

2014

Examining Tacit Exchange, Embedded Within Socially Shared Hand-Stitching Practices, With The Shipibo Artists Of Peru

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**Examining tacit exchange, embedded within socially shared
hand-stitching practices, with the Shipibo artists of Peru.**

Nicolle Desmarchelier

Masters of Art

(Visual Art)

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Edith Cowan University

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June

2014

Abstract.

This exegesis reflexively examines the role of the tacit in my intercultural creative exchange with a number of the Shipibo artists of Peru. Central to the research was a three-month residency spent in Peru with these artists. The research reflexively examines the impact of the residency on my creative praxis.

In particular, the research explores how the process of hand-stitching, embedded within the day to day lifeworld, can offer a space for such intercultural exchange. Furthermore, the research focuses on the shared hand-stitching practices as part of a socially communicative process. This creative exchange is placed in the social and public space of a western art gallery to facilitate a broader critique with an audience regarding concepts such as the tacit, and the role of creative, intercultural exchange.

This creative research uses the methods of praxis and reflexivity as a way for my art practice to be critically situated among relevant theorists, artists and associated ideas. Two lenses are adopted to examine the creative praxis. The first is the tacit and how it locates the ineffable creative exchange between artists within an intercultural context. The second draws on critical theory, proposing the concept of reflexivity as a means for examining our shared hand-stitching practices. In particular it focuses on questions concerning the tacit, intercultural exchange facilitated by shared hand-stitching practices between us, as artists situated within a post-traditional, globalised world.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;*
- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or*
- iii. contain any defamatory material;*

Signature:

Date:

6.10.14.

Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank my primary supervisor Dr. Nicola Kaye and my auxiliary supervisor Dr. Christopher Crouch for their assistance and intrinsic knowledge, which they generously offered throughout this candidature.

I extend a special thanks to Dr. Nicola Kaye for her support, encouragement, constructive criticism, guidance and perspective, through a time when I felt I had lost my way in the academic process. I acknowledge Dr. Kaye for her enormous generosity and am grateful for her insights, artistic understanding and continual feedback.

I also wish to thank Dr. Danielle Brady for her professional and sensitive approach to the dilemma of intercultural communication within the academic process: to Bethany Anderson, for her editing of this exegesis: to Dr. Jane Donlin, for her unflagging encouragement.

My endless gratitude is extended to Santosh, my husband, who travelled with me to Peru and into the day-to-day life of this research. His love, support, sacrifices and encouragement are immeasurable. My gratitude is also extended to my family, my children, my grandchildren, friends and colleagues who have always been supportive.

Last but by no means least, I wish to acknowledge and thank the Shipibo artists of the Eastern Amazon of Peru, who always welcomed me with love and humour. Elisa, Jobita, Pashin Yaka, Gwana and Eder, to name a few, all of you, thank you for your creative inspiration.

I dedicate this exegesis to ShantiMayi whose place in my life is immense and who has been integral to me undertaking this research.

Iraqi.....

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The DVD includes images from the two exhibitions and other relevant material, and correlates directly to the exegesis sections (6.3-6.6.2).

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1.0 Introduction to the intercultural, creative project

In 2010, I completed a three-month residency in the east of Peru, creatively working alongside the Shipibo artists of the central Amazon lowlands. I was based for the time in a frontier town, Pucallpa, on the Ucayali River, in the Amazon.

This research critically examines the creative process of traditional hand-stitching practices within an intercultural context. The intercultural, creative, communication that took place through this residency aims to examine the embedded tacit knowledge in the creative exchange between the Shipibo artists and myself. The central research question asks: How can the embeddedness of the tacit within socially shared hand-stitching practices facilitate intercultural creative exchange with the Shipibo artists of Peru?

There are two exhibitions as part of this research, both of which were exhibited at Spectrum Project Space, Edith Cowan University, Perth, in 2011 and 2013. Shipibo cloths were exhibited for the first time in Western Australia at the first of the two exhibitions, *Iraqui*, in 2011. The second exhibition was held in 2013, entitled *We know more than we can say ...* These exhibitions are referred to throughout the exegesis, but are specifically examined in section (6.0), *A reflexive analysis of the tacit, creative intercultural exchange made evident within my two solo exhibitions*, where reflexive analysis of the tacit, creative, intercultural exchange is articulated. Images from both exhibitions of related information are referenced in the attached DVD.

The research project was originally conceived by prefacing the existing ethnographic information by anthropologist Angelika-Gebhart Sayer (1984). Gebhart-Sayer spent time within the Shipibo villages in the 1980s, and her research has been prominently considered, by researchers of the Shipibo traditions. She coined phrases such as “woven songs”, “pattern songs” and “singable designs”, which were deemed relevant to the making of the Shipibo cloths (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984).

This way of perceiving Shipibo cloths however, differed from my experience and the information I received from the Shipibo artists. It became apparent, that previous

research relating to the Shipibo art cloth, was no longer relevant to the artists I encountered within the current contemporary setting (de Mori, 2011). This growing understanding came about through my unique situation working alongside the artists, as an artist in the group, rather than an “ethnographer”, though information was offered to me, however, in an informal way. No formal interviews were carried out, although information deemed relevant at the time, was often given spontaneously and was noted in my diary.

Due to language and literacy difficulties, the communities and individuals I spent time with were not given written information about the project. However, there were extensive explanations via an interpreter, prior to all interactions. As an artist, I continue to view the Shipibo artists as fellow hand-stitchers and artists with complete control over the circumstances of their interactions, rather than participants in a designed study. The contact with the Shipibo artists is collaborative rather than a process of collecting data. As part of my creative praxis involved learning skills from the Shipibo artists, rather than studying them, it has been difficult to conceive of the outcomes of these interactions as data. The creative engagement, tacitly exchanged, with the Shipibo assists me in my creative practice, is critical to my creative research, and supports my reflexive position within the public exhibitions held as part of this candidature.

The central concerns of the research and my ongoing traditional hand-making practice have evolved over time. Over the last four years, I have focused on travelling within the Andes Mountains and into the Amazon Jungle of Peru. This travel has been to develop my creative research and intercultural communication has been a consistent influence on my creative process. As a textile artist I engaged interculturally with the Shipibo artists and experienced, first hand, artists who are immersed in a traditional way of hand-stitching. As a western artist communicating within an intercultural context with the Shipibo, my contention is whatever our differing cultural traditions, our mutual traditional hand-stitching was the site of our intercultural exchange.

By acknowledging myself as a textile artist, I am claiming my tools of trade, so to speak. I work with fabric, thread and needles and over a number of years I have developed, and continue to develop, skills in stitch and design. I am drawn to the

touch and dexterity with which my hands work, and the interaction between hand and cloth. The hand-made facilitates sensitivity to my practice that cannot be matched by machinery. I am not opposed to non hand-made objects or industrialised creative processes, given I use contemporary materials as well as stitch into acrylic as a medium for hand stitching. I agree with Valerie Kirk, (cited in Gale & Kaur, 2005), an Australian tapestry maker, who articulates the position of an artist who hand-makes:

As a tapestry weaver it is all important that I create the work. It is not a simple matter of making by hand for the sake of this or as opposed to machine made or an adverse reaction to technology or wanting a hand made look. There is no technological process that can work in the way that I work as an artist creating in the process, making decisions each step of the way. (p. 65)

There is much debate regarding gender and the art/craft dialogue; however, this research does not extensively examine these discourses. These debates, nonetheless, are significant for my creative practice and they are contextualised in the final section 6.0 of the exegesis, which focuses on my creative practice. I make my position clear regarding such debates and how they inform my work.

I am an artist, a maker of hand-stitched objects in many forms. The term maker alludes to hand crafted objects; however, it can also mean an artist who conceives of work, and engages others to make the work. By artist/maker I mean I conceive the work, then through the act of hand-making, "I further transform the materials, by placing them in social and aesthetic contexts" (Crouch, 2013, ¶1) Cloth, needle and thread are the materials I use, and they are also portable. My art practice occurs in and around my work, home, family and local and international community, all of which exist within a globalised world. My creative praxis is a way of navigating the spaces between each of these aspects of my life and is the constant element linking my diverse lifeworld. My studio, in a way, is as large or small as my current lifeworld. As Graeme Sullivan (2005) indicates:

Within this context, the studio is seen as a site of inquiry that is not bounded by walls, nor removed from the daily grind of everyday social activity. Furthermore, studio art experiences

are inclusive of the full range of ideas and images that inform individual, social and cultural actions. (p. 81)

Within my praxis, I assert there is a necessity to negotiate the globalised post-traditional world in which I live and make, in order to contextualise traditional ways of making within a post-traditional world. This portability of studio and my tools of making, allow me to create my objects wherever I am situated. The capacity for mobility facilitates the making to manifest in a broad context and acknowledges Sullivan's studio "not bounded by walls" (2005) as a site for reflexive praxis. This is developed later in the introduction. This also echoes with Canadian artist Ann Hamilton's "notion of living at the threshold of edges" (1996, n.p.), when she asserts:

I think a lot of the very abstract quality of my work – and the literal quality of it - is always dealing with a state or place or an edge, a border, a threshold, a place that's in between. And I think that is the place I occupy within my work and that perhaps the work occupies. And so it is interesting to me to think about needing to work at that edge, but actually living physically in the middle. (n.p)

I have experienced "a place that's in between" (1996), not only within my lifeworld and praxis but also within the globalised, post-traditional, intercultural context in which I make. It was through my praxis interfacing in an intercultural setting that I came to understand the space between, the liminal space (Bhabha, 2007), as an important place of creative exchange and information gathering.

I refer to this as a place of tacit exchange, a place of silent dialogue (Polyani, 1974, 2009), and thus a place of communication between the Shipibo and myself. This sense of "dialogue", communicated within my praxis was not always with words. Intersubjective (Feather, 2000) exchange was an essential element of the creative conversation between us. The information and creative interchange between us, and the impact of this exchange on me as an artist, were potent elements in the development of my creative praxis. This idea is further developed in (section 5.0) of the exegesis, where I investigate the relevance of my creative praxis as the starting point to the research.

1.1 Introduction to the intercultural creative exchange with the Shipibo artists of the Eastern Amazon, Peru.

This investigation is contextualised within a globalised post-traditional world (Giddens, 1991). My research investigates the creative tacit exchange within an intercultural setting and is communicated through two public exhibitions within a western gallery, as well as this exegesis. In order to contextualise my creative exchange with the Shipibo artists, I provide a brief account of my initial introduction to them, their hand-stitching practices and their cloths (this is further developed in section 2.0).

I was given a piece of Shipibo stitching by a friend before going to the Amazon, and was immediately drawn to the stitching, colour and designs on the cloths. I was curious about the combination of designs and the use of many contemporary materials. Many of the customary designs are dyed with traditional plants and yet stitched in contemporary fluoro-coloured cotton and synthetic thread. The designs are geometric and hand-stitched with great precision, demonstrating the reflexive embodied knowledge of the Shipibo artists regarding their cultural cosmology. These designs traditionally reflected the Shipibo vision of the cosmos and acted as a map of this cosmos (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984). The impact of the traditional design coupled with the hand-stitching of the Shipibo cloths, in non-traditional materials and in a post-traditional context, seemed contradictory to me. This contradiction, however, became a compelling stimulus to learn more about the Shipibo artists and their stitched cloths, and is essentially the starting point for this research.

Furthermore, the research was galvanised by the fact that although the Shipibo knowledge of traditional cloth patterns is changing, the artists continue to dye and stitch cloths as they have always done, despite economic and cultural changes. The cloths no longer function purely traditionally, and are purchased by tourists as a means for the artists to support their families. The Shipibo artists indicated that hand-stitching is still deeply integrated within their daily lives. This had great significance for my research as I have continually been drawn to traditional ways of making that include daily and family life as an integral part of the making process. This has informed my creative practice for many years. Thus, my time with the

Shipibo, who consistently coalesce daily elements within their creative practice was so important for my research and in particular, spending time in their homes and communities.

I had a clear idea about how this research might unfold. The reality, however, was very different. I had arranged by e-mail, prior to my travels, to accompany local people who travelled to communities by boat in order to collect stitched cloths from distant villages. This would enable me to be with a negotiator while finding a community of artists where I could spend time. I was confident that thorough planning had enabled my contacts to be well established; however, within twenty four-hours of arriving in Pucallpa, all of my contacts, developed over months, had for many reasons fallen through. I therefore had to find my way in a new and unfamiliar environment, with very little local language and no guide. I realised, at this point, that my contact with the Shipibo artists would have to take a new direction and would require a different approach.

The context I found myself in was as an Australian artist in a town on the edge of the Amazon jungle, with no cultural mediator, no interface with the Shipibo artists, and no interpreter. However, I was guided to Maroti Shobo in Pucallpa, which is the Shipibo Artists' Collective, and introduced myself to Marina, the Director. During this meeting I met my interpreter, Eder, who invited me to meet his extended family and supported me throughout my stay, thus enabling me to establish contact with the artists.

As a guest in different Shipibo communities, I spent time with the Shipibo in three different contexts. The first contact required days travelling to and from a community by car through the jungle and then by boat up the Ucayali River. This then led to an invitation to meet members of a family of artists on the outskirts of Pucallpa. The third context was within a family compound, down the river from Pucallpa.

In each of these meetings I introduced myself as an artist and made it clear I was not translating or attempting to make sense of their world from an ethnographic perspective. My research was concerned with how shared hand-stitching could facilitate intercultural dialogue. This remains the central tenet for the research.

Given the intercultural nature of the research, I assert the Shipibo artists are not framed as the exotic other (Bhabha, 1994), nor do I idealise the Shipibo culture (this is further developed in the Literature and Contextual Review 3.0). I acknowledge there is a post-modern longing to exoticise the “other”, to project the “authentic and original” out (Bhabha, 1994). However, the life of the Shipibo in our post-traditional globalised world is full of material poverty, which has subsequent consequences. That is not the whole story, however, as simultaneously they also embrace great social wealth within their own culture (Bilhaut, 2009). All these elements combined with our communications together, and underpinned by a reflexive praxis model (McNamara, 2012; Barrett and Bolt, 2009; Crouch, 2007), are what informed and influenced my creative practice, culminating in the two exhibitions held as part of this Doctoral Candidature.

1.2 Overview of creative praxis: Background, key terms and exegesis structure.

Background

I provide a short background to the research to highlight the longevity of my creative praxis and acknowledge the impact on me creatively, of travelling internationally both within India and Peru. My doctoral studies have continuity with my Masters research, which culminated in an internationally published book chapter. I completed a Masters of Arts (Visual Art) in 2009. Over the past sixteen years I have travelled to India and Peru as a way of exploring traditional ways of stitching and to interact creatively with traditional artists who hand-stitch.

The focus for my Masters was to question whether hand-stitching as a creative practice had a place within a commodified world context. My research brought into focus the importance of skill, craft and the transformative nature of making within a post-traditional global context. I was invited to present at the conference *Subjectivity, Creativity and the Institution* in 2009 at Curtin University of Technology, Perth, chaired by Dr. Christopher Crouch. As a result of this presentation I was invited to publish a chapter in the publication, *Subjectivity, Creativity and the Institution*, (2009, ed. Crouch). In this chapter I discuss traditional practices as a site for personal resistance, identity and social engagement. I worked with the inside of pockets taken from jackets, turning them inside out, and then hand-stitching into

the surface, as a way of exploring intimacy, and the tacit exchange of hand, body and cloth. These issues continue to be important creative concerns and are further developed within this exegesis.

Key terms.

The concepts and phrases throughout this exegesis are drawn from many contexts: sociology, critical theory, intercultural communication and art and culture. The following terms are critical to this study-lifeworld, reflexivity, reflexive praxis, globalisation, intercultural communication, tacit knowledge/exchange, intersubjective, tradition and post-tradition. I introduce these terms and concepts here and further define and discuss them in the Literature and Contextual Review 3.0 and Approach to the Study section 4.0.

The term “lifeworld”, was coined by Husserl (1936), to describe the day-to-day world of human action and social relating, as cited in Carr, (1987). The lifeworld exists before systems of logic, is taken for granted, and is always present as a backcloth to all other aspects of life (Habermas, 1987). Lifeworld is an important component of Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action (1987), which I draw on to describe the process of communicative social action I experienced with the Shipibo artists. Macey (2001) posits that Habermas’ lifeworld:

...is a realm of shared intersubjectivities bounded by all those interpretations of the world that are presupposed by its members and provide a shared background of knowledge. It gives the horizon for all the processes of reaching a common understanding and coordination through communicative action. (p. 230)

I use the term lifeworld to indicate a sphere of daily experiences, focused on a shared creative activity, hand stitching. This social context is where the Shipibo artists and I creatively worked. Our focused communicative activities, together with our mutual hand-making practices within a domestic setting, were the vehicle for us to communicate interculturally.

It was in this collective socially creative action that our mutual activity of hand-stitching, found a resonance (Habermas, 1987). Crouch (2007) insists that to understand the communicative act as an artist, it is vital to adopt a performative attitude, in order to “interrogate the purpose of artistic communication from an

objective as well as a subjective perspective” (p.108). He adds that this provides “the potential to enter into a reflexive intellectual engagement” with creative praxis (p. 108). This is important to foreground here to make explicit the importance of a reflexive praxis model for my research.

Being reflective within this research differs from being reflexive. A reflective view critiques and analyses “how personal action measures up to be accepted, [in] often professionally defined paradigms” and can be said to be an “extant body of knowledge” (Crouch, 2007, p. 109). Reflexive thinking, however, requires I be accountable for how I influence the purpose of the creative communication, the outcome of the research, and hence what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Crouch, 2007). Crouch indicates, “researchers into creativity should understand that their creative works and/or artefacts need to be critically and reflexively engaged with”, within a social realm and not only in the personal (p. 110). It is my reflexive engagement with the Shipibo within our shared creative and social context that informs and supports this creative praxis.

