

2008

Family footprints: tracing the past in the present through curatorial autobiographical practice

Anthony R. Bourke
University of Wollongong

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses>

University of Wollongong

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material.

Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Recommended Citation

Bourke, Anthony R, Family footprints: tracing the past in the present through curatorial autobiographical practice, M.A.-Res. thesis, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 2008. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/805>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

FAMILY FOOTPRINTS

Tracing the Past in the Present through Curatorial Autobiographical Practice

Master of Arts by Research

from

University of Wollongong

by

Anthony Bourke

Faculty of Creative Arts

2008

Certification

I, Anthony Bourke, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts by Research in the Faculty of Creative 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.

Anthony Bourke

Date:

Acknowledgements

Elizabeth Ellis, Keith Vincent Smith, Peter Emmett, Jo Holder, John Darling, Patricia Bourke, Belinda Bourke, various family members, the late Michael Riley, Tracey Moffatt, Hetti Perkins, Brenda Croft, Jonathan Jones, Djon Mundine, Diana Wood Conroy, Amanda Lawson, Michael Rolfe, Daniel Cunningham and staff at the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, David Corbet, Mitchell Library Staff, Jennifer Leahy of Silversalt Photography, Marise Williams and Ross Murray.

Abstract

The research is a study of a curatorial development, process and practice over ten years and three exhibitions that culminated in the exhibition *Lines in the Sand: Botany Bay Stories from 1770*, in 2008.

The accompanying written text charts the evolution from a 1998 exhibition *Flesh & Blood: A Story of Sydney, 1788-1998* where for the first time I synthesised various strands in my life: my career as a curator in Aboriginal art and relationships with several of the artists, an exploration of my own colonial family history, and a growing interest and expertise in colonial material.

Flesh & Blood has been described as a new form of curatorship (see Lawrenson): an exhibition that was both traditional and innovative, in which the past was brought into the present by the juxtaposition of appropriated images, and the weaving of Aboriginal and personal settler narratives for the first time. The inclusion of artworks by Aboriginal artists disrupted a linear European telling of history.

The concept I developed for the second exhibition in 2006, *EORA: Mapping Aboriginal Sydney, 1770-1850* was to identify and examine where possible the Aborigines dispossessed in those first years of settlement. This was a counterbalance to my family history and provided the opportunity to bring into the public arena the extraordinary scholarship of Keith Vincent Smith, the biographer of *King Bungaree* and *Bennelong*. The exhibition demonstrated how much information is now known about the Eora people and provided an opportunity for the Mitchell Library to showcase for the first time their colonial Indigenous material. While curatorially conservative, it was the most comprehensive exhibition of the subject matter ever assembled.

In 2006 I also commenced my Masters of Arts by Research at the University of

Wollongong in order to examine the third phase of my research: specific encounters between my family and Indigenous people. I started with Philip Gidley King, my maternal great-great-great-great-grandfather, as he was a First Fleeter as Second Lieutenant to Captain Arthur Phillip in 1788. Both these men experienced the first encounters with Aboriginal people in Botany Bay and their documentation has provided the official historical record, as the other better known and subsequently published journal writers arrived in Botany Bay several days after them. While I have other encounters to examine between my family and Indigenous people, the events of 1770 and 1788 are so fundamental as foundational narratives, that they have become the entire focus of this thesis.

As my reading and written research progressed, the visual images I discovered, or were familiar with, became an indispensable element of the project. With my background as a curator and the variety of visual imagery available, an exhibition emerged as the most effective means of articulating my thesis. *Lines in the Sand: Botany Bay Stories from 1770* also evolved into a quest to identify and articulate the Aboriginal perspective and voice, where possible, on the events of 1770 and 1788, and reflected the latest scholarship. The Aboriginal point of view has undoubtedly been best expressed by artists, particularly Gordon Bennett, and a younger generation such as Daniel Boyd and Jonathan Jones. Also incorporated again has been the most recent research of Keith Vincent Smith who has identified or verified several of the Aboriginal participants and eye witnesses of those first encounters.

In 2006 I moved to Bundeena in the Sutherland Shire, and was subsequently invited to propose an exhibition for the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre. As the southern shore of Botany Bay is part of the Sutherland Shire, an exhibition about the responses to the events of 1770 and 1788 in Botany Bay was the logical outcome.

