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THE DE-LEGITIMISATION OF CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS EXPRESSIONS AND INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST REPRESENTATION

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"The De-Legitimisation of Contemporary Indigenous Expressions and Intersectional Feminist Representation"

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Introduction

A typical question posed to contemporary Indigenous artists is "do you make Aboriginal art?", naturally I respond that I do. However, once they view my work, it is quickly dismissed as a misunderstanding, perhaps they were looking for what I can only assume is the fallacious notion of: "*authentic* Aboriginal art". It is my understanding that what many art consumers wish to purchase is most likely featuring pieces from well recognised and respected Western Desert artists (see fig. 1)

Figure 1. Walangkura Napangka, *Untitled* 2009
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas (180.0 h x 244.0 w cm)

Many art consumers seeking "authentic Aboriginal art" aren't necessarily motivated by the portrayal of Aboriginal culture and individual expression of existence, but rather seeking a consumable and static "aesthetic" regardless of the artistic intentions behind it. In Australian contemporary art there is an unstated pressure on contemporary Indigenous artists to remain true to the notion of traditional and / or authentic artistic expression. This expectation is based on false and outdated notions of what Australian Indigenous art consists of, it also serves a more sinister oppressive role in the way it denies and undervalues the complex identity of Indigenous Australians from simultaneously existing within an Indigenous and contemporary context.

This paper will address the questions and conflicts associated with differing perspectives and artistic depictions of history, the ways in which structures of power directly influence the validity of representations of Indigenous expressions and the associated impact on the formation of self and identity.

In the first section I will discuss how the de-legitimization of contemporary Indigenous expressions is explored as the subject of what constitutes Aboriginal Art is analysed with reference to my studio research and personal experiences as a contemporary Indigenous Artist; addressing the designation of "inauthenticity" due to the integration of modernity and celebrating culture in a contemporary way.

Section two examines altering perspectives of reality and de-colonisation through art as a critique of past representations of historical events and national identity and the ways in which art has shaped our understanding of history and how this, and many other current affairs and topics are being challenged by Indigenous artists today.

Within section 3, representations in art and popular media and the effect on the self is simultaneously analysed and contrasted to highlight the inequality of black characters and the consumption of cartoons and children's programming and how this affects the production of self worth and understanding within a global context. An intersectional-feminist critique will also be discussed in order to illuminate the history of the male gaze within art and how I intend to directly subvert this by painting my own works and portraits as a woman of colour and demand agency within male dominated gallery spaces.

Finally, section 4 will address the possibilities for future contemporary, culturally inclusive, and innovative ways of producing works that are designed for people of colour as well as defying the common western narratives of the "princess/prince charming trope" and allowing female characters to be given strength and determination, subverting past examples of out-dated and sexist notions of gender specific roles and limitations.

How can Indigenous artists explore modernity and transcend the art world and society's ingrained systematic racism and sexism in a critical way, without the risk of disparagement? By asking these complex questions within my honours project, I hope to begin to challenge preconceived notions of Indigeneity and reject the label of "Aboriginal Art" as a

classification entirely as this creates a divide between Indigenous artists as a collective and community. It is crucial to begin reclaiming the female form and highlight the importance of works portrayed and exhibited by female artists in order to deconstruct the past trend of women under-exhibited yet overrepresented as voyeur figures in art and media.

Section 1: De-legitimization of Contemporary Indigenous Expressions

This is not to diminish or criticize the continuation and preservation of traditional Aboriginal customs through art, but to challenge the pressures from the western gaze and expectations of the art market for Indigenous art to remain confined and unaffected by modernity and global influences. From an early age I had been conditioned to identify "aboriginal art" as a construct, due to my first encounter with the aesthetic expectations held by the judges of an Indigenous student art competition in primary school; I had spent all week painting a large rainbow glitter dragon in my lunch breaks and was proud to see it on the wall next to the other contestants, only to be told that I hadn't won as the theme was supposed to reflect "*Aboriginal painting*". This had resulted in me eventually disassociating myself as an artist during adolescence from my Indigenous peers, and even my own family's art works, as my father and grandfather are both exhibiting Indigenous artists. As negative as that experience was, it has allowed me to reflect on the ways in which classifications and public perceptions of indigeneity can have systematic and inter-personal effects on an Individual's self worth and sense of belonging to culture. I now have the conviction and understanding; I am Indigenous and an artist, and I make *Aboriginal Art* regardless of subject matter or aesthetics and I am entitled to be recognised as such.

