicate distance.



Fig. 4. *The Battles of the Hōgen and Heiji Era.*

Artist: unknown. Culture: Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Date 17th century.

Medium Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colour, and gold on paper. Dimensions (each):154.8 x 355.6cm. (57.156.4-5) source: Rogers Fund, 1957 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The Edo period in seventeenth century China (1615-1868) provided many examples of bird's eye landscape art. The two battles portrayed (fig.4) signify took place in 1156 and 1160 and were among the most memorable uprisings of medieval Japan. They indicated the end of the Old World order. The art work is described thus:

...dark greens, browns and blues of the landscape sharply contrasted against brilliant gold create colourful and decorative effects. The entire city of Kyoto, where the major military actions took place, is viewed from above, in a vast panorama... clearly, the anonymous creator of these screens is indebted to an earlier tradition of war pictures...however the panels are in the Momoyama decorative style reveal that the artist was also very much affected by contemporaneous artistic trends.²

Below, in his painting *River in Flood and Blind Bird*, (Fig.5) John Olsen has pushed the solid mass of landscape to the top of this lyrical painting. He paints this scene looking straight down at it to depict a section of the Murray River near the coastline of South Australia from a cartographic viewpoint, calligraphic lines meandering and tracing 'the odd angles and curling paths of the fretted landscape entering the water.'³



Fig. 5. John Olsen.

River in Flood and Blind Bird. 1982. Oil on canvas 165 x 180cm.

Source: Deborah Hart. *John Olsen*. North Ryde: Craftsman, 2000. page 154.

Pictorial perspectives vary significantly across art and cultures from the earliest times, reflecting the ontological and epistemological aims of its users. An example, the isolating or detached tendency of Western linear perspective “ like the philosophy of Descartes and Kant splits the passive viewer off from the objective world and places him outside looking in (or, as in the case of Kant, inside looking out)”⁴

Chinese perspective is very different. It was developed in the Neolithic Period, evidence of which has been shown in excavations of coloured pottery in the 1920s. Chinese artists were not restrained by mimetic visual perception developing instead a coherent method of spatial organisation that is not restricted to a fixed focal point in its perspective. It exhibits a shifting perspective, a metaphorical map, that reflects the state of the artist’s mind. Therefore the image does not describe the spectator/artist/viewer's position in relation to the scene portrayed. “This subtle shift creates within the mind of the viewer more of a connectedness with the objects within the work. The Chinese landscape painter assumes that the beholder, along with the artist himself, was in the landscape not looking at it from the outside”.⁵

Certain painting theories, such as the *Graphic Theory and the Six-Rule Theory* which formed the theoretical basis for present-day Chinese painting date back to the fourth century and were put forward by Gu Kaizhi born in Wuxi in 344 AD and died in 406 AD. Gu was known as the founder of traditional Chinese painting. Its influence is evident in the famous hand scroll entitled *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress* (c370AD- 406AD) which illustrates correct behaviour for court ladies. This painting was taken from *Nine Stories* - a political satire about Empress Jia Nanfeng written by Zhang Hua.⁶



Fig. 6. Gu Kaizhi c345-406. *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress*. Painted hand scroll. 1 of 9 sections. Source: Wei & Jin Dynasties - Arts & Virtue. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.

Western art has been dominated by particular pictorial conventions developed to represent both architectural space, usually interiors, and outside landscape in art from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as seen from a fixed perspective. In Florence, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) was credited with the invention of a method of producing a mathematically derived system of single point linear perspective with the first known painting using this perspective in 1415. “It consists of setting down properly and rationally the reductions and enlargements of near and distant objects as perceived by the eye of man: buildings, plains, mountains, places of every sort and location, with figures and objects in correct proportion to the distance in which they are shown.”⁷ Antonio Manetti proceeds to write that Brunelleschi, in order to produce linear perspective, used a system of vanishing points onto a two dimensional surface to produce a mathematical illusion of depth. These points or lines

all intersect at eye level on the landscape horizon. For the next five centuries, Brunelleschi's system of perspective dominated the picturing of space in Western art.

Following Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti regarded mathematics as the source of perspective in art and in his treatise *Della Pittura* (On Painting) wrote about the relationship of perspective to optical vision. However it is now widely recognised that this objectification of space was not free of ideology:

While perspective may be viewed as simply a handy tool to create the illusion of three dimensional space on a two dimensional surface, symbolically it can also be taken to signify, within the broader context of art history, the total subjugation of nature to a scientific rule. Nature, now culturally encoded, could be viewed from a safe and controllable distance, as if through a window.⁸

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) began as an apprenticed artist to the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio (1435–1488), a recognised master of perspective. Leonardo added another perspectival technique (aerial or atmospheric perspective) that overcame the wooden effect often created by the application of linear perspective. The Renaissance artists were deeply informed by ancient texts, and Leonardo's invention revived a technique known more in ancient times. Claudius Ptolemy, a noted Greek/Egyptian astronomer, mathematician and geographer, wrote about perspective in the 2nd century A.D. In his writings Ptolemy had indicated that painters of architectural scenes used 'veiling airs' to show the colours of things seen at a distance. These 'veiling airs' added a veil of atmosphere and distance to the linear viewpoint of the landscape motif.⁹

In Leonardo's atmospheric perspective, colour is modulated so that it is stronger in the foreground and paler and bluish purple in the background - a technique that Chinese landscape artists also used to great poetic effect. Modern scientific studies have shown that particles of dust or moisture in the atmosphere causes a dissemination

of light as it passes through it. This dispersal of light depends on the wavelength of the light, with blue or short wavelength light stronger than red or long wavelength. This is why the sky is blue and items far-away seem to be behind a diaphanous cloak of blue.¹⁰

Leonardo's discovery was aided by his invention of a perspectograph. While the viewer observed an object through a hole in a square frame he drew onto a pane of glass the viewed subject which allowed him to measure the distance between the object and the drawn image of it and how the colours needed to be shaded to show distance in perspective. By this means Leonardo proceeded to work out how to reduce in proportion size, colour and definition thus allowing him to depict a three dimensional reality onto a two dimensional plane.¹¹

The diminution or loss of colours is in proportion to their distance from the eye that sees them. But this only happens with colours that are at an equal elevation: those which are at unequal elevations do not observe the same rule because they are in airs of different densities which absorb these colours differently.¹²



Fig. 7. Leonardo da Vinci. *The Last Supper*. 1498. Tempera and mixed media on plaster 460 x 880 cm. Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan.

Source: In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–

Leonardo's painting of *The Last Supper* (fig 7) although an interior scene, demonstrates both linear and aerial perspective. The ceiling above Christ and the Apostles portrays the transversals, orthogonals and vanishing point as shown in the diagram below (Fig.8). If the ceiling's vanishing point lines were to continue in length they would finish directly at the top of Christ's head. This also occurs with the wall hangings on either wall. Thus Leonardo used linear perspective, not only to depict space correctly, but also as a symbolic system that indicates the importance of the central figure, Christ, in the group.

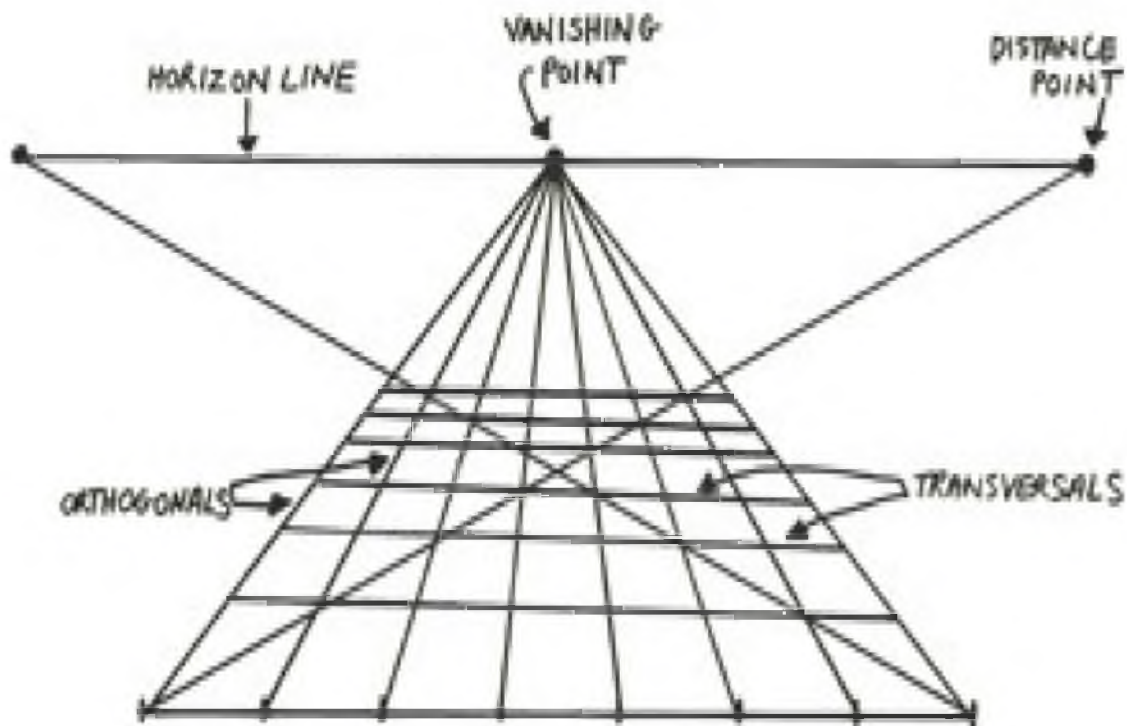


Fig.8. Linear perspective: A mathematical system for projecting the three-dimensional world onto two-dimensional surfaces. Source: Jim Elkins, Art Institute of Chicago.

The atmospheric aerial perspective described by Leonardo in the fifteenth century and centuries earlier by Ptolomy, is seen in Claude Lorrain's *Landscape with Aeneas at Delos* (1672) and Camille Pissarro's *The Boulevard Montmartre at Night* (1897).



Fig. 9. Claude Lorrain. *Landscape with Aeneas at Delos*, 1672.

Oil on canvas. 99.6 x 134.3 cm. Wynn Ellis Bequest, 1876.

Source: the National Gallery, London. U.K.



Fig. 10. Camille Pissarro. 1830-1903. *The Boulevard Montmartre at Night* 1897.

Oil on canvas. 53.3 x 64.8 cm. Courtauld Fund, 1925.

Source: the National Gallery, London. U.K.

In the early sixteenth century maps on parchment or cloth were considered an ancient development having been used since around 8,000 B.C. and were very rare in application and certainly not with the accuracy and detail Leonardo had developed. Leonardo's drawings of maps and plans number amongst the most magnificent of the time and were executed in some cases for military purposes and in others to satisfy the need for reliable topographical maps for peacetime projects.¹³ Mathematical perspective had a huge impact on European mapmaking as shown in Leonardo's *Map of Imola* which set a new benchmark for mapping.



Fig.11. Leonardo Da Vinci,
Map of Imola, c.1502.
Pencil, chalk, pen and wash on paper, 44 x 60.2cm.
Source: Museo Vinciano, Vinci. Italy.

From this point onwards maps of European origin narrated religious and political viewpoints with artistic refinement integrated with geographical knowledge. Gradually this idea of mapping as art was replaced with the need for scientific accuracy aided by the compass, the sextant and the printing press.

I must agree in part with William L. Fox when he writes: “There are typically two classes into which aerial images fall, the vertical and the oblique...” Fox continues:

The first is made looking straight down, the second at an angle to the ground.

The first tends to appear flat, to reveal pattern, and to be more map-like, while the second is more three dimensional and pictorial and establishes context and relationships among features.¹⁴

The second class of aerial image as expressed by Fox is a bird’s eye perspective and is not of a cartographic or mapping genre. The bird’s eye view that appeared in descriptive art became popular in Great Britain after Canaletto’s visit to England in the 1750s aroused interest in panoramic views of buildings and landscape. The topographical viewpoint was further stimulated by fashionable interest in the ‘Sublime and the Picturesque’ during the eighteenth century in British painting and literature. In 1801 artist Thomas Girtin exhibited a 360-degree bird’s eye view of London entitled *Eidometropolis* while the trend continued with paintings by Claude Monet (1840-1926) and James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903).¹⁵

The mapping view, however, is synonymous with the making of blueprints and maps. Before manned flight the term ‘bird’s eye’ was used to distinguish it from views drawn from an experiential height to those drawn from an invented bird’s eye perspective. The bird’s eye view as a genus has existed since classical times and experienced a fashionable revival in the mid to late nineteenth century Europe. A true bird’s eye view made during World War 1 in the twentieth century is in fig. 12.¹⁶



Fig.12. World War 1 photo of a pigeon with German camera attached. The camera recorded the enemy's ground position and numbers of troops. Source: Alfred Hildebrandt.

The Western conventions in painting arrived in Australia with the First Fleet in 1788 and are amply evident in the tradition of landscape painting that developed here. The atmospheric aerial perspective described by Leonardo extends to Australian landscape painting in works such as Arthur Streeton's (1867-1943) *Land of the Golden Fleece* (1926), Walter Withers' (1854-1914) *Country Road*, (1898) and contemporary artist Tim Storrier's (1949 *The Fall (Incendiary Detrius)*. (2000)



Fig 13. Arthur Streeton. *Land of the Golden Fleece* 1926.

Oil on canvas, 50.7 x 75.5 cm. Oscar Paul Collection, gift of Henriette van Dallwitz.

Source: The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, A.C.T.

Streeton used colour to give the image a sense of space, painting the distant Grampian Mountains with blues and greys to make them recede, and using warm yellows in the foreground to make the golden fields appear closer to the viewer. Trees are shown as larger in the foreground and smaller as they recede. This use of colour perfectly carries out the mantra of Leonardo in the late fifteenth century.

While in the twenty-first century Western artists developed new way of representing space, perspective was not wholly abandoned. For example, in the contemporary landscape painting below (fig. 15), Tim Storrier shows recession in the landscape through contrasting sizes between foreground and background objects with the horizon a cool greyish mauve in colour. The diminishing size of the cloud formations, as they approach the land, informs the viewer of a repetition of the same linear perspective and draws attention to the blaze of colour in the background.



Fig. 14. Tim Storrier. (born 1949).

The Fall (Incendiary Detritus) 2000. acrylic on canvas 183cm x 304.5cm.

Source: Bonhams Art Auctions.

Changes in Western conventions of perspective towards the end of the nineteenth century were made by French master painter Paul Cézanne as he began to query the configuration of his subjects and reduce them to their geometric fundamentals. Most importantly he ignored the basic rules of perspective as he allowed - in a Chinese fashion - each subject, whether still life or landscape, to become autonomous within the space of a picture while letting the relationship of one object to another take precedence over traditional single-point perspective.¹⁷



Fig.15. Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). *Gardanne*, 1885–86.

Oil on canvas. 80 x 64.1cm. Gift: Dr. and Mrs. Franz H. Hirschland, 1957.

Source: In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

Above, in fig.15, is one of three painted views of Gardanne, a hill town near Aix-en-Provence, where Cézanne painted in the autumn of 1885 and part of 1886. The town is observed from a close vantage point in this painting and anticipates Cubism in its

restricted palettes and faceted forms. The art historian James Voohries writes that Cezanne used:

...an organised system of layers to construct a series of horizontal planes, which build dimensions and draw the viewer into the landscape...Cezanne ignores the laws of classical perspective, allowing each object to be independent within the space of a picture while the relationship of one object to another takes precedence over traditional [linear] single point perspective.¹⁸

Cezanne's new approach to space influenced the Cubists as is clearly shown in Braque's painting of *The Viaduct at L'Estaque*, 1908 (fig.16) The Cubists in turn influenced the radical spatial geometries of twentieth-century abstraction. According to Sabine Rewald:

The Cubist painters rejected the inherited concept that art should copy nature, or that they should adopt the traditional techniques of perspective, modelling and foreshortening. They wanted instead to emphasize the two-dimensionality of the canvas. So they reduced and fractured objects into geometric forms, and then realigned these within a shallow, relief-like space. They also used multiple or contrasting vantage points.¹⁹

The modern Western idea of the use of non-atmospheric aerial perspective, by flattening the picture plane, was seen in Cubism in the early 20th century. The destruction of the realistic pictorial space, in three dimensional terms, was obtained by the elimination of traditional academic means of producing volume and depth by shading and perspective.²⁰

The term Cubism was first used by French art critic Louis Vauxcelles after seeing landscapes painted by French artist George Braque in 1908 at L'Estaque in homage to Braque (figs 16 and 17). Vauxcelles named the abstracted algebraic forms 'cubes'. In this painting, "acknowledged by some art historians to be the first Cubist painting, Braque opens up the dimensions of the buildings and then pushes them upward along the picture plane, rather than receding into a semblance of distance."²¹



Fig.16. Georges Braque. *The Viaduct at L'Estaque*, 1908, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 59 cm.

Source: Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.



Fig.17. Georges Braque. *Houses at L'Estaque*, 1908. Oil on canvas. 73 x 59.5 cm.

Source: Kunstmuseum Musée des Beaux-Arts de Berne, Switzerland.

Edward Lucie-Smith believes that a combination of the ideas of Cezanne and African art, from which both Picasso and Braque created an entirely new artistic expression, was “perhaps the most important and certainly the most complete and radical artistic revolution since the Renaissance.”²² These influences followed on from an exhibition of African art in May or June at the Palais du Trocadero in Paris, and a retrospective of Cezanne’s work at the Salon d’Automme in the same year, 1907. The words of Braque are quoted by Rubin: “It [Cezanne’s impact] was more than an influence, it was an invitation. Cezanne was the first to have broken away from erudite, mechanized perspective...” Rubin went on to say “Like Cezanne, Braque sought to undermine the illusion of depth by forcing the viewer to recognize the canvas not as a window but as it truly is, a vertical curtain that hangs before us.”²³ This idea of a “vertical curtain undermining the illusion of depth” is important to this dissertation on perspective as it refers to a difference between looking through an imaginary window as referred to by Alberti: “Nature, now culturally encoded, could be viewed from a safe and controllable distance, as if through a window”²⁴ and a vertical curtain that removes any trace of depth in the art work.

Spivey, Whitehouse and others insist that Picasso visited the caves of Lascaux in 1941 where thick black outlines surround the drawings of animal forms by Upper Palaeolithic humans. This was a stylistic convention used by Picasso and other artists known as *Les Fauves* (the Wild Ones) in the first decade of the twentieth century.

According to author John Richardson, Picasso insisted that his painting, *Les Demoiselle d’Avignon*, and others from the time, had no connection to the Ivory Coast, the French Congo or the caves of Lascaux and were influenced only by the reliefs from Osuna (a Roman site in Spain) that he had seen in the Louvre a year or so before.²⁵

Many claims have been made, and continue to be made, concerning Picasso's reaction to Ice Age cave art - in particular it is said that he visited either Altamira or Lascaux and declared that "we have done nothing" or that "none of us can paint like this."²⁶

Picasso's lithography of *The Bull* (fig.18) and a drawing on the wall of the pre-historic caves at Altamira in Spain (fig.19) make a compelling case for the influence of these prehistoric 'maps' on Picasso's work.