This provided the opportunity for me to present my ideas and research findings through a curatorial process that had been evolving over ten years. Rather than “conclusions”, my curatorial thesis illustrates how many different narratives contribute to a national narrative, and that there are many ways of interpreting and understanding history.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
List of Figures	ix
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 <i>Flesh & Blood: A Story of Sydney 1788-1998</i>	6
Chapter 2 <i>EORA: Mapping Aboriginal Sydney 1770-1850</i>	23
Chapter 3 Philip Gidley King in Botany Bay, January 1788	31
Chapter 4 <i>Lines in the Sand: Botany Bay Stories from 1770</i>	59
Chapter 5 <i>Lines in the Sand</i> Exhibition Catalogue Essay: “Lines in the Sand”	85
Conclusion	98
Bibliography	103
Appendix A: Ken Watson review of <i>Flesh & Blood</i>	109
Appendix B: Hetti Perkins’s Speech for Opening of <i>Lines in the Sand</i>	116
Appendix C: Katrina Schlunke, Talk: Captain Cook’s Eye-patch Sunday 13 April at 2pm, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery	118
Appendix D: <i>Lines in the Sand</i> – Budget	128
Appendix E: Hazelhurst Regional Gallery Floor Plan	129
Appendix F: <i>Lines in the Sand</i> – Visitors’ Book Comments	130

Appendix G: Elizabeth Fortescue, “Drawn From the Past,” <i>Daily Telegraph</i> 29 Mar. 2008, Culture: 10. Photograph: Bob Barker.	132
Appendix H: John McDonald, “All their Eggs in one Basket: A Cultural Exchange with San Diego Piques the Interest, while Elsewhere Pirates Entertain in a Blend of Art and Activism,” <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 10-11 May 2008, Spectrum: 16-17.	133
Appendix I: Anna Lawrenson review of <i>Lines in the Sand</i> for <i>Art Monthly Australia</i> . Submitted version. November 2008.	134
Appendix J: Marisa Van Eijk review of <i>Lines in the Sand</i> for ARTWRITE http://blogs.cofa.unsw.edu.au/blog/artwrite/Artwrite+38/?permalink= ARTWRITE-ISSUE-38-FEATURES.html	144

List of Figures

Introduction

- Figure 1. Daniel Boyd, *Untitled*, 2006. Sandpit (sand, wood),
model ship (wood, felt, cord). 300 x 300 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Mori Gallery, Sydney. 1

Chapter 1

- Figure 2. Poster for *Flesh & Blood: A Story of Sydney 1788-1998*. 6

Chapter 2

- Figure 3. Entrance to Mitchell Library during *EORA: Mapping
Aboriginal Sydney 1770-1850*. Photograph by author. 23

Chapter 3

- Figure 4. First contacts in Botany Bay: April 1790: Philip Gidley
King, p. 113, “Remarks and Journal kept on the Expedition
to form a colony: 1786-December 1790”: fair copy,
compiled 1790. Ref: MLMSS C115/safe1/246) Collection:
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales. 35
- Figure 5. Thomas Medland after Richard Cleveley, *A View of Botany
Bay*. Etching Published 17 June 1789, by J. Stockdale. The
Supply etc at anchor, and the Sirius with her Convoy arriving.
Collection of author. 38
- Figure 6. Clinton Nain, *Two Natives Dancing* (1998). Photograph
(diptych), 45 x 64 cm. Collection of author. 53
- Figure 7. “A description of a wonderful large wild man, or monstrous
giant, brought from Botany Bay”, c.1790, printed broadsheet.
Collection: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. 54

Chapter 4

- Figure 8. Gordon Bennett, *Australian Icon (Notes on Perception No. 1)* (1989). Oil and acrylic on canvas, 76 x 57 cm. Private Collection. 61
- Figure 9. Entrance Foyer Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre: Enlarged “*copy of the original plan of Sting-ray Bay on the east Coast of new Holland, by the Master of H.M.S. Endeavour, Captain James Cook 1770*” and *Untitled* flag by Boat-people.org. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 64
- Figure 10. Gallery entrance 1770: Daniel Boyd, *Captain No Beard*. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 66
- Figure 11. Gallery Entrance 1788: Joan Ross, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 67
- Figure 12. Installation 1770 end of gallery: E. Phillips Fox, *Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay*, Daniel Boyd, *They Call Them Pirates Out Here* and *Untitled* installation. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 69
- Figure 13. Daniel Boyd, *Untitled* in front of *Echo* by Guan Wei. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 70
- Figure 14. 1770 small gallery/cabin. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 71

- Figure 15. 1788 small gallery/cabin. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 71
- Figure 16. Adam Hill, *Heads Will Roll*. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 72
- Figure 17. Midden latex peel, Paddy Forham Wainburranga, *Too Many Captain Cooks*, and *Too Many Captain Cooks*, film. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 74
- Figure 18. Jonathan Jones, *mark making (A View of Botany Bay)*, 2008. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 76
- Figure 19. 1778 end wall (left to right): Julie Dowling, *Boongaree*, Gordon Bennett, *Metaphysical Landscape 11* and Jonathan Jones, *mark making (A View of Botany Bay)*. Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 77
- Figure 20. Collection Botany Bay National Park (Kurnell). Installation photograph by Jennifer Leahy, Silversalt Photography. 80