The notion of *authentic* Aboriginal Art, as a means of classification, is another means of control and compartmentalisation of the complexities of Indigenous identities existing within modernity today. To expect the artistic expression of indigeneity to remain subdued and ancient, as though untouched and non-progressive, is to deny the history of colonisation, protectionism and assimilation and past policies that were forced upon Indigenous Australians, and to exclude the right to assert one's agency to choose and incorporate the present-day Indigenous experiences and reflections on the past. Danto excellently addresses this similar concern when discussing the ways in which the use of the label of "the fair sex" had confined and neutralised the agency for change of women in society at the time;

> The power to classify is the power to dominate, and these parallel aestheticizations must be regarded as essentially political responses to what were sensed as dark dangers in both…[1]

I find it important to also explore the ways in which other forms of art are de-legitimised and critiqued as being "low forms" of art; such as comic art and manga (which I am directly influenced by). It becomes a challenge to assert myself as an artist within academic and gallery level spaces; often the response to my work includes the exclamation of subconscious or conscious use of trivialising phrases to me, such as "Oh I see your scribbles/doodles/little cartoons you've made…" Throughout my research I have endeavoured to expose the ways in which our collective consciousness as a society has created a hierarchy of art and complex levels of classification that are maintained in order to contain and organise each expression into a more digestible and comprehendible form. During my studio research I have examined the power each form is perceived to possess; certain forms of art, photography or abstract works for example, are perceived as being far more capable of enacting social change and projecting intellectual commentary due to the often highly conceptual nature of the works which is thereby seen as being of greater worth because of this.

However, I argue that by maintaining the hierarchy of different forms of art having greater or lesser value can often exclude many audiences who are unfamiliar with the art world and thus lessen the effectiveness of enacting far reaching social change by only promoting the abstract and esoteric as being "good art".

For my chosen expression, illustrations with cartoon and anime influences, I believe the genre is far reaching and very effective at changing attitudes towards representation in art and media – remaining non-esoteric in its approach, and delivering an overwhelming display of black female characters dominating the space. By depicting only black women in eminent powerful ways, my aim is to achieve a sense of catharsis and belonging for women of colour within an art gallery space whilst simultaneously alienating and challenging white audiences to reflect upon the 'othering' experience that many people of colour are confronted with. This othering is a lived experience for many marginalised groups in not only gallery spaces, but also within media, advertising and other visual sources we are exposed to as a society

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[1] Danto, Arthur C. The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986 p. 181.

featuring white representations that result in the exclusion of people of colour to the periphery and the realms of foreign and or exotic.

Section 2: Altering Perspectives of Reality and De-Colonisation Through Art

Who decides the validity and power of art? It can be argued that it is dependant on the political agenda of those in a position of authority or influence at the time. Members of the art world, academics and critic's interpretations of a piece can greatly affect how an artist's work is perceived and understood by the world, often critiqued as either "dangerous or useless"[2]. Danto discusses this dilemma and the ways in which intellectual and political figures interpret art, often referring to the underlying philosophical depth or potential for societal influence. Perhaps it can be argued that unlike philosophy, art is able to provide a subjective perspective on reality, that individuals can experience and utilize within their psyche to become an agent for change; and thus art is capable of power via proxy.