Fig.18. Pablo Picasso. *The Bull*. State I-IV 1945. Lithography.
The Museum of Modern Arts, New York.



Fig.19. Altamira Cave, Spain. A Bison (Fig. 38. Bison no. 43.) using three natural pigments similar to ochre and zinc oxides. Source: Jose Antonio Lasheras. *The Cave of Altamira 22,000 years of History*.

Picasso made use of a torch lit church for an exhibition of his murals *War and Peace* on the ceiling of a deconsecrated chapel near Antibes, France in 1952. Roland Penrose writes about this cavern-like exhibition:

...with the closing of the west door from the street, the vault of the old chapel, lit only from the chancel, had the effect of a cave. Picasso had toyed with the idea that visitors should see his murals by the flickering light of torches, in the same way that primitive man saw the magic paintings hidden in the caves of Lascaux.²⁷

Whatever the influences, Picasso is credited with receiving, he has influenced the development of modern and contemporary art to an unparalleled extent that resulted in the pictorial flatness, vivid colour palette, and fragmented Cubist shapes that helped to define early modernism. This thesis will proceed with a short outline of some artists who were influenced by Picasso and in turn influenced others from the mid-18th century to 2014.

Cubism had a deep influence on Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) and in his 1912 series of Apple Tree paintings, this procedure eventually led to "the first really non-figurative paintings (or pure abstract art), from 1914 on."²⁸



Fig. 20. Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), *Apple Tree in Flower*, 1912, oil on canvas, 106 x 78 cm.

Source: Gemeentemuseum. The Hague, Netherlands.

Picasso also made a deep impression on the American Abstract Expressionists as they turned to primitive myth and archaic forms for inspiration. One of these artists was Jackson Pollock (1912- 1956) who was guided by Cubism in the detaching of line from colour, redefining the nature of drawing and painting while still finding new means to express pictorial space.

Michael Fitzgerald, curator of the exhibition *Picasso and American Art* at the Whitney Museum of Art writes:

Jackson Pollock was tremendously interested in Picasso... He was really the most competitive of all the American artists with him... Pollock's *Water Bull* was inspired by Picasso's historic *Guernica*. *Gothic* was his take on Picasso's edgy *Les Femmes d'Alger*. But Pollock went one step further with a drip painting he did in 1950. We found films of Pollock paintings that were made in the early 1950s, of him laying out in black lines the shapes that are the beginning of the canvas... they're actually figurative shapes drawn from Picasso's work.²⁹



Fig. 21. Jackson Pollock. *No 5*, 1948. Enamel paint on fibreboard. 120 x 240 cm.

Source: < [www.academia.edu/4388266/Jackson_Pollocks No.5,1948](http://www.academia.edu/4388266/Jackson_Pollocks_No.5,1948) >.

When Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) painted his portraits of monstrous women, he returned to the Cubist women typical of Picasso's artwork. Placing Picasso's famous *Les Femmes d'Alger* alongside any of de Kooning's woman paintings reveals many similarities. Both artists used bold, black lines to outline their figures, and both endowed their women with an overwhelming sense of power and overt sexuality. John Elderfield admits that de Kooning retained the sculptural contours, the planes of traditional painting and the "shallow picture plane of modernist art found in the Cubist works of, for example, Picasso and Braque".³⁰



Fig. 22. Willem de Kooning. *Woman I*. 1950-52.

Oil on canvas, 192.7 x 147.3 cm.

Source: Mark Stevens, "Willem de Kooning Still Dazzles" *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2011.



Fig. 23. Pablo Picasso. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)* 1935.

Oil on canvas 244.9 x 233.7cm.

Source: The Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The artist associated with the Abstract Expressionist generation and whose work most closely approached the concerns of this thesis is American artist Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993). In the words of Maurice Tuchman:

Mapping is an important aspect of Diebenkorn's work and maps play an iconographic role, a double one: topographically, they give an impression of ploughed fields viewed from the air, and also cartographically (in somewhat later work), they suggest printed coloured maps of America.³¹

Diebenkorn's painting can readily be described as landscape mapping and a mixture of cartographic markings and aerial observations. The discovery of a mapping view was for Diebenkorn a way of total expression. He had already acknowledged that he was receptive to the influences of a course of a river and a particular terrain whilst driving through it and this impression found its way into his work. Diebenkorn was

responding to his environment perhaps as if he was in and part of the land as well as looking down on it. It was not a matter of flying often and recording information as he did so, but a managed means of letting his own imagination take flight.³²

Diebenkorn acknowledges diverse influences such as Paul Cezanne, Henri Matisse, Robert Motherwell and Mark Rothko. While viewing Rothko's paintings Diebenkorn found a pure painterly space that was flat, implicit, compliant and capable of continual development and the confirmation of Matisse's aphorism that "art exists not to represent the world but to create a parallel world through a condensation of sensations."³³

Stephen Westfall reflects on Diebenkorn's influences: "Was there ever a painter more obviously and cheerfully influenced by a wider range of artists, both before and around him, who remained resolutely himself"³⁴ Diebenkorn pursued an evolving lifelong inquiry into the work of Cezanne, Pierre Bonnard, Matisse, Klee and Mondrian and Westfall goes on to write:

...the extent of Diebenkorn's references to landscape viewed from above is something almost new to painting. The aerial sweeps of Russian avant-garde painting, for example, remain theoretical and do not encompass landscape. In paintings such as *Urbana No.4* (1950) Diebenkorn enacts an abstracted and grandly exteriorized version of the 'flatbed picture plane' roughly contemporaneously with Rauschenberg's.³⁵

Elizabeth Broun quotes from Diebenkorn's studio notes "...temperamentally I have always been a landscape painter" and then continues: "so it is reasonable to look at the landscapes first for clues." The landscapes tend to arrange bands of colour parallel to the picture plane and then introduce at least one plunging diagonal – freeway, aqueduct, coastline or railing- with a directional thrust that creates a deep diagonal space in the flatness of the painted surface. Broun continues with a revealing statement "Diebenkorn can summarize in a single diagonal centuries of knowledge

about the way that single point perspective creates spatial illusion.”³⁶

According to Gerald Nordland, Diebenkorn agreed completely with two of the principles expressed by Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb in the New York Times newspaper in 1943, principles that are the backbone of abstract art:

(1) To us art is an adventure into an unknown world, which can be explored only by those willing to take risks... (4) We favour the simple expression the complex thought. We are for the large shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal. We wish to reassert the picture plane. We are for the flat forms because they destroy illusion and restore truth.³⁷

From 1948 to 1955 Diebenkorn’s work took on a powerful form of abstraction influenced by an aerial viewpoint of the landscape. A complete change in his work, 1955-1967 saw him emerge, for this period only, as a painter of figures and still life in the interior, before returning back to abstraction.

Early in his painting career Diebenkorn flew over the desert from Albuquerque to San Francisco to view an Ashile Gorky exhibition. During this flight he recorded in his diary that the views from the propeller-powered plane at low altitude were inspiring. He had always reacted to the route of a river and the natural geometric areas of farmland and curved lines formed by it, now from above he could see villages and towns shaped by rivers and the natural geography of the land. Colours varied from portion to portion, and the bird’s eye perspective revealed a logic and acute reduction that energized the artist who stated: “The aerial view showed me a rich variety of ways of treating a flat plane - like flattened mud or paint. Forms operating in shallow depth reveal a huge range of possibilities available to the painter.”³⁸

Constance W.Glenn wrote that the mapping viewpoint that commenced with the earlier paintings of Diebenkorn were in the style of the New York school of

abstraction: “they were characterised by linear planes, which gave the impression of aerial landscape views, and by a fluid line that defined a type of biomorphic abstraction.” Except for a brief return to representational art Diebenkorn’s painting culminated in a series of over 140 large scale paintings entitled *Ocean Park* distinguished by allusions to the landscape, algebraic supports united and reunited, and overlaid with many layers of luminous colour.”³⁹

Maurice Tuchman refers to *Urbana No.5*, also known as *Beach Town*, as an “abstracted aerial landscape” and to *Urbana 1953* (fig. 24) as “a materialized map.” Tuchman goes on to state that this painting is one of Diebenkorn’s most stimulating and thought provoking paintings with coloured areas lying exactly on the picture plane...“there is no atmosphere or perceived space implied here...and humour is implied by the three dimensional cup painted into the lower right corner.”⁴⁰

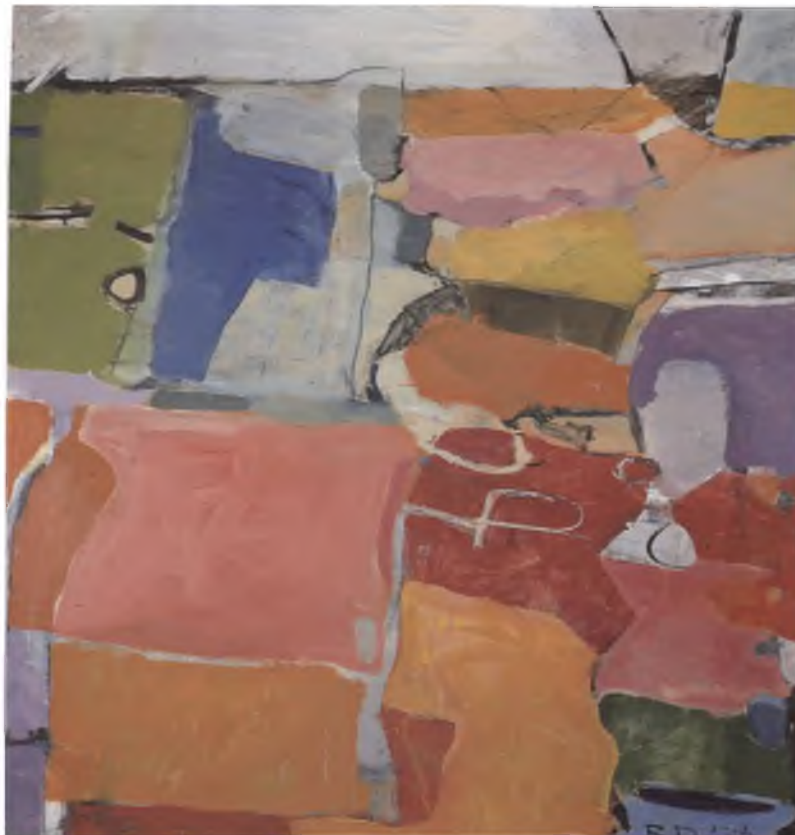


Fig. 24. Richard Diebenkorn. *Urbana 1953*.

Oil on canvas, 154 x 120 cm.

Source: Gerald Norland, *Richard Diebenkorn*. New York. page 63.

Another artist painting mapping landscapes is Yvonne Jacquette, known as the *Aerial Muse*, famous for her mapping viewpoint of landscape. Jacquette, born in 1934, the second of seven children, was encouraged to paint and draw as a young child. In order to exist when her siblings were especially unruly Jacquette could envisage herself levitating above the household turmoil and viewing the household from above. Hilarie Faberman curator at the Cantor Art Centre, San Francisco writes that Jacquette, in her young teenage years, was able to observe and imagine unusual perspectives and to remove herself mentally from her close environment, all of which assisted her in developing her chosen artistic landscape aerial perspective.⁴¹

Jacquette's richly coloured complex work combining perceptual realism and abstraction has many diverse influences including Joan Mitchell, William de Kooning, Piet Mondrian and perceptual realists Fairfield Porter and Jane Freilicher. Australian artists painting from a mapping perspective such as Sidney Nolan, Fred Williams, John Olsen, Robert Juniper and John Wolseley had all occasionally flown over landscape by aeroplane during their careers but Jacquette is different from them in that she almost always flew to gain a mapping viewpoint. Faberman writes to explain her own ideas in a brief history of this perspective she describes as bird's eye and aerial:

Throughout the history of pre-twentieth century art, from the misty townscapes of fifteenth century Flemish masters to Nadar's late nineteenth century photographs of Paris from balloons the bird's eye view signified god-like powers such as spirituality and omniscience. After the flight at Kitty Hawk, artists in Europe and America hailed the new invention and the radical perspective it afforded...for the Futurist F.T. Marinetti and the Orphist Robert Delaunay, the airplane was symbolic of the energy of the contemporary age. For abstract artists, such as the Suprematist Kasimir Malevich and the Constructivist Alexander Rodchenko, the elevated viewpoint provided an appropriate look for a revolutionary society...⁴²



Fig.25. Kazimir Malevich,

Untitled, ca.1916. Oil on canvas, 53 × 53 cm

Source: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Venice.



Fig 26. Alexander Rodchenko. *Composition 1918*.

gouache and pencil on paper. 33 x 16.2 cm

Source: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Malevich was known to reject conventions of gravity, clear orientation, horizon line, and perspective systems whereas Rodchenko, after denying formal painting, used elements taken from photographs, staying in a flat dimension of space with a limited colour palette of only black, red, white and greys. Therefore, both artists, in rejecting, among other things, perspective systems and using a flat dimension of space were actually using a mapping viewpoint and not an aerial or bird's eye perspective as Faberman describes.

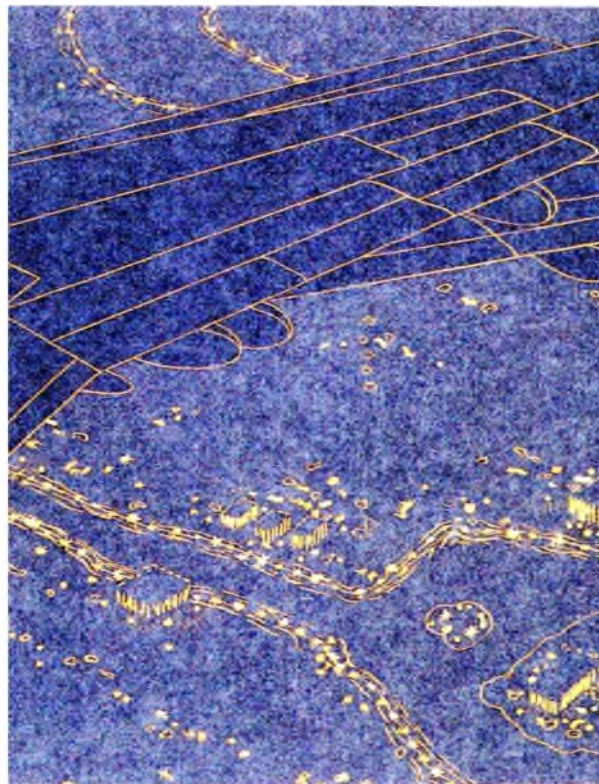


Fig.27. Yvonne Jacquette. *Veering Off 2*. 1996.

Woodcut in four colours on mulberry paper.

Plate 30.2 x 22.9. Paper 42.3 x 33.7. Edition: 20, plus 2 AP, 2PP.

Source: Yvonne Jacquette. *Catalogue Raisonne*, 1975.

Jacquette is also well known for her aerial perspective prints. A *Catalogue Raisonne* of some fifty-five prints dating from 1975 includes the one above, *Veering Off*, 1996. The painting *Little River Farm* 1979 (fig.28) was inspired by a hand

coloured lithographic print by American artist George Catlin in 1831, “Jacquette took particular note of Catlin’s unusual viewpoint, his suggestion of texture through a range of repeated marks, and the manner in which the composition broadens at the top in a kind of reverse perspective.”⁴³ The artist’s painting *Little River Farm* also uses the varied diverse colours and textures of the fields to construct a decidedly abstract pattern although, I would argue, both of these examples are leaning towards a bird’s eye viewpoint and are not fully mapping the landscape as do the paintings of the artist, Jane Frank, in figs. 29, 30 and 31.

In her correspondence with Faberman, Jacquette wrote of the new possibilities and challenges she received from the aerial view. Writing to Janice Oresman in 1984 about her painting *Little River Farm* (fig.28) she noted “the different colours of the fields recently ploughed, heavily planted...made a spatial gesture intriguing from the air in opposition to the farm buildings and a stream. I wanted a new pictorial gravity by putting small things near the centre bottom and large areas near the top and sides. I wanted to get away from vanishing point perspective and engage the viewer...as a textured map might.”⁴⁴



Fig. 28. Yvonne Jacquette.
Little River Farm 1979. Oil on canvas 198 x 162.5cm.
Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.

American artist Jane Frank (1918-1986) is the third artist chosen for this overview of overseas artists using a mapping perspective. Frank's art encapsulates with style and chronology both the modern and post modern periods of abstraction in her painting, mixed media, textile designs and sculpture. A period of study in 1956 with Hans Hofmann, teacher and the catalyst of the abstract expressionist movement in America, provided encouragement to proceed with seventeen paintings for a one-man show at the Baltimore Museum.⁴⁵ In a statement to her biographer, Phoebe B. Stanton, Frank speaks of her time with Hofmann:

This was a most rewarding and fruitful time. It had been quite a struggle to give up the careful, accurate and academic training I had learned so thoroughly. For the first time I felt free to see things in a different manner... Mr Hofmann spoke of 'monumentality' a great deal. This did not necessarily mean actual scale or size. It was more to do with shapes placed in adjacent ways to one another...⁴⁶



Fig 29. Jane Frank. *Aerial View No 1*. 1968.

acrylic and mixed media on canvas. Diptych. 152.5 x 213.5cm.

Source: Phoebe B. Stanton, *The Sculptural Landscape of Jane Frank*.



Fig.30. Jane Frank.

View From the Meadow, 1968. Acrylic and mixed media. Diptych 152.5 x 142cm.

Source: Margret Dreikausen, *Aerial Perception: The Earth as seen from Aircraft and Spacecraft and its Influence on Contemporary Art*.



Fig.31. Jane Frank. *Rockscape 2*, 1961.

Oil and spackle on canvas. 48.5 x 127cm.

Source: Phoebe B. Stanton, *The Sculptural Landscape of Jane Frank*.

Frank's paintings evolved into complex mixed media works with applied articles including burnt wood, sea-weed gesso and pebbles. Holes were cut into the canvas to reveal multi layers of painted canvas and other ways of exploiting the dimension of her work before finally arriving at a true mapping viewpoint in her landscapes.⁴⁷

In her book *Aerial Perception* author Margret Dreikausen sees Jane Frank's aerial landscapes as paintings which reflect contemporary interest in reality experienced from a historically new vantage point.⁴⁸ I would argue that Dreikhausen is incorrect in her statement that this is a historically new vantage point. Maybe it is new, in her opinion, to twentieth-century Western art but prior to the 1970s various non-indigenous Australian artists, such as Fred Williams and John Olsen, were already using this important mapping viewpoint in their paintings.