By approaching the research as an artist within a communicative act, I appreciate that my descriptions of what transpired are not neutral (Crouch, 2007). Hence I reflexively frame the communication with the Shipibo artists, within the following contexts; social, institutional, gallery and global, thus opening the research to broader scrutiny and to avoid “narcissism if it is located in the social realm through the adoption of reflexive and performative research methods” (p. 105). Crouch (2007) posits:

In this way the researcher can be led to a dialogic understanding of how acts of communication, are constructed by the individual, and how they are constructed by the institution. The research student introduced to the idea a performative attitude is confronted with the need to interrogate the purpose of artistic communication from an objective as well as a subjective perspective, and thus has the potential to enter into a reflexive intellectual engagement with the work. (p. 108)

I use reflexive praxis, to communicate that during making, thinking, writing and researching, it is the action of such informed social engagement that influences the practical outcome of the research (Barrett & Bolt, 2009, p. 150). Praxis is the action

of ideas having a practical outcome, and is not always predictable (Crouch, 2007). Hence, informed reflexive action has the possibility to support and stimulate new thought and supports my creative praxis. Reflexive praxis, therefore, is defined through broad and critical lenses, acknowledging the complexity of the social, cultural and creative engagement (Crouch, 2000), with the Shipibo artists, thus critically supporting my position as an artist communicating within an intercultural globalised world context.

The terms intercultural and cross-cultural are often considered interchangeable; however, they are conceptually different. Scholar Gudykunst (1997) indicates, "Cross-cultural research involves comparing behaviour in two or more cultures. Whereas, intercultural research examines behaviour when members of two or more cultures interact", as cited in Otten et al, (2009, p. 1). I appreciate any distinction in terminology is subtle, as I found myself in both of these situations. Following this and asserting my research position, my reflexive, creative praxis, is as an artist researching my creative process within an intercultural setting, not as a researcher of intercultural communication. I use intercultural communication as the system that best describes and supports my creative exchange with the Shipibo artists.

In, around and almost interstitially, there is a way of gathering, ferreting and generally fossicking for knowledge, which is called tacit knowledge. Michael Polanyi (2009, 1974) coined the notion of "tacit knowing", particularly within the creative arts, to acknowledge a dimension of experience, a gathering of information using intuition and hunches. Bolt (2004) affirms this knowing of information is an embodied knowledge that cannot be verbally articulated and yet is evident, as cited in Barrett & Bolt, (2009).

Embodied knowledge is the result of a repetitive task and is therefore information that our bodies understand outside of conscious thought and before words (Polyani, 2009). Embodied knowledge is just that: knowledge embodied in our bodies. I contend the process of creative hand-stitching with the Shipibo artists was the bridge for the shared, embodied knowledge. Polyani (2009) indicates we absorb and embody knowledge through "our tacit powers interpreting our world around us by converting the impacts between our body and the things that come our way into a

comprehension of their meaning” (p. 49). This way of coming to know can be called “non-propositional” knowledge (Imani & Niedderer, 2009, p. 6).

The problem with “non-propositional” (tacit) knowledge in research is not that it cannot be justified; it is because non-propositional knowledge is essentially personal and situated, making it difficult to measure. The Shipibo and I spent three months together in Peru developing our creative tacit exchange and, as previously stated, tacit knowing exists before language (Polyani, 2009, p. 14). The difficulty in this research is how to communicate explicitly the tacit way of gathering information, that is, to articulate how this relates to and supports the research question and outcome. In particular how a tacit experience between artists can then be communicated to a wider audience (Imani & Niedderer, 2009, p. 6), beyond the individual subjectivity of the artist (Crouch, 2007). Polyani (1974) asserts, “At all these points the act of knowing includes an appraisal; and this personal co-efficient, which shapes all factual knowledge, bridges in doing so the disjunction between subjectivity and objectivity” (p. 17). By this he means that tacit knowing becomes the “personal co-efficient”, the reflexive element of explicit knowledge, and therefore is vital for making meaning and understanding of all knowledge (Imani & Niedderer, 2009, p. 6). Hence it follows that this way of knowing is present in all knowledge (Polyani, 1974).

In other words, although the communication with the Shipibo was tacit, my creative practice via the exhibitions, *Iraqui* and *We know more than we can say....* can be seen as the “propositional” knowledge, i.e., communicated through creative, ineffable, language via these exhibitions. These communicative acts can only hint at what transpired creatively with the Shipibo artists. Polyani’s proposition, that tacit and explicit knowledge are not in opposition, but lie within the same spectrum and existing through a quality of the ineffable (2009, 1974).

The Shipibo and I did not have a common spoken language; we relied on “our tacit powers interpreting our world around us” (Polyani, 1974) via our creative communication to make sense of, as well as inform ourselves of, what transpired between us. The formation of this knowledge and how it is communicated needs to

be understood in this research in order to recognise its relevance to my praxis and the creative exchange between us.

This research is centrally focused on the role of creative practice and how this reflexively generates and communicates experiential knowledge (Imani & Niedderer, 2009, p. 2) within a social and cultural context, in order to facilitate intercultural creative exchange within a globalised setting. This research critically and reflexively engages with creative praxis. It aims to hint, via creative praxis, what transpired between the Shipibo and myself. It is through my exhibitions, that I attempt to make significant the tacit and demonstrate it within this research via my creative praxis.

Intersubjectivity is the experiential, interpersonal connectedness between people who are attuned to and occupied in constructing social relations (Feather, 2000). Merleau-Ponty (1992) posits that intersubjectivity also embodies consensus as well as differences and disagreements, thus allowing a rich and dynamic intercultural dialogue as cited in Feather (2000). The intersubjective is a way of defining our experience of each other, a dynamic somewhere between the subjective and objective in perception (Feather, 2000). Intersubjectivity can be seen as a mutual agreement defined by overlapping individual perspectives in order to reveal tacit knowing and develop shared understandings Merleau-Ponty (1992) as cited in Feather, (2000). Intersubjectivity then has two elements and can be viewed from the perspective of an individual's decision precipitating actions within the encounter, or as the intersubjective impact upon the individual (Feather, 2000, p. 6). Merleau-Ponty (1992) argues that given intersubjectivity "can also attempt to exclude or negate these subjectivities. Both modes are essential to the embodied subject" as cited in Feather, (2000, p. 5), meaning differences may be revealed; hence "we can grasp the unevenness of intersubjectivity" (Feather, 2000, p. 7).

Polyani (2009) also acknowledges the intersubjective experience between subjective and objective as embodied, a state he calls "indwelling". He states that when we are involved in an experience, "we are attending through our bodies. We incorporate it [the experience] in our body-or extend our body to include it-so that we come to dwell in it" (2009, p. 16). Polyani further posits, "It brings home to us

that it is not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning” (p.18). Thus my *immersion* in the creative hand-stitching with them within the cultural interface was subjective, while at the same time I was involved within an intersubjective, intercultural dialogue with the Shipibo artists through this creative process. Being intersubjective meant we had our hand-stitching as a common activity of social action and meaning. We used our common sense to construct and interpret various elements of shared social and cultural life and we made sense of the divergent meanings of our intersubjective experience (Feather, 2000).

By referring to the intersubjective nature of our exchange through our mutual hand-making, as noted previously, I acknowledge my reflexive position within our “system of interconnectedness” (Habermas, 1987) and the “intersubjective experience of the communicative act” (Crouch, 2007) inherent within our shared intercultural communication. Of the intersubjective, Merleau-Ponty (1945) contends:

We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behavior in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world. (p. 413)

This notion of a common world in which we co-exist references the creative hand-stitching practices as a container for tacit, intersubjective exchange. The analysis of the dynamic intersubjective experience between the Shipibo artists and myself is integral to this research.

I practice traditional hand-stitching within a post-traditional world. Given this, it is imperative within reflexive research to ask what tradition means within my particular post-traditional context. Giddens insists, “Much of what we think of as traditional, and steeped in the mists of time, is actually a product at most of the last couple of centuries, and is often much more recent than that” (1994, p. 62). Giddens asserts that the longevity of a tradition does not make it more genuine (2011, p. 41). Hobsbawm (1983), however, questions the validity of traditions that have not existed from time immemorial and call those traditions without a sense of longevity “contrived” or “invented” traditions (2011, p. 40), offering yet another position

regarding tradition. I position the research with Giddens: given my experience with the Shipibo artists, traditions were always in a state of flux and hence contemporary (Giddens, 1994).

Donlin (2011) acknowledges the contemporaneity and aliveness of tradition and validates it as a context for a hand-making praxis. In my Masters thesis (2009), I acknowledged the transformative nature of hand-stitching, meaning “traditions can be altered and transformed”(Giddens, 1994). The aforementioned positions on tradition are used to focus contemporary notions of tradition within a western paradigm. Hence these positions support the significance of hand-making traditional practices, when establishing an intercultural dialogue in a post-traditional world. I came to appreciate that the Shipibo artists and myself were engaged in co-creating and identifying what Adorno (1997) speaks of when he explains, “tradition as a living entity that manifests itself in the way life is lived” as cited in Donlin, (2011, p. 1), the lifeworld.

I also engage with the research of Dr. Bernd Walter Brabec de Mori, a musical anthropologist who lived and worked with the Shipibo for five years. He challenges notions of the longevity of current Shipibo traditions. De Mori insists many Shipibo traditions have been developed and continue to develop in response to the changing physical, economic, political and cultural environments of the last 60 years. He indicates these shifts have required Shipibo adaptation to these changes, in turn engendering newly emerging traditions (de Mori, 2011). This position is similar to Giddens’ and Donlin’s view of tradition. The flexibility to respond to cultural and social changes indicates the continually reflexive approach of the Shipibo engaging within cultural and social changes enacted within our post-traditional, globalised world.

Exegesis structure.

In section 2.0, *Art residency with the Shipibo artists: My personal narrative*, I use the form of a personal narrative to further document and contextualise what drew me to the Shipibo artists, their cloths and our creative exchange. I am sensitive to the

cultural complexity this indicates when my lifeworld is influenced by my western, euro-centric cultural and educational background.

Section 3.0, Literature and Contextual Review, explores the impact of globalisation on the intercultural, intersubjective communication between the Shipibo and myself. In this section I define and examine the terms intercultural, intersubjective, globalisation, cosmopolitanism, liquid modernity and the underpinning ethics of my research. I draw on research from Giddens (1991, 1994, 2011) on tradition and how it forms and reforms itself. I refer to Jensen's writings (2003, 2007) on intercultural discourses, cultural theorist Bhabha (1994, 2007) and social theorist, Bauman (1998) who discuss our contemporary context of rapid change as liquid modernity. An exploration of intersubjectivity by theorist Feather is also undertaken (2000), and Beck's (2006) examination of cosmopolitanism is drawn upon.

The Literature and Contextual Review 3.0 more broadly defines terms and concepts as they relate to my praxis to establish the context, background and relevance of the topics. The Literature and Contextual Review is divided into four sub-sections: 3.1 The impact of globalisation on intercultural research with the Shipibo; 3.2 Different approaches to intercultural communication: 3.3 Tacit exchange/knowledge and the significance of the intersubjective: 3.4 Traditional/post traditional: Acknowledging the changing nature of tradition and the impact on intercultural exchange.

An initial framework for my theoretical positioning in the Approach to the Study, section 4.0, is based on the research of Giddens (1991, 1994, 2011), particularly on the concept of tradition and the post-traditional. Barrett and Bolt (2007) critically engage and reflect on the creative methodologies in promoting a wider understanding of practice as research. Ball and Smith (1992) are discussed, to bring their understanding of the position of participant observer as "a pathway to understanding the cultural differences, that make us what we are as humans" (Smith, 1992, vii). Pink (2007), takes a reflexive approach to visual research and application as an academic practice.

Crouch (2007), develops research methods so the creative process, when framed through praxis can be acknowledged as new knowledge and understands that, tacit knowledge is contemporary: it is "a fundamental part of the way in which we think

and act as contemporary human beings" (Crouch, 2013, ¶ 4). Most importantly for my research, Michael Polanyi (2009), acknowledges that creative acts contain tacit forms of knowing which contribute to discoveries. Griffiths (2009) as cited in Biggs and Karlson, (2012), asserts that within creative arts based research, process is always unfolding and the outcome may become obvious only towards the end of the research. Feather again (2007), places the significance of subjectivity within an academic context.

Section 4.0, Approach to the Study, discusses the synthesis of appropriate methods relating to our exchange. Reflexive practice and praxis are the core terms I discuss which underpin my creative praxis. In sub-section 4.1, I define the research model; in sub-section 4.2 Reflexive praxis as a research model is investigated and in sub-section 4.3 Reflexive and reflective are discussed; 4.4 current thinking regarding Narrative method as a research tool; in sub-section 4.5 The role of participant observer is acknowledged and discussed.

In section 5.0, *Creative praxis as the overarching vehicle for tacit exchange*, I summarise the core issues underpinning my praxis and my personal reasons for making. I further examine my creative praxis as a vehicle of tacit exchange between us. I discuss my various roles as an artist within the intercultural setting, as well as theoretical writing relevant to being an artist who hand stitches within a contemporary context. I also consider my creative process up to and including the two exhibitions for my Doctoral Candidature.

Section 6.0 is focused on the creative praxis and its potential for reflexive action. Questions are raised such as how can the hand-made find any value in the post-traditional globalised world? Can it be the site for shared intercultural meaning between the Shipibo and myself? This section also includes my creative response to the residency and the impact on my work.

Section 6.2. is a reflexive analysis of artists and makers within a craft-based practice and the implications of such praxis in a post-traditional world. I reflexively engage with the work of artists relevant to my research, such as Ann Hamilton (2002, 2004) and Kimsooja (2004) and Else van Keppel (1997). These artists adopt a reflexive approach to their praxis.

I conclude section 6.0 by reflexively analysing the two exhibitions *Iraqi* (2011) and *We know more than we can say...* (2013). By integrating the cloths of the Shipibo artists—which as noted, was the first time they had been shown in Western Australia—as well as my own in *Iraqi*, I asked the audience to engage with the Shipibo and my works so that they, the audience, also became part of the intercultural dialogue, thus creating a social act. In the second exhibition, *We know more than we can say ...* tacit exchange was the most significant aspect for me. In addition, the immeasurability of the intersubjective, intercultural, creative, exchange between us was a central aspect of the exhibition. This exhibition builds upon the first and continues to examine how I made this intangible, exchange apparent to an audience. This was, and continues to be, a central trope for my creative praxis, and is reflexively examined.

My creative praxis aims to articulate the subjective, informal understanding of how shared hand-making practices between us, within an intercultural setting, acted, “not as a remnant of [a] past” (Crouch, 2013), but as a living exchange between artists within a contemporary context. Adorno (1997), as previously stated, affirms that tradition is alive and witnessed in the way lives are lived. I recorded the exchanges with the Shipibo not only through stitch but also via photography, film and sound. All photographic and video content within the exhibitions were there with the consent of the involved individuals.

2.0 Art residency with the Shipibo artists: My personal narrative.

The purpose of this section is to give some general background information regarding the environmental and cultural context in which my intercultural residency with the Shipibo artists in Peru took place. As I have stated in the introduction, Maroti Shobo, the Artists Collective in Pucallpa, was the starting point in meeting Shipibo artists, who then introduced me into family groups.

The Shipibo are one of the largest Indigenous tribes in Peru's Amazon basin and live in small communities along the Rio Ucayali and all its tributaries and oxbow lakes. Multiple family groups live communally, which is the traditional way the Shipibo have lived (Gheerbrant, 1992). Pucallpa, on the river in the Eastern Amazon (which means "red earth" in Quechua), is a frontier town, a city in the jungle on the Rio Ucayali and where I was based and where many Shipibo also live.

The Ucayali is also the name of the region in the centre of Eastern Peru of which Pucallpa is the capital. Until the late 1800's Pucallpa was a small outpost for traders in rubber, and explorers, and those looking to hunt. One of the largest lakes in the Amazon rainforest is Lago Yarrinacocha, which is located about 7 kilometres from Pucallpa (Gheerbrant, 1992). The lake is polluted from petrol, due to constant boat traffic, in and out of Pucallpa.

Pucallpa spreads along the banks of the Rio Ucayali where all manner of riverboats transport their cargo of people, wood and fruit in continual motion and sound, up and down the river. The unbaffled sounds of the outboard motor boats add to the cacophony and contrast with the hand-built dugouts, which are manually paddled and from which fishing nets are cast by the local Indigenous fishermen.

Pucallpa is the central market for local agricultural produce as well as an industrial centre containing sawmills and industrial plants for extracting rosewood oil. It is equipped with electricity, though lacking in paved streets other than the main roads to and from the central part of the town and within the primary shopping areas. When it is raining it sounds like an avalanche on the tin roofs, and the unsealed roads become wild, red, muddy rivers.

These were the conditions and surroundings of Maroti Shobo, where I met my interpreter, Eder. Eder continually helped establish introductions while creating ongoing communication and enabling intimate negotiations in order to make plans. Eder interpreted from English to Spanish to Shipibo and back again however, he was unable to translate texts. Eder was taught to stitch by his mother, and participated in the research both as an artist and interpreter.

Once introduced to the Shipibo artists, our communication initially was tentative and fragile, taking time and requiring us to take each other at face value, having no one to negotiate our meeting. Through my experience with the Shipibo artists from Maroti Shobo, I became acquainted with significant cultural protocols, vital information, enabling me to progress with my research. The Shipibo, by initiating and managing the Cooperative to sell their textiles, ceramics and jewellery within an urban setting, engaged directly with the commodification of what they had made. The Shipibo have in fact, generally maintained a higher level of economic autonomy, as a result of this Collective, than many other artists from different tribes within the area (Kellog, 2005, p. 157).