Danto contemplates the disputes of philosophy and art when it comes to gaining historical understanding, I anticipated some criticism of the flawed nature of historical accounts and the understanding of history itself as a concept, but this was left to be desired within his chapters on the Disenfranchisement of Art[3]. It is known that any documentation of historical events is often wrought with propaganda, manipulation, biases, and frequently designed to portray the individual (or commissioner) in the most honourable way as opposed to the more "realistic". The same can be said of colonisation and the history of Australian settlement within historical texts, however, for many Indigenous Australians this perspective differs greatly from that of the first fleet accounts and educational texts which have shaped popular opinions and understanding amongst the Australian public. I have chosen to study the work of Daniel Boyd within my research as a response to the issues mentioned above with a statement from Boyd's work and Eurocentricism:

> Questioning the romantic notions that surround the birth of Australia is primarily what
> influenced me to create this body of work. With our history being dominated by Eurocentric

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[2] Danto, Arthur C. The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986 p. 173

[3] Danto, Arthur C. The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986

views, it is very important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to create dialogue from their own perspective to challenge the subjective history that has been created[4]

Boyd's interpretation of first fleet explorers as pirates (see below fig. 2) forces the audience to re-examine prior knowledge and understanding of Australian history.

Figure 2. "*Captain No Beard*" Daniel Boyd, 2005
Oil on canvas (192.0 h x 108.0 w cm)

Boyd challenges audiences to view from an Indigenous perspective while simultaneously also confronting the nation's false premise – Australia was invaded not discovered, stolen not settled. The explorer accounts and first fleet artistic depictions of British colonials invading Australia are accepted as "historical" truths and used as a means of legitimate documentation and education. Furthermore, I argue against the statements of Plato, as examined in Danto's chapters in The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art (1986), that art is simply romanticised false mimicry of reality;

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[4] Boyd, Daniel. Storylines Project, COFA, UNSW

> Plato notoriously identified the practice of art with the creation of appearances of appearances, twice removed from the reality philosophy addresses[5]

I disagree with Plato in this particular context, as the work of Daniel Boyd and the portrayal of pirates is a powerful depiction and metaphor and provides a glimpse into the sensitive nature of the relationship between First Australians and British Imperialists and the power of art to reimagine and evoke contemplation from differing experiences of the same moment in history and de-colonise Australian historical perceptions.

Section 3: Representations in Art and Popular Media and The Effect on The Self

The female form, within a large percentage of art, has been produced from an observed male perspective - one could argue from a voyeuristic perspective, and this has led me to question many works and their contexts and how this affects public perception and understanding of sexism within gallery spaces. As an Indigenous female artist, I have chosen to reflect upon the ways in which many Indigenous figures have been documented, specifically Indigenous women, illustrated within colonial accounts (see fig. 3).

Furthering on from the feminist analysis that surrounds European portrayals of the female form i.e. The Reclining Nude etc. I find it integral to my work to draw attention to and counter this by depicting contemporary Indigenous women in powerful and diverse cover-style imagery as a means of creating an intersectional-feminist critique;

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[5] Danto, Arthur C. The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986 p. 174.

Figure 3. Port Jackson Painter; "*Aboriginal woman and child by a fire*" (between 1788 and 1797) Watling Drawing - no. 51

commenting on both the lack of representations of ethnicity and gender in positions of power in popular media, as well as within an Australian context. My work includes pop-culture references, brands, commercialisation and technology as a means of directly challenging these restraints and societal expectations of my Indigenous identity to remain ancient and "primitive".

I have frequently encountered heated conversations over statements such as;

> "If you don't like what the white man has done to your people, then hand back your western clothes and iphone.."

I reply to anyone who holds this opinion that I am as entitled to modernity and the products of the technological age at my own discretion, as any other Australian – however, I am also entitled to demand respect, acknowledgement, and justice for the treatment of Indigenous Australians both past and present. These statements show the false perception of indigeneity and the expectation to return to a state of "authenticity"; meaning to go back in time 200

years prior to settlement, as opposed to acknowledging the presence and power of current Indigenous identities existing within two worlds of culture and modernity. Many individuals are successfully reviving and exploring language and creative expression – utilizing both technology and contemporary art forms to express Indigeneity in new and diverse ways.