Painters of this unusual viewpoint find satisfaction in it as, unlike conventional landscape art, aerial landscape paintings do not have a recession of the view into an endless horizon or a view of the sky. Therefore there is a normal affinity to abstract painting not only due to known items being unrecognizable when viewed from a mapping viewpoint. This is because there is no point of reference or top or bottom to these paintings which usually is an important aspect of the painting's true focal point. Stanton refers to Frank's *Winter* aerial landscapes: "One is given no indication of the size of the scene; the way through which winter passes could either be a mountain gorge or a minute watercourse."⁴⁹ This abstraction of the subject leaves the viewer to decipher the original subject and the artist's devices as some aerial landscape artists, make the subject totally abstract with indirect or no references to reality.

In summary this chapter outlined the history of perspective and depictions in space in Western art and the diverse changes that took place in the Renaissance and

during the twentieth century with a focus on artists outside Australia whose work in some way informs Australian artists in general and my own studio work in particular.

Chapter 6.

Notes

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- ^{34.} Stephen Westfall, "Richard Diebenkorn- A Reasoned Sensualist" *Art in America* Vol.86. No.10, October 1998. Web 11 Sept 2011. 106-111.
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- ^{36.} Elizabeth Broun, "Richard Diebenkorn's Ocean Park No.6." *American Art*, Vol.13, no.2. (Summer 1999) Web 08 Aug 2007. 80-83.
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Chapter Seven

Cartography in Non-Aboriginal Australian Art: 1950-2014.



Fig 1 Robert Juniper. *Murchison Landscape* 2008. Mixed media on canvas 122 x 152 cm.

Source: *Robert Juniper* by Gavin Fry. p205.

Maps mark distance in space as calendars mark distance in time. The great popularity of the map in contemporary art began with the Minimalists' concern for number, time and measurement. Conceptual artists, conditioned by the American modernist's adoration of huge scale adopted the map and the photograph as evocative substitutes for first-hand experience. The sensuous connection with matter necessary to all visual art, no matter how dematerialized, was not ruptured; it was simply abstracted... "land that is not mapped is not possessed" says geologist Paul Leveson... We read maps with our fingers, demonstrating our journeys. Mapping and map-reading are intimate processes.¹

As a Western culture Australian artists have always closely followed developments in European and American art. Hence its artists were alert to and part of the radical shifts in depicting space that were described in the previous chapters.

In the years after World War Two abstraction became increasingly influential in Australia as it did in Europe and America. Australian artists were also exposed to international art by the influx of immigrants from war-torn countries in Europe and important exhibitions of overseas art being shown in Australia including the 1939 Herald *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art* and *French Painting To-day* in 1953.²

An important early exhibition of abstract art, *Direction 1*, was held at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney in 1956 showing the work of Robert Kippel, John Olsen, John Passmore, and Eric Smith. The *Direction 1* exhibition was a commercial failure - not one work sold - however the exhibition was successful in another way, as its ideology of abstraction offered a catalyst leading to greater variation in the Sydney's art scene.³

In 1959 Melbourne, in a counter response to the increasing influence of abstract art from America and within Australia, seven artists aided by art historian Bernard Smith formed the Antipodean group. These artists were determined to hold onto their dedication to the figurative image. The Antipodean Manifesto stated that the art of "Tachists, Action Painters, Geometric Abstractionists, [and] Abstract Expressionists" was "not an art sufficient of our time...not an art for living men."⁴

The artists involved in the wide-ranging discussion between the two groups at this time included Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, Robert Dickerson, David Boyd, John Brack, John Perceval and Clifton Pugh, all aged between thirty and forty years of age in 1959. Major contemporary influences of the time were from artists who based

their beliefs on underlying mystical truths such as Piet Mondrian, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. Geometric Abstraction had by this stage been introduced to Australia by Grace Crowley while Ian Fairweather working in isolation on Bribie Island in Queensland, experimented with powerful and graceful interactions of line and space. Artist and teachers John Passmore and Godfrey Miller challenged art students to experiment with painting and move away from "the world of natural appearances to achieve an essence of creativity" ⁵

One of the most ground-breaking Australian artist of his generation was Sydney Nolan (1917-1992). Nolan, arguably, was the first artist in Australia to use mapping perspective in his landscape painting even though Margaret Preston is recognized by some writers as an earlier exponent of mapping perspectives. While her experiments may have been well intentioned Preston's appropriation of Australian Aboriginal art sits at odds with my philosophy.⁶ Also I exclude her work her work as an early exponent of mapping as she uses a bird's eye perspective with vanishing points to the horizon and not a cartographic or mapping perspective. This viewpoint is especially evident in *Flying over the Shoalhaven River* (fig.2).



Fig 2. Margaret Preston. *Flying over the Shoalhaven River*.1942.
Oil on canvas 50.6 x 50.6. Source: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra A.C.T.

Nolan's serious interest in cartographic viewpoints of landscape was unique for a non Aboriginal Australian artist of his time. His first flight over Queensland and Central Australia in 1947 was a watershed delivering inspiration for future paintings. Nolan wrote about his impressions of this flight, and his recognition of its creative mapping potential.

Looking straight down from the plane gave me that questioning I felt on first seeing the flat Wimmera from the back of a motor truck. In that case the way to paint it was to put flat landscape vertically up the canvas. The position is exactly reversed from the plane. How to solve it I do not know as yet but modern painting has probably been too much in the hands of old fashioned men...[this] is vision without philosophy, distortion, primitiveness. [I] should have gone in an aeroplane a long time ago.⁷

As Nolan's attraction to remote Australia increased he made a three-month journey with his family to the McDonnell Ranges, Arnhem Land, the Kimberley, Great Sandy Desert and the Gibson Desert in 1949 to experience the Australia that existed beyond the developed coastal borders. During this journey Nolan made copious notes in his diary and took many photographs, stopping in various Aboriginal camps and station homesteads where his family took part in the daily activities. Later that year Nolan declared that after travelling in and over Australia he was of the opinion that "the Australian Aborigine is probably the best artist in Australia [and] has a wonderful, dreaming philosophy which all Australian artists should have."⁸

Nolan's view of the inland country from an aerial viewpoint provided him with a completely new spatial confrontation that did not include any obvious appropriation of motifs or symbols from Australian Aboriginal art unlike Preston. However during his flights to Queensland in 1947 and 1949 "his appreciation was enhanced by his direct contact with [Australian] Aboriginal art and culture."⁹ Nolan used his diary to

clarify his struggle with all he had seen and wrote, “such categories need clear thought before there is clear painting” and believed that his difficulty resulted from lack of understanding indigenous culture. There was a “need to be more familiar with it.”¹⁰

A number of Nolan’s aerial paintings were made from Ripolin enamel paint and ink on glass. *Aerial Landscape- Circular Contours* (1949) shows a background painted in tones of pale pink and beige with a contour drawing of the plains, vegetation and mountains seen from above, executed in black ink. At the top left hand edge the drawing is sparse; it then runs down into a series of mountain ranges at the bottom left hand corner, while there is more movement in the upper and lower right hand sides of the painting. Nolan uses diminutive drawings of trees to decorate this aerial landscape in a naïve style.



.Fig. 3. Sidney Nolan. *Aerial Landscape – Circular Contours* 1949.

Ripolin and ink on the back of glass. 25.4 x 30.5 cm.

Source: Geoffrey Smith, Catalogue: *Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought*.

Robert Hughes writes that Nolan's naivety was never present in his earlier works that emulated paintings by Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso and Kurt Schwitters "The primitive figuration we associate with his work came much later... no doubt he would have seen this style of art at [Danila] Vassilieff's home at Warrandyte."¹¹ These flat outlines, awkward raw shapes and the unexpected changes of scale between items on the picture plane soon became Nolan's trademark gestures as he produced the "popular image of Australian landscape: a desert as dry as a bone."¹²



Fig. 4 Sidney Nolan. *Landscape* 1967.

Mixed media on paper. 50.8 x 76.2 cm.

Source: Geoffrey Smith, Catalogue: *Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought*.

Nolan's *Landscape* 1967 (fig.3) recalls the sinews of the mountains and the contours of his mapping views with a transparent fluidity and a continuous flow of striations in tones of cream, beige, pale brown and burnt umber. The plains below seem to sweep in from the top left of the painting with bands of pale cream across a flat background area of a deeper colour stretching right across the top edge. From the right-hand side deeper rusty tones of a sinewy ridge of mountain sit across the plains below with a transparency that allows the plains to be seen through the mountain ridges.

Bernard Smith writes of Nolan's work:

Nolan's visionary responses to the Australian landscape continue to substantially shape contemporary consciousness. His significance lies not in the fact that his images are uniquely Australian, but rather the manner in which his art transformed the Australian experience into something more universal... Nolan's pivotal role [was] in developing a western visual vocabulary for the Australian outback that supplanted the pastoral imagery that had dominated Australian landscape painting since the 19th century. Nolan merged the past with the present, the real with the imagined, Australia with Europe.¹³

The landscape genre has been a defining character in Australian art since colonial days. The domestication of the unfamiliar land by the colonial artists was attempted through, as Jill Bradshaw explains: "clothing it with forests of oak and by re-ordering its vistas into a vision of bucolic peace."¹⁴ Nolan's art attempted to invalidate the course of taming this domestication by depicting the desert void as alien. Bradshaw draws on artist Juan Davila who confers:

[Nolan] only parsitised this landscape, projecting upon it his own anxiety in a negative form of the 'pathetic fallacy': 'The long standing anxiety of Australians confronting the landscape indicates a problem of identity. The void of the land is forced to signify, ignoring the suture that it offers.'¹⁵

Among the most recognized landscape painters in the generation after Nolan are John Olsen (1928 -) and Fred Williams (1929-1982). I will argue that both Williams and Olsen began painting from a mapping perspective as early as the mid 1950s, not the 1970s as John McDonald states:

It was not until the 1970's when John Olsen and Fred Williams started to paint landscapes based on aerial observation, that the subject lost its gothic overtones, and became imbued with life and colour...a landscape laid out like an amazing abstract painting crafted by nature itself...over the decades these landscapes have been brought closer to us by the experience of Aboriginal painting, which replicates the same features in a distinctive sign language.¹⁶

In an early interview with Virginia Spate, Olsen spoke of his philosophy regarding his life and work. He stressed the fact that as he looked at the landscape he disputed the Renaissance model of standing, looking and painting that was in the viewer's line of vision. Olsen found this to be too visual an experience and saw the basic failing to be not dwelling *in* but *outside* the landscape. He finds it necessary to travel through the landscape and to feel the rise and fall of hill and plain. Olsen sees a painting not as a depiction of the landscape but a manifestation of successive individual reactions to experiences which took place within the landscape. He transposes external experiences into a painting so that the line between the person, the external world and the painting experience all disappear. He speaks of painting a friend's laughter into gullies and fields so that the laughter becomes part of the rhythm of the brush. When Olsen states that he is not concerned with beautiful paintings he does not refer to the beauty and joy in his paintings but to the intensity in mood that disturbs, threatens and makes one's emotions aroused. "Art must make you laugh and make you a little afraid."¹⁷

Ken McGregor observes that Olsen does not follow a traditional landscape painter's format of foreground, middle distance and background, but paints as if he is in the middle of

the painting, “in love with the soil, the plants and even the dust” while absorbing and then transferring to canvas differing landscape elements from a mapping viewpoint.¹⁸

Many influences in Olsen’s work have come from art and philosophies that are outside the Western tradition or were reacting against it, especially the privileging of the individual subject as an autonomous being outside nature, as in Renaissance perspectives. These influences include Eastern philosophies, Scottish painter and poet Alan Davies, Paris-based master printer W.S. Hayter, artists Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Willem de Kooning and Jean Dubuffet. Olsen adopted the free-flowing line used by Klee and the elegant brushwork of the Oriental calligraphers. Olsen’s 1958 journal notes: “Zen realises that our nature is at one with objective nature...in the sense that we live in nature and nature lives in us.”¹⁹



Fig.5 John Olsen. *Landscape Mediterranean*.1957.

Oil on canvas on board. 54.5 x 65.5 cm.

Source: La Trobe University Art Collection.

One of Olsen's earlier mapping perspective works painted in Spain is *Landscape Mediterranean* 1957 (fig 5). This small painting is in various sombre tones of grey with highlights of cream, pale blue and yellow. The painted surface is built up of many layers some delicately incised with fine lines and detail. The cartographic perspective provides the viewer with a microscopic view of the shape of the landscape loosely related to that of the human body.

This idea of an imaginary journey through landscape, with nature not viewed as detached but as something that can be actively engaged with and seen from a telescopic perspective, establishes intrinsic elements of Olsen's future work.²⁰ The strength of this work is derived from the manner in which the mapping view 'abstracts the motif' encouraging the viewer to look or experience the image more intimately.

The idea of looking from a cartographic point of view has remained in Olsen's work. After his return from Spain in 1959, his paintings of the city of Sydney were full of calligraphic lines and figurative images on a flat picture plane. Deborah Hart writes:

In Olsen's large paintings he pits microscopic details against aerial [mapping] perspective. In their spatial orientation he agrees with the advice of an eleventh century Chinese treatise: Landscapes are large things. He who contemplates them should be at some distance: only so it is possible for him to behold in one view all shapes and atmospheric effects.²³

In August 1982 Olsen made his extended trip across the Pilbara Region of Western Australia with writer Mary Durack and others, in a trip that covered 18,500 kilometres by land and 11,500 kilometres in helicopters and light aircraft. Olsen reported that he was "continually enraptured by the fluctuating patterns seen from the air."²² This expedition, like Nolan's earlier and similar experience, was to provide Olsen with additional resources in his continuing search for a cartographic perspective in landscape painting. He made numerous sketches and notations during

the ten week trip of which some were to become the basis of major oil paintings such as *The Pilbara on Fire* (fig.7).



Fig. 6. John Olsen. *The Pilbara on Fire* 1984-5.

Oil on canvas. 136 x 154 cm.

Source: John Olsen, *The Land Beyond Time*. Melbourne: McMillan, 1984.

Olsen's concerns were to retain the timeless quality and the expansiveness of the landscape: "The whole landscape seems to sprawl endlessly – conventional European compositional devices would be totally inadequate to this landscape."²³

On another planned trip, the subject of Ken McGregor and Jenny Zimmer's book, *John Olsen: Journey into the 'You Beaut Country'*, Olsen is quoted:

The flight in the light aircraft over and around Lake Eyre was breath-taking [Olsen] remarked. The only way to see this landscape is from the air, look at the patterns of the earth, they are like a beautiful skin, look at the pressure ridges of crystallising salt. There is a constant interplay of sky, land and water...for me it's just as essential to observe the geological lay of the land from an aerial [mapping] perspective as it is to peer into the crawling microscopic depths of a pond.²⁶

Olsen acknowledges seeing Australia from a different point of view after flying over Australia by plane and speaks about the Heidelberg School and its art as “absolutely wonderful, but it was a landscape of foreground, middle ground and horizon, and we were seeing it differently.”²⁷

In contrast to Olsen, Fred Williams had a grounded response to the landscape compared to Olsen’s more dynamic approach. Deborah Hart explains: “Olsen is less concerned with underlying geography than Williams. He is free flowing...bringing metaphorical, quixotic and psychological resonances into the orbit of the landscape.”²⁸

Before Williams left England in 1956 to return to Australia he had viewed two exhibitions of Cubist paintings including French Cubist works at the Tate Gallery and a retrospective of Georges Braque’s work at Edinburgh. As Patrick McCaughey states: “...Braque and Cubism began to hold his [Williams’] attention...Braque’s Cubism gave him the foundation and structure he was looking for.”²⁹ Williams’ early 1960s paintings, especially, can be traced to two well used items in his library: Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler’s *Cubism’s Heroic Years* (1954) and Guy Habasque’s *Cubism* (1959), “...one is paint marked, and the other so well used it is worn out.”³⁰

Williams’ *You Yangs* series of paintings (1963-64) were generated from a **range** of low granite hills on a volcanic plain outside Melbourne from which Williams could obtain a high viewpoint. The landscape is seen from an expansive mapping perspective that develops a new kind of pictorial space that is both vast and ordered . Williams was able to distil form and structure from a stand of trees on a featureless plain even though no distinct pictorial focus was present in the landscape.³¹

The *You Yangs* paintings have a beauty of colour and configuration of shapes. The exciting manner in which they depict the structure of the landscape without indicating the season in which they were painted is typical of Williams’ lack of interest

in depicting seasonal changes of climate. Williams had found in this series an individual way of working that proved that no amount of abstract paint marks could obscure the real structure of these works, organised through his perception of the characteristics of the Australian landscape in tone, shape and the clustering of trees arranged within the geometric proportions of the Golden Mean.³³ Jennifer Phipps writes, “It is through the creation of such images that Williams fundamentally altered the way in which we view the Australian landscape.”³⁴

The differing configurations of the three paintings incorporate geometric marks. *You Yangs 1* features a complete geometric right angle, *You Yangs 2* a figure eight and *You Yangs 3* a central massed configuration. McGregor quotes Williams' own description of his hieroglyphic marks: “Here I consider I have got the essence [of the bush]. That is how a landscape should be, even if it isn’t... I want to isolate those marks, turn them into handwriting. They become an alphabet, like handwriting, like hieroglyphics...”³⁵ This supports the idea of mapping - the canvas or paper on which a drawing or painting is constructed forming its physical ground and Williams' calligraphy becoming a form of handwriting. The artist is literally making marks on a flat surface without any reference to traditional models of perspective which would provide spatial depth: in effect he is map-making.

Robert Lindsay and Irena Zdanowicz write:

Unlike Sidney Nolan’s paintings of aerial views of the topography of Central Australia with its eroded red hills, Williams’ paintings, also using aerial [mapping] perspective views, ignore the contoured anatomy of the landscape and concentrate on the vegetation with its lines of trees which denote, once interpreted, the lines of valleys or the crests of hills. It is through these distanced generalized views of the vegetation that Williams creates an archetypal Australian landscape.³²



Fig.7. Fred Williams. *You Yangs I* 1963.

Oil and tempera on composition board. 137.0 x 180.3 cm.

Source: Patrick McCaughey. *Fred Williams 1927-1982*.



Fig.8. Fred Williams walking over the landscape of the You Yangs.