The contacts I made through Maroti Shobo, the Shipibo Artists' Collective, allowed me to move among many family groups, in many different contexts. The socially circuitous way of making arrangements by the Shipibo (de Mori, 2009) could be mistaken for passivity; however, our exchange was intersubjectively dynamic. I came to understand that the information that passed between us was both intentional and unintentional. There were times when we misinterpreted each other; however, the common denominator for us was our shared hand-making practice, and because of this shared focus and our acceptance of the language difference, these moments were often a point of stimulus.

I travelled into the Shipibo communities to meet the artists and see their cloths, because their work was no longer collected for sale by the Artists' Collective, as fuel costs previously met by Maroti Shobo had become prohibitive as a result of the Great Financial Crisis of 2008. This was a time when international funding bodies withdrew financial support for local craft based products. This changed the dynamic between the Shipibo artists and the Artists' Collective. The Shipibo artists, who lived

further up the river, then, independently transported their goods into Pucallpa to Maroti Shobo, in order to have them sold. This required less money for fuel from the organisation, enabling it to consign works from artists within only 10 communities, living close to Pucallpa, thus enabling more local artists to show their work.

I understood primarily through observation that different artists had different skills. For example some stitched the larger cloths and printed other larger cloths. Some artists made jewellery; others again stitched patterns inherent to the Shipibo onto recycled clothing. I was not given any information regarding commissions or if the artists were directed to make on request, either by tourists or management. I had the impression the artists themselves would sometimes informally gather items for sale from other artists, as well as their own, when they travelled to their communities and transport them to be sold at the Collective. All of this information was provided via conversations with the artists within the Collective and through my own observations.

I went to the Collective with Marina and Eder to view and buy some cloth and had little idea what was to come. I purchased two pieces of cloth, influenced by Eder who told me the appropriate protocol. I then bought an artwork from each of the twenty artists. I negotiated a set price to be spent with all of the artists. As I went to each artist a continual re-negotiation was necessary. I realised in retrospect I was a willing, if unknowing, participant in setting up contacts. The time spent at Maroti Shobo with the Shipibo artists consolidated contact with other communities to further my creative research. All the contact was opening new possibilities, however, I still required an interpreter.

Eder was at first reticent to interpret for me as he had had difficult experiences with westerners. He indicated he had experienced unequal power relationships, and broken promises regarding financial arrangements. I found with the Shipibo a gentle, sensitive approach to be the most effective. It was Eder who instigated journeys and contacts up the Rio Ucayali and introduced me to his Shipibo family network.

One such introduction was to Pashin Yaca, a Shipibo artist at the San Francisco community very near Pucallpa – I was touched by her enormous generosity. Pashin

Yaca, an accomplished potter and bead artist, gave me her time, information regarding her work and process, and spoke of her long life of ninety-five years. She also sang a song of welcome, which I recorded and it was shown in both of my exhibitions (DVD 3.0). Eder also introduced me to his grandmother, Gwana, who had come in from her community to look after her twelve year old granddaughter, Kardy. Gwana is over seventy-five years old and going blind.

Gwana lives on the outskirts of Pucallpa, far away from her extended family in very simple wooden housing with a tin roof and no insulation. In the past, when Gwana looked after her grandchildren in her community they became ill and died from disease that required medical attention which she was unable to access, due to distance. As she did not want this to happen again, Gwana left her home of 70 years to be the support person for her granddaughter on the outskirts of Pucallpa, so Kardy has access to education and medical facilities, if required. Gwana knew that she might never return to her home, as she is too old and blind for the journey to be a safe one. I acquired the last cloth she would ever stitch and it was presented in both exhibitions (DVD 4.4).

Whatever the difficulties they are facing, the Shipibo want their children to thrive in the changing world. Eder said the Shipibo make sure their children return to their communities, often, to spend time with the extended family and to learn the traditions and language of their communities. The sustaining heart of the Shipibo tradition is deeply rooted in their relationship to the rainforest, physically, spiritually and culturally, as is clearly evident in their creative works (Rittner, 2007; Davis, 2009).

When Eder's mother, Jobita, came to teach me Shipibo stitching, essentially it was on her terms. She offered her presence and skills, and I accepted. Although arrangements regarding time and place to meet appeared to be fluid, I sensed that Jobita's positioning of herself as my teacher, was intentional (this is discussed further in 6.3.5). In this exchange we silently understood she would direct our time together. The Shipibo have a sense of open-ended time (de Mori, 2009), and for them time is not a linear construct. These meetings could and did take many hours,

which I realised via my ongoing contact with the Shipibo, both individually, and when visiting their communities.

Jobita and I both looked to stitch as our common creative act, affirming the tacit in our intercultural communication. It became evident within this mutually unfolding revelation of misunderstandings and confused intentions that we lived firmly within our differing lifeworlds. There were moments when this was an exquisite tension. Even when we responded differently to the same situation, we used our common sense to interpret elements of creative, social and cultural differences. In fact we often found ourselves laughing at endless attempts to make sense of experiences seemingly so unlike and unusual to each other.

Certainly as I moved into the making process, I was challenged to find ways to creatively integrate the acquired knowledge and communicate this via “institutional language” (Pink, 2007, p. 4) within a western gallery setting. This is further examined in relationship to my solo exhibitions (section, 6.0). I concur with Pink’s position that “the moral and philosophical beliefs of the researcher and his or her view of reality also impinge greatly on the ethical practices that he or she applies in research and representation” (2007, p. 50). It was a very real consideration for me as an artist “to be not just self reflexive about my methods, but also conversant about them in institutional languages” (p. 4). My creative engagement is with embodied knowledge, exchanged via hand-stitching processes. I have aimed to grasp, however fleetingly the tacit within the intercultural moments of exchange between us via creative praxis.

3.0 Literature and Contextual Review.

In the Literature and Contextual Review I present an overall critical framework of current theories pertinent to the focus and inquiries of this study. By doing so, I clarify my position as an artist investigating the intercultural dialogue between the Shipibo artists of Peru and myself, while engaged within a creative exchange, via hand-stitching as a site for tacit intercultural dialogue.

The intercultural creative engagement between us is central to this doctoral research and is framed within the global context. I appreciate that it is not possible to accurately reproduce interactions with artists of a traditionally oral culture, given our different languages and cultural differences. It was not and is not my intention to translate our interactions using a written form or construct meaning or create an overlay through Western modes of thinking in order to “make sense”, of what transpired (Rittner, 2007).

The Literature and Contextual Review provides a broad overview of the issues underpinning the research, as well as offering contrasting conceptual outlooks. The relevant topics are discussed in the relevant four sub-sections: Globalisation, sub-section 3.1: *The impact of globalisation on the intercultural research with the Shipibo*. Intercultural Communication is examined in sub-section 3.2: *Different approaches to Intercultural Communication*. Tacit exchange/knowledge and the intersubjective are discussed in sub-section 3.3: *Tacit/Exchange and the significance of the intersubjective*, concluding with an analysis of traditional way of making in a post-traditional world sub-section 3.4: *Tradition/post-tradition* which acknowledges *the changing nature of tradition and the impact on intercultural communication*. These four areas of consideration establish the parameters of the research and provide clear theoretical perspectives to support my reflexive creative praxis. I point out that there is some overlap, as authors are discussed across differing sections, demonstrating the interrelationship of some the ideas and issues.

I begin by reviewing the literature regarding Globalisation in sub-section 3.1, as this was the context in which we as artists participated in our creative, intercultural exchanges. Due to this contextual relationship, I review definitions of the terms

intercultural and cross-cultural and demonstrate that intercultural communication can be conceptualised in a number of ways and most specifically, to demonstrate that it is a constant element within my creative praxis. Through this review I establish the impact globalisation had on us as artists in an intercultural situation and clarify approaches relevant to examining traditional hand-stitching practices within an intercultural context to support my creative praxis.

3.1 Impact of globalisation on the intercultural research with the Shipibo.

As a Western artist of my background, to make sense of my interactions with the Shipibo artists of the Amazon is not a straightforward task. However, my experience with the Shipibo artists has enabled a reflexive, creative, global dialogue and the opportunity to enter the Shipibo lifeworld, where everything, human and non-human, is endowed with subjectivity (Bilhaut, 2009). Following this, everything perceived within the Shipibo paradigm has its associated perspective, place and value, which differs from the cultural paradigm I inhabit.

The Shipibo artists have entered a new global modernity (Beck, 2006; Bauman, 2000), and live at the intersection of the richness of their ancient culture and their desire to protect their rights, their lands and their language. At the same time they are willing to enter the globalised world of technology and to be part of a thriving economic and politically sound community so their children can be healthy and educated (Bilhaut, 2009). Our interactions were framed by this paradigm. This context embodied a cultural perspective deeply embedded within the current globally technologically savvy world.

It was in this global climate we came together in our creative hand-stitching practice, albeit I have the opportunity to travel. As Jonathan Friedman (2003) suggests it is not globalisation that is new, but mobilisation, as cited in Bauman, (2000). This is part of my lived experience. As a working minority-world artist I live in a time where most destinations in the world are affordable and geographically reachable.

Cultures have always interacted and in this process have shared ideas, beliefs and exported and imported commodities (Connell, 2007). I am engaged as an artist in this dynamic of globalisation that creates situations of increased intercultural contact and therefore I am exposed and complicit, via my participation, with a quality of diffusion within this process. Diffusion, according to Stief, (2008, p. 1) is the action of spreading ideas and a way of describing the creative intertwining implicit within intercultural exchange.

Globalisation, by its very nature, involves movement i.e. diffusion, of practices, ideas and technologies and hence knowledge across cultures and countries. Giddens (1990) describes this globalising process as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (p. 64). Globalisation also indicates we are closer to each other via consumerism, ideology and by simply knowing about each other (Giddens, 1991). The globalising impact of technology enables me to access information and to contact the Shipibo and their arts both easily and rapidly. The escalation and frequency of communication, is enabled by technologies such as the Internet, Facebook, YouTube, and mobile phones- all of which I utilised in communicating with the Shipibo and continue to use (via the Internet through an interpreter). There is much complexity with digital technologies, and I am not suggesting technology is without problems, as it can divide countries, communities and families, and not everyone has access to the same possibilities it provides (Bauman, 2000). However, for me, it created opportunities for increased levels of communication when setting up the research, and enabled further contact when in situ with the Shipibo.

It is important to assert that the seeming ease with which we can contact others around the world via technology must be underpinned with a critical awareness. Beck also alerts us to the importance of being aware of “a highly ambivalent picture of reality and the future: opportunities are boundless but so to are threats” (2004, p. 40). Giddens further describes the impact of forms of technical communication as a process of “disembedding” (1991, p. 20). These “disembedding mechanisms” work in “the reorganising of time and space” and “separate interaction from the particularities of locales” (1991, p. 20). I accessed some of my research contacts

with the Shipibo before going to Peru via these technologies and so they (Shipibo) are certainly participants in the “time-space distancing”, (1991, p. 21) that Giddens claims is an aspect of globalisation.

Furthermore, Giddens asserts, “Globalisation concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations “at distance” with local contextualities” (1991, p. 21). This was especially the case with this research, as initially the Shipibo artists and I mutually entered our exchange physically “at distance” in order to make our contacts. This, however, only developed into a more solid and enduring relationship with the artists and their families face-to-face as we intersubjectively entered and witnessed our respective creative lifeworlds.

I had not anticipated how the interpersonal nature of my contact with the Shipibo artists would impact on me creatively. Nor had I understood the effect of the global nature of our meetings which unfolded in such ways as to lead me to experience what Bauman (1998) refers to as “global effects, notoriously unintended and unanticipated, rather than to global initiatives and understandings” (1998, p. 60). Bauman refers to Jowett’s “*new world disorder*” as a way of describing globalisation in its current form (1998, p. 59). This is in contrast to the earlier classic, modern, thinking around globalisation which contained the hope and intention of making a universal world order, “on a truly global scale” (p. 59), thus viewing globalisation as a universalising force. However, the fact is that we are all being affected and impacted by globalisation albeit in very different ways (Connell, 2007). Bauman (1998) asserts we all have global effect-but we are unable to “execute actions globally” (p. 60). He indicates, “Globalisation is not about what we all, or at least the most resourceful and enterprising among us, wish or hope to do. It is about what is happening to us all” (1998, p. 60).

Initially, it was understood that any intercultural dialogue was linked only to a sense of nationality. Ulf Hannerz (1992) argued that rather than assuming all national cultures as different, we needed to view cultures as creolised societies as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 6). This is clearly evident within the Shipibo culture, as they try to keep their families intact by maintaining their language and communities and yet at the same time reach out for intercultural communication outside their immediate

cultural sphere. Hannerz (1992), as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 6) also indicated that the globalising process has two opposing elements; while we are becoming closer and closer to each other, globalisation has also brought a greater localising focus within each particular country. Indeed, people within a nation could have a greater difference from each other than people from across cultures (Featherstone 1990, Hyland Eriksen, 1993), cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 6).

What is new is not the commodity-based, intercultural communication that is a consequence of globalisation, but the frequency of this contact and its ensuing impact on all areas within cultures (Bauman, 1998). This mobilising consumer society Bauman calls “liquid modernity” (1998) and he uses the term in a metaphorical sense to describe a quality of post modernity. Liquid modernity implies that the melting of known structures, which have been a permanent feature of modernity, is so rapid and constant in all of our lifeworlds (1998), that any idea of lasting stability is undermined. Beck (2006) similarly concludes, “Capital tears down all national boundaries and jumbles together the “native” and the “foreign” (p. 21). He continues, “The everyday experience of cosmopolitan interdependence is not a love affair of everyone with everyone. It arises in a climate of heightened global threats, which create an unavoidable pressure to cooperate” (p. 23). This directly links with the concerns of my practice.

The contact with the Shipibo artists has enabled and challenged me to negotiate my identity through our globally contextualised, intercultural communication, and to acknowledge these broader social and cultural concerns. I am enabled to travel as an artist in the ways that I have because of the times and place in which I live. I acknowledge the unequal distribution of power and capital which Beck’s question articulates: “Is it not shown by the fact that borders are becoming ever more permeable for members of elites, whereas for the rest, the poor, these same borders are sealed? “ (p. 43). Another question my research needs to ask is, is it enough to simply acknowledge the differing permeability of borders depending on wealth? By naming such globalising realities, I both acknowledge my complicity and the need to engage reflexively with it, in order to critically contextualise my creative praxis within the globalised world.

3.2 Different approaches to Intercultural communication.

Jensen (2003) is a seminal scholar of intercultural communication who emphasises, “The complexity in society demands more complex questions and answers” (¶ 3). Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1993) as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 3), also contends, “one of the challenges in the field of intercultural communication is to develop analytical tools on the basis of the complex concepts describing complex societies”. Post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994) confronts similar issues to Jensen when he asserts that in order to have intercultural dialogue, it is vital to know that all systems and statements are constructed in what he refers to as “the third space of enunciation” (p. 38). This where the Shipibo and I, coming from different lifeworlds, came together within the creative shared social act of hand-stitching, thus enabling intercultural communication.

Lustig and Koester (1996, p. 9) define communication as “a symbolic process in which people create shared meanings”. We did not have the means to communicate via a common spoken language; however, we found other ways to convey meaning. The combined sharing of an action or in my experience with the Shipibo, of our silence, were our ways of communicating, and creating meaning. Meaning, however, as Merleau-Ponty (1971) as cited in Feather, (2000) notes, is based on personal perception and experience and may or may not be shared with others. For us, our shared creative process became the site of our intercultural communication, and meaning was enabled through our tacit exchange.

I acknowledge there are many ways to approach this phenomenon of intercultural communication (Jensen, 2003). Indeed there is the argument that “there is no difference between intercultural communication and other kinds of communication” Gudykunst (1994) and Saurbaugh (1979), as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 8). At times this was true within my research as we sat together as artists, speaking of our different contexts, which had much commonality and resonance.

The field of intercultural research however, can also be considered from two traditional perspectives – one functionalist and the other poststructuralist (Jensen, 2003). According to proponents of the former methodology, “The functionalist

research tradition has tried to predict how culture would influence communication. Focus has been on identifying culture as barrier against more effective communication” Samovar et al., (1981) as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 9). Collier and Thomas (1998), as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 12), define intercultural communication from a post-structuralist view as a discussion from the perspective of the individual. Their definition indicates that individuals are those “who identify themselves as distinct from one another in cultural terms”. I concur with Jensen (2003, ¶ 22) who indicates, “ It is through the construction of the others we construct narratives of ourselves”. Fred Jandt and Delores Tanno (1996) as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 12) also support this view.

The social constructionists Davies and Harre (1990, p.40) as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶18) outline and describe two differing and possible ways one can negotiate positions within an intercultural setting:

There can be interactive positioning in which one person say positions another, and there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself. However it would be a mistake to assume that, in either case, positioning is necessarily intentional. One lives one’s life in terms of one’s ongoing produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production.

Samovar and Porter, on the other hand (1991, p. 8), indicate that intercultural communication is “a dynamic transactional behaviour-affecting process in which people behave intentionally in order to induce or elicit a particular response from another”. There can be no one definitive ethical blueprint in approaching intercultural dialogue when difference is inevitable. I agree with Sarah Pink (2007) who clearly states, “If difference denotes plurality and equality rather than hierarchy, then it would seem unreasonable to argue that one ethical code would be superior to another” (p. 50). In conclusion, she cites Rapport (1997), as cited in Pink (2007, p. 50): “I want to outline a liberal basis for social science which recognises individuals as universal human agents above whom there is no greater good, without whom there is no cultural tradition”. I concur with Pink that when I encountered people interculturally in the research process I held them equally and in the highest respect; however, I do note that this is not always the case.