Wiradjuri artist Brook Andrew is a great example of this with his work "Jumping Castle War Memorial", utilising Wiradjuri patterns on a PVC jumping castle (see below fig. 4).

Figure 4. *Jumping Castle War Memorial*, Brook Andrew 2010

PVC vinyl

Brooke Andrew's work provides insight into a unique Indigenous perspective on colonisation; my interpretation of this piece is that the decision to feature as a jumping castle is a statement on the disrespect and ignorance to the loss of Indigenous lives during colonisation as well as the effects of urbanisation and agriculture which has often disregarded sacred sites and burial grounds, which many structures stand upon today and are essentially

trodden on and trespassed upon daily, much like the "Jumping Castle War Memorial". The use of Wiradjuri patterns has also provided a synthesis of Indigenous history and cultural practice into a contemporary form;

> "…[the pattern] was traditionally used in dendroglyphs, in trees to mark ceremony but also burial trees. And you'll also see that on shields. But what I've done is brought it into the 21st century…" [6]

It is significant to further mention that geographically the largest Indigenous population is predominantly located on the east coast of Australia[7]. This information directly dispels many myths and stereotypes of Indigenous Australia existing solely within outback and remote settings and can aid in the re-education of just how diverse and unique Indigenous identities and communities are across Australia.

My work titled "Native Pride" (see below fig. 5), features a self portrait alongside my parent's totems. The Wedge Tailed Eagle (Bilyara) is my Father who is Barkindji from Wilcannia in far western NSW, and the Native Bee is for my Mother who is Biri Gubi Waka Waka from Cherbourg QLD.

This work also acts as a visual expression of the fusion of culture and modernity; the mockery of popular brand Nike changed to "Pike" on the jacket is referencing the nature of commercialisation and the popularised brands of our generation, as well as the symbolic nature of the steel nose ring and industrialisation of the "modified" millennial generation. All provide a distinct image that evokes the reinterpretation of Indigeneity and expression and a glimpse into my own identity as a 21st century artist, and daughter of two proud tribes within NSW and QLD.

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[6] Brook Andrew, 17th Biennale "Jumping Castle War Memorial" 2010.
[7] "… largest populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians lived in New South Wales (208,500 people) and Queensland (189,000 people)" ABS, Estimates 2011

Figure 5. *Native Pride*, Emily Johnson, 2016
Acrylic and ink on paper (29 h x 40 w cm)

It is important to also address my intention of depicting my characters with distinct alternative subcultural references; such as piercings, dyed hair etc. as this further challenges,

the typecast stereotypes within representations for characters to solely exist as an ethnic identity as opposed to an individual with a multifaceted depth of character.

Within feminist art it is similarly designed with the use of mainstream forms in order to create evocative works that provoke audiences to reconsider societal norms and oppressions and this is an element I explored within my practice as discussed by the Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous activist collective of feminist artists against racism and sexism within art;

> By borrowing "forms or materials" normally associated with dominant culture, marginalized rhetors create a perspective by incongruity that draws attention to social inequities[8]

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[8] Radner & Lansing, 1993, p. 10 as cited in Demo, Anne. "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion" 140, 2010

By only painting portraits of Indigenous female characters within my honours research I have created a statement that draws direct attention to the lack of representation and inequality when it comes to the roles that are available.

Throughout my studio practice I have also endeavoured to create works my project whilst being conscious of the sexist and racist inequalities that exist within gallery spaces, with mention to the work of the Guerrilla Girls (see below fig 6),

Figure 6. *Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?*, Guerrilla Girls 1989
Poster print (27.9 h x 71.1 w cm)

With this in mind, each of my artworks within my honours project portrays a unique and nuanced expression of Indigeneity and contemporary existence as opposed to the portrayals in the past used as purely documentation and classification of historical accounts of Indigenous women by colonial male artists.