Source: Craig McGregor, *In the Making*. (Melbourne: Nelson, 1969)

Ian Burn observed of Williams' approach to the monotony of the Australian bush:

Most of our landscape painters have sought to show that it isn't monotonous;

Williams was more inclined to explore what that 'monotony' might be... forcing

attention on to the curiously daubed incidents and inflections of paint on his

surfaces....His calligraphy of blobs, daubs and squiggles superimposed on a field of

paint *visually* feel like bits of landscape...they act as ciphers or mnemonics,

triggering particular visions of the landscape.³⁶

Williams made use of fencing and geometric division in his landscape paintings, sometime using lines of wire attached to the canvas stretcher as a grid. The use of the grid as a spatial device can be traced back to the work of fourteenth and

fifteenth century artists "where the perspective lattice is inscribed on the depicted world as the armature of its organisation...but it does not map the space of a landscape...in reality it maps the surface of the painting itself."³⁷ Rosalind Krauss explains further:

In the spatial sense, the grid states the autonomy of the realm of art. Flattened, geometricized, ordered, it is antinatural, antimimetic, antireal. It is what art looks like when it turns its back on nature. In the flatness that results from its coordinates, the grid is the means of crowding out the dimensions of the real and replacing them with the lateral spread of a single surface.³⁸

Williams does not appear to have had a romantic view of the landscape, but saw it as a vehicle for ideas rather than emotion unlike the metaphors and narratives used by Sidney Nolan. There are no figures in his paintings, no clouds in the sky and no cast shadows. Williams accepted the landscape as it was - often dry, repetitive and barren. Williams' desire to remove atmosphere from his paintings and make them more detached is noted by McGregor "The landscape is merely the starting point for a fastidious and prolonged process of refinement."³⁹ James Mollison adds: "The verticals of these pictures emphasize the scale of the landscape portrayed just as lines on maps tell of scale and distance. They rest on views across landscape seen from miles up in the air."⁴⁰

The mapping view is present as Williams avoided conventional perspectives and treated this flat surface as a large collage of colour and shapes recalling the collage had been used by Picasso and Braque to link clear bold shapes to their work. As Helen Topliss proposed:

Williams used an equivalent of high perspective, or an aeroplane view akin to Aboriginal ground painting which allows for a cursive and calligraphic script to stand in for natural phenomena. Williams registers natural form via a set of heiglyphics... and was interested in Chinese art for that very reason.⁴¹

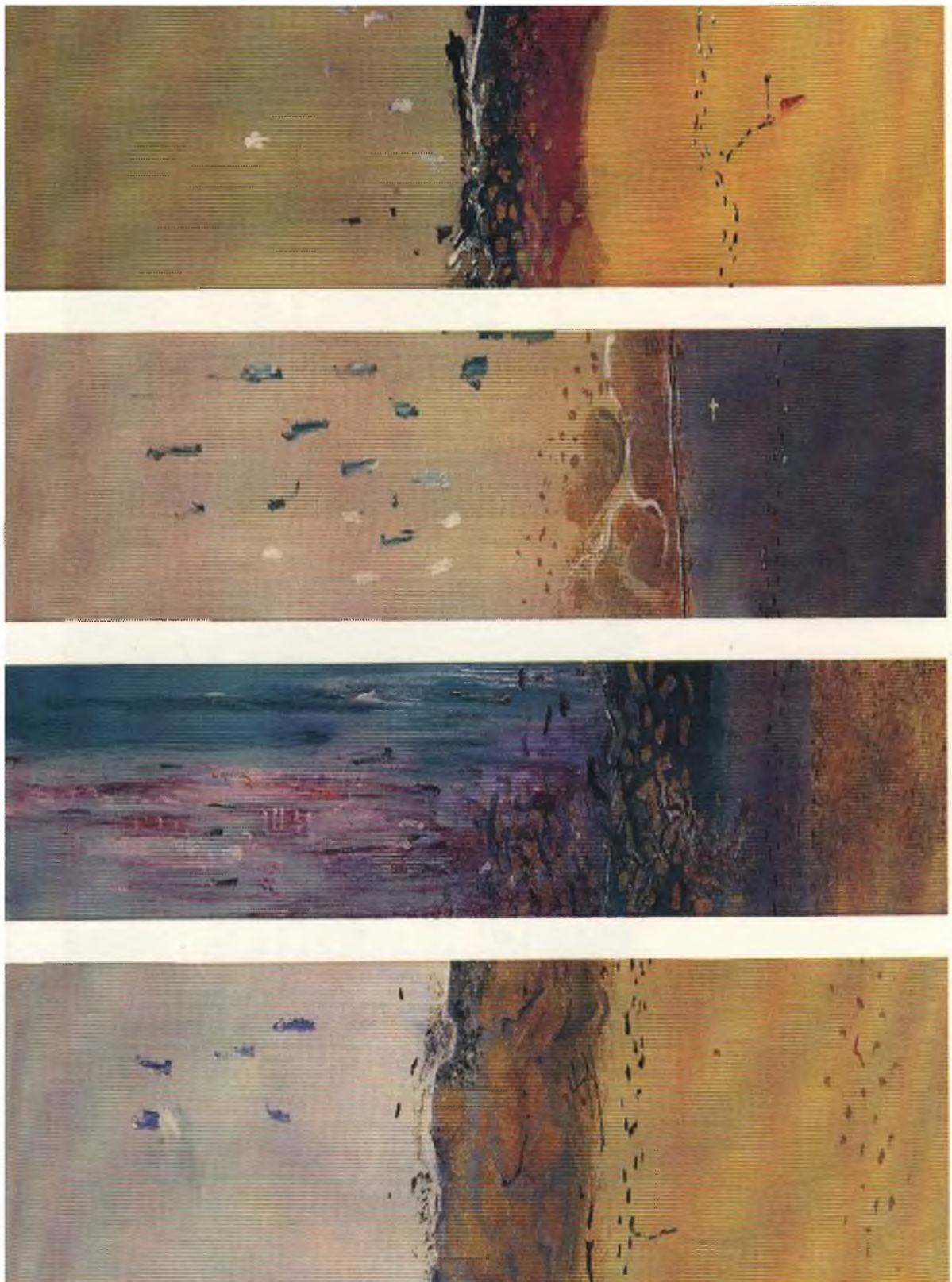


Fig.9. Fred Williams.

Beachscape, Erith Island polyptych 1975-6.

Oil on 4 canvases (1) 40.5 x 203.3cm (2) 40.6 x 203.3cm (3) 35.6 x 203.3 (4) 48.3 x 203.3.

Source: James Mollison. *A Singular Vision: The Art of Fred Williams*.

Mollison also notes the painting *Beachscape, Erith Island polyptych 1975-6*.
fig.10:

...an extraordinary innovation in landscape painting....Williams has again taken a mapper's view of the landscape: land, beach, water's edge, shoals and sea...we look down onto footprints along the deserted beach... as a result of the constant travelling he had done Williams knew a great deal about landscape seen from the air and he painted this scene looking straight down.⁴²

Deborah Hart responds with the words:

Painted in horizontal strips, these works both recall early colonial topographical [cartographic] drawings and watercolours and find affinities with contemporary abstraction.⁴³

The cartographic perspective revealed in Williams' view of the landscape allowed each component of his painting to live with its own strengths while the picture plane was graphic and flat. Williams' paintings are more about their visual texture and the elimination of atmosphere than about the appearance of the actual landscape. Williams produced over one hundred gouache paintings of the Pilbara of Western Australia in 1979 and several oil paintings including *Trees in Landscape* 1981 (fig. 11). This painting adapts a close-up mapping view that moves the viewer into and across the landscape thus creating a painting substantial in dimension and striking in colour forcefully redolent of the Pilbara that functions as a symbolic and representational depictions of inland Australia.

Williams was the first Australian artist to have a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, *Landscapes of a Continent* in 1977 and purchased a number of his paintings. Williams' painting *Winjana Gorge, Kimberley 1* (1981) described as 'a vibrant and painterly map.' The documentation suggests his large works of the 1970s and early 1980s as being influenced by the Colour Field painters, Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman.⁴⁴



Fig. 10. Fred Williams. *Trees in a Landscape* 1981.
Oil on canvas 182.3 x 152.1. Source: National Gallery of Victoria.

Sasha Grishin's **says** Williams took what he wanted from many sources and went on his own journey that ranges from the scarring of the landscape to the sheer strength and beauty of it. "A certain pigment was used because it was used by Michelangelo. A superb etcher, he cropped his copperplates and printed confusing variant editions because Rembrandt did. A canvas was given the exact dimensions of Tom Roberts' *Bailed Up* because Williams wished to challenge his predecessor."⁴⁵



Fig.11. Fred Williams. *Strath Creek Falls 2* 1979.

Oil on canvas. 183.0 x 152.5 cm.

Source: James Mollison. *A Singular Vision: The Art of Fred Williams*.

One of the waterfall series *Strath Creek Falls 2* (fig.11) is viewed from above and spreads out its panoramic beauty across the canvas so that the expanse of soil and rock achieves the quality of a tapestry in the rich deep colours of the earth. A thin white line of water from the falls lies on the flattened picture plane adding a geometric focal point. Williams' characteristic hieroglyphic markings add to the overall effect truly mapping the landscape. Like a surveyor his marks become coordinates mapping

the lines of the country, a concept he had considered early in his career: "I suppose the most universal picture is a map – it's worth thinking about."⁴⁶

While Olsen has not relied on photography- the quick sketch informs his paintings- Nolan and Williams have used photography as an aid in painting. After Nolan's second plane flight in 1949 when his notes and sketches provided insufficient material, he took advantage of professional aerial photographers. He used the detailed photographs featured in *Walkabout Magazine* and collected photos from "the Australian Military Forces with a request for prints of air photos of Central Australia and the Kimberleys."⁴⁷ Williams usually painted plein air in gouache and took these samples back to his studio for extended oil painting. However he made use of his own camera on his first flight over the Kimberleys in 1979 taking over five hundred aerial photographs as source material for future paintings.

By contrast Richard Woldendorp (1927-) is a photographer who has been deeply influenced by painting.

Woldendorp's imagery is informed by a deep knowledge of Australian painting.

Echoes of the delicacy of Fred Williams and the sensuality of John Olsen pervade many images but always with the suggestion that Woldendorp draws inspiration from the same timeless sources available to these painters – the land... [the mapping] landscape photographs remind us of the ancient vigour of the Australian continent; their virtue lies in presenting the landscapes simultaneously explicit and abstract.⁴⁸

Woldendorp showed an interest in abstract form in his work from the mid 1950s. He took the opportunity during the mining boom in Western Australia in the 1960s to become a fulltime freelance aerial photographer, with the catalyst being his first commission for *Walkabout Magazine*. Woldendorp was amazed, as a migrant coming from a European country of many centuries of development and order, how little non-Aboriginal Australians knew about their country beyond the coastline.⁴⁹



Fig.12. Richard Woldendorp.

Lake Hilman, central Western Australia, The edge of a natural salt lake.

Taken January 2007 with a Pentax 6x7 camera, 200mm lens and Fuji Velvia 100 film.

Source: Richard Woldendorp. *Abstract Earth*.

Woldendorp shows a cartographic viewpoint in his photographs, *Lake Hilman, central Western Australia* and *Coastal River Pattern, Northern Territory, Australia*. The latter photograph is of an area that contains coastal mangroves and flood plains depicted in a painterly style that could be mistaken for an abstract painting the photographs more concerned with abstract imagery than landscape representation. There are neither horizon lines nor signs of linear perspective. Familiar landscapes have become texture, line, tone and contrast.



Fig.13. Richard Woldendorp. 2004.

Coastal river pattern, Northern Territory, Australia. Tidal variations create a design.

Taken in 2004 with a Canon EOS1N 35mm camera and Fuji 100 film.

Source: Richard Woldendorp. *Abstract Earth*.

Woldendorp keeps his photographic method straightforward avoiding alteration or enhancement. He shoots his imagery from the aircraft's window to achieve an aerial perspective presenting sights that the viewer would otherwise never see: the limestone shapes of the Pinnacle Desert that protrude through the sand dunes, subtleties of the rock face of Uluru, and skeletal images of the honeycombed Kennedy Ranges.⁵⁰

Woldendorp's first book, *The Hidden Face of Australia* (1968), with specialist bird photographer Peter Slater, revealed the neglected character of some parts of the continent. The second book that included Woldendorp's photography, *In the Making* (1969), edited by Craig McGregor, demonstrated a connection between all art forms. As an aerial photographer and producer of over seventeen books on the subject Woldendorp has achieved an international reputation for his photography.

Gael Newton notes the connections in Woldendorp's aerial photographs of the landscape with contemporary landscape painting:

Woldendorp's monochrome and colour work shared formal concerns with the abstract forms and dynamic rhythms across all the visual art mediums featured in the book.

His works have a striking resonance with the landscape painters of the 1960s – 80s... with the aerial [mapping] viewpoint in the paintings of John Olsen... the images also run in tandem with the emergence in the 1980's of a generation of dynamic desert paintings in modern acrylic by indigenous artists.⁵¹

Photography reveals, from a mapping view, that the landscape is “simultaneously explicit and abstract”⁵⁰ and exposes the artist to vantage points that otherwise would not be available. The time allowed for even a quick sketch from a plane window would not provide sufficient information to complete a painting. Woldendorp approaches the medium of photography from an artistic aspect that equals the painters of landscape in depth and scope and claims that his work is not an exercise in photography but an appreciation of nature.

Woldendorp has made it an undertaking to photograph some of the sites painted by Olsen and Williams from the same perspective. An example of this is *Scrub Fire* (1981) formally similar to Williams' *Bushfire* (1976).⁵² It clearly illuminates the difference between a bird's eye perspective and a cartographic or mapping viewpoint. Williams has taken his viewpoint from above his subject, looking down, whereas Woldendorp is slightly projecting into the distance.

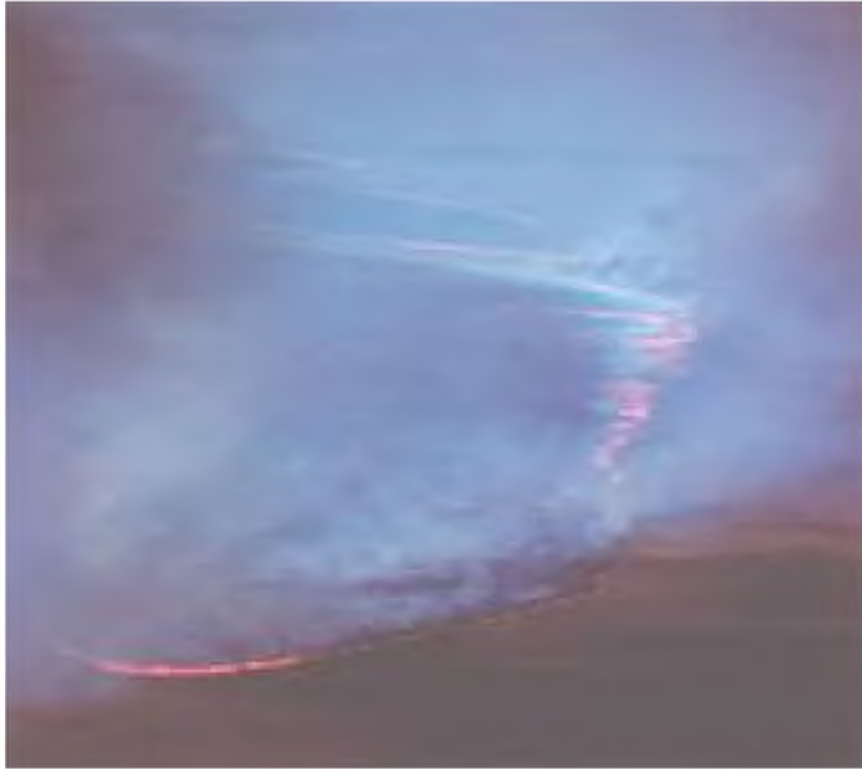


Fig. 14. Richard Woldendorp. *Bush Fire, Pilbara, W.A.* 1981.

Source: Richard Woldendorp. *Abstract Earth*. 2008.



Fig. 15. Fred Williams. *Bushfire* 1976.

Gouache 57 x 54 cm. Source: Patrick. McCaughey, *Fred Williams 1927-1982*.

The cartographic viewpoint in Woldendorp's work focuses on coastlines and the flatness of the interior land worn down since its creation by the powerful erosion of wind and water. From above, this view can see details not available elsewhere. Patterns of flood plains, estuaries, deserts, rivers and ranges can be seen in their entirety. Woldendorp's photographs capture the majestic and the subtle from dramatic to abstract, as he uses the skills learned in art school in his native Holland. His photos speak for themselves about the state of the environment in many parts of Australia and also convey his deep rooted love and respect for his adopted country's natural landforms.⁵³

English born Australian artist, John Wolseley (1938 -) said in 1994: "I generally feel that the land here has not really been painted yet except by some singular artists, and of course, Aboriginal ones, and this is because we've imposed European or other foreign models on something most peculiarly different."⁵⁴ Wolseley's words make two important points addressed in my argument. The first is that Western and Australian Aboriginal models represent space very differently. The second is implied by Wolseley's hope that the land might yet be successfully painted by Western artists if these artists deconstruct their models, which were developed to represent a different landscape, and pay closer attention to the Australian Aboriginal concept of country.

In contrast the above artists, Wolseley is deeply immersed in landscape. In an almost literal sense he crawls over it like an ant rather than soaring above it like a bird. This closeness to the landscape, which allows him to monitor all its relations like a botanist or biologist recording the habitat, is what gives his work an ecological content.

The idea of wilderness, as perceived in John Wolseley's art, opens up the possibility of seeing within it a number of central ideas, including habitat theory, the Gaia hypothesis and the notion of a microcosmic /macrocosmic duality operating in nature.⁵⁵

The former quotation gives merit to Wolseley' value in terms of cartographic art. His mapping of the Australian landscape has taken place since 1976 when he arrived from England via Spain and Thailand and began teaching in Newcastle, New South Wales, for a brief period. His impressive involvement with journal writing throughout his career gives an insight into his sense of excited discovery in his engagement with Australia, revealing a sense of wonderment that “there are luminous green circular ovals and map shapes [on the alpine forest floor]...It has a map - like quality... He makes no attempt to give the viewer an authoritative reading of nature...but introduces us to an aspect of wilderness which prompts us to see differently.”⁵⁶



Fig.16. John Wolseley. *Finke River Drawing* 3 Sept 1978 (detail)
pencil and ink on paper. 33.5 x 24.0cm. Source: Sasha Grishin *John Wolseley: Landmarks*.

Wolseley enters into an alliance with nature, making rubbings of watercolour papers on rock face to obtain glacial texture **or** burying a drawing in the earth for

period of time to utilize the effect of the soil on the paper. Through these and other actions he abrades the margin between the natural world and culture.