Expanding on Pink's assertion, and at the heart of this creative praxis, is the understanding that we are first, creative human beings. As such, we are immeasurable and there is much that we may never know about each other. This perspective was a central premise of my research approach. Within the broader context of this research, however, we were engaged in communication within a global and intercultural context. This demanded a wider context of research focus, as well as a "dynamic of research practice" (McNamara, 2012, p.10) that sits between the subjective nature of the creative contact and the "demand that all suppositions should be open to critical review as well as exacting scrutiny (including one's fondest assumptions!)", (2012, p.10). This critical, reflexive process underpins the creative praxis within the exegesis.

Thus, within my creative praxis, I am aligned with the positioning of Muneo Yoshikawa (1987) as cited in Jensen, (2003). He was in turn influenced by Martin Buber and presented a model of communication called 'The Double Swing Model'; Yoshikawa (1987) as cited in Jensen (2003,) states:

In the double swing model, communication is seen as an infinite process and the two participants will both change in the meeting. I contend that the goal for a communication is not to eliminate differences, but to use dynamics that arise through the meeting. (¶ 13)

This dynamic of difference continually shaped and enabled the creative meetings between the Shipibo and myself. Hence I concur with Yoshikawa's (1987) approach "to use the dynamics that arise through the meeting" as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 13) as obviously our shared experiences would have similarities and differences. Although we came from differing lifeworlds our creative engagement within the socially shared act of hand-stitching enabled communication within an intercultural context.

The Shipibo's ethics and protocols were clearly made known to me via our tacit exchange and through my interpreter. We approached each other with great mutual respect and much transpired as we stitched, listened and at times spoke. Berger and Luckmann (1966), as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 17) state that from an everyday perspective, the term experience is central to communication. They continue, "It is

impossible to ignore one's experiences. That is an important fact in intercultural communication" (Jensen, 2003, ¶ 17), and that one needs to respect that the communication partner might have other experiences, and is socialised to experience his or her world as real Berger and Luckman (1996) as cited in Jensen, (2003, ¶ 18). Ultimately, I concur with Pink when she notes it is up to the individual artist to decide that their "practices and representations are ethical before these are held up to the scrutiny of others who will then interpret this question for themselves" (Pink, 2007, p. 51).

The aforementioned positions on intercultural communication are deeply challenging for me as I travel into other cultures outside of my Western paradigm. By reflexively considering these and other critical writings, concerning globalisation, intercultural discourse, tacit knowledge/intersubjectivity, tradition/post-tradition, I reflexively map an ethical creative praxis.

3.3 Tacit exchange/knowledge and the significance of the Intersubjective.

The transformative nature of maker, aesthetic and material can be explained only through the act of making; however, it can be witnessed and the process of the making shared (Crouch, 2013, ¶ 1) via a reflexive creative praxis. Hand-stitching is a communication between the material, the maker and processes of making, and, in relation to my exchange with the Shipibo, between maker and maker. The tacit exchange is underpinned by my creative praxis, which is "contingent upon a social and cultural environment"(Crouch, 2000, ¶ 14) that is always open to negotiation and is premised on acting together with the Shipibo artists, not upon the other (2000, ¶ 15). This, then, demands consideration beyond the practice of making, to circumvent self-interest, and brings clarity to the intersubjective exchange within our shared communicative action (Crouch, 2007, p. 108) via my praxis.

Polyani's seminal works, *The Tacit Dimension* (2009) and *Personal Knowledge* (1974), were attempts to articulate the subjective, seemingly informal way of understanding the world and to challenge the hierarchy of the thinking of the time, which privileged formulaic knowledge and ignored the skill required to gather such information. Polyani understood that research results were the product of a "set of

skills” used to gather information that exists before outcomes (Polyani, 2009, p. 30). It is the information that exists before any further formal outcomes and contains its own rules of action. Polyani asserts, “the aim of a skill full performance is achieved by the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them” (1974, p. 49). He continues:

Rules of art can be useful, but they do not determine the practice of an art; they are maxims, which can serve as a guide to the art only if they can be integrated and to the practical knowledge of the art. They cannot replace this knowledge. (1974, p. 50)

Tacit knowledge, then, cannot be articulated formally or in propositional (explicit) terms, nor be captured in spoken language or formulated with numbers (Polyani, 2009). It is embodied knowledge consisting of unwritten rules, and which values hands-on skills as a way of developing and communicating this knowledge. This knowing can, however, be seen clearly through our actions when we carry out basic tasks e.g., threading a needle, tying a knot and stitching. We do not, however, know every detail of how this happens, or how we acquired our capacity to perform such skills. Polanyi (2009) alludes to the frequent intangibility of learning and shared intelligence, when he states, “we can know more than we can tell” (p. 4). Similarly Crouch (2013) also states:

We can’t always articulate what we know; sometimes we can only demonstrate it because there isn’t a vocabulary that exists to explain what is happening – and more prosaically – it is easier and quicker to show someone what we know rather than try and explain its process. (¶ 2)

Polyani does not privilege tacit knowledge over explicit knowledge (1974, p. 17). He clearly indicates the importance of scientific knowledge and that its methods of analysis are not undermined by acknowledging the importance of tacit knowledge (2009). Polyani firmly asserts, “Destructive analysis remains also an indispensable weapon against superstition and religious practices” (1974, p. 51). He further contends, that the “personal co-efficient, which shapes all factual knowledge, bridges in doing so the disjunction between subjectivity and objectivity” (1974, p. 17). I understand from Polyani’s statement that he considers it is vital to employ a

critical analysis when approaching situations focused on tacit exchange in order to be open to new ways and possibilities to avoid personal prejudice.

Current researchers Nonaka and Takeuchi (as cited in Tsoukas, 2002, p. 1) support a widely adopted view of tacit knowledge as knowledge waiting to be translated or changed into explicit knowledge (p. 1). Polyani (1974) clearly indicates new knowledge does not manifest when the tacit becomes explicit. I agree with Tsoukas that this perspective “ignores the essential ineffability of tacit knowledge, thus reducing it to what can be articulated” (Tsoukas, 2002, p. 15). Polyani (2009), clarifies the ineffable quality of the such knowledge when he states, “we attend *from* something for attending *to* something else; namely, from the first term to the second term of the tacit relation” (p. 10; italics in the original), calling this “the phenomenal structure of tacit knowing” (p. 11).

Hence such knowledge, is not knowledge waiting to be articulated-to be expressed in words, nor does it sit at the opposite end of the scale from explicit knowledge (Polyani, 2009, p. 10). Tacit and explicit knowledge are “two sides of the same coin”, as all explicit knowledge is underpinned by tacit knowledge (Tsoukas, 2002, p. 15). Tsoukas (2002) further insists.

Tacit knowledge cannot be captured, translated or converted but only displayed and manifested in what we do. New knowledge comes about not when tacit becomes explicit, but when our skilled performance, our praxis, is punctuated in new ways through social interaction. (p. 16)

Tsoukas’s (2002) emphasis on the transformative aspect of the social, supports my experience with the Shipibo artists, and applies to the continual unfolding of such communication through our shared making, where new insights and knowledge emerged within our creative engagement with one another. Affirming the social act as a means of change, also confirms that the gallery and my exhibitions are sites for tacit communication of creative works within the social context of the gallery.

The recognition of Polyani’s (2009) concept of the tacit dimension also gives value to and offers a way of recognising knowledge gathered and shared via sensory information and images, and thus supports the central aim of my research inquiry.

Bolt (2009) also acknowledges that the capacity of tacit knowledge within the making of artworks can generate information that requires verbal and written articulation. I concur with Bolt (2009), that, the exegesis is vital for my research to bridge the tacit and explicit knowledge while firmly acknowledging the ineffable quality of the this way of knowing and so further articulate and appreciate that they can be complementary. As Bolt states:

tacit knowledge and the generative potential of process have the potential to reveal new insights: both those insights that inform and find a form in artworks and those that can be articulated in words. It is here that the exegesis offers a critical role. (2009, p. 31)

Additionally, Bolt posits, “knowledge in creative arts research can be seen to emerge in the involvement with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice” (2009, p. 31): materials lost, found, used and discarded, given, shared and borrowed. The “studio”, or context for the Shipibo and my creative exchange, was mobile and depended on many personal, social and other random factors. It was in the shared movement of making, interculturally, that the Shipibo artists and I, found forms of tacit knowledge through intersubjective communication across our different backgrounds.

My approach was always as a maker using cloth, stitch and dye. An acknowledgment of the informal procedure of reciprocally learning and gathering information was key to understanding how we accumulated knowledge, as well as tacitly transmitting and receiving details. In fact, we often relied on our intuitive and sensory perceptions to inform each other of intercultural protocols and information due to the difficulty in understanding each other’s language. Much of the information I acquired while in contact with the Shipibo artists was through listening, watching and engaging in hand-stitching. The Shipibo artists’ processes resonated with the materiality of my own practice. Our common materials were needle, thread, cloth and dyes; both chemical and plant derived.

I encountered both verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication in my contact with the Shipibo artists. Making these distinctions is important as verbal communication, as previously stated, was via an interpreter with a particular quality and approach. Spradley (1980) contends, “a large part of any culture consists of tacit

knowledge. Informants always know things they cannot talk about or express in direct ways” (p. 11).

Our communication was subject to our own experiences as artists. As previously mentioned, the Shipibo and I participated and observed each other in order to become familiar with how to be and establish what was required of each other. Through this approach, it could be argued we were engaged in participating with, and observing each other within a tacit exchange. I acknowledge the intersubjective as a way to describe the phenomena of shared experience between us, and the doxic knowledge of our lifeworlds. Doxic knowledge is lived experience that we often take for granted and is knowledge which can be unconscious but which we all have (Bourdieu, 1972).

Intersubjectivity, then, is the experience in which people exchange phenomena, and which may include a shared divergence of meaning Merleau-Ponty (1992), as cited in Feather, (2000). Intersubjectivity was expressed in the way that the artists and I conducted our roles, imbued with our differing cultural patterns. There was verbal dialogue; however, there was also an ephemeral, intersubjective exchange. Feather (2000), affirms that within the intersubjective experience, “we are immersed in it and it always has a generality which escapes conscious organisation” (p. 4.). He continues “None of this is meant to suggest that social life is inherently whimsical, rather that the way its semantic networks come together to frame new objects is, in any detail, unpredictable” (p. 6.). This indeed was the case for the development of my creative praxis and in my meetings with the Shipibo artists. Although many aspects of our exchange were unpredictable, there was a stability within our unspoken quality of communication, which informed our social, creative, roles and how to act.

We all entered into our contact with our various “ideas about the project”, Giddens, (1991), as cited in Feather, (2000). I had some awkward experiences with some of the artists, due to previous Western encounters that had been problematic. One such example was with a Shipibo artist and shaman, Elisa Vargas Fernandez, at one of the communities called San Francisco. She had asked for privacy regarding some traditional ceremonial information she had shared with a Westerner from a

university in North America; however, the researcher had contravened the agreement in quite a public way. Understandably, Elisa was suspicious of me and she was clearly not interested in seeing me, or having any contact with me, even though she insisted on a meeting when asked. Elisa kept me waiting and when she arrived, her husband accompanied her. Alberto sat behind me as Elisa spoke of the incident. He was silent and she constantly looked towards him. I did not insist on seeing the cloths and made it clear via the interpreter I was going to leave. At that moment, Alberto indicated I could stay. He said he sensed I was trustworthy and said that they would bring some cloths for me to have a look at. Elisa immediately relaxed and we developed a closer relationship. Over the course of our meetings, I came to understand that time and reciprocity, i.e. mutual creative exchange, were key aspects in gaining a more relaxed and deeper Intersubjective experience.

In my research, I find myself in a sense between two worlds. I was in a dialogue without direct speech, via an interpreter, and had my own subjective understandings, as did Elisa. Her subjective experience was predicated on “other” Westerners; hence our dialogues developed on the basis of our individual experiences. Rather than theorising beforehand, I enacted what Feather (2000), in discussing the work of Dummet (1981), speaks of:

Dummet’s point is that effective communication or structured discourse starts from a practised context of shared meanings and only on that ontological basis can classification take place, that is, make sense to subjects. Hence classification is an outcome of communicative practices rather than its starting point cited in Feather. (2000, p. 3)

However, as an artist, I was engaged in two approaches of an intersubjective nature. I found myself on the edge of the unknown and unfamiliar and experienced that “outcomes” emerged via our unfolding “communicative practices” (Feather, 2000, p. 3). I also approached my exchange with the Shipibo artists with my particular ideas about the project (Giddens, 1991) and both seemingly divergent approaches were researched via “informed reflexive action” (Barrett & Bolt, 2011, p. 118) and continue to be so. By this I mean that I reflected on the unexpected circumstances I found myself in with the Shipibo artists, and understood my contribution to the situation, so demonstrating both action and reflection. By acknowledging (reflecting

on), the complexity of my social, cultural and creative engagement with the Shipibo artists, I engaged in informed reflexive action, knowing the outcomes would be necessarily emergent and not fixed (Barrett & Bolt, 2009, p. 6). This placed our contact in a broader context and beyond the merely personal.

Feather (2000) identifies two schools of thought describing this complex experience; The Frankfurt School and Phenomenology, and, in particular the work of Anthony Giddens and Maurice Merleau-Ponty respectively. One model aims to establish the objectivity in dialogues, (the Giddens' reflexive model) and the other model privileges the self as subjective.

Feather (2000) posits further;

On the Giddens' view it is as if the musician (artist) has ideas about a project first and then identifies some historical contextual allusions with which to embellish it. This seems to put the cart before the horse as it is the context which enables the project to emerge in the first place. (p. 3)

By contrast, Merleau-Ponty (1992) as cited in Feather, (2000) argues:

that in its relation to the other (other subjectivities) the embodied or intersubjective experience can overlap with other subjectivities which are mutually situated in some way and it can also attempt to negate or exclude subjectivities. Both modes are essential to the embodied subject. (p. 3)

I contend that Elisa and I sat within this sense of "overlap" in our approach to each other. Thus I am acknowledging both the Giddens (1991) reflexive model as well as Merleau-Ponty's (as cited in Feather, 2000) perspective as having relevance to my research. We had a shared sense of meaning through our hand-made cloths, and as artists. However, we also experienced a "divergence of meaning" resulting from our different lifeworld experiences. I was also reflexively self-monitoring, in order to decide on situationally, appropriate behaviour Giddens (1991) as cited in Feather, (2000) within this intercultural dynamic. In this instance, I would contend, Elisa and I were experiencing the complexity of reflexively engaging intersubjectively within an intercultural setting. In Moore's (1997) understanding, Giddens' (1991) view has us "picking things out, and then feeding them back into the field of activity concerned" as cited in Feather (2000, p. 3). Hence Giddens often argues, "that there

is in contemporary life a growing self-conscious relatedness to historical and cultural background” (p. 3). Furthermore Merleau-Ponty (1992) as cited in Feather (2000) contends:

that we construct the rationality of what we are doing rather than referring to [rationality...given beforehand], we make sense of our experience from within it rather than from outside it. Thus meanings are received from experience rather than given to it. This [being in the world] (following Heidegger) is then the monitoring process, [the activity organising the world by responding from within....] The contextual is therefore already embedded in subjectivity and it is via [unconscious] or [informal social knowledge] that the conscious self grasps an object. (p.4)

I assert that these views of Merleau-Ponty are relevant to this research based on my lived-experience with the Shipibo. Merleau-Ponty (1992) states that we make sense of our experiences from within them, indicating Feather’s (2000) notion of “informal social knowledge”(p. 4) as a way of articulating this social exchange. By responding from within the subjective experience, I make meaning via the tacit. This acknowledges what Feather (2000) affirms: that I cannot always control my field of perception, because “we are [I am] immersed in it and it always has a generality which escapes conscious organisation” (p. 4). Feather (2000) continues, “meanings are generated via praxis (socially self-constituting activity)” (p. 12). This position supports the idea that reflexivity takes place in a larger context, because the experience has already been contextualised via the shared day-to-day activities of the Shipibo and myself. Therefore, I am privileging the ideas of Merleau-Ponty over Giddens for my research concerning the intersubjective, while acknowledging I also approached the research, at times, with preconceived ideas.

3.4 Tradition/post-tradition. Acknowledging the changing nature of tradition and the impact on intercultural exchange.

Anne-Gael Bilhaut (2009), an anthropologist who lived with the Zapara people in the Columbian Amazon, asserts, “the Zapara do not invent or reinvent their traditions, but recycle elements of them that they then imbue with new indigenous insights, like the need for political resistance” (Bilhaut, 2009, p. 95) Bilhaut’s

understanding resonates with my experiences with the Shipibo regarding their textile traditions. Part of my research investigation was to comprehend the enormous flexibility and range of information regarding the Shipibo traditions I received, and to grasp that the Shipibo philosophy allows for “complete freedom in maintaining, transmitting, creating and changing of [traditions]” (de Mori, 2007, p. 7). The assertions of many scholars on Shipibo textile designs have been translated and explained, and are highly acclaimed. For example: D. W. Lathrap (1970, 1976); P. G. Roe (1982); and, A. Gebhart-Sayer (1984). However, thirty years later, the Shipibo, seemed reluctant to designate longevity or meanings to many of the designs. This is significant to me as it was unexpected. I had come to expect what I had read in this acclaimed research as fact: that the meanings of the cloths and how they were made were universal. My understanding that the designs had fixed meanings, however, was not information that was confirmed by the Shipibo.

This research has helped me to understand that tradition, as I experienced it with the Shipibo, was co-created as “social renewal, which is an act of cultural transmission” (Donlin, 2011, p. 9). Social renewal indicates that tradition is alive and functioning (Giddens, 1991, p. 146). Giddens suggests that, “In traditional contexts, the life-cycle carries strong connotations of renewal” (1994, p. 146), as each generation passes on and renews traditions or takes from the previous one. However, in the Shipibo culture, this did not appear to occur in a linear way and, as previously stated, this research required me to remain inconclusive when I made any inquiry about the traditional ways the cloths were constructed.

