Genocide: a ceramic representation and documentary study of the impact of colonisation on the Australian Aboriginals

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GENOCIDE: A ceramic representation and documentary study of the impact of colonisation on the Australian Aboriginals.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS (D.C.A.)

FROM THE

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

BY

PAUL COUNSEL

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS 1990
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this dissertation is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

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ABSTRACT

The work presented in this submission deals with the impact of colonisation on the Australian Aboriginals. It is presented in two parts, one a written dissertation, the other an exhibition of ceramic art. Using both aspects, I investigate the relationship between Aboriginal and white societies, both in an historical and present day context, and claim that this relationship constitutes genocide.

This narrative is not written from a straight historical point of view, in that I do not look at different areas, States, times, individuals and policies to evaluate similarities and differences. Rather, it is a personal statement written by an artist. There is no attempt to create a smooth myth in the way that much of Australia’s history has previously been addressed.

In this investigation, I have applied Raphael Lempkin’s definition of genocide, to events and practices which have taken place since the colonisation of Australia. I have structured the document around the United Nation’s Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

In the presentation of the art work, I have used clay and corroded steel metaphorically to represent Aboriginal and white societies respectively. The resultant juxtaposition of these materials alludes to certain events and practices as described in the research.

My greatest concern is that our history has been prejudiced by ideals and assumptions, which lay at the foundations of our ways of thinking. Aboriginal people continue to suffer the results of this legacy.

It is my belief that these ideals need to be reassessed and that we need to change the way we remember our past. Through this body of work, I am expressing my concern at the continued injustice directed towards Aboriginal people, by making visible a history which has contributed to the present socially depressed condition of Aboriginals.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THOSE WHO HAVE DONE ANY WRITING KNOW OF THE PROBLEMS
IN GAINING A LITTLE DISTANCE FROM THAT WRITING, IN
ORDER TO SEE MORE CLEARLY.

THIS PROBLEM, AND THE ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS OF
FRUSTRATION AND MENTAL BLOCKAGES, ARE USUALLY
PASSED ONTO OTHERS.

IN MY CASE THEY WERE PASSED ON TO SOMEONE WHO SHARES
A SPECIAL PART OF MY LIFE.

AMANDA

THANKYOU
I REMEMBER THE DAY I DISCOVERED THAT MY PARENTS WERE MORE THAN JUST MY MUM AND DAD, THEY WERE MY MATES.

OVER THE LAST THIRTY YEARS OR SO, I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THE BOND BETWEEN US, COULD NEVER GROW STRONGER THAN IT IS AT THE PRESENT.

BUT TOMORROW IT DOES.

THANKS PAT AND D'ARCY,
THANKS MUM AND DAD.