Wolseley's major map paintings began to appear in the late 1970s. He has made some of the most noteworthy environmental paintings ever produced in Australia. Grishin explains part of Wolseley's process:

The mapping paintings involve the notion of process and movement. The artist [Wolseley] moves within the landscape and is part of that landscape and absorbs the sense of time relevant to the environment, where a crab's tracks in the sand or the pattern made by birds' feet can be studied, observed and recorded with meticulous detail.⁵⁷

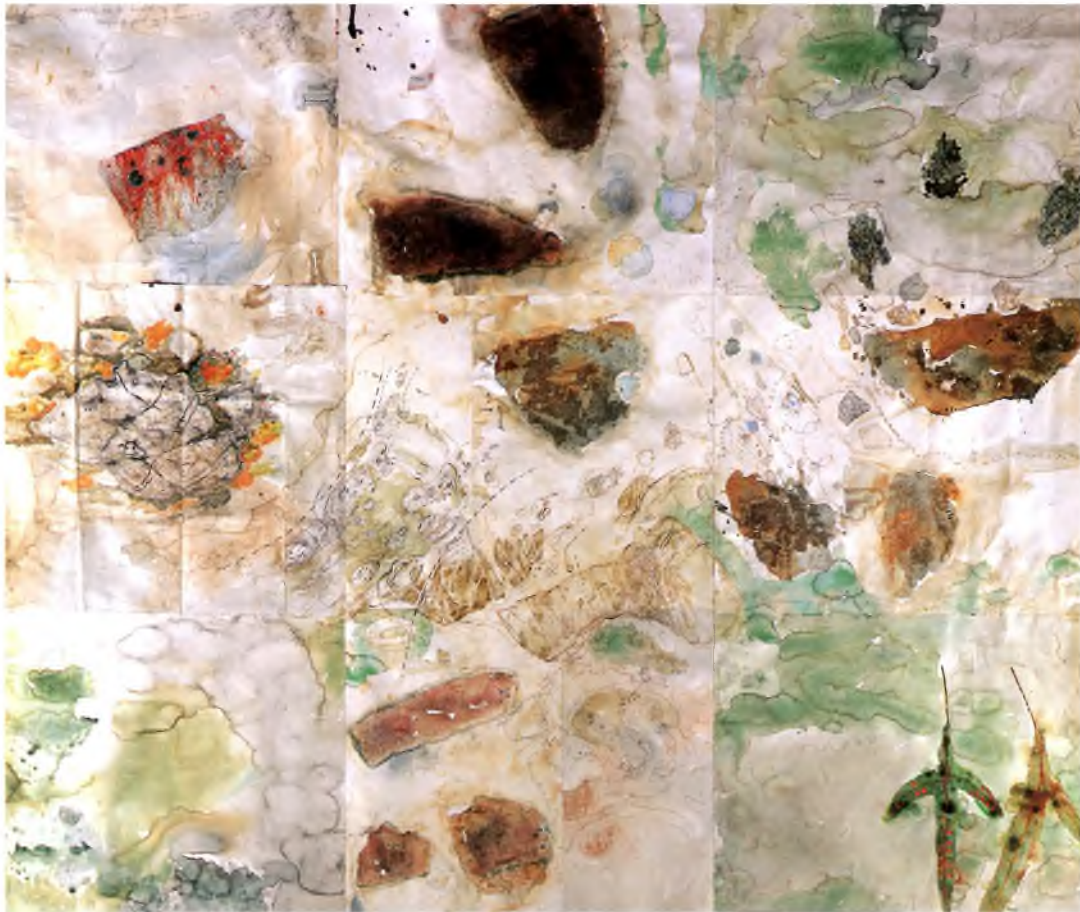


Fig.17. John Wolseley.

Concerning the passing of the glaciers and the coming of the first lichen. (Tasmania) Section. 1994.

Watercolour on paper, 162 x 220 cm. Source: Sasha Grishin *John Wolseley: Landmarks*.

The paintings *Concerning the passing of the glaciers and the coming of the first lichen*. (Tasmania) Section. 1994 (fig.18) and *Scrambling, Climbing, Flying and Moving Through the Cobboboonee Forest*, 2006/2009. (Fig.19) are typical of Wolseley's mapping style of landscape painting. They notate geological formations through various devices:

A random scanning of the surfaces...with incredibly detailed, wondrous studies of minute lichen and mysterious boulders ...mysterious pools of colour... like ocean rock pools, juxtaposed with steep mountainous slopes... precise measurements of altitude...minute studies, carefully and precisely numbered, like geological specimens in a natural sciences museum.⁵⁸

Wolseley writes:

I have hoped that in my attempts to map certain ideas about the desert I can produce works which subvert the traditional strategies of map-making.

The cartographic devices and methods used by earlier surveyors – whose aim was to colonise and find uses for country – I have appropriated to de-claim the desert; to find out what the desert does to me rather than what I or my sponsors can do to it.⁵⁹



Fig.18. John Wolseley.

Scrambling, Climbing, Flying and Moving Through the Cobboboonee Forest, 2006/2009.

watercolour, carbonised wood, graphite on 16 sheets of paper. 56 x 76 cm (each).

Source: Carboniferous Exhibition, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery Sydney. 2010.

It would be simplistic to claim that the mapping perspective used by Nolan, Olsen, Williams, Woldendorp and Wolseley is directly influenced by Australian Aboriginal painting. To the best of my knowledge none of the artists in this chapter have used Australian Aboriginal symbols in their work, or at least not in any direct sense. However each has in more general ways painted within the increasing presence of Aboriginal art in the Australian consciousness.

The map-maker's viewpoint used by these artists produces a unique representation of landscape that broke away from the post Renaissance tradition. This fresh approach to an established genre of painting, as stated earlier, was made possible by abstraction of the motif through flattening the picture plane and the absence of linear and atmospheric or aerial perspective encouraged by the Colour Field painters of America and the Informel and Tachism art of Europe and ultimately drawn from the art of Cezanne and the Cubists. Yet each of these artists has been deeply respectful of Australian Aboriginal art and by default, of a uniquely Australian expression of mapping.

Nolan visited Australian Aboriginal families in North Queensland with his wife and daughter early in his career and researched local Australian Aboriginal and European history and as quoted above had a deep respect for Aboriginal art.⁶⁰

In communication with John Olsen's son, Tim Olsen, on what he considers to be his father's inspiration when mapping the Australian landscape he wrote:

He [Olsen] is inspired by indigenous topography, but it was from aircraft that he developed his ideas on the aerial view. He often comments on how Australia being so flat, by being above the landscape you can encompass so much more of its structure, lines, trails, tributaries, shapes, colours and tones. Best w, Tim.

Tim Olsen Gallery, 63 Road, Woollahra. 2025.⁶¹

Jenny Zimmer notes Olsen is “highly appreciative of Aboriginal art, admits himself to be – correctly and understandably – at a culture removed from it. His cultural ancestors are drawn from European, and particularly French and Spanish, cultures... comparisons may be employed in their common use of aerial [mapping] perspective...but some of his work (e.g. *Kimberley Landscape Dog*, 1998) is also reminiscent of Goya’s *Head of a Dog*, 1820.”⁶²

Mollinson writes of Williams: “Frazer Fair, a painting companion, recalls that from time to time Williams mentioned the need to “absorb Aboriginal art” but that “he put it in the too hard basket.”⁶³ Williams admitted that the bush had no particular interest for him and had said: “I can only take four or five hours at a time—and sometimes I find it hostile– I don’t like the bush very much.”⁶⁴

Certainly Williams resonated with an Australian Aboriginal way of seeing as Ron Radford wrote: “His [Williams’] spotted afocal landscapes of the sixties well preceded the desert dot-painting movement that was based on traditions of design and stories about land tens of thousands of years old.”⁶⁵ Radford remembers that when he was with Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri in the Art Gallery of South Australia looking at *You Yangs Pond* (1963) by Williams “of all the paintings he [Clifford Tjapaltjarri] had just seen, apart from his own in the gallery, he responded only to this one.”⁶⁶ From vastly different traditions both artists deeply understood their landscapes independently, both had worked out new ways to express country. There were nonetheless unintentional parallels, recognised by Clifford Possum.”⁶⁷

Woldendorp appears not to require a relationship with Australian Aboriginal art as his method of photographing from a mapping perspective by airplane is distinctly removed from the Australian Aboriginal ethos of being in place. However “while not mimicking Australian Aboriginal art’s mapping qualities, the pictures clearly show

fraternal affection for indigenous Australia's downward vision of the land."⁶⁸ Of all these artists Wolseley is the one who has worked most closely with Aboriginal artists prompting Grishin to write: "Wolseley's work has the quality of a white man's Dreamtime, one that the artist has not created or invented, but which has been somehow revealed through a collaborative process with the environment itself."⁶⁹ Wolseley's journals are verification of his thorough study of Australian Aboriginal land tenure and art refined over years by encounters with traditional custodians of this land with whom he has painted and lived for short periods of time in his many travels.



Fig. 19. John Wolseley at Papunya 1979. Source: Sasha Grishin, *John Wolseley: Land Marks*. Sydney: Craftsman, 2006. page 81.

Summary

From travel and study overseas these five artists understood their landscapes independently, and had worked out new ways to express country from the influences received. I suggest that any parallels and direct references made between Aboriginal art and these non-Aboriginal artists should be made with caution. While generally aware and admiring of Australian Aboriginal art, none of these artists felt the need to appropriated Australian Aboriginal art. Rather, what links these artists is their cartographic approach, as if they intuitively understood what made Aboriginal art so distinctive and that it is the most effective way to represent this country.

Chapter 7.

Notes.

¹. Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*. (New York: New Press, 1983.) 125.

². Deborah Clark "The Antipodeans: challenge and response in Australian Art 1955-1965" *Art on View* issue no.20. Summer 1999. 4-8.

³. Virginia Spate, *John Olsen*. (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1963) 6.

⁴. Clark 4-8.

⁵. Clark 4-8.

⁶. Alexa Moses, "Shadow cast Over a Painter's Legacy" *Sydney Morning Herald Art Review*. 25 July 2005. 11.

Alexa Moses: "She [Preston] used Aboriginal motifs in her work from the 1920s onward...

Through a modern political lens, Preston can also be seen as a white artist who took images from a culture already abused and exploited without any cultural, social or political understanding of the meaning of these images, nor of the people from whom she was borrowing."

Hetti Perkins: "part of the problem with Preston borrowing images is that the artist didn't understand the narrative vital to indigenous art ... it's like speaking in a French accent without speaking French. The accent is there, the intonation is there, but the meaning is not..."

Gary Lee: "What's the difference between appropriation and influence? ... [Lee] calls the issue [of Preston's art] as political. Art history has confused Preston's use of imagery with the promotion of Aboriginal art itself."

Djon Mundine: "equates Preston's use of Aboriginal imagery to crucifixes being used as decorations by heavy metal bands... Naïve or sinister? Mundine who has written about the work views it as both. What he does not see in it is what Preston intended: an authentically Australian art." ⁵

⁷. Jane Clark, *Sidney Nolan- Landscapes and Legends*. (New York: Cambridge U.P, 1987) 109.

- ⁸. Geoffrey Smith, "Nolan's Vision" *The Age Newspaper*. (31 May 2003) Web 14 April 2013.
- ⁹. Geoffrey Smith, Catalogue: *Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought* (Melbourne: NGV. 2003) 2.
- ¹⁰. Smith 2.
- ¹¹. Robert Hughes, *The Art of Australia*. 5th.edit. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1986) 163. Print.
- ¹². Hughes 157.
- ¹³. Smith 3.
- ¹⁴. Jill Bradshaw in *The Australian Scapegoat: Towards an Antipodean Aesthetic* Ed. Peter Fuller. (Nedlands Western Australia: U of W.A. Press, 1986) 63.
- ¹⁵. Bradshaw 63.
- ¹⁶. John McDonald, "Richard Woldendorp" Web 27 March 2010. 2-6.
- ¹⁷. Spate 9-13.
- ¹⁸. Ken McGregor and Jenny Zimmer. *John Olsen: Journey into the "You Beaut Country*. (South Yarra, Victoria: McMillan, 2007) 30.
- ¹⁹. McGregor and Zimmer. 45
- ²⁰. Deborah. Hart, *John Olsen*. 2nd ed. (North Ryde: Craftsman, 2000) 38.
- ²¹. Hart 13.
- ²². Hart 155.
- ²³. Hart 156.
- ²⁴. John Olsen, *The Land Beyond Time*. (Melbourne: McMillan, 1984). 58.
- ²⁵. Judith O'Connell, *Highlife Magazine* Vol 7 No 6. (Bowral: Canongate, 2003) 114.
- ²⁶. Hart 241

- ²⁷. Patrick McCaughey. *Fred Williams 1927-1982*. (Sydney: Bay, 1987) 114.
- ²⁸. James Mollison. *A Singular Vision: The Art of Fred Williams*. Canberra: ANG, 1989. 56.
- ²⁹. Mollison 77.
- ³⁰. Robert Lindsay and Irena Zdanowicz. *Fred Williams: Works in the National Gallery of Victoria*. (Melbourne: NGV, 1980) 14.
- ³¹. Mollison 79.
- ³². Jennifer Phipps and Kirsty Grant. Ed. *I Had a Dream: Australian Art in the 1960's*. (Melbourne: NGV, 1997) 71.
- ³³. Craig McGregor, *In the Making*. (Melbourne: Nelson, 1969) 103.
- ³⁴. Ian Burns, "Fred Williams: That is How a Landscape Should Be, Even If It Isn't." *Dialogue: Writings in Art History*. (North Sydney: Allen, 1991) 88-9.
- ³⁵. Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985) 10.
- ³⁶. Krauss 10.
- ³⁷. McGregor (1969) 102 .
- ³⁸. Mollison 135.
- ³⁹. Helen Topliss, "A Singular Vision: The Art of Fred Williams" *Art and Australia*. Vol 27, 1990 Autumn. Web 5 May 2012. 401-403.
- ⁴⁰. Mollison 170.
- ⁴¹. Deborah Hart. Ed. *Fred Williams: Infinite Horizons*. Catalogue. (Canberra: N.G.A., 2011) 11.
- ⁴². *Australia, 1900-Present*. "Fred Williams: Winjana Gorge, Kimberley, 1." 2000-2006. MOMA. Web 5 May 2012.

- ^{43.} Sasha Grishin, "Fred Williams" *Australian Painters of the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Lou Klepac (Sydney: Beagle, 2000) 181-182.
- ^{48.} Mollison, 1989. 133.
- ^{47.} Smith 20.
- ^{48.} Robert McFarlane, "Abstract Earth" *Sydney Morning Herald* 9 July 2008. Web 25 May 2010. 1-4.
- ^{49.} Gael Newton, "Richard Woldendorp" *Contemporary Art: Australian, International and Aboriginal Art*. Web 27 March 2012 1-3.
- ^{50.} Peter Skinner. "Profile: Richard Woldendorp" *Rangefinder Magazine*. Web 27 March 2012.
- ^{51.} Newton 2.
- ^{52.} McFarlane.2.
- ^{53.} McFarlane 3
- ^{54.} William L. Fox. *Aereality: On the World from Above*. (Berkeley C.A.: Group West, 2009) 282.
- ^{54.} Skinner 2.
- ^{55.} Sasha Grishin, *John Wolsley: Land Marks*. (Sydney: Craftsman, 2006) 9.
- ^{56.} Grishin 17.
- ^{57.} Grishin 17.
- ^{58.} Grishin 67.
- ^{59.} Grishin 14.
- ^{60.} John Wolseley in "Interpretations of the Landscape through visual Art" *The Cultural values of the Central Ranges: A preliminary report*. 203. Web 19 April 2013.
- ^{61.} Smith 3.
- ^{62.} Tim Olsen Gallery, 63 Jersey Road, Woollahra 2025. E-mail 11 Feb 2011.

^{63.} McGregor and Zimmer. 155.

^{64.} Mollison 210.

^{65.} Lindsay and Zdanowicz. 14.

^{66.} Ron Radford in *Fred Williams: Infinite Horizons*. Ed. Deborah Hart
(Canberra: N.G.A., 2011) 9.

^{67.} Radford 10.

^{68.} Radford 10.

^{69.} McFarlane 2.

^{70.} Grishin (2006) 129.

Chapter Eight

Cartography in Australian Aboriginal Art after 1970.

Western notions of aesthetics are rarely those motivating the creation of [Australian] Aboriginal art. Nor does the *raison d'être* of much Western art – the artist's desire to communicate thoughts or emotions, to present the world to his or her eyes, or to comment in a highly individual way on imaginary or real life – generally apply to [Australian] Aboriginal art. Rather, [Australian] Aboriginal people, no matter where they are, paint what is in their heads, in their histories, as a continuation of their spiritual link with their country.¹

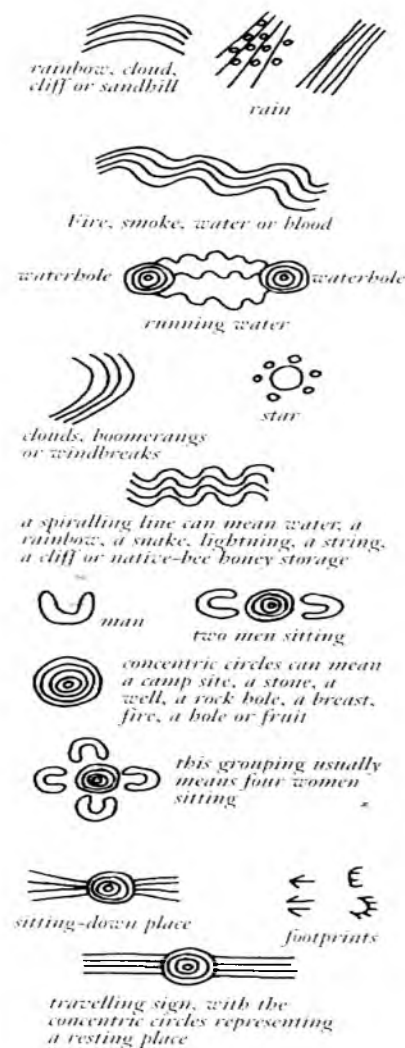


Fig.1. A sample of motifs used by Central and Western desert people²

Rock art whether carved, pecked, painted or drawn, is a unique record of age-old narratives of the land—a type of geography or land writing. About a quarter of the present population of Australian Aborigines live in remote parts of Australia where a living tradition is passed down to descendants in performative ceremonies, rock carving, rock paintings and spoken stories of the Dreamtime and in the ancestral narratives of the country itself. The art discussed in this chapter is part of this tradition and not the lively urban-based Australian Aboriginal art practices that have risen to prominence in the past twenty-five years.

Because geography is an important discourse in Western notions of identity, Howard Morphy has seen this as a potential common ground between the two. This contrasts with the differences between Australian Aboriginal and Western discourses of country that mark the starting points of most analysis of Australian Aboriginal art. This is amply illustrated in the following quotes, all of which reference mapping, from six respected contemporary academics: Judith Ryan, Jennifer Isaacs, Terry Smith, Erin Manning, Nicholas Mirzoeff and Vivien Johnson.

Judith Ryan:

They [the Australian Aboriginal artists] render tangible and permanent an ephemeral art formerly confined to ceremony, transforming it into something new.

The configuration of circles, arcs and meanders, also found on ancient petroglyphs from Central Australia, seem to issue from within the continent itself...the artist paints the land from inside it, not perched on the outside using their brush as a camera.