Giddens (1991) posits that when we lived in a predominantly traditional culture, the mores of the time were not critiqued. Nor was the impact of an individual’s action overly considered, as choices were already set down by the traditional customs of the times and culture. In our current post-traditional (Giddens, 1994) context, we are less concerned, however, with the rituals laid down by previous generations that held the social structure together. Perhaps, this is because our options are as open to change as the culture in which we live. In contrast however, what I learned from my time in the Amazon, is that the Shipibo consider the previous generations as somehow always present, and draw continually to construct traditions from the past and the future. De Mori (2007), indicates:

The historical inevitability of the western interpretation of time (there is objective past which had actually happened and a intersubjective, historical interpretation of this past in the present) is not compatible with this generative model of time, where any past can be constructed from manipulation of contents in the present. (p. 6)

Giddens (1994) insists tradition in our post-traditional world is alive and flourishing, though lived in a new way (p. 93). Maybe it is no longer tradition lived in the traditional way, but new traditions emerge from global impact on a world scale, as well as locally (Giddens, 2003, p. 42). This is the context, the post-traditional world, the Shipibo artists and I, came together in. We live in a world of change, both locally and globally. Every cultural structure, including day-to-day life is being impacted upon and “re-established in many areas of life, including everyday life” (Giddens, 2003, p. 42), in particular I would add, those traditions that no longer serve the peoples of the culture, including our Western culture.

Giddens (2003) acknowledges we are an emerging cosmopolitan society, i.e. a world where very little of our planet is unaffected by human presence or intervention. Giddens (2003) affirms, “This is a society living after the end of nature. It is also a society living after the end of tradition” (p. 43). This doesn’t mean that traditions disappear, they continue, but in different forms (Giddens, 2003, p. 43). The Shipibo and I live and hand-make using traditional methods and materials in a post-traditional society (Giddens, 1994), yet my experience of this is that our perceptions were neither fixed nor confused within our respective cultural identities. The point I wish to assert is that given all of the complexity of our lifeworlds, we were able to establish intercultural discourse through creative engagement across differing traditions. This was made possible, I argue, via tacit exchange, thus enabling an intercultural creative dialogue between the Shipibo and myself.

4.0 Approach to the Study.

I acknowledge that, as an artist, I bring my social, cultural and creative complexities to this research. I also appreciate, as previously stated, that acknowledging this does not mean that my subjectivity does not still inflect upon the research (McNamara, 2012). I do, however, reaffirm this is not research on or about the Shipibo artists. It is rather an exploration of my creative processes impacted upon by my interaction with the Shipibo artists. I consider and assert that the Shipibo artists and I are peers, exchanging tacit knowledge, embedded within traditional hand-stitching processes. My desire to engage interculturally with artists that use traditional hand-stitching, was the stimuli for embarking on this creative research. Specifically, my aim was to develop my creative praxis by working with artists who are immersed in a traditional way of hand- stitching, as I also use traditional ways of making. My intention was to explore whether the creative act could be the conduit for creative exchange within an intercultural context.

4.1 Defining the research model.

Given the complexity of the key research ideas-intercultural, intersubjective and the tacit - positioning myself with the Shipibo artists allowed for a greater critical and reflexive appreciation of these ideas in a real-life situation. As a result, the many intercultural cultural nuances that arose were understood more readily, as were our creative exchanges. Griffiths (2009) cited in Biggs & Karlsen, (2012, p. 183), when speaking of academic virtue within creative practice research, notes that a critical approach to such research is required

Bridges (2003), posits the following principles of academic virtues, with which I concur: "Careful attention to argument and evidence; thoroughness; honesty; humility with regard to one's knowledge and respectfulness with regard to the knowledge claims of others; responsiveness to criticism; perseverance" as cited in Biggs & Karlsen, (2012, p.183). As I was physically situated within both the Shipibo's domestic and community contexts these considerations were essential principles to

adopt given my participation in the daily domestic events, thus requiring me to observe what was appropriate for the situation (see section 4.5).

Bridges (2003), as cited in Biggs and Karlsen (2012) indicates, that it is by being a participant observer in particular situations that provides a more complex understanding into many of the human and cultural subtleties within a particular research context, and claims:

Simply, some social conditions and relationships are more likely than others to enable people to be open and honest in their experience, their perceptions and their feelings – and hence to enable them to contribute to a fuller and more truthful understanding of that situation. Hence, if researchers allow their work to be governed by principles which support those sort of social conditions and relationships, they will be able to produce better research. (p.182)

I understand that by being positioned in this way, I affect how the reader or viewer perceives my project and I can direct how and what knowledge is communicated from the research. Griffiths (2009) asserts however, that, “when the researcher is part of the context, or a focus of the research, as in ... some reflective practices, he or she is the only one with access to some of the knowledge required” as cited in Biggs and Karlsen, (2012, p.182). This was the position I held with the Shipibo artists; however my broader focus was on conveying the interpersonal information Griffiths speaks of, into the social, cultural and public domains of the exhibitions, and in particular how to communicate my research findings to a gallery audience via my reflexive creative praxis.

In opening the research to a broader critique within a wider and more comprehensive context, my aim is to support the application of reflexive praxis for “the sharing and communication of the contribution to knowledge within the field of research inquiry” (McNamara, 2012, p. 6). Another important aspect of broadening the context is to include some background around the makers and the changing circumstances regarding the Shipibo cloths.

The way textiles are currently made in the Amazon is changing. The women are teaching their husbands, brothers and sons to stitch the cloths. Traditional ways of making still exist in some villages; however, not all villages make cloth in the

traditional ways and this changes again within an urban setting. Over time, being exposed to a variety of settings and makers within communities enabled an appreciation of the diverse and individual ways the textiles were made, used and sold. The navigation of this complexity as an artist was essential in order to illustrate the relationship between making and researching, and so look to my own creative praxis. I was continually located in the act of making, thinking, writing, and therefore, as Griffiths (2009) cited in Biggs and Karlsen, (2012) attests, becoming embodied within this research.

When speaking of “embedded” and “embodied” knowledge, I am referring to the tacit knowledge exchange within our shared creative hand stitching (Polyani, 1974). Explicit knowledge is not in opposition to the tacit exchange of information, though conceptually a distinction can be drawn. Crouch (2013) indicates, “Tacit knowledge ... is a fundamental part of the way in which we think and act as contemporary human beings. [However]... knowledge-that transformation of raw data into a socially applicable form-is still exchanged within communities of practice” (Crouch, ¶ 4). For the Shipibo and I, our creative interchange within an intercultural context acted as a transmitter for an exchange of tacit knowledge. The process of transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, while acknowledging the ineffable, is called articulation or codification and the interaction of these ways of knowing, explicit and tacit, are vital for new knowledge to be engendered (Polyani, 1974).

I contend that using a reflexive lens to articulate ideas of the tacit, and the creative processes of my research including the handling of materials feeds an emergent knowledge that supports the tasks of this exegesis. I concur with Crouch (2007):

If adopting a performative attitude creates the potential for the individual to assess the creative act from outside of the act, then adopting a reflexive viewpoint, allows an understanding of the creative process from a subjective viewpoint, revealing a dynamic relationship between the context, construction and the articulation of the act. (p. 2)

4.2 Defining reflexive praxis as a model.

Macbeth (2001) as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 260) defines reflexivity as, “a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, other, text and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself”. Regarding this research, the shared practice of hand-stitching, within an intercultural globalised setting, emerged as a “cultural activity and a social responsibility rather than just a personal fulfilment” (Donlin, 2011, p. 116). As such, this required a reflexive analysis of all the contributing layers of meaning to avoid the trap that McNamara (2012) indicates when “the research topic becomes the researcher and not the research question” (p. 6).

In reflexively positioning my praxis; firstly I situated myself in the field of creative inquiry (i.e. the Eastern Amazon), secondly, by analysing the subsequent impact upon my lifeworld, and thirdly by noting the impact of our tacit exchange on my praxis. This way of positioning the making and its meaning resonates with Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity which indicates that “this reflexive process, methodologies in artistic research, are necessarily emergent and subject to repeated adjustment, rather than remaining fixed throughout the process of inquiry” Bourdieu as cited in Barrett & Bolt, (2009, p. 6). Researching new knowledge within the flexibility of “informed reflexive action” (Donlin, 2011, p. 118) is a central method I use in my ongoing art praxis and is essential to the intercultural nature of the research.

My creative hand-stitching practice and subsequent praxis, was directly influenced by exposure to the Shipibo artists in their homes, communities and villages. Reflexivity within this research not only involved focusing on the validity of information and outcomes; it also indicated that as an artist I was engaged in the activity of gathering, in a Heideggerian sense, “praxical knowledge” (Barrett & Bolt, 2009, p. 6). Furthermore Barrett and Bolt assert, “knowledge implies that ideas and theory are ultimately the result of practice rather than vice versa” (2009, p. 6), albeit practice in this research informs the theory and reciprocally the theory continually informs the practice.

Bolt defines praxical knowledge as an overlapping of knowing resulting from the handling of materials and an engagement with making that goes “beyond the particularity of a practice to contribute to the broader knowledge economy” (2009, p. 6). In my experience as an artist/maker, Bolt’s definition embodies and embraces the multi-layered threads of gathering information, the ebb and flow of the making process, and the engagement with thinking and writing, which at times can happen simultaneously.

The term praxis, as defined by the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1971), is “the unification of critical theory and revolutionary practice”, as cited in Oliga, (1996, p. 217). I consider adopting praxis within my Approach to the Study section, as an essential development for me, as both artist and researcher: “Because praxis is not self-centered but is about acting together with others, it forces the practitioner to consider more than just the practicalities of making” (Crouch, 2007, p. 112). Praxis supports a critical context where both “meaning and its processes are contingent upon cultural and social environment that is about ‘negotiation’ rather than “acting upon others” (Crouch, 2007, p. 112).

The research was also continually affected by the culturally different lifeworlds of the Shipibo and myself and by our embodied lived experience within diverse social backgrounds Griffiths, (2009) as cited in Biggs and Karlsen, (2012). Giddens (2003) further indicates:

Yet in a cosmopolitan world, more people than ever before are regularly in contact with others who think differently from them. They are required to justify their beliefs, in an implicit way at least, both to themselves and others. There cannot be a large dollop of rationality in the persistence of religious rituals and observances in a detraditionalising society. And this is as it should be. (p. 45)

The Shipibo artists and myself are citizens of the cosmopolitan world Giddens (2003) speaks of, and as such are continually exposed to cultural differences and ideas as well as the understanding that traditions within this global context are also open to change.

The Shipibo textiles are not only used on the bodies of men and women as clothing: they also have a sacred value when used in ceremonies for healing. The textiles of

the Shipibo artists became a cultural bridge between us, and the Shipibo indicated the skills involved in making the cloths were immersed in their history and tradition, though they did not expand on any particulars with me. As noted, the traditional use of their textiles, together with the gender roles of those who make the cloth are changing.

I recorded my observations and understandings using notes and drawings. Many of these tacit exchanges were then translated within my practice and vice versa. It is the impact of the Shipibo cloths on my work, as well as the shared process of making, that informs the research.

The Shipibo indicated that many of their personal experiences and family narratives were, in fact, embedded within the making of their cloths. As stated, I acquired their stitched cloths for my ongoing collection of their work. My intention was not to interpret the cultural heritage of the Shipibo cloths or their makers, rather to care for and document their hand-stitched cloths, which continue to impact on my creative praxis. Shipibo cloths were included in both my exhibitions, which is further discussed in the creative practice section of the exegesis (6.0).

My creative hand-making practice is subjective and impacts upon how, as an artist, I interpret my lifeworld and experiences. However, it is vital in my research not to stay only within my personal narrative. It is through a reflexive analysis of praxis that one “can avoid the pitfalls of introspection and narcissism ... towards an analytical engagement with human interaction” (Crouch, 2007, p. 112). Praxis is also the lens I use to view the intersubjective exchange between us.

I agree with Crouch (2007), that the researcher influences the research process and its outcomes. Hence, as a researcher it is imperative I reflexively acknowledge how, “Reflexive thinking ... could be considered [to be] making demands on the researcher to take account of the many ways they themselves influence research findings and thus what comes to be accepted as knowledge”, Sandelowski & Barroso, as cited in Crouch, (2007, p. 110). I continue to acknowledge that, as an artist, I bring my social, cultural and creative complexities to this research. I also appreciate, as previously stated, that acknowledging this does not mean that my subjectivity does not still inflect upon the research (McNamara, 2012). I do, however, reaffirm this is

not research on or about the Shipibo artists. It is rather an exploration of my creative processes impacted upon by my interaction with the Shipibo artists. I consider and assert that the Shipibo artists and I are peers, exchanging tacit knowledge, embedded within traditional hand-stitching processes.

Within this research praxis I articulate, via creative processes, a position from which to record and interpret my social, historical and cultural contexts and to communicate this through my creative praxis. This is a perspective, supported by Barrett and Bolt (2009), who clearly indicate that a “third species of research”, performativity, is evolving. Austin (1962), as cited in Barrett and Bolt, (2009) indicates the notion of performativity means, “an action that generates effects”. Barrett and Bolt continue:

In the double articulation involved in creative arts research, practice brings into being what, for want of a better word, it names. The research process inaugurates movement and transformation. It is performative. (p.150)

The research is expressed in various forms within *Iraqi*, (2011) and *We know more than we can say...* (2013). Both exhibitions contain images moving and still, sound, music, performance and installation following Barrett and Bolt (2009). When research concludes in these ways, it is deemed that an action has been performed, effecting “performative research” (p. 150). This marriage of action and performance is clearly evident in how I have interfaced creatively with the Shipibo artists, being actively involved in a hand-making process with the artists, their cloths and within the exhibitions.

My research demonstrates how a reflexive praxis model (Crouch, 2007) encompasses and enables my research not to slip into an overly self-referential subjective area (Crouch, 2000¶ 6), thus necessitating embeddedness within the social world, with which the research is engaged (Giddens, 1991). This, however, does not negate the subjective and indeed the intersubjective nature of the research (Feather, 2007). Rather, it insists on a critical model that acknowledges the Shipibo artists and myself as contemporaries, and the audience within the social public exhibitions. I also acknowledge my presence as a participant/observer (section 4.5), and the importance of story or narrative (section, 4.4) as a way of communicating interculturality with the Shipibo artists (Leavy, 2009).

I acknowledge the subjective elements of this research and recognise the immersive/emergent states, qualities and aspects of creative praxis. Reflexive praxis is defined here as informed and committed social and creative action (Crouch, 2007) within an intercultural setting, imbued with the aforementioned academic virtues- this lies at the heart of my practice and research. The intersubjective and intercultural nature of my research required me to be engaged in continual social, cultural, creative and analytical negotiation i.e., praxis, and to be open to change. By investigating and engaging within this process, using practical and ethical judgements informed by social and intercultural theories, I avoid some of the pitfalls of being self-referential (Crouch, 2007).

Crouch (2007) further indicates, “Articulating praxis as a research method is important because it demands a reflexive position” (p. 112). As a reflexive practitioner I negotiate between the content, context and theoretical elements of my creative practice while engaged within my lifeworld as a maker. Following this, as a reflexive practitioner I bring the methods of this act of research to praxis (Crouch, 2007). To further communicate the research, other research tools are engaged with to explain the complexity and multi-layered relationships between artwork, materials, meanings and definitions made by the artist (Crouch, 2007) and, in my case, with the Shipibo artists.

As the practice unfolds, I come to understand and experience through its materiality and the action of the making, that this creative praxis informs and is informed by discourses in cultural studies, social history, sociology, critical theory, intercultural dialogue and visual art.

4.3 Reflective/reflexive

In the introduction to this exegesis, reflective and reflexive was defined; these terms are further clarified in this section. Chiseri-Strater, (1996) as cited in Pillow, (2003, p.177) indicates that to be reflective does not include another person, however, critical reflection challenges us to ask how our behaviour, biases and presence in many different ways may have influenced a situation. Thus we can take action, if required, based on these reflections (Schon, 1987).

Reflexivity, however, not only requires another, but also demands one scrutinises oneself, the other and the researcher's context (Crouch, 2007). Pillow (2003) further contends, "To be reflexive, then, not only contributes to producing knowledge that aids in understanding and gaining insight into the workings of our social world but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced" (p. 178). Thus, reflexivity is critical to this research, and crucially positions it within an intercultural globalised world. Reflexivity underpins the investigation and engagement with the Shipibo artists in the social, cultural, intercultural and creative contexts in which we found ourselves. Following this, McNamara (2012) states that we need "a research model that requires a critical reflection, involving the communication of the contribution to knowledge and its findings" (p. 5). All of these assertions support the social act of making and therefore insist that the research is positioned within a larger world context, to establish praxis as a way of communicating the knowledge gained.

Reflexive praxis, therefore, means that during the making, thinking, writing and researching, it is the action of such informed engagement that influences the outcome of the research (Barrett & Bolt, 2007). Praxis is about the action of ideas having a practical outcome, which cannot always be predicted (Crouch, 2007). Hence, informed reflexive action has the possibility to support and stimulate new thought regarding this research.

Through the application of critical reflexive research I examine intercultural and intersubjective exchange, which is further discussed in the Literature Review, 3.0. Within a contemporary, global, world context I assert that praxis allowed the tacit, subtle and dynamic creative dialogue that culminated in the exhibitions, *Iraqi* (October, 2011) and *We know more than we can say...* (August, 2013). It is informed by research and practice, and underpinned by my continual examination of these elements through reflexivity. The research critically supports tacit exchange within an intercultural context as well as recognising the broader parameters of the social and global contexts. McNamara (2012) states succinctly that "Going beyond the parameters of one's practice to provide a historical or conceptual context for a creative or professional practice is an important way of establishing whether new insights are being produced or not" (p. 6). I assert, that placing praxis critically

within a social, global context has been essential to the research and the outcomes, as this allows broader critiques to take place. Thus, reflexive praxis challenges possible bias and encourages rigour within the research.