The necessity of representation in popular media is another component of my research, exploring Foucault's "Technologies of The Self" and his emphasis on the importance of introspection, analysis, self-care and appreciation of an individual as an agent of their own power by utilizing;

> Operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being' that people make either by themselves or with the help of others in order to transform themselves to reach a 'state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality'[9]

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[9] Foucault, Michael. "Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault" (1988) p. 18

I have also researched the ways in which gaining further insight into the formation of the self is connected and initially greatly affected by visual stimuli; such as TV programs and illustrations in early childhood and adolescence:

> Media use is quite high during adolescence comprising 7.5 hrs. of each day… representation in children's programming (cartoons), in which only 3%-9% of the characters appearing are Black[10]

After examining the above mentioned statistics, this illuminates the necessity for more content to be created and intentionally designed to fulfil the deplorable lack of equal representation, especially for black audiences. Throughout my research I wish to further scrutinize the warped nature of popular programing and the lack of representation of diversity and highlight that considering the above 3-9% statistic mentioned. Minorities are severely under-represented; despite the high percentage they make up of the U.S population.

> Minorities constituting nearly 40 percent of the U.S population in 2013, minorities will become the majority within a few decades[11]

To elaborate; representations can often be depicted as solely being a tokenistic "minority" character, lacking the depth and complexities associated with the human condition. White depictions are perceived as neutral, and so their character's crux is unrelated to their heritage or cultural customs. This same context can be applied to the earlier stated discord of classifying "Aboriginal Art" as a distinct aesthetic principal – a white artist is never classified as, or expected to only produce "Colonial Art" as an example, in order to be recognised and validated.

As a society we do not experience confusion or question why a white artist doesn't produce works from the past gothic, baroque, or the renaissance periods of European Art. Modernity is not reserved for the "Western" world alone to experience and explore, the synchronisation

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[10] Ward, L. Monique. "Wading Through the Stereotypes: Positive and Negative Associations Between Media Use and Black Adolescents' Conceptions of Self." (2004) p. 284.
[11] Ralph J. Bunche Centre for African American Studies at UCLA; Hollywood Diversity Report 2014.

of contemporary forms and Indigenous art does not equate to the omission of authenticity; it simply provides the means of an additional cultural artistic expression to engage with.

Within my work I have chosen to portray Indigenous female characters with diverse roles in order to challenge the few pigeonholed and typecast roles that exist within popular media; the work "Mantis Queen" (see fig 7.), depicts a woman of colour within a fantasy role of an elf and evokes feelings of beauty and awe at her enchanting appearance and interesting companion on her shoulder. Aesthetically this piece does more for the subconscious as it disrupts the social construct of who women of colour can be within art and media; elf imagery has been dominated by European/western beauty ideals with the argument of being "realistic" for their geographical setting, which forced me to beg the question: "how is a mythical creature with pointed ears *realistic* to begin with?! And why can't she be brown?"

Figure 7. *Mantis Queen,* Emily Johnson 2016

Acrylic and ink on stretched canvas (30 h x 30 w cm)

Destiny Deacon, a contemporary Indigenous female artist whose work similarly also addresses the idea of re-imagining narratives and white media to include a black audience, as evident in her work "Under the Spell of the Poppies" (see fig. 8).

Depicting scenes from The Wizard of Oz with black dolls immediately transports Indigenous identities to the forefront of the audience and makes a statement about the ways in which films can be re-staged to portray alternative perspectives.

 Within my studio practice I have depicted cover-style imagery inspired by heroic poses seen in popular media text such as film posters and manga covers, by re-imagining them with Indigenous female leads as the focal point. I can identify similarities within my honours project and the way Destiny Deacon has utilised well known scenes in The Wizard of Oz,

Figure 8. *Under the Spell of the Poppies* (Traveling from Oz) Destiny Deacon 1998
Bubble jet print from Polaroid photograph (74.0 h x 60.0 w cm)

to draw attention to Indigenous identities and issues in a contemporary way, critiquing our understanding of dominant narratives and iconic imagery from Hollywood and how this can be subverted as a means of satirical representation for marginalised groups.