There is a tactile art of feeling in which knowing, sensing and touching country and the ancestral world transcends the European imperative to see.³

Jennifer Isaacs:

... [Australian Aboriginal] artists seem to have an eerie sense of aerial knowledge ...another aspect of the overhead [cartographic] perspective is the persistent

importance of tracks. These are used extensively in the paintings to denote meaning and identify particular ancestors. The segmented paintings can be viewed from above, like aerial 'maps' of ancestral journeys across the land...⁴

Terry Smith:

[Australian Aboriginal mapping is not] orientated north-south, east-west nor set out in measured distances, with objects drawn to scale...It is a visual provocation to ceremonial song, to the telling of elaborate narratives of how and why the original beings created the earth and everything in it, how the ancestor figures lived and where they went, their journeying, their acts, their examples.⁵

Erin Manning:

Clifford Possum [Tjapaltjarri] has described his map series as land titles. This series of paintings followed in the wake of important protests claiming rights to land at a time when [Australian] Aborigines of different tribes were forced to live together in imposed centres such as Papunya...to understand this as straightforward reclaiming would be misleading, because it would imply that the land as such was at stake. Clifford Possum was not delineating landmarks on a cognitive grid. He does not own the land, nor would he claim to.⁶

Nicholas Mirzoeff:

...this practise [of Australian Aboriginal mapping] could not be more distinct from the European strategy of depicting 'pure' landscape from a disinterested and disembodied viewpoint. This difference continues to play itself out in contemporary Australian culture and the politics of settlement.⁷

Vivien Johnson:

...like Western topographical maps, these paintings are large scale maps of land areas, based on ground surveys with great attention to accuracy in terms of positional

accuracy among the items mapped... they can be used for site location... Their precision gives them the validity of legal documents: they are indeed the Western Desert graphic equivalents of European land titles.⁸

Howard Morphy states that even though some Australian Aboriginal paintings do represent topographical features of the landscape the analogy between Aboriginal Australian art and maps can be oversimplified. The depictions of landscape are not related so much to topographical detail but to their mythological significance. In this way, Morphy argues, they demonstrate privileges of heritage, ritual and custodianship.

[Australian] Aboriginal paintings can only be fully understood as maps once it is realised that the criterion for inclusion is not topographic but mythological and conceptual: paintings are thus representations of totemic geography ...but topographical order still influences how places are represented...making maps of country is exercising rights of inheritance and ritual authority and often implies rights to the land itself.⁹

Once Australian Aboriginal art entered the fine art museum and art world discourse it inevitably began to be perceived within these terms even though the artists do not engage with this discourse.¹⁰ Nevertheless, a notable difference between traditional ceremonial art and that made for the art market is that the latter has removed or obscured references to secret knowledge in the traditional designs. Wally Caruana writes of the necessity to protect the sacred designs from public viewing:

The combinations of designs allow an endless depth of meaning, and artists in describing their work distinguish between those meanings which are intended for public revelation and those which are not, and provide the appropriate level of interpretation.¹¹

Johnson reveals that this strategy was used by the early Papunya Tula artists to protect the sacred religious world of their people:

... although derived from the men's secret-sacred religious world, the painting

[Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's painting *Warlugulong* 1976] is an adaptation from this realm, deliberately manipulated to allow for general viewing while also maintaining faith with tribal laws.¹²

Also mindful of his responsibilities Tjapaltjarri refers to the sacred and spiritual in his paintings and the need to keep this knowledge only for the initiated members of his tribal family: "The stories are part of my religion but not the whole story which is out there [in the bush] and in my mind. I cannot tell you the whole story or you and I would die."¹³

The most recognised catalyst for the beginning of the Papunya Tula art movement occurred in 1971 when Geoffrey Bardon, an art teacher, was posted to Papunya, which was then a government-administered community of more than 1,000 Aboriginal people. Bardon encouraged several men to paint their stories and soon others joined in. The dots, which became markedly more prominent in Papunya painting from 1973, are typically thought to have been a crucial means of concealment. Ethnographer Dick Kimber identified them in 1981 as a prime means of eliminating some elements used on some sacred objects while Ryan characterized them in 1989 as 'masking', even 'camouflage'.¹⁴ This led to a greater abstraction of the subject, hence the comparisons made by Western critics to Western abstract art.

However, as gallery owner Gabrielle Pizzi wrote: "Papunya stands alone, having no direct link to any other art movement or school. Its similarity to Op Art or Minimalism is purely coincidental."¹⁵ She also considered that Papunya was made out of the misery of a deeply spiritual people taken from their tribal lands by the Australian government in the 1960s in order to assimilate them into an Australian way of life. These people were from the Pintupi, Walpiri, Luritja, Aranda and Anmatyerre language groups. This abrupt intrusion into their tribal ways had an intensely unsettling

consequence that, however, resulted in powerful and spiritual paintings from the world's oldest continuous culture derived directly from ceremonial art.¹⁶

During sacred ceremonies Australian Aboriginal people apply designs belonging to that particular ceremony to the ground. These sand paintings and sculptures are constructed by the elders to aid the induction of tribal members into stories of the Dreaming. Some Dreaming stories reveal tracks of the waterholes or 'soaks' that are governed by the availability of drinking water and taught by tribal elders to their people in sand sculpture designs and songs – a type of cartographic iconography - in order to record the sites of these important sources of water. People uninitiated in the stories of the Dreaming never got to see these sacred designs since the soil would be smoothed over after the ceremony.



Fig. 2. Old Mick Takamarra and Old Walter Tjampitjinpa .The haptic quality of sand painting carries over to paintings on board and bodies. Geoffrey Bardon. *Papunya Tula: Art of the Western Desert*. 1991.

The extensive ritual of sand and body painting has provided the artists with an instinctive mapping perspective of all images, even photographs, viewed from any angle. This provides an absolute relativity of the paintings edge. This relativity, which denies any certainty other than the apparently unlimited points of view from which the painting can be observed, “it is the fourth dimensional cloak, or frame, of the perceptual third dimension, stemming directly from sand-mosaic and body-painting mediums.”¹⁷

Australian Aboriginal curator Hetti Perkins states that Bardon insisted that the Papunya artists paint in their own manner, not the Western styles which he felt could corrupt their art as he had a strong sense of the differences between both styles of art.¹⁸ Ian McLean writes of Bardon, “...he did not refer to it as contemporary art, and emphasised its roots in Aboriginal tradition. It was as if he deliberately resisted or repressed the obvious formal affinity between Papunya Tula painting and Western abstract art.” McLean continues “And he had good reason. As we have seen, claims for such affinity had been commonplace in the modernist reception of Aboriginal art in the 1960s, but by the late 1970s the comparison was generally considered superficial and demeaning to [Australian] Aboriginal art.”¹⁹

In November 1972 Papunya Tula was one of the first registered companies formed by Australian Aboriginals. Today Papunya Tula Artists Pty. Ltd. has 49 shareholders, predominately of the Luritja / Pintupi language groups, and represents about 120 artists. Papunya Tula celebrated forty years of successful painting between November 2012 and January 2013 with two exhibitions in Alice Springs and one in Singapore.²⁰

with religious values of the Anmatyerre people. Tjapaltjarri's trust and friendship with author Vivien Johnson provides valuable insights into Aboriginal mapping of the Dreamings, and an understanding of some of the Anmatyerre language, customs and learning that had been interrupted by European settlement.

Tjapaltjarri was born in a dry creek bed at Napperby Station about two hundred and seventy kilometres northwest of Alice Springs. He was taught traditional sand and body painting in a time honoured way, at first introduced to basic iconographic patterns—animal tracks etc - as a child, and later as a young man he initiated into the sacred meanings of the stories that would make up the basis of his future paintings: the stories of the Dreaming, the Spinifex wallaby, sugar ants, kangaroo and snake. In his younger days Tjapaltjarri was as a carver of wood artefacts for the tourist trade, while his seasonal work as a drover for Hamilton Downs Station allowed him time to return to the Napperby bush. Tjapaltjarri was already carving and painting while an occasional visitor to the settlement of Papunya during the late 1960s before the arrival of Bardon in 1971. Within six months of Bardon's arrival, over thirty artists, including Tjapaltjarri, were producing paintings using acrylic paints.

Judith Ryan states in the *Fieldwork; Australian Art 1968-2002* catalogue:

The whole history of Australian art has been irrevocably changed by what thirty or so senior men achieved at Papunya. ...The achievements of Papunya Tula and other Aboriginal artists since the ground work was laid in the first two years at Papunya has made it impossible to exclude Aboriginal art from any survey of Australian art post-1970.²²

The Papunya Tula Company records from 1972 show that Tjapaltjarri was mapping the nine specific Dreamings that appeared in his paintings for the next twenty years. However, in 1976 as Kimber states there was "still widespread antagonism expressed toward the painting movement with other Western Desert

communities...and also some serious concerns expressed to me by senior men from other communities about certain aspects of the art.”²³ These concerns related to any disclosure of secret-sacred material and the painting of a Dreaming to which the artist was not connected...Tjapaltjarri was exceptionally careful in regards to traditional facts and was disapproving of Aboriginal artists who did not “include the food supplies of the ancestral beings” in their paintings.²⁴

After the early years canvas was purchased to replace the boards as the favoured support allowing for larger works such as Tjapaltjarri's painting for a BBC documentary film crew. The film, *Desert Dreamers*, was made to present Aboriginal art to an international audience. The painting by Tjapaltjarri, assisted by his brother Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, was *Warlugulong* 1976 “a work of totally unprecedented narrative complexity in the Papunya Tula style, encyclopaedic in its range and detail.”²⁵ *Warlugulong* 1976 is an excellent example of how a large-scale painting could rework the “formal vitality of the smaller scale into a large format without any diminishment of the overall visual impact.”²⁶

Tjapaltjarri’s achievement in these large format ‘deeds of title’ paintings, using the superimposition of one layer over another, claimed McNamara, resulted in a “zooming in and out of focus, as though one peeks through clouds of floating dots- suggesting either ephemeral effects of atmosphere or the passage of fire over a landscape- allowing one to gaze onto a Dreaming site below.”²⁷

Or as Vivien Johnson put forward:

...like Western topographical maps, these paintings are large scale maps of land areas, based on ground surveys with great attention to accuracy in terms of positional accuracy... they can be used for site location, and...are Western desert graphic equivalents of European deeds of title.²⁸



Fig.4. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. *Warlugulong (Fire)* 1976. Acrylic on canvas, 168.5 x 170.5 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales. Source: Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*. 2004.

Terry Smith argues that Tjapaltjarri did not set out the Dreaming stories in the same spatial relationship observed in a European map. For each of the main stories told in *Warlugulong* 1976 the artist changed the north-south axis. For example the two sons of Lungkata flee to the south but are actually shown going upwards or north on a European map. Yarapiri the Great Snake travelled south to north but is shown moving east to west in European mapping traditions. Just looking at two examples “requires a spinning in space above the landscape on the part of the spectator who wishes to remain anchored, or better, a letting go of Western spectatorship.”²⁹

Over the period 1976-79 managers at Papunya Tula, John Kean and Dick Kimber, observed the painting of the five large mapping works by Tjapaltjarri and the cultural importance was upheld by pages of detailed notes. Deciphering the background information on the cultural sites and Dreamings was referred back

numerous times to the artist for verification. These notations and diagrams provided a valuable source of information. Kean writes about *Warlugulong 1976* and the other four large map paintings by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri:

The icono-graphic elements of these paintings bore an uncanny resemblance prepared by anthropologists for claims to Aboriginal land in Central Australia and to botanists' vegetation maps of the area. They provided a visual thesis for Aboriginal connection to country.³⁰

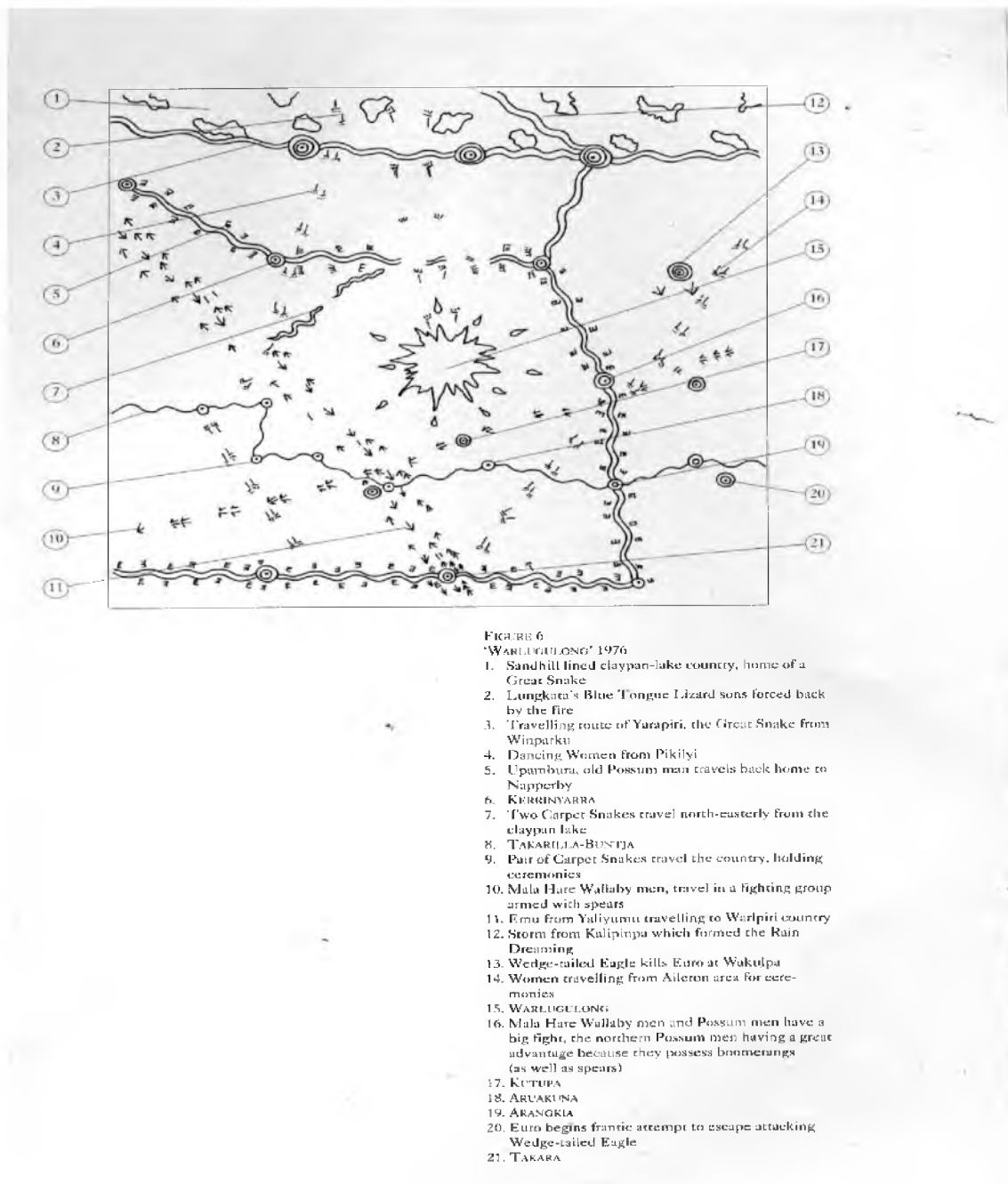


Fig.5. Map of *Warlugulong 1976*. Source: Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*. 2004.

Kean recognised that the five vast paintings make discernible the conceptual maps that underpin the Australian Aboriginal comprehension of land in central Australia. The many particularized Dreaming images and sites are joined along ancestral song lines and criss-crossed with “precise tracks and traces left by ancestral beings...across these vast canvases, each representing hundreds of square kilometres of country, the principal soil and vegetation types are mimicked with patches of dots representing the country as seen from above.”³¹

. Morphy also cites *Warlugulong 1976* to illustrate his argument on mapping in Australian Aboriginal painting:

There is often no single orientation for a painting. Different views of the landscape may be superimposed on each other and the scale of features reflects their mythological proportions rather than their geographical relations there are various twists in geographical perspective in order to incorporate mythological perspectives... and this applies to *Warlugulong 1976* ³²

The main feature of Tjapaltjarri's and Papunya paintings in general is the compressed cartographic depiction of landscape. While the link between artist and country is an essential feature of most Australian Aboriginal art, unlike other Papunya Tula artists Clifford Possum explored the idea of the relationship between artist and country further and “...perceived the parallel with maps of the Europeans and explored its artistic potential in the new medium by developing the concept of his paintings as ‘maps’ of country.”³³ However Tjapaltjarri's mapping is removed from conventional European mapping as the geographical and cosmological relationships are different. Another distinction is that *Warlugulong 1976* was painted flat on the ground as are most Western Desert paintings, opposed to the easel painting tradition of Western linear perspective.

There is no directional North in Tjapaltjarri's paintings and the artist took his bearings from different sides of the canvas at varying stages of the mapping as Johnson explains;

...the Dreaming trails have *not* been placed in their geographical relationship to one another as on an European map...the artist changed orientation, like spinning in space above the landscape...so that two or more Dreamings tie in with each directional realignment...just as the tracker continually up dates his bearings and alignments in space with each change of direction in the chase. He had been trained since a child to have a refined sense of direction with the knowledge adjusting even further to the sense of the familiar...As the map series continues, Clifford Possum works to reconcile European and Anmatyerre sense of direction and balance in his Dreaming cartography.³⁴

Warlugulong 1976 includes complex viewpoints of graphically orientated mapping stories of the Dreaming and the absence of horizon emphasises the fact that there is no separation between land and sky. The difference demarcated by the horizon is returned into a more cosmological landscape in which clouds, rainbows and wind are an integral part of the landscape. A set of symbols or signs is used to note the presence of the ancestors who are embedded in the land.

Tjapaltjarri makes use of the Tingari symbol in *Warlugulong* as he had in many other works such as *Bushfire 2* (1972) and *Man's Love Story* (1973). The Tingari symbols are painted concentric circles that represent ancestral beings who brought culture and law to the Western desert region people. They also "mark a place where ceremonies were held, an identifiable location to the present day... the place names run from the north to the south over a vast stretch on country."³⁵

Johnson cites the five 'deeds of title' paintings as revealing the spatial aspects of the totemic landscape, thus giving non-Aboriginals insight into the innermost attribute of Australian desert culture where sites of sacred implication are connected in

their geographic relationship to each other “These paintings are maps in a more conventional sense as the vegetation, geology and topography of the area is represented by the arrangement of background dots.”³⁶

The last of Tjapaltjarri's large mapping paintings, *Yuutjutyungu* 1979, is recognised by Kean as “the most complex and ambitious Papunya Tula painting; it calls on the full range of dimensions – space, time, depth and description of the earth.”³⁷ The Los Angeles Times reviewer, William Wilson, after viewing *Yuutjutyungu* in the 1994 United States exhibition *The Evolving Dreamtime*, wrote: “it is a large composition by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. As dark and sumptuous as an imperial Chinese court painting, it is also as unexpected as an Abstract Expressionist masterpiece. Its title *Yuutjutyungu: Ancestral Tales of Mt. Allan Sites* is mysterious and stately...there is no question this is an art exhibition.”³⁸



Fig. 6. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. *Yuutjutyungu: Ancestral Tales of Mt. Allan Sites* 1979. (section). Synthetic polymer paint on canvas. 231.0 x 365.5 cm. The Kelton Foundation. Source: Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*. 2004.