Engaging ethically and rigorously has provided ways to understand the context, content and my role as participant in the research. The development of this exegesis without the appropriate theoretical perspectives in place could be viewed as biased, or at the very least, lacking rigour. Haseman, (2006) as cited in McNamara, (2012) states, “creative practice is ‘inherently experiential’, its knowledge tacitly formed, but placing it within criteria of research nonetheless requires an additional level of consideration and communication” (p. 100). I appreciate also “it is equally important not to let the practice slip from view of the research inquiry” (McNamara, 2012, p. 12). These considerations are certainly a fine line for an artist researching at these interfaces and, as Spivak, (1998), as cited in Pillow, (2006, p.6) states, “making positions transparent does not make them unproblematic”.

4.4 Narrative inquiry as research tool.

A narrative is a story and one that is always about an event or has an element of personal disclosure (Leavy, 2009). Clandinin and Connelly as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 32) state that the term “narrative, [names] a fundamental structure and quality of experience, both personal and social”. This narrative inquiry approach supports this research. It is incumbent that I provide critical tools for consideration using an appropriate language to communicate the tacit knowledge that passed between the Shipibo artists and myself, within our social, creative and intercultural context. A reflexive approach to narrative inquiry is essential in order to avoid “the subjectivities of creative disciplines and the (mis) use of narrative methodologies [which] can sometimes promote narcissism if they are used to validate comment on the methods and forms of representation rather than their analysis” Clandinin and Connelly as cited in Crouch, (2007, p. 106).

A narrative inquiry method is telling and listening to stories, as well as reflecting on them, and communicating through text, making art or other techniques which are all forms of re-writing and re-telling Clandinin and Connelly (1989) as cited in Leavy,

(2009, p. 27). Narrative inquiry includes narrative as both the method and the experience that is being researched Pinnegar & Daynes (2007) as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 25). This is, by definition, a reflexive, action-based approach to the gathering of information (Leavy, 2009). It is important to note I was not aware of this methodological approach when I was in Peru; however, what became productive as my research developed was that the “minimal passive interviewing technique” Jones (2006) as cited in Leavy (2009, p. 32), speaks of, occurred naturally and easily between the Shipibo and myself. Jones’ (2006) notion of “[non-interruption]” as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 32) was indeed one of the social protocols the Shipibo insisted on.

Leavy (2009) speaks of maintaining openness through somatic, physical, experience, (eye contact, head nodding/movements) and realising that broad lines of inquiry may interrupt information that is resting and nestling just below the surface Jones, (2006), as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 32). To engage reflexively challenges me to know how I stand in the world, how this shapes perceptions, and as Skinner (1986) cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 36), claims, “how to communicate an experience while living it”. A vital element of narrative inquiry within the research is that narrative inquiry “generally focuses on experience which can be conceptualised in many ways” Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) as cited in Leavy (2009, p. 28).

Bakhtin (1986) as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 31), has greatly influenced the theoretical methodology of narrative inquiry and places focus on the interface of the “verbal and the non-verbal” as the core of his approach. When in the homes of the Shipibo artists, even with an interpreter, often our deepest and strongest exchanges were with eye contact, a light touch on the hand, tacit exchanges and as Leavy points out “it is within and across these dimensions that the soul of our participants’ experiences may emerge” (p. 32). Jones (2006) as cited in Leavy, (2009, p. 32), using this as a framework, insists, “The bricolage of images and nonverbal clues accumulate ... to produce additional keys that unlocked the narratives, enriched the life stories and enhanced the analysis”. This certainly recognises the process of the tacit exchange between individuals as a central exchange of this inquiry.

Narrative inquiry also focuses on presenting multiple points of view (Leavy, 2009) and allows for “semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions“ and techniques, which were imperative in an intercultural setting. Leavy insists that this approach to research requires high levels of reflexivity and, a willingness at all times to look at information from many different perspectives using different lenses for interpretation Leavy, (2009, pp. 27-28). I concur with Leavy’s position, given that I was continually exposed to different Shipibo artists, in a variety of contexts, as well as being exposed to many different cloths and ways of making. Leavy (2009, p. 40) continues, “A primary advantage of this method is the possibility it has to raise *self consciousness* and thereby *promote reflexivity*” as discussed.

I concur with Clandinin and Connolly (1998) that narrative inquiry, “In essence, involves the reconstruction of a person’s experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu” as cited in Leavy, (2009 p. 5). I have demonstrated that the personal and social elements of the narrative approach, together with acknowledging somatic experience as a way of experiencing the tacit, is by definition a reflexive, action-based approach to the gathering of information to support this research inquiry.

4.5 Participant observer.

It has been difficult to find appropriate and accurate language to define my active presence within the intercultural dialogue that took place. I use the term “participant” to describe my involvement within an activity and associated with others. The meaning of observer indicates someone who becomes aware of things and events through the senses or an expert who observes and comments from an objective perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Clearly, the former meaning of observer is the more accurate for myself as an artist. My presence and experience was neither static nor objective; in fact I assert it was fluid and intersubjective (Feather, 2000). For the purpose of this research, given the complication of this definition, I use the term “participant observer” in its broad sense so as to make clear my position is not ethnological. I concur with Hammersley and Atkinson, (1983) who assert “...in a sense *all* social [creative] research is a form of participant

observation, because we cannot study the social world without being part of it”, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, (2011, p. 248).

I came to understand my physical presence was integral to building trust and familiarity in order to fulfill the central tenet of this research inquiry. It was my experience that “Reflexive participant observation is paradoxical in that it requires the participant observer to become immersed in the social reality of the observed, taking note of personal experience without becoming enmeshed in the relational dynamics observed”, as cited in The centre for study of organizational change, (2011, p. 4). Indeed, it was through being in each other’s company (Polyani, 2009), engaged and focused within our hand-making, that we interacted and observed the creative process to build knowledge and understanding. In practical terms, this meant I was fully engaged within my practice of hand-stitching, and witnessing the Shipibo traditional hand-making, while being engaged within a reflexive, creative praxis.

5.0 Creative praxis as the overarching vehicle of tacit exchange.

The overarching premise of this section of the exegesis is acknowledging creative praxis as the central vehicle of tacit exchange. It is divided into two parts; 5.1 makes evident the value of the intersubjective, tacit and creative exchange between artists and how this impacted within personal, social and cultural relationships with cloth, hand-stitching and the hand-made, and 5.2 positions myself as an artist and maker within a craft-based practice.

This investigation aims to reveal that intercultural dialogue tacitly exchanged with the Shipibo artists, is established via shared traditional hand-stitching practices, and expressed and communicated through my creative praxis. This research is contextualised within the social-cultural circumstances of late modernity (Beck, 2000), and situated within the intercultural, post-traditional, globalised world in which the Shipibo artists and I live and create. This research has required me as an artist and a researcher to both participate in and observe the creative and, often silent, tacit, communication between us. Hence, I argue that our shared hand-stitching processes became the site of our tacit, creative exchange.

In this section of my exegesis, I reflexively situate the role of my art practice and the issues of intercultural, creative, dialogue with the Shipibo artists. This is contextualised within our globalised post-traditional world (Beck, 2000) and communicated via my creative praxis. In doing so, I demonstrate and position the significance of my creative praxis as a site for intercultural communication (Jensen, 2003, 2007) with the Shipibo artists. The method of reflexive communicative action (Crouch, 2007) underpins my tacit exchanges (Polyani, 1974, 2009) with the Shipibo artists. Engaging reflexively (Giddens, 1991, 2003) supports, reveals and makes relevant inquiries arising throughout the research, thus enabling new knowledge and information to continually emerge. This was paramount to my two exhibitions, held in 2011 and 2013 respectively. I use a critical, reflexive praxis model as it is based in real-life situations and held within the social act of making (Donlin, 2011).

Appropriate artists whose works share some creative considerations with my unfolding praxis 6.2, include Ann Hamilton's (2004, 2002) approach to her making process, and in particular her inclusion of the importance of touch, time, materiality, slow making, reading, thinking, researching and the place for human presence. This has been central to my investigation. Other relevant artists include Kimsooja (2004) for her understanding of the power of stitch; Misao Tsubaki's (1991) exploration of "slow time"; and Else van Keppel's (1997) assertion of the relevance of the hand-made.

5.1 Making evident the tacit within personal, social and cultural relationships with cloth, hand-stitching and the hand-made.

I start by providing a brief overview at this point acknowledging the embeddedness of cloth, fabric and textiles within our human history. I refer to the personal, social and cultural relationships with cloth, and therefore assert the importance of the hand-made.

Gale and Kaur (2005) posit that cloth, fabric and textiles, are an integral part of all "cultural nuance, a resource in every struggle, a comfort in the most personal and domestic spheres of our lives. Each of us has a relationship with fabric from cradle to grave" (p. 3). They confirm, "[cloth] precedes the age of metals and the invention of the wheel" (p. 3). A relationship with textiles spans much of human history and is universal as well as ancient. Barber (1994) uses archeological evidence to support the existence of textiles, as far back as 10,000 years ago.

Gale and Kaur (2005), however, indicate textile's tools and processes are probably older still. They assert that there was an "explosion in human technology and cultural activity" (p. 180) within the Upper Paleolithic period some 35000 to 17000 years ago. They indicate that textiles and tools to make cloth were a part of this cultural and social evolution in some way. As textiles do not age well, the origins and age of earlier cloth are lost to us as cloth pre-dates our capacity to record accurately.

Hence we all have a relationship with cloth in some form, regardless of where we come from in the world. We also have an ordinary familiarity with it (Gale & Kaur,

2005). Indeed, it can be said that cloth is woven into the fabric of all our lives in myriad ways. By approaching textiles and their history from a broad social and cultural perspective, it is easy to overlook that individual artists have unique, personal and creative relationships to cloth and its creative meaning and context. Gale and Kaur (2005) acknowledge the personal, and the collective relationships with the universal nature of cloth when they state:

Within textiles is art and science, craft, technology and design, industry, history, culture and politics. For humanity itself it has been an enemy and a companion, it has made and broken communities. ...Textiles is not a single subject in the classic sense, it is a collection of many that spin around the presence of cloth: its making, its analysis, its sale and its use and even its demise and disappearance. ...textiles is greater than any one group or person and reflects the broad diversity of humanity. (p. 3-4)

I concur with Gale and Kaur that the term textile is collective and inclusive of many creative approaches to making. This understanding is significant to my research because, as a craft-based artist using cloth, needles and thread, I am open to diverse approaches, materials and ideas through which to communicate the significance of the intercultural creative dialogue.

5.2 Positioning myself as an artist and maker within a craft-based practice.

To reiterate, I have stated in the introduction, my place as a maker of hand-stitched and crafted objects and my reasons for prefacing the hand-made. I again acknowledge debates regarding the art/craft discourse, and refer here, to some seminal texts regarding these concerns. They are, Benjamin, (2008) *The work of art in the age of mechanical production*; Cumming and Kaplan's (1991), *The arts and craft movement*; Greenhalgh's (2002), *Craft and modernity*; as well as Wayland Barber's (1994), *Women's work-The first 20,000 years, Women, cloth and society in early times*; Parker's (2010), *The subversive stitch: embroidery and the making of the feminine*; Chadwick's (199), *Women, art and society*. However as noted this research does not critically examine these debates in depth, however, they have significance in contextualising my creative practice. I make my position clear regarding these

discourses and reflexively how they inform my work in the final section of the exegesis, which focuses on my creative practice.

I affirm my creative praxis, as seen in the respective exhibitions, is the central vehicle of my communication of the tacit (Polyani, 1974, 2009), intersubjective (Feather, 2000) creative exchange with the Shipibo artists. The line of communication did not stop there, as it was reflexively opened to the public sphere within my exhibitions. The following quote by Jessica Hemmings (2013) exemplifies the kind of intercultural creative journey I make as an artist and maker. I am mindful of some of the possible creative pitfalls that she acknowledges when she contends:

The content of textile art is often intimate-even therapeutic-for the maker. This serves some purposes. Work that means nothing to its maker is unlikely to invigorate a viewer. But the downside is that particularly personal content can feel impenetrable to the outside. In fact there are times when the viewer can feel like they are the furthest person from the makers mind. (p. 1)

I agree with Hemmings (2013) that the over-personalisation of creative works by the artist can impact adversely by not engaging the viewer, thus not communicating to an audience outside the subjectivity of the artist. I would assert, however, that my reflexive creative focus has been to continually emphasise the communicative role of the creative intercultural exchange with the Shipibo artists. Following this, the significance of this project lies in what has been embedded within these tacit exchanges. My reflexive praxis approach acknowledges and insists that the tacit exchange between us as artists is accessible to the viewer. My focus has been on the communicative role of my practice; hence the communicative role of my practice has been vital to my decisions regarding making and setting up the exhibitions. Following this Hemmings (2013) asserts:

It is tricky work to mine the dark places of our pasts. Gravititas can be accidently lost, instead of gained, in the process. But textiles seem to be a magnet for these sorts of narratives, perhaps because of their constant proximity to our bodies. (p. 1)

Again, I agree with Hemmings, that within the making process, in the act of stitching, cloth, needle and thread are required to be close to one's body. Having the cloths

close to our bodies, however, was not always the case within our exchange due to the environments in which stitched. Cloth, materials and our needles and threads were often spread on the earth, grass or the wooden floors of the houses where we worked. By the Shipibo acknowledging the immersion in the quality of the day to day, as an essential element of creative life, the sense of 'body' also took on different meanings. Hemmings (2013) further posits:

The solution is not to avoid the personal, but to ensure that the personal is accessible. Content that offers up potential for multiple readings can allow the personal to become public without the need to cite confusion as an intended (and often hard to believe) outcome. (p. 1)

My aim has been to recognise and articulate the personal qualities of this research, but not in a narcissistic way (Crouch, 2007). Employing a reflexive analysis of all the elements of the making and its processes in the overall research, I would contend, positions the personal within a broader social context. This reflexive approach, I propose, supports, critiques and clarifies my inquiry into the tacitly exchanged intercultural dialogue with the Shipibo artists. Placing the resulting creative works within a gallery context offers the creative works up for "multiple readings [that] can allow the personal to become public" (Hemmings, 2013, p. 1)

I position myself as an artist who uses traditional textile craft practices, non-traditional-industrial materials and multi-media with hand-stitching as the skill base at the core of my creative practice. The term maker, needs to be discussed. Craft, as cited in Webster's Dictionary (2005), means manual skill; a skilled trade. Gale and Kaur (2005) assert "Essentially and absolutely a craftsperson is a maker" (p. 63). Gale and Kaur extend this definition by indicating "The craft approach to textiles is very much process-led; the actual pursuit of making by hand is of paramount importance for the craft person" (p. 63). This tacit, haptic knowledge is implicit to me as a maker and communicator within my creative praxis. I agree with McCullough as cited in Hemmings, (2012) who states that hands "act as conduits through which we extend our will to the world. They serve also as conduits in the other direction: hands bring us knowledge of the world" (§ 10). I assert what McCullough refers to is the tacit knowledge exchange between cloth, body, needle, thread and maker and how that continuous exchange informs my textile practice.

For example, in my exhibitions I included hand-written descriptions of creative works with graphite on the walls of the galleries (6.0-6.6) as a way of acknowledging human presence. I used film and photography within the exhibitions, to document the creative context bridged between the Shipibo artists and myself and to communicate this to an audience. By using acrylic material for the discs, laser etched and then stitched by hand, I aimed to extend the notion of craft to include non-traditional materials and incorporate the traditional and non-traditional (6.0-6.6).

It is important to note that my practice and other practices are changing within the craft field to include non-traditional approaches to materials and the making process. For example Black, as cited in Gale & Kaur, (2005), states:

Students have been experimenting for some time with new unconventional materials which have been pressed into service to take knitting into new areas, breaking down barriers between craft, art and fashion. Experimental 'yarns' include wire, paper and plastics and knitted fabrics have been treated to a wide range of processes, perhaps printed, laminated, rubberized, felted, sprayed or dipped in resin. (p. 67)

It is clear that as a contemporary artist using textile-craft skills across a number of disciplines and engaging with non-traditional materials, I must position myself within a craft-based creative field. Yet my reflexive creative praxis also sits outside these bounds. In this contemporary post-traditional society the "tangible margins of subjects are eroded" (Beck, 2006, p. 66) as a result of the fluid, cosmopolitan nature of our lives. Artists whose practices I examine, Ann Hamilton, Korean artist Kimsooja and Else van Keppel, are relevant to this research as, like myself, they embrace the multiple roles the craft practitioner embodies in the process of making. I concur with Gopika Nath, as cited in Gale & Kaur, (2005), who outlines relevant current issues stating:

Having worked within the realm of textiles for more than 20 years, I find the idea [of] having to define myself as designer, craftsperson or artist as rather perplexing, for I find that I work as all three and at given times, in certain contexts, this medium has allowed me to indulge and also emphasise the many facets of my creative being. But society today decrees that we make demarcations and categorise artists by the medium of their expression. (p. 66)

I appreciate it is a hand-made quality that identifies craft objects on the whole and determines the value of the object in all areas of critique. My point is that a textile craft-based approach to making can be and often is a creative practice that is inclusive of and embraces other creative disciplines. I wish to acknowledge my position as an artist using textile processes, engaged primarily within a craft-based practice, and yet I am not fixed within that practice. Rather, I am open to diverse ways of communicating the tacit subtleties of the intercultural dialogue between the Shipibo artists and myself. This openness is evident in and vital to my Doctoral exhibitions, and is further extrapolated in the following section 6.0.