I have addressed issues of representations in media, not with a response or demands for inclusion and diversity by popular producers and companies, but by directly manifesting these artworks myself. By doing this I am able to dismantle the invisibility of Indigenous female identities and create diverse roles and experiences of vicarious fantasy for myself and women of colour. Despite the stereotypes and misunderstanding that I myself have been confronted with, I simply respond to criticism of my work as "not aboriginal art" by continuing to produce works however I choose without fear of disassociation with my artistic Indigenous community. Like the contemporary Indigenous artists I have mentioned within my research, I strive to be recognised within the art world as an Indigenous artist producing works directly political and intentionally targeted to black audiences and the continuation of Indigenous expressions through visual media.

My work titled "Wishful Thinking" (see fig. 9) is a representation of an artistic response to fulfilling my need for escapism that many white and majority audiences get to experience; the privilege to project onto a character who looks like yourself enables you to further connect with a story and its characters and your own imagination and formation of identity.

As an Indigenous female fan of the popular manga and anime series Dragon Ball Z, no popularized characters existed for me to project upon and so I painted myself into this world utilizing my agency as an artist, no longer waiting for these roles to be created *for* me.

The dragon god Shenron is also pictured as within the Japanese manga and anime series he has the ability to grant any wish, this artwork is a musing upon this mythology as I would wish nothing more than to be a character within this fantasy world that inspires me artistically.

Figure 9. *Wishful Thinking*, Emily Johnson 2016

Acrylic and ink on canvas board (40.64 h x 30.48 w cm)

Section 4: Integration of Culture and Nuance; Subverting from the Western Gaze

The work of Japanese animation company Studio Ghibli has greatly affected the way in which I position my work in order to place my Indigenous beliefs and identity as a female artist at the forefront of each piece. Similar to the ways in which Miyazaki incorporates Shinto beliefs using both ethical narratives as well as religious imagery and spiritual icons intentionally for Japanese audiences.

 In order to create a nuanced body of work, I have also selected to include spirits from the dreaming such as "The Ngatyi" (See fig. 10). The Ngatyi is a motif within my previous works as well as my honours project as I connect strongly with it's ability to create and shape the landscape (much like an artist would), as well as it's formation of waterways which are

integral to the Barkindji way of life and continuation of culture and practice as the translation of "Barkinji" is "belonging to the river" (river being the Darling River)[12]
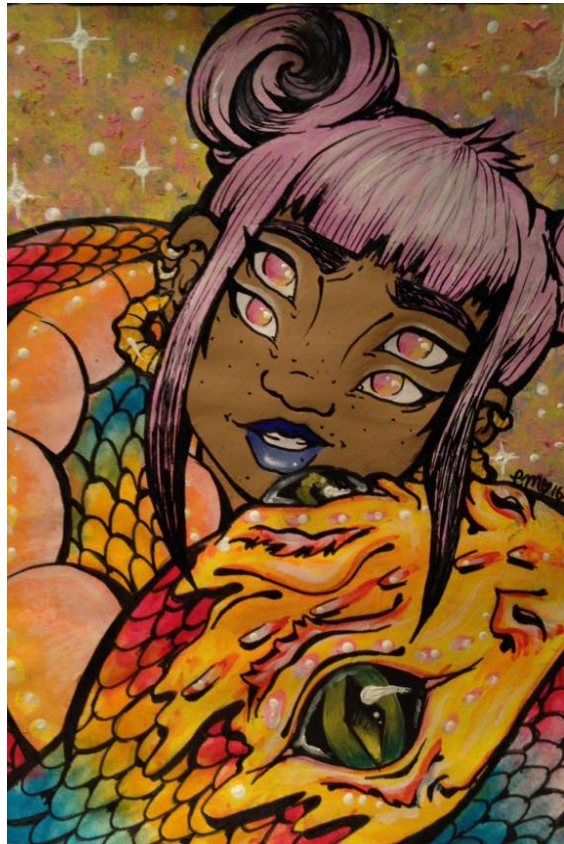