The ‘dark and sumptuous... mysterious and stately’ *Yuutjutiyungu* is even more remarkable when one considers the painting site, used by Clifford Possum in fine weather, pictured in fig.7.



Fig. 7. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's open air studio at Mbunghara, July 1980. Photo: Tim Johnson

The last paintings by Tjapaltjarri, that depict skeletons talking to each other, are “prophetic and uncharacteristically psychological works” writes Kean, “They pose disturbing questions about the deeper meaning of the cross-cultural experiment that had Tjapaltjarri, his family and the Aboriginal art market at its epicentre.”³⁹

The second Aboriginal artist to be overviewed is Walpiri artist Dorothy Robinson Napangardi, who was born in 1956 in the bush near Mina Mina, a significant women's site, in the Tanami desert 400 km north-west of Alice Springs. The family was forcibly relocated to the government settlement of Yuendumu in the late 1950s and were not able to return to their country until 1976 when lands rights legislation was finally passed.⁴⁰

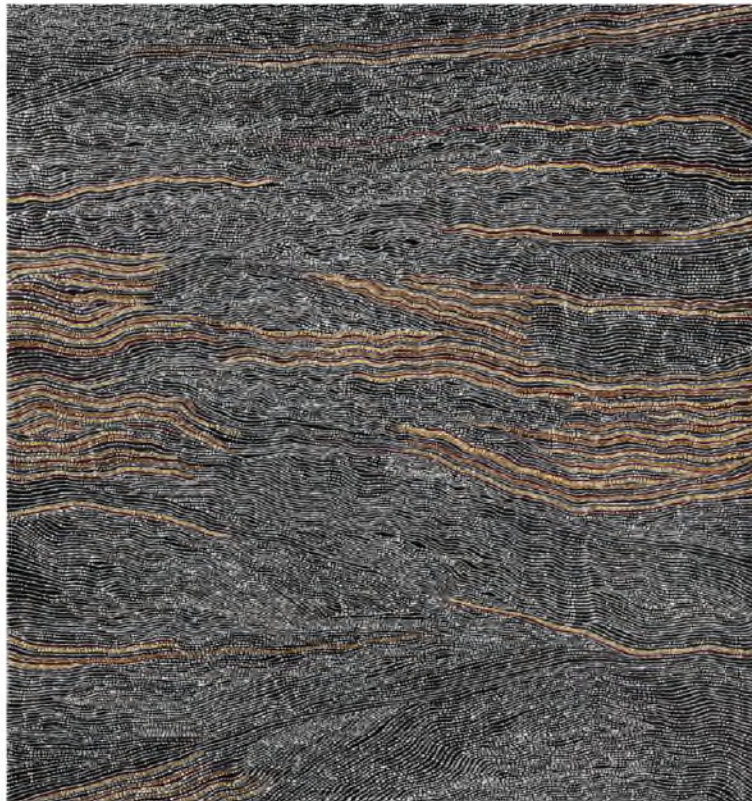


Fig. 8. Dorothy Robinson Napangardi. *Sandhills of Mina Mina*. 2000.
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas. 198 x 122 cm. Source: National Gallery of Australia. A.C.T.

Napangardi started painting in 1987 at the Centre for Aboriginal Artists in Alice Springs. Her exposure to other artists proved helpful but the return to her childhood area of Mina Mina is believed to be the most influential factor in her development. Here at Mina Mina she was offered and received specific knowledge about the stories of her people. This led to the extreme stylisation, intricacy and immense size of her future work. Napangardi's achievement, writes Christine Nicholls:

...is the formation of a unique visual consciousness optically assisted by living and sleeping outdoors... Napangardi's spatial consciousness was never framed as 'mono-directional planar...it is her ability to render this superior spatial ability onto canvas that makes her work so special...human cultures differ greatly in terms of how they organise space and this is evident in any comparison between [Australian] Aboriginal artwork and other world visual traditions.⁴¹

Nicholls draws on David Lewis Williams' description of Australian Aboriginal people's exceptional visual-spatial and orientation skills brought about by the ability to construct mental maps...an ability to keep in one's head a dynamic view of a huge tract of land that is updated continually in the mind as one moves through it. "While the point of reference is necessarily the self, the self is not fixed in time or space in relation to the 'map' as a whole...it is constantly being realigned on the basis of movement, change of direction, bearing, and must factor in the passage of time and distance."⁴²

Napangardi's paintings are composed of a complex arrangement of lines that create innumerable intersections that seem to dance on the canvas. Her view is above, cartographic sometimes featuring the whole salt clay pan and other times a single grain of sand. In a minimal palette of blacks, whites and browns, she recounts the stories of *Jukurrpa* or Dreaming specific to the Mina Mina area rich with histories of the ancestral women and their digging sticks.



Fig. 9. Salt on desert clay pans at Mina Mina.

Source: Christine Lennard, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs.

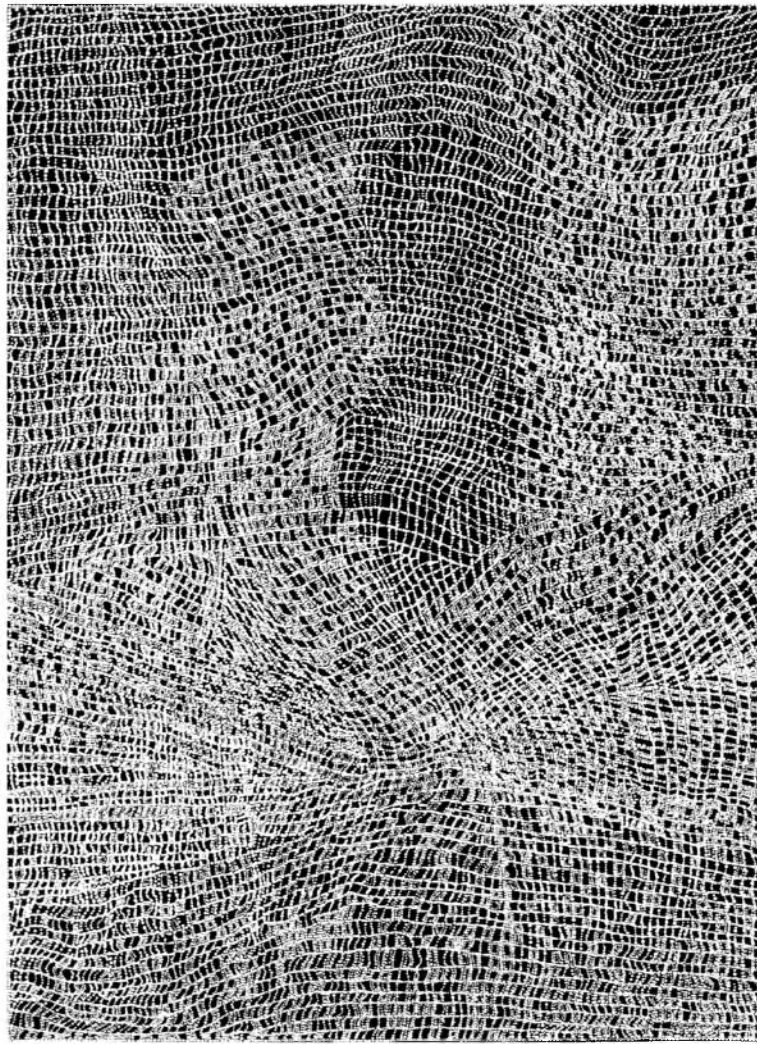


Fig.10. Dorothy Robinson Napangardi. *Women's Dreaming* 2001.

Synthetic Polymer paint on canvas, 183 x 122 cm.

Source: Christine Lennard, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs.

Emily Evans and Falk Wolf write that, in their opinion, Napangardi's concept of land cannot be understood outside the framework of her resolution to map and grid her family land. As a guardian of country Napangardi enjoys authority over the land which allows her to establish her own style of representation. The grids of Napangardi "map her country, her Dreamings, and deep interconnectedness with both."⁴³ Whereas the anti-perspectival grids of Western modernism maps nothing but "the surface of the painting itself."⁴⁴



Fig.11. Michael Nelson Jagamara. *Mikilangu* 1984.

Acrylic on canvas 122 x 182.5 cm. Source: Vivien Johnson. *Michael Jagamara Nelson*. 1997.

Michael Nelson Jagamara, also a Walpiri artist from the Western Desert, was born between 1946 and 1949 at Vaughan Springs, Mt. Doreen Station, one hundred kilometres west of Yuendumu where he was taught sand, body and shield painting by his grandfather as a boy. He later moved to Yuendumu so that he could receive European education at the mission school leaving at the age of thirteen. After his Walpiri initiation rites he worked driving trucks and droving cattle before moving to Papunya in 1976 where he settled and married. The ability, gained at the mission school, to read, write and speak English was to assist him in his future artistic career.⁴⁵

Jagamara had inherited key responsibilities for many sacred sites and rituals from his father, an important Walpiri Medicine Man or Shaman at Yuendumu and these Dreaming stories remained with him when he was given the opportunity to learn painting at Papunya in 1983. Despite the Walpiri elders' resistance to entrust their

sacred designs to canvas, the monetary remunerations were becoming gradually more obvious to many of the far-flung desert communities with the dotting method maintained to screen the designs from the uninitiated viewer.

Approximately forty years ago, when Jagamara began to paint at Papunya no "Walpiri tribesman or woman who valued their life would dare expose the culture to outsiders without the elders permission. Nor could they paint the Dreaming in defiance of the guardians of its law."⁴⁶

I've been learning from them other old artists, like old Kaapa and Tim Leura. I was watching how to mix the colours. Clifford Possum too. Just sitting there watching them, then I start myself...I thought to myself - I'll do different to them mob- instead of copying them. Do my own way.⁴⁷

Later Jagamara certainly did it his way with great formal innovations: "multi-layered dotting on the larger canvas": Not following topographical location as Tjapaltjarri had done, but placing varying modes of several Dreaming stories on the one canvas "for maximum visual impact" and also changing modes of infill using irregular interlocking shapes, stippled and contour dotting.⁴⁸

Jagamara's painting *Five Stories* is arguably his most important work and its image has been represented world wide in exhibitions and publications. The artist tells Johnson of his intention to put *Five Stories* together. "Like Clifford [Possum Tjapaltjarri]– he did lots of stories...the colours different – light blue...you can see the desert properly, like river, and swamp, big lake, from bushfire probably – put them all together."⁴⁹ Jagamara used yellow in place of the traditional white and small areas of one colour are brushed in and surrounded by another contrasting colour to give a muted effect. The black in the painting on which the designs are applied he regarded as 'body' the body on which similar designs are traditionally painted for ceremony. He was focused on its representational function as a mapping landscape. As Johnson quotes

the artist: "...background here, no dots. Red and white, salt lake when you go in aeroplane – from air or top of hill I used to look."⁵⁰



Fig.12. Michael Nelson Jagamara. *Five Stories* 1984. (detail).

acrylic on canvas 122 x 182 cm. Source: Vivien Johnson. *Michael Jagamara Nelson*. 1997.

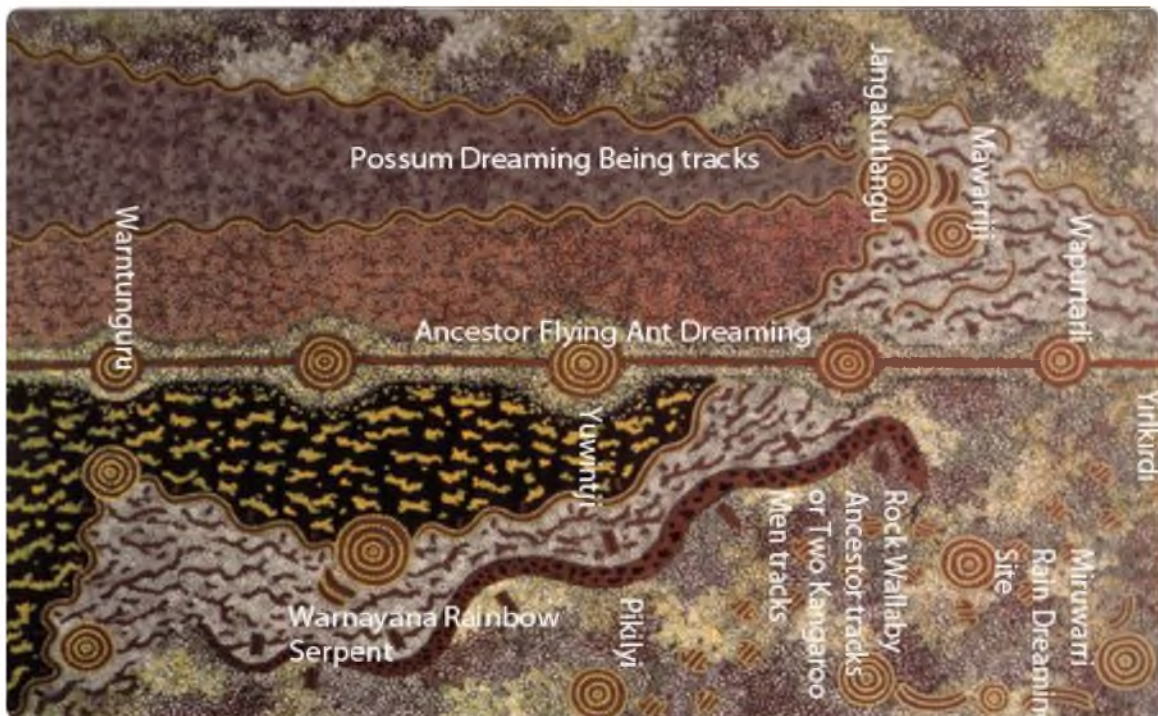


Fig.13. Dreaming map of *Five Stories*.

Source: Professor Ian McLean. University of Wollongong, New South Wales.

While mapping within the carefully delineated dotting style of the late 1970's and early 1980's at Papunya, Jagamara's natural flair for creative structure and enthusiastic colour brought him recognition in the local and international art world achieving a number of accolades. From 1984 when he won the inaugural National Aboriginal Art Award his work was exhibited in the 1986 Sydney Biennale. In 1987 his 8.2 metre mural was installed in the northern foyer of the Sydney Opera House before he won the commission to design the 196 square metre mosaic forecourt of Australia's new Parliament House in 1988. An Order of Australia and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of New South Wales in 1993 and 2008 respectively have cemented his reputation.

However, controversy also impacted on Jagamara's life and painting practice most infamously after Immants Tillers appropriated his 1984 painting *Five Stories* and later following the Parliament House commission as Johnson elaborates:

... the controversy that erupted in 1988 over Indigenous activist Kevin Gilbert's claims that the [Parliament House] mosaic placed a curse on white Australia until justice was done for Aboriginal people, invested the mosaic with an energy and significance for all Australian Aboriginals.

In late 1993 it [the mosaic] became the focus of large Indigenous demonstrations in Canberra over the terms of the Federal Labor Government's proposed Native Title legislation...on the 27th Sept, 1993 Michael Nelson removed the centre stone from the mosaic to please 'the town mob in Alice Springs and the Koori people in Canberra'... by Christmas 1993, the Mabo Native Title legislation was the law of the land... reflecting later on the trouble caused for him back home with the lawmen of Central Australia, Michael Nelson's words were "I should've stopped home and do my work painting."⁵¹

In her 1996 monograph on Jagamara, Johnson notes that in the Walpiri society there exists "a strict etiquette of self-effacement which makes bragging about one's

potential the height of bad form” and Jagamara had crossed that barrier with his 1981 and later statement that he might become a famous artist one day. He admitted to Johnson in an interview about 1996 that “everybody call me famous artist...Old people famous. Best way. And now everybody, Aborigines and white, they have a turn, ‘he’s a famous artist.’ Not proper. They make me shamed. I get shamed in my heart. I get nervous, bit frightened too.”⁵²

The year 1996 was a turning point for Jagamara as George Petelin writes:

In 1996, after meeting artist and gallery owner Michael Eather in the late 1980’s Michael Nelson began formally working within the collaborative atmosphere of Brisbane’s Campfire Group... he took part in artistic experimental workshops exchange of ideas and art practices... Nelson has launched into a highly expressionistic genre with his minimalist surfaces embellished with singular, rapidly painted, calligraphic-like motifs that resound with the power of their ancient origins. The meticulous dot has been replaced with vigorous gestures executed energetically and haptically on to the painted surface of his canvases.⁵³



Fig.14. Michael Nelson Jagamara. *Old man Lightning* 2011.

Source: George Petelin, "A History of the Campfire Group"



Fig.15. Michael Nelson Jagamara. *Lightning Dreaming at Yamapunta*. 2011.

Source: George Petelin, "A History of the Campfire Group"



Fig.16. Michael Nelson Jagamara. *Two Yams*

Acrylic on canvas.202 x 205 cm

Source: Red Desert Gallery, RDD319. Eumundi Qld.

I ask myself the following questions: Are the recent paintings by Jagamara indicative of contemporary Australian Aboriginal art in the early twenty-first century? Do the comparisons begin with curtailment of the Dreaming stories of the artist through early exposure to fame and white culture compared to the lifestyle of Tjapaltjarri? Did disappointment with the outcome of the Parliament House mosaic disillusion Jagamara to the extent that his vision extended towards a Western modernist approach while still mapping his country? Do his 2011-2012 paintings glow with the Australian Aboriginal spirituality of his earlier work? I do not think so!

I would argue that an Australian Aboriginal artist with great success behind him is not well placed to engage in experimental workshops that may appear to have compromised his artistic vision.

Tjapaltjarri had been clearly puzzled by Emily Kngwarreye's "seemingly minimalist development of indigenous art" with the words: "What story this one, where the design?"⁵⁴ However Kngwarreye had negligible exposure to the world of western art and people. Marcia Langton writes:

...in the challenging circumstances of post-colonial Australia - colour materials, design and even gender roles have been reconsidered and reshaped around core traditions to permit the painting tradition to continue in new circumstances of globalism and large uneducated audiences.⁵⁵

Perhaps, as Andrew McNamara suggests, Australian Aboriginal artists are changing the state of play in Australian art:

Genius can be understood as someone who establishes a new aesthetic idea, or, borrowing from Thomas Kuhn's account of scientific revolutions, genius forces a paradigm shift in aesthetic thinking and awareness... Kngwarreye, Tjapaltjarri and the Papunya Tula movement each initiated a new conception of what indigenous art can be...new modes of doing things can be established which displace former principles. This is the ironic consequence of exhibiting the dynamism of a culture."⁵⁶

The cartographic approach **of** the three painters discussed above is typical of contemporary Western Desert art, and in general, it does seem to be leading a paradigm shift in Australian art particularly as some non- Aboriginal artists search for new approaches to landscape painting.