6.0 A reflexive analysis of the tacit, creative, intercultural exchange made evident within the two solo exhibitions.

The following section is a detailed analysis of works I created throughout my candidature, resulting in my two solo exhibitions. I will begin by reflexively examining the processes of making the works. It is the cumulative nature of making the work that brings together the processes, situates the work and communicates the tacit between the maker and materials, contextualised in my everyday exchanges, with the Shipibo artists.

The two critically, reflexive solo exhibitions as part of this candidature, *Iraqi* and *We know more than we can say...* are a testament to the significance of the creative, intercultural exchange between the Shipibo and myself. As artists we permitted enough time to allow the deepest knowledge to pass subtly and seemingly invisibly between us. It was the social act of hand stitching with the Shipibo artists, within an intercultural exchange, that supported the creative dialogue and praxis that animates these exhibitions. The exhibitions have been a critical part of the reflexive research and demonstrate the explicit process of documenting the act of communication through shared hand-stitching.

The first exhibition, *Iraqi*, (2011), incorporated not only my creative response to the Shipibo makers and our practice, but also integrated their cloths within the exhibition. As stated in the introduction this was the first time Shipibo cloths had been shown in a public gallery in Western Australia. As part of my research process, I bought and gathered Shipibo cloths for my own collection as a way of recording our conversations as artists. The works in the second exhibition, *We know more than we can say...* (2013), further exemplify a committed and deeper understanding of the nuances of the intercultural act, and aimed to render more visibly the tacit exchange that took place. This was a result of the tacit becoming increasingly significant for me as my reflexive praxis developed.

The concepts my research navigates are difficult to convey to an audience, such as tacit exchange, and so it is imperative I reflexively situate myself within a creative intercultural exchange with the Shipibo artists. Furthermore this is vital in order to

communicate our tacit exchange to a larger audience situated within a Western gallery context. I refer again to the Approach to the Study section in order to reiterate my reflexive position, and in particular to Chiseri-Strater (as cited in Pillow, 2003), who claims that a reflexive perspective, not only helps to understand the workings of our social world, but also provides ways to understand how these insights and knowledge of the tacit are reached. I am engaged within a critically reflexive model, which supports and communicates the significant areas of this research, and contributes to knowledge and critiques its findings (McNamara, 2012). The tacit exchange of knowledge, “that transformation of raw data into a socially applicable form”, takes time. This is articulated by Crouch (2013) who posits:

Comprehending how tacit knowledge is formed and is then communicated is now the subject of much examination, and rightly so, for it was/is the democratic basis for the traditional crafts in rural, non-industrialised cultures, or in cultures where libraries and museums were not public but in the hands of elites. In environments like this, traditional knowledge is passed from group to group and generation to generation through shared practices that are often given metaphorical and allegorical form. In such environments there is time to observe and absorb and act on subtlest of variations in practice. (¶ 3)

I acknowledged in the Approach to the Study 4.0, that my meetings with the Shipibo could take many hours, with the longest being over many days. I also acknowledge the site-specific nature of the immersion within the day-to-day with the Shipibo artists. I reiterate, the shared tacit communication was held within the intimacy of the domestic and the creative in the day-to-day, activities of eating, sleeping, making and talking. I was reflexively engaged within culturally creative and socially responsible activities with the Shipibo artists, at times on a daily basis. These daily creative contacts stimulated new knowledge, allowed for the gaining of insights, and redirected my ways of thinking about process, time and the tacit, as vital means of intercultural communication. Crouch (2013) confirms this tacit knowledge exchange, which I situate within the social act of hand-stitching, and affirms the every-day as a site for the tacit:

“Tacit knowledge” is often localised and cannot be found in any other form other than the form in which it is internalised by individuals. To sew for example, is to understand the thickness of the thread, the way in which its thickness and length change the way in which it can be used. It is to understand the thickness of the cloth and how the needle passes through it, how all these things can be understood instantaneously. Such intimate knowledge of the world formed through the synthesis of body, mind and practice is common in our everyday dealings with each other and the wider world. (¶ 4)

It was being together with the Shipibo, within the everyday, which allowed tacit communication to unfold between us as artists. We understood as artists, the material relationship each had with cloth, needle and thread. Further, we could see and experience each other and the materials hence, absorb the way we made work. Such exchanges simply take time, in my experience, to allow the tacit to synthesise through body, mind and practice.

6.1 The unfolding narrative of my creative process in Peru and Western Australia and the resulting exhibitions.

In section 6.1 I introduce Jobita and her son Eder (figure 1) who introduced me to the artists at the Collective Maroti Shobo, and to other artists within communities (figure 2). Jobita and Eder (figure 1) showed me their cloth in the Collective in Pucallpa. It was thanks to their introductions to other Shipibo artists that I was able to travel to the Shipibo communities. I map my processes of dyeing and staining cloth, using the plants from the surrounding jungle in Pucallpa (figures 3-18) and detail the overlaying of the dyed and stained cloth from Pucallpa with the plants from Perth W.A. (figures 19-22). I used these methods in Perth W.A. and knew them to be sustainable and transferrable. The cloth resulting from the process became the hand-stitched work for both exhibitions. My aim was to demonstrate the intercultural exchange within material processes, and the tacit exchange between cloth and plant via the imprinting technique. I discuss the Shipibo methods of dyeing, staining and stitching their cloths and give examples of the cloths (figures 24-25). Their approaches were resonant with my own creative practices. The final

part of this section charts Jobita and Eder teaching me Shipibo stitching (figures 26-27).

The Shipibo traditionally dye and stain cloth they use prior to stitching into it. They use a local tree bark called Caoba (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984, p. 26) to dye the cloth. Clay is used to make the designs, which when washed after the cloth is dried in the sun, goes black, staining patterns onto the cloths, some of which are then stitched. This process is done up to six times, in order to develop the black staining in the design. This was told and shown to me by the Shipibo. Those cloths that are not stitched are called Chopa Keweaba Kene, cloths.



Figure 1 *Jobita and her son Eder, my translator, with cloth dyed with Caoba bark, an example of Chopa Keweaba. (Desmarchelier, 2010)*



Figure 2 *An example of Coaba stained, printed and stitched cloth. (Desmarchelier, 2010)*

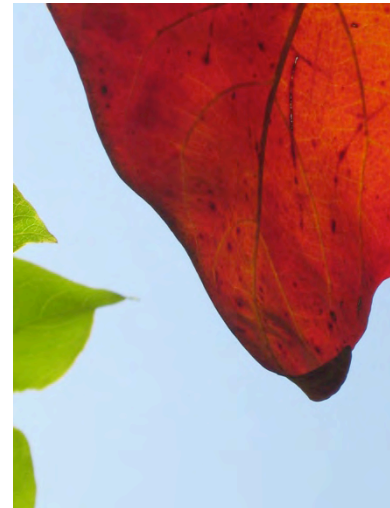
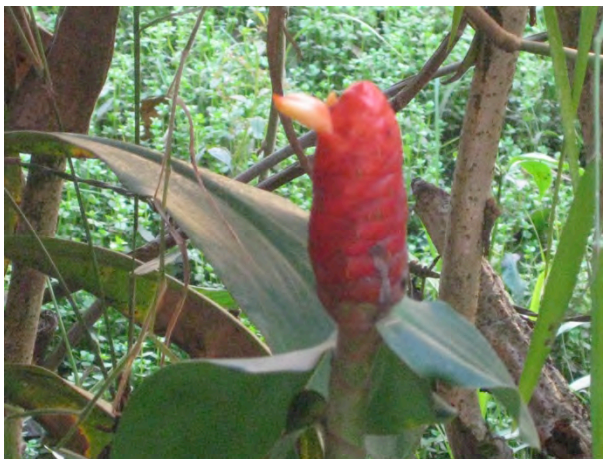
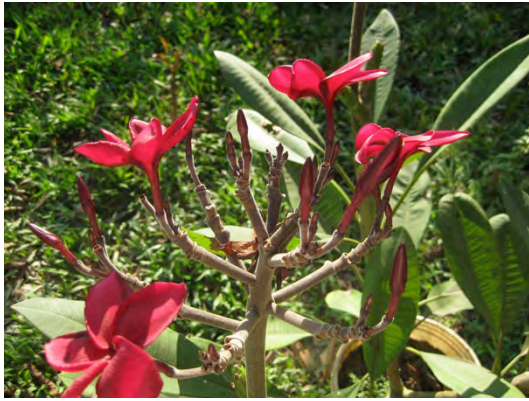
In Australia, I had used a sustainable method of dyeing and staining, called solar dyeing. It is always experimental, inasmuch as the colours are not uniform, nor the longevity of the colour guaranteed. Solar dyeing depends on time and the intensity of the sun to be successful. In these experiments I wet silk cloth with water, lay it out on black plastic and then gather flowers, leaves and plants from my garden are these are randomly placed on the dampened cloth. The black plastic is then rolled up, with plants and cloth inside and placed on the tin roof of my house in Perth W.A. It is left there for a week in the summer heat, with the contents of the plastic literally baking in the sun. When it is unwrapped, disintegrating rotting vegetable matter leave stains, marks and shapes and the residue of petal and leaf imprints. I decided to use this method with plants from the garden (pictured below) at the edge of the jungle where I was staying in Pucallpa.



Figure 3 *Garden where plants were gathered and my worktable in the foreground.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figures 4 & 5 *Flowers used for staining, Pucallpa, Peru.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figures 6-9 *Local flowers (Peru) and mango leaves used to stain and dye cloth.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)

As an artist, focused and engaged within a slow, time consuming process, this way of making is very familiar. Staining and dyeing as a process is fundamental to my practice and one that was geographically transferable. There was great time and sensitivity taken in selecting the materials, plants, dye cloth and threads, stitch threads, and in developing the required techniques. These aspects are all part of the process of my practice and acknowledge the tacit implicit within it. The process of waiting for ideas to happen, waiting for time to pass to consolidate ideas, thinking, questioning, reading and writing all belong to my methods of creating reflexively.

The use of the sun as a heat source and the local plant material, are additional tacit resonances between the Shipibo and myself in our creative process. Everything experienced while I was in the process of making was intrinsic to what was made and has commonality with Hamilton (2004), Kimsooja's (2004) and van Keppel's creative works and processes.

The following images (figure 10-22) demonstrate the process of staining and dyeing the silk and wool cloth I bought from Australia, with local plants from Pucallpa. Some of the silk I had previously dyed with local plants from my neighbourhood and I used these strips to wrap the wet bundles, which in turn transferred some of their colour.



Figure 10 & 11 *Layers of cloth and leaves and bundles of plants and cloth.* (Desmarchelier, 2011)



Figures 12 & 13 *Plant/cloth bundles wrapped in strips of pre-dyed cloth.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)

I did not have access to dye pots or ongoing fires where I was staying, as this was not sustainable. Hence, I considered the solar dyeing method for extracting colour from common garden plants was a responsible approach, where I did not require wood to create heat. The bundles of dampened cloth and plant matter were placed in plastic zip-lock bags and pegged on the clothesline to gather the jungle heat of the day. The bags of bundles were left to bake for twelve days. I checked every few days

to see if the colour of the staining was vivid enough, unwrapped and then re-wrapped the cloth.



Figure 14 Bagged bundles ready for the clothesline. (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figure 15 Bundles of plant fibre and cloth baking in the jungle heat. (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figures 16 &17 *Plant fibre and cloth bundles unwrapped after twelve days in plastic bags in the sun to heat and extract the colour of the plants for staining.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figure 18 *Stained and dyed cloths drying.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)

On returning to Australia with the pieces of stained/dyed cloth, I repeated the process of over staining with plants from my garden and neighbourhood. I did this to materialise the tacit, to make evident the importance of the creative tacit exchange between the Shipibo and myself. I also aimed to communicate through a reflexive process that trying different ideas and sampling with dye and stitch are a very important part of my process. I would assert that by “creatively playing” and investigating, more complex creative ideas evolve.

I refer here to the discussion in the Approach to the Study section 4.0 and Heidegger’s sense of “praxical knowledge” (as cited in Barrett & Bolt, 2009). Praxical knowledge is further defined by Bolt (as cited in Barrett & Bolt, 2009) as an

overlapping of knowing from handling materials and an engagement with the making that goes “beyond the particularity of practice to contribute to the broader knowledge economy” (p. 6). Bolt’s definition recognises the time invested in learning new skills, experimenting with known techniques, and the ebb and flow of the making process, which are integral to my reflexive praxis. I also refer in the Approach to the Study section 4.0, to Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity: “methodologies in artistic research are *necessarily* emergent and subject to repeated adjustment, rather than remaining fixed throughout the process of inquiry” (Bourdieu as cited in Barrett & Bolt, 2009, p. 6). I refer to it again here, as it clearly describes the process of my research: the time taken in learning new skills, experimenting with known and unknown techniques, the to-ing and fro-ing of myriad ways of gathering information, as well the engagement with thinking, writing, sifting and sorting, all of which happened simultaneously.



Figures 19 & 20 *Eucalyptus Cinerea* leaves and flowers on the ground from near the freeway in Bibra Lake, Perth, W.A. (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figures 21 & 22 Stained and dyed fabric from Peru. In the image on the right hand side this same fabric is solar dyed with *Eucalyptus Cinerea* leaves. (Desmarchelier, 2010)



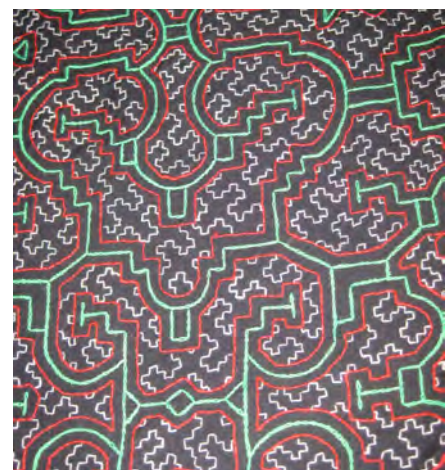
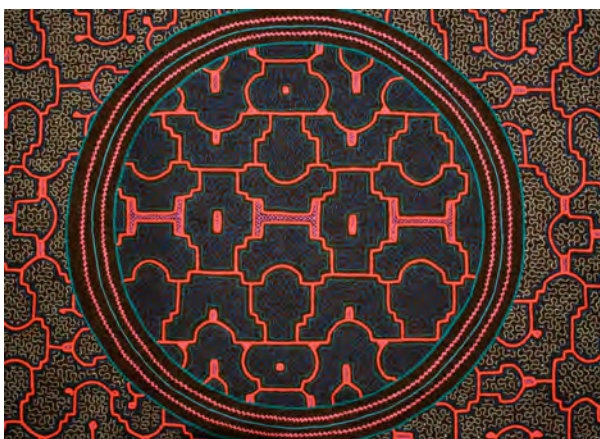
Figure 23 Detail of *Crossings* from exhibition *Iraqi*, 2011. (Desmarchelier, 2010)

In the exhibitions *Iraqi* (2011), and *We know more than we can say ...* (2013), I aimed to communicate the sense of the multi-layered, tacit intercultural exchange between the Shipibo artists and myself. *Crossings*, (figure 23) was constructed from the many pieces of fabric, dyed and stained both in Peru and Perth, W.A. and then

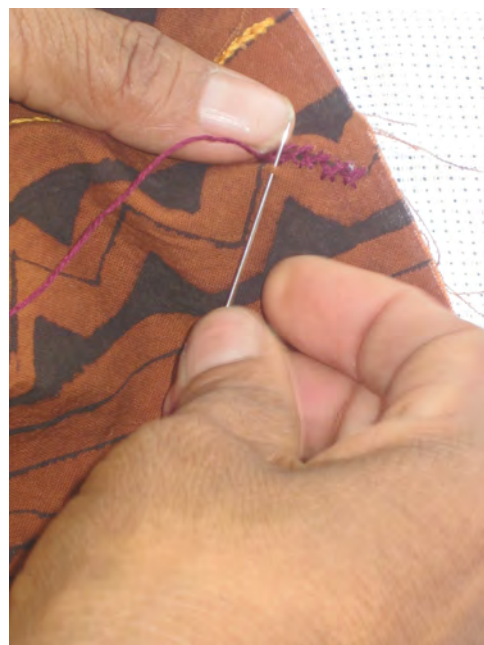
pieced and stitched together. For me this was a material way of layering plants and cloths from both countries, imbued with the intercultural exchange within our creative tacit dialogue. I am not being literal here, as the tacit is ineffable. In fact the name of this piece changes in each exhibition as I appreciate more fully that the tacit is not easy to pin down. Therefore the act of naming and re-naming was my attempt to offer a clue to the audience of implied meanings.

Exhibiting the works in the *Iraqi* exhibition (2011), opened another layer of critique, via my creative process, to record the social, historical and cultural contexts of the research and communicate this through my creative praxis. In the Approach to the Study section 4.0: I refer to Austen (as cited in Barrett & Bolt, 2009, p. 150). I acknowledge that the exhibitions are part of the performativity of the process, and as such are “an action that generates effects”. As such, viewing the works, *in situ* gave other layers of meaning to the works, to which I responded.

My concerns are with the tacit intercultural exchange between the Shipibo and myself as a means of communication, via our hand-stitching. Having had the opportunity to spend creative time with the Shipibo traditional hand-stitching artists, I aimed to practice variations of the stitches I was shown, and explore the vibrant colours of the Shipibo threads. This further demonstrates the ongoing reflexive nature of my practice and approach to communicate the tacit, intercultural exchange with the Peruvian artists.