Figure 10. *Ngatyi & Me*, Emily Johnson 2016

Acrylic, watercolour and ink on paper (20 h x 14 w cm)

Totemic animals hold great significance to communities and individual's sense of identity; my Father's totem "Bilyara" (Wedge Tailed Eagle in Barkindji) as well as my Mother's Native Bee totem is featured in my work titled "Native Pride" (see previous fig. 5). By incorporating these iconic spirits and animals I intend to directly cater to the the Indigenous Australian gaze and reflect the nuanced experience and cultural significance of this imagery.

Similarly, Studio Ghibli had also made the conscious decision to feature distinctly Japanese settings and symbols of spirituality as well as portraying female heroines whose character

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[12] Hercus, A. Luise. "Paakantyi Dictionary", (1993) p.3.

fulfilment is not solely based upon beauty or pursuing marriage (see fig. 11). Being exposed

to these films during my adolescence shaped my understanding of the capabilities female

characters can have as well as myself; not only were these characters portrayed as powerful

and determined, but they also have distinct connections to land, spirituality and nature.

Figure11. *Princess Mononoke Screenshot*, Studio Ghibli 1997

 The Shinto influences are particularly strong within the film Princess Mononoke (1997), and

as an adolescent viewing this film initially I was able to connect strongly with the animism

and custodial attitudes towards nature and animals, as well as the story's main plot to protect

the forest and spirits from industrialisation;

> Princess Mononoke (1997), this Shinto belief is fused with an ecological allegory that condemns
>
> reckless industrial civilization, and particularly its employment of nuclear weaponry[13]

 This has had a long lasting effect on the ways in which I believe media and art can be

utilised to enact positive social change as well as educate and revive the customs and beliefs

of a culture within a form that directly engages adolescents and young people with which the

future of our society is dependent upon.

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[13] Anderson, J. Michael. "Miyazaki, Shintoism & Ecology" 2005

Conclusion

The pressure and expectation of all Indigenous forms of expressions to remain "*authentic*" and traditional in order to be recognised not only stifles the potential for the synthesis of Indigenous beliefs and customs within a 21st century context, but it also withholds the ability for Indigenous voices to be heard within current affairs and global contexts with which we are all a part of. The chosen style and medium of Indigenous expressions of experiences is "Aboriginal Art" regardless; societal pressures and pre-conceptions of aesthetic authenticity take away the agency of Indigenous artists' and their right to choose without disparagement.

I have found no greater self-reflection than that of portraying Indigenous characters and analysing my own feelings of gratification seeing these artworks and what they represent. This introspection of my identity as a person of colour, as well as a female artist, fills the void I experience within popular media that does not represent me or acknowledge my joint existence. I find it insensitive when representations detach the cultural identity from the unique and nuanced composition of the self that is affiliated with the human psyche.

My work reflects the connections to culture, spirituality, modernity and subcultures of fashion and expression that comprises my identity. As an Indigenous female artist, the journey I have made since adolescence to reach this point and the various influences and artistic endeavours has been a challenge. In order to successfully and intellectually articulate my dissatisfaction with the art and media that many women of colour are exposed to yet excluded from, and the effect this invisibility can have on one's sense of self and identity. We can begin to demand equal representation within gallery spaces and media to include intersectional works made by and for women of colour.

The research throughout my honours year has resulted in a response to inequality and ignorance. I acknowledge and remain inspired by Indigenous contemporary artists within various forms and media who are also challenging misconceptions and innovating new and unique expressions of Indigeneity and reclaiming the wholeness of identity that non-marginalised artists are appointed.

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