Terry Smith writes: “As settlement [of Australia] progressed to a point when it needed to introduce its own practices of selective forgetting, landscape became more and more prominent, both in actual journeying and in the distilled visitation of the painted image.” Smith continues “in contrast, Aboriginal representation of territory does not calibrate in the senses or measure distance or plot exact locations on the earth’s surface...”⁵⁷ Smith concludes:

Painting and singing continue this sacred ground into the present. Ceremony and art making repeat the imbrication of the bodies and spirits of the men and women into the actual, and the re-imagined, ground. It is a representing which preceded the era of colonization, and will supersede it. It is a murmuring and a mark-making which is incessant.”⁵⁸

Artist Marjorie Alessandri claims that in order to revitalise contemporary Australian art with some form of spirituality and innovation, Australian artists are turning towards Australian Aboriginal art for assistance. She also suggests that “the Australian fascination with Aboriginal culture is motivated by an awareness of the sterility of white, middle-class culture and its failure to provide spiritual values.”⁵⁹

One example of the influence of Australian Aboriginal art on non-Aboriginal artists is in response to Papunya Tula art coordinator Andrew Crocker's introduction of Sydney artist Tim Johnson to a first hand view of Papunya artists at work. This galvanised Johnson’s own return to painting at a time when he was looking for, but unable to articulate, a reason or motivation for so doing. The work of the Papunya artists was a revelation for Johnson, but he came to see that the ‘new’ Aboriginal art

could not be construed as an extension of the modernist project. He also worked on joint canvases with Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula, Kaapa Kaapa Tjampitjinpa and later Jagamara.⁶⁰



Fig. 17. Tim Johnson and Michael Nelson Jakamarra (Jagamara).
Women's Story and Yam Dreaming 1987-92. acrylic on canvas board. 40.5 x 30.3 cm.
Source: Vivien Johnson, *Michael Jagamarra Nelson*.

Summary

This chapter has explored the correlation between key Australian Aboriginal artists and country using the notion of mapping as a conceptual framework. Each of these artists lives with the unique cultural knowledge that informs their painting, each reinvesting the cartography of the ancestral through their work.

The combination of the mythological map, unintelligible without explanation, and the clouds of visually hypnotic dots encouraged the Western viewer to engage with images that distil the beliefs of a continuing culture that can trace its roots to earliest human history.

Chapter 8.

Notes.

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- ^{2.} McCulloch 53.
- ^{3.} Judith Ryan, Ed. *Fieldwork. Australian Art 1968-2002*. (Melbourne: NGV, 2002) 13-15.
- ^{4.} Jennifer Isaacs, Ed. *Spirit Country: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art*. (South Yarra: Hardie Grant, 2006) 13-15.
- ^{5.} Terry Smith, "Visual Regimes of Colonization: Aboriginal Seeing and European Vision in Australia." *The Visual Culture Reader*. 2nd edit. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Phaidon, 2004) 487.
- ^{6.} Erin Manning, "Relationscapes: How Contemporary Aboriginal Art Moves Beyond the Map" *Cultural Studies Review*. Vol.13, No. 2, September, 2007.144-5.
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- ^{8.} Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*. (Adelaide: Art Gallery of SA 2004) 81-2.
- ^{9.} Howard Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*. 5th ed. (London: Phaidon, 2004) 106-7.
- ^{10.} Ian McLean. Ed. *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art: Writings on Aboriginal Contemporary Art*. (Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art, 2011) 20.
- ^{11.} Wally Caruana, *Aboriginal Art*. 2nd ed. (London: Thames, 2003) 103.
- ^{12.} Johnson (2004) 228.
- ^{13.} Vivien Johnson, (Roseville: Craftsman, 1994) 62.

- ¹⁴ Tim Bonyhady. "Sacred Sights" Sydney Morning Herald, 9 December 2000, Spectrum pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁵ Gabrielle Pizzi, in *Aboriginal Art and Spirituality*. Ed. Rosemary Crumlin, (North Blackburn, Vic: Collins Dove, 1991) 76.
- ¹⁶ Pizzi 76.
- ¹⁷ Geoffrey Bardon, *Papunya Tula: Art of the Western Desert*. (South Yarra, Victoria: McPhee Gribble, 1991) 228.
- ¹⁸ Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink. Eds in *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*. (Sydney: AGN.S.W. 2004) 201.
- ¹⁹ McLean 44.
- ²⁰ Appoline Kohen. "A Powerful Tradition" *Australian Art Review*. Nov-Dec 2012. Ed. Patricia Anderson. (Sydney: Australian Art Review, 2012) 71.
- ²¹ Johnson (2004) 15.
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- ²³ R.G. Kimber, "Recollections of Papunya Tula 1971-1980" in *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*. Ed. Perkins and Fink (Sydney: Art Gallery of NSW, 2004) 206.
- ²⁴ Kimber 206.
- ²⁵ Johnson (1994) 49.
- ²⁶ Johnson (1994) 49.
- ²⁷ Andrew. E. McNamara, "No Two Ways About It: On the Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri Retrospective." 2005. Web 11 March 2013. 1-7.
- ²⁸ Ryan 61.
- ²⁹ Smith (2001) 49.

^{30.} John Kean, "Getting back to Country: Painting and the Outstation Movement 1977-1979" in *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*. Ed. Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (Sydney: AGNSW, 2004) 222.

^{31.} John Kean, "Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri-Adelaide and Beyond" *Artlink*. vol 24 no.1, 2004. Web 11 March 2013. 2.

^{32.} Morphy 105-6.

^{33.} Johnson (1994) 47.

^{34.} Johnson (2004) 92.

^{35.} Johnson (2004) 227.

^{36.} Johnson (2004) 223.

^{37.} Kean 2

^{38.} William Wilson in the *Los Angeles Times*, 1994. *The Evolving Dreamtime*, Pacific Asia Museum, Los Angeles, 1994-1995.

^{39.} John Kean. "Getting back to Country: Painting and the Outstation Movement 1977- 1979." in *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*. Eds. Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (Sydney: AGNSW, 2004) 222.

^{40.} Christine Nicholls, "Thinking big: spatial conception in the art of Dorothy Napangardi." *Artlink*, v.23, no.3, Sept -Nov 2003: 44-51.

^{41.} Nicholls 44-51

^{42.} David Lewis-Williams, in Christine Nicholls "Thinking Big: Route Finding by Desert Aborigines in Australia'" *The Journal of Navigation* 29:1. January 1976.Web 29 July 2013. 45.

- ^{43.} Konig, Kasper and Emily Joyce Evans and Falk Wolf. Eds. *Remembering Forward: Australian Aboriginal Painting since 1960*. (Cologne: Museum Ludwig, 2010) 56.
- ^{44.} Rosalind Krauss. *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002). 10.
- ^{45.} Vivien Johnson, *Michael Jagamara Nelson*. (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1997) 39.
- ^{46.} Johnson (1997) 33.
- ^{47.} Johnson (1997) 50.
- ^{48.} Johnson (1997) 64.
- ^{49.} Johnson (1997) 61.
- ^{50.} Johnson (1997) 64.
- ^{51.} Vivien Johnson. "Michael Jagamara Nelson Gives It a Go." *Artlink* Vol 24, no. 3, 2004. Web 16 March 2013. 1-4
- ^{52.} Johnson (2004) 111.
- ^{53.} George Petelin, "A History of the Campfire Group" Web 16 March 2013. 1-4.
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- ^{55.} Marcia Langton, "Sacred Geography: Western Desert Traditions of Landscape Art" in *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*. Ed. Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (Sydney: AGNSW, 2004) 263.
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- ^{57.} Smith (2004) 492-3.
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Conclusion

The studio work and written dissertation each examine mapping from an epistemological perspective, that is, they propose art making as a way of knowing country and place, from alternative vantage points. This epistemological perspective to landscape, I have argued, has been a universal human practice from earliest times and it still informs contemporary art. My research has demonstrated the range of mapping and of the historic developments in perspective from 40,000 BC to the twenty-first century.

An important element in Australian Aboriginal ways of representing country, I argue, has been an illusion of abstraction, in which colour, line and form act as a type of symbolic language that communicates knowledge about place, however obliquely **or** subjectively the audiences' reading is. In this respect, representing place using a coded or abstracted model of mapping is at odds with the European tradition of art in which perspectival systems aim to mimic the outer forms of nature as seen by a human eye from a fixed position.

In twenty-first century Australia there is a unique confluence of ancient and contemporary practices which draw on diverse approaches and traditions of mapping. Aboriginal and colonial histories of place, which I have documented particularly in regard to the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and more expansively in the Western Desert of Australia, have provided examples of distinct knowledge of place. While the invasion and settlement of those regions considered fertile by the colonists (such as the Southern Highlands) resulted in the widespread decimation of the indigenous population, other parts of Australia were more slowly colonised, allowing the indigenous populations time to adapt to a greater degree. As a consequence, in large parts of Australia an ancient way of knowing the country continues to be

practiced. This intimate cosmological and physical knowledge of place has been the driving force behind a contemporary painting tradition, drawn from pre-history, that has influenced artists of European descent in subtle and explicit ways.

This crossing of cultures is a complex story now more than two centuries old. While I recognise its broad outlines in terms of the impact on European artists, my main focus has been to investigate the mapping of their country by Australian Aboriginals and the ways non-Aboriginal artists have, in different ways, drawn on these influences.

As I have shown, Western traditions of map-making and developments in European and American art histories have naturally informed non-Aboriginal artists, but the land itself as a generative subject, invested as it is with Aboriginal cosmology and mystique, has shaped Australian painting since 1788. It is in this context that my own painting, motivated by my Aboriginality and endorsed by a close relationship to place, sits within the chronology of map-making as art and art as map-making in Australia.

Painters who employ a mapping paradigm in their work find satisfaction in it as, unlike conventional landscape art, cartographic landscape paintings do not have a recession of the view into an endless horizon or a view of the sky. Therefore it establishes a natural affinity with abstract painting, due to subjects being flattened when viewed from a mapping position. The writers of art reviews, text books and web pages could do well to recognise the differences between topographic, cartographic and aerial perspectives when writing about them so that a clearer understanding can be discerned.

The story of Papunya Tula, in itself, is a remarkable narrative of the adaptation of ancient designs to modern materials, of what had existed in transient appearance to

an enduring one, and of something that had no commercial value into a product that would revolutionise Australian art and perceptions of country and knowledge. In a sense Papunya Tula marks a new legitimacy in mapping place. It is as if there are universal aspects of art making and in Australia our shared history is short enough to observe the discreet unfolding of two distinct models, not just of mapping, but also of thinking and imagining. Art will help to map this process.

Exegetical Appendix.

Sarah Willard Gray.

Concepts of Ownership, Belonging and Place. 2009-2014.

The aim of my PhD exhibition of paintings was to explore the landscape of the Bong Bong Common on the Southern Highlands of New South Wales using a cartographic viewpoint that provided a spatial illusion of flatness. This viewpoint allowed me to examine mapping from an epistemological perspective and propose alternate viewpoints for knowing country and place. Mapping the landscape using a cartographic perspective is underpinned and framed by the histories of mapping outlined in the thesis and the paintings and the thesis together gives the viewer a richer understanding of a landscape I know well, as it is a place to which I have a deep attachment.

The starting point for my PhD studio work was the politics, history and family connections to the Bong Bong Common. The politics of this land has been a common thread running through this series of paintings and deeply informs my sense of attachment to the place. My historical understanding of the landscape changed the way I approached my creative work and embedded in the paintings is a record of this history. I thought deeply of this history while working *in situ* to achieve a sense of place, authenticity and connection to the area in which I reside and the connections with my own family histories. Thus it determined the landscapes that I chose to work in and also the emotional feelings I had while painting there – though this (affect and emotion) was not a subject of the written thesis, I will give some examples:

- The *Hanging Tree* (fig.3) which is an expression of my compassion for the Gundungurra people and those who are believed to have been killed here and on their land more generally.

- *Bayoong Bayoong c1825* (fig.5) This large painting represents a part of the Wingecarribee River where there was an early colonial settlement. Thus it is a good example of a painting that does have some bearing on the research in the thesis. The composition of the painting is based on a plan of the gaol, Charles Throsby's hut, the Commandant's quarters, soldier's barracks and two large vegetable plots as they were in c1825. This plan is illustrated in the thesis on page 60. (Refer to Fig 2. in chapter Four). Field notes made by Surveyor James Larmer in 1837 show the location and relative size of the buildings at Bong Bong: locksmith, military barracks, commissariat store and blacksmith's shop. Hoddle, 1837, FBK 467, p91. Source: Rappoport Report, Fig 12. page 31.



Sarah Willard Gray. *Bayoong Bayoong c 1825*, 2012.
Acrylic on canvas 1.80m x 2.49m. Source: Sarah Willard Gray.

- *The River Wingecarribee. No.1* (fig.6) The image reveals the grains of red-brown soil of the Common, mixed into the paint in a sincere reference to a substance from the environment itself, thus presenting the painting as an index or haptic map in memory of the Gundungurra people.

The Wingecarribee River played an important role as an inspiration in my creative work. At the bend of the River is the historic causeway thought to be the oldest existing colonial causeway in Australia, built to allow Governor Macquarie's carriage to cross over the river in 1820. The basalt rocks and hardwood timber of the causeway is still clearly visible just under the surface of the water. This causeway is referenced in the painting below and on page 35 of the thesis. However the reference is designed to evoke an emotional response and is not a realistic documentation of the causeway or part of a historical narrative.



Sarah Willard Gray. *The Causeway at Bong Bong*. 2012.

Acrylic on marouflaged board with oil glazing. 90 x 60 cm

Source: Sarah Willard Gray

The fact that the Berrima District Historical Society assisted me in tracing my father's family added much more to my encounter with the Bong Bong Common. They found that my great grand uncle James Shepherd was born near Bong Bong Village in 1831, when it was an army garrison. This was eleven years after it was visited by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1820 to officially declare it the first village in the Southern Highlands. These close ties to place increased my sense of ownership, belonging and emotional attachment to the place.

The PhD Creative has been underpinned by this deep attachment through an investigation of my place in this particular landscape through the perspective of cartographic mapping. Initially my interest in aerial mapping developed from my Masters Research exhibition and thesis research in which I explored local landscapes from an aerial perspective. This PhD thesis research and exhibition of paintings further developed this research and allowed me to further understand the particular point of view I had adopted in my paintings and understand my place in the landscape.

The written thesis and paintings investigated the localised history of the Southern Highlands and its representation by artists. I did not appropriate or critique existing landscape representations of the Bong Bong Common but, do allude in a poetic way to its history and this history does inform my artistic response to the landscape. I do not however attempt to represent either narratively or allegorically the history discussed in the written thesis. My thesis and paintings are a dialogue between practice and research. The paintings initially driving the direction of the research and the research directly guiding the way in which I depicted the landscape.

Through my paintings of the Bong Bong Common I have explored perspective and cartographic mapping using devices that collapsed the atmospheric space of the painting and I have purposely used a restricted colour palette. I use only four or five

colours in a restricted tonal palette derived from the colours of the material (rather than atmospheric) landscape I am working in to ground the viewer to the earth. Whether used separately or blended, the aim is to hold all elements together in a movement from complementary to tertiary colours that embody the hues of the dark trachite rock, red earth and grey green foliage of the locale. I seek to ground and forefront the landscape through imagery and tonal palette colours that connects the viewer to light foliage with a focus on the earth and the architecture of the landscape that sits underneath and connect the viewer both the current and the ancient histories of the landscape. The use of the cartographic perspective allows me to adopt this viewpoint.

To understand the way in which artists have utilised this cartographic perspective I looked to the long history of landscape painting starting with the drawings and paintings of the Upper Palaeolithic era, through to French post-impressionists and American Abstract Expressionists, culminating in an historical examination of the perspectival means by which a number of Australian artists have approached their representations of landscape. This historical research enabled me to contextualise the mapping perspective I used in my landscape paintings.

I write about this cartographic painting device in the thesis and the writing in chapter six elucidates the principles of cartographic perspective and its relations to other perspectives. All of the PhD paintings are composed from a cartographic or mapping perspective and have no connection with aerial, linear, or bird's eye perspective. Western mapping and landscape art are noted for their linear and aerial perspectival techniques for which there is a specialized terminology. A simple explanation of the cartographic perspective is one seen from an elevation looking directly down and does not, like a bird's eye view, involve any vanishing points. It flattens the picture space by depicting two dimensions onto a two dimensional surface

without any suggestions of recession or shading of colours to replicate distance. The use of a Cartographic perspective allows me the freedom to clearly map the chosen terrain in a way that other perspectives do not allow me to explore.

Initially I start a painting with in-situ sketches underpinned by historical research I have sourced and any sketches and photographs I have discovered while researching the site. My working practices are quite ordinary as I begin with sketching directly with sepia ink onto a canvas with a red oxide ground. In some paintings, if the feeling is there, I work with text and will include a quotation or some other suitable words on the preliminary drawing to be painted over in parts during the completion of the work. In previous years I have made numerous sketches in visual diaries but not necessarily at present. I have spent a great deal of time in the landscapes of the Southern Highlands sketching and painting and researching the histories of this area. When I return to the studio I rely on the memories of the landscape and the paintings an emotional response to place. I map my sense of belonging and place in this landscape which is embedded in a context broader and deeper than the current generation.

The cartographic viewpoint that I use allows me to collate this historical research and preparatory work and give the viewer an alternate vantage point to view the landscape that draws together this research connecting it to not only current and colonial histories but also ancient pre-colonial and a pre-historical history of the landscape with a viewpoint that connects the viewer to the earth as a constant in the evolution of this landscape over such long period of time. I also tell the story of place through these landscapes and the perspective I use allows me to draw together a narrative of belonging and deep connection to the landscape of the Bong Bong

Common through a long history of its inhabitants, generations of my own family and their connection to this landscape in which I live.

I have lived for thirty four years on the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and for the last fifteen years I have painted out in its landscape with a focus on the Spanish word 'Duende' meaning 'spirit of the earth'. The landscape, used in this way, is a sanctuary-a sacred place without walls, and to realise it quietly is a spiritual experience. From the time of the Barbizon School artists have continued to go into the landscape to paint plein-air and to experience the sounds and smells of the landscape that become more apparent as an awareness of another dimension seduces the mind. I hope that my artworks act as a meditation on the theme of engaging with place and perspective.

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