Figures 24 & 25 Details of the vibrant colours and patterns of the Shipibo cloths. (Desmarchelier, 2010)



Figures 26 & 27 *Stitching with Jobita and a detail of a Coaba and clay stained cloth being stitched. Jobita is wearing a traditional skirt, a Chitonti, and a Coton, a traditional blouse.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)

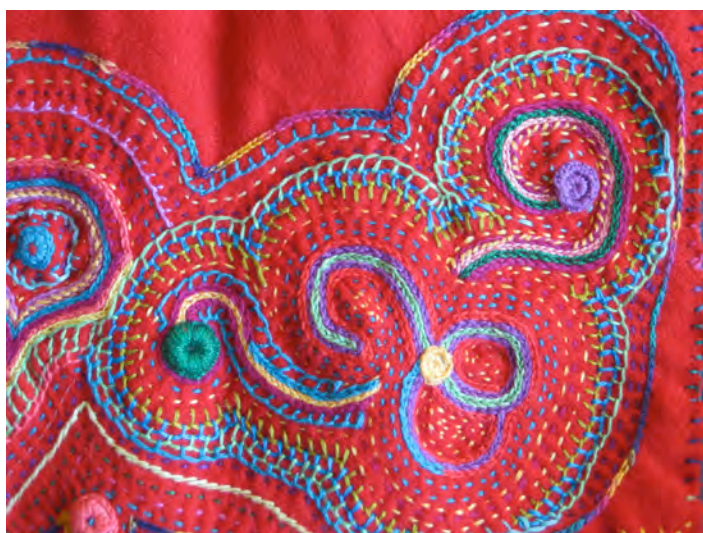


Figure 28 & 29 *Examples of my exploration of new stitches in the colours of the Shipibo aesthetic.* (Desmarchelier, 2010)



I acknowledge that the time taken to stitch, to think, to research, to record research, and develop appropriate skills belongs to the process of reflexive making. In fact the time taken is part of the process and central to my reflexive praxis. My experience of traditional hand-stitching with the Shipibo artists illustrates that the slow, repetitive act of stitching, by its very nature, facilitated the tacit exchange between us and supported intercultural communication and our creative dialogue.

6.2 A reflexive analysis of relevant artists within a craft based practice, appropriate to this investigation and their relationship to my creative praxis.

In this section, I acknowledge craft-based artists relevant to this research, either through their methodology and approach to the material aspects of making or in their articulation of related concepts. Relevant theorists and artists who have supported my creative praxis are acknowledged in the Literature and contextual review 3.0 and support the global context of this research.

Many artists rely on the long and mysterious history of cloth to inform their practice. Relevant artists, Ann Hamilton (2004, 2002), Kimsooja (2004) and Else van Keppel (1997), all articulate via their creative praxis concepts that relate to my creative research. I demonstrate how these artists have a direct link to my praxis. As I stated in the Introduction 1.0 I began this research not knowing how it was going to unfold. The time-consuming creative stitching, staining and dyeing

processes that I use to make pieces for the exhibitions, required reading, research and a great deal of systematic trial and error, all part of my reflexive praxis.

Ann Hamilton (2004) uses a variety of materials and media in her installation and performance work. Cloth, clothes and their political and cultural relevance are central themes in her work. However, it is her approach to the making process, using writing and thinking about making that is most relevant to my research. Hamilton's comprehension and inclusion of the importance of touch, time, materiality, slow making, reading, thinking, researching and the recognition of tacit human presence support my creative praxis.

Hamilton (Hamilton, 2004) acknowledges and supports "the repeated act of making" as a communicative language, positing:

To extend the hand to touch is the first projection of the body. As a maker, I need to touch and be touched by material. In that reciprocal act, knowledge that can only be felt is made present by embodied experience. The knowledge of these embodied experiences is never its name. Just as naming offers up linguistic recognitions, so too, the repeated act of making, offers up recognitions that are materially embodied. We need both. I need both. (p. 179)

Hamilton understands the tacit and the embodied and appreciates the difficulty of naming and articulating what is being "materially embodied" (p. 179). Yet she also recognises the importance of the "linguistic recognitions" (p. 179) to allude to the tacit. This relationship between the tacit and explicit is not about changing the tacit into the explicit. Even though the tacit is indescribable and indefinable, we can still acknowledge the shared skills we are involved in, e.g. the shared hand-stitching between the Shipibo and myself. "We can discuss them [the skilled performances we are involved with] provided we stop insisting on 'converting' tacit knowledge and, instead start recursively drawing our attention to how we draw each other's attention to things" (Tsoukas, 2002, p. 1). The exchange of tacit knowledge between the Shipibo artists and myself, and how I communicated this is a vital component to my reflexive praxis and my aim is that this was made evident within each of my Doctoral exhibitions. This is further extrapolated upon in sections 6.3 and 6.5.

Performance artist Kimsooja (2004) places herself in the midst of crowds all around the world with the intention of “inverting the notion of performing” (p. 215). By remaining fixed in a crowd of people she communicates more by doing nothing and subsequently demands she is seen. I too placed myself as a maker at my worktable and within a video within my second exhibition. In being present in these two different ways, the creative, repetitive act is made visible to the audience. Although my time with the Shipibo was not performative in the sense of Kimsooja’s work, I often had the experience of being still within a moving day-to-day landscape, engaged in creative processes situated within an intercultural and domestic environment. This was a site for further tacit knowledge exchange between the Shipibo artists and I. Therefore, by showing the making process of hand stitching by the maker in the exhibitions, I aimed to evidence this tacit exchange.

Kimsooja demonstrates a profound understanding of human presence with cloth as many of her installations use old clothes to create a narrative of human presence and absence. An example of her work reflecting this approach and understanding is *Sewing into walking-Dedicated to the Victims of Kwangju* (1995). Kimsooja was a participant and an observer in this work. By placing herself within her own work, her presence was neither static nor objective. I assert that taking this position acknowledges the fluid, and the intersubjective, as a way of contextualising and communicating the tacit within the social act. Kimsooja’s embodiment of the power of stitch has also been particularly relevant to my praxis. Kimsooja (2004) indicates that by using old clothes and bedding, she is documenting a universal sense of human history, indicating a transcendent perspective. She says:

From that moment, I understood the power of sewing: the relationship of needle to fabric is like my body to the universe, and the fundamental relationship of things and structure were in it.I worked with cloth and clothes, sewing and wrapping them. I always used old clothes and traditional Korean bedcovers- that retain the smells of others’ lives, memories, and histories, though their bodies are no longer there- embracing and protecting people, celebrating their lives and creating a network of existences. ...in its documentation I recognized that my own body was a sewing tool, a needle that invisibly wraps, weaves, and sews different fabrics and people together in nature. (p. 213)

I share Kimsooja's emphasis on the body as an essential part of the making process. Also relevant is her acknowledgment of the significance of the larger context for the communication of the personal and the intimate nature of her work, thus making it all visible and open to critique (Crouch, 2007). This reflexive approach to making and the placement of the making and maker within a broader context is important to my positioning of our creative works. As noted, the placement of myself within the exhibition *We know more than we can say...* was an important inclusion, as I was present as maker both within the mediated video and in real time at my table covered with the tools of stitching.

Many of the creative processes discussed speak of time and, certainly, stitching can be evidence of the passage of slow time. Artist Misao Tsubaki's work does precisely this, as she states, "In my work like the clocks ticking, I'm etching my inner voice, stitch by stitch. I am recording tracks of the footsteps of my life in Human Time" (as cited in Smith, 1991, p. 11). Time is also central to my practice, in staining, dyeing, piecing and the printing of cloth, as well as in appreciating the time taken in the tacit exchange with the Shipibo artists.

As outlined in the Introduction 1.0, I began this research with certain parameters in place and a clear focus, evident by my research question; however, not knowing how it would develop, and as such many elements of the research shifted. I assert that this shift in the research was not arbitrary. On the contrary, the changes came about due to circumstances beyond my control, thus requiring me to have a flexible, reflexive focus, which embraced different notions of time, amongst other things, when it came to contact with the Shipibo artists. In the Approach to the study section 4.0, I assert that reflexive praxis means that during the making, writing, thinking and researching (and I would add re-designing), it was the action of my informed engagement that influenced the outcomes of the research. Hence, many of the new situations within the research required my informed engagement with a different understanding of time, as I understood it. Much of my contact with the Shipibo artists has been based on a sense of open time. I now understand the time it takes for tacit exchanges (Crouch, 2013), within creative intercultural communication.

Staining of cloth has been a central method I have used as an artist for many years. It is about the time, imprint and tacit exchange between cloth, heat, plant and maker. The particular colours resulting from the staining process are a result of using flowers, bark, seeds and leaves. I choose particular plants based on the colours I want to achieve. There are also random factors within this, such as the time and place at which the plant material is picked; how long after selection are the plants used; the heat of the sun and the length of the time the cloth and plants are exposed to each other and, not least of all, the country I am in. The process and outcome of this staining and dyeing is further developed visually in the exhibitions 6.3-6.6.

I concur with Australian artist Else van Keppel (1997), who indicates “that making and thinking exist together in a unity that is a prerequisite for creative work” (p. 24) and thus, for my research, resonates with praxis. She continues that hand-making is an act of “simplicity, not so much as a disregard for complexity, but as a clarification of the significant” (p. 15). Within a Western post-traditional society, it could be argued that there is no need for hand-made objects; however, in a globalised world we do, as human beings, require the hand-made as a poetic reference point. Van Keppel is speaking of the act of making, the tacit exchange between maker and material, the experience that Yanagi (1972) points to when stating, “Every artist knows that he is engaged in an encounter with infinity, and that work done with heart and hand, is ultimately worship of Life Itself [sic]” (p. 90). Ann Hamilton (2004) acknowledges and supports van Keppel’s point, as I do, that the seemingly simple act of hand-making does not disregard the ‘complexity’ of the making process.

In fact, the time-consuming, slow and repetitive act allows for an expansion and inclusion of many elements, both privately and within the social act. Hamilton’s (2004) perspective once again affirms a way of actualising a material practice, inclusive of all elements of the processes of making. For me, thinking, reading, being in silence, research, intuition, storytelling and acknowledging the repetitious act allows the mind and imaginative space to open, while “living physically in the middle” (Hamilton, 1996, n.p.). The creative communication of the tacit, viewed within a Western gallery, and further articulated within this exegesis, references the

tacit nature of gathering information and exchanging knowledge. Hamilton (2004) asserts:

Reading, which has a profound effect on one's thinking and experience but which leaves no material trace, form the material of my makings. What gives shape to experience as experience, not as a picture or narration of it, but in the present? Suspending into the quiet space, with attention and a broadly associative mind, can one use this invisible, silent and usually solitary activity and let it become the material of the practice itself? Can a work evoke the space of reading, if not the act of making? (p. 179)

Hamilton (2004), by reflexively questioning the interchangeability and interrelatedness of language and process, acknowledges everything becomes the "material" for her making, even when there is no material process. The invisible, ineffable and solitary actions of thinking, reading and associative activities are all related to the making process. The inclusiveness of all these elements within creative praxis resonates with me as an artist and acknowledges the tacit exchange between maker, materials and the making. I acknowledge the tacit and its ineffable quality; indeed as Tsoukas (2002) affirms:

To treat practical (or tacit) knowledge as having a precisely definable content, which is initially located in the head of the practitioner and then "translated" into explicit knowledge, is to reduce what is known to what is articulable, thus impoverishing the notion of practical knowledge. (p. 13)

To discuss how I make, the processes of making and the different components contributing to my praxis, is essential. However, I also acknowledge the ineffability of tacit knowledge exchange between artists, materials and process. Polyani posits; "[This] brings home to us that it is not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning" (2009, p. 18).

My creative praxis and the works in the two exhibitions, are how I, as an artist draw attention to the ineffable component of tacit knowledge in order to communicate the invisible, transient and ephemeral nature of the tacit creative exchange. It is this ineffability that Hamilton (2004) alludes to when she says "the knowledge of these experiences is never its name". Kimsooja (2004) states, her body is an invisible tool that "wraps, weaves and sews". Tsoubaki (1991) also speaks of etching an "inner

voice stitch by stitch” while simultaneously recording the process of making in human time. van Keppel (1997) acknowledges the simplicity [skill] of the hand-stitching, is “not so much as a disregard for complexity, but as a clarification of the significant”. I, like these artists, understand it is only possible to hint through creative praxis, at the shared tacit knowledge between artists and materials.

Tacit exchange has no written or verbal language. The creative works within the two exhibitions are the embodied language of the tacit knowledge and indeed, as previously stated, not the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. I concur with Tsoukas (2002) when he affirms that new knowledge comes about when our praxis is approached in new ways via social interaction (p.16). Rather than finding an explanation or pinning down how tacit knowledge works, (which is impossible anyway), Tsoukas (2002), suggests we “find new ways of talking [about the tacit], fresh forms of interacting, and novel ways of distinguishing and connecting” (p.16). This is the site of my creative praxis.

6.3 *Iraqi*. Spectrum Project Space, Mount Lawley, Perth, W.A. October, 2011. I commence this section by recognising creative praxis, as the vehicle of shared tacit communication between the Shipibo artists and myself. I concur with Giddens (1994) who acknowledges traditions (in my case, hand-making), are living entities, (which has been previously discussed, in the Literature and Contextual Review 3.0) which act as a conduit for information to pass tacitly between us, the artists, within reflexive, creative exchange and with an audience. This fluid view is acknowledged and demonstrated in my creative praxis and in the intercultural exchange with the Shipibo, and also demonstrated in the exhibitions.

This third part of section 6.0 further contextualises my creative praxis as a way of creating intersubjective, intercultural dialogue, using the works created throughout this candidature. This part includes the significance of spending time in Peru with the Shipibo artists and their ongoing impact on my creative process. I document visually, as well as discuss, my exhibition *Iraqi*, which was held in October 2011 at Spectrum Project Space, E.C.U. Mt. Lawley. This exhibition is a part of the reflexive process of documenting the tacit, communicative, intercultural exchange with the

Shipibo artists of Peru, and my first attempt at communicating these ideas to an audience in Australia.

In *Iraqui*, many of the Shipibo cloths were shown, together with my hand-made works to demonstrate the creative, intercultural conversation that occurred between us as artists. In *Iraqui*, the tacit was implied and evident, but was not the central focus of this exhibition. This first exhibition set the intercultural context within the day-to-day lifeworld between the Shipibo artists and myself. This enabled me to be immersed with the Shipibo artists, by means of socially shared hand-stitching, which acted as a communicative tool for tacit exchange within a daily context.

Iraqui, means *Thank you* in Shipibo. Pashin Yaca, a Shipibo artist, sang a song of welcome when I visited her. At the end of the song she said, “iraqui”, thank you, for listening. I then responded with the word “iraqui”, thank you, to her for her song. This was a moment of communication and appreciation of each other and we both laughed. Saying “iraqui” to the Shipibo always brought warmth and resonance to our communication. The purpose of naming this exhibition *Iraqui*, was as a result of this exchange with Pashin Yaca, her song of welcome, and her thank you. *Iraqui*, “thank you”, was the Shipibo word I continually used with the artists, and which became an expression of ongoing intimacy between us, and embodied the interface of our intercultural dialogue.



Figure 30 Pashin Yaca, Shipibo artist. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

The following parts of this section (6.3.1-6.3.5) reflexively examine various aspects of *Iraqui*. In 6.3.1 I provide an overview of the layout of *Iraqui*. This is important as I demonstrate the overall placement of the work for the audience. In 6.3.2 I contextualise the Shipibo artists and the commodification of their cloths, both within communities, and on the streets of Pucallpa and Iquitos. I then detail three particular Shipibo artists. In 6.2.3 I discuss each of the Shipibo cloths in *Iraqui* and some audience responses. In 6.2.4, I examine my works within the exhibition and contextualise the significance of the intercultural tacit exchange. The final piece, the film 6.3.5, is an analysis of the intercultural creative exchange, contextualised within the everyday i.e. sounds, welcome song, and a film sequence of the artist Jobita teaching me Shipibo stitch patterns.

These sub-sections are structured by referring to images depicting the artists, their cloths and my creative response to this intercultural creative dialogue. The images act as a visual map and order the reflexive analysis of *Iraqui*. The images are numbered and I refer directly to them in the text.

6.3.1 Reflexive analysis of Iraqui

Iraqui showcased the Shipibo's works, exhibited for the first time in Western Australia. This was significant as in *Iraqui* my aim was to creatively express to an audience the intercultural exchange that took place via the creative act of hand-making. The intercultural articulation between us was made significant by the presence of a number of the Shipibo cloths in this exhibition and their placement in relationship to my own work. Also by the presence of Dr. Noel Nannup, Nyoongar community elder, on staff at Kurongkurl Katitjin, Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research at Edith Cowan University, Perth, who opened the *Iraqui* exhibition with a welcome to country ceremony, which he did (see section 1.0 *Iraqui*, in accompanying video). This ceremony acknowledged the land on which the exhibition was taking place.



Figure 31 *Untitled* (Desmarchelier, 2011) **Figure 32** *Example of Chopa Keweaba* (Desmarchelier, 2011)

My work *Untitled* (figure 31), is dyed with Puffball, a local mushroom growing close to where I live in Perth, W.A. The stitching is done in concentric circles, using linen thread. I placed a Shipibo cloth next to *Untitled* as (figure 32) to make explicit the significance of acknowledging the time-honored processes of making, dyeing, staining, printing and stitching. The Shipibo and I were resonant with each other in our ways of making, within our creative intercultural communication. The Shipibo cloth is dyed with white clay, sun dried, and stained with Caoba bark (figure 32).

Iraqui was a way of communicating my creative response and the value of momentary impressions of the Shipibo oral culture and tradition, which is passed on in the forms of stories, song, patterns, colours and myths. The purpose of this exhibition was to reflexively respond to the cultural and creative interface between us. In order to explore our creative interface and intercultural dialogue, I used a number of different creative forms, sound, projection, Shipibo hand-stitched cloths and my hand- made stitched pieces.

The gallery was set up in a particular way, so as to communicate to an audience the geographical context, the intercultural exchange that took place, the post-traditional world we inhabit and how this frames the creative exchange. I detail the layout by referring to the right hand side of the gallery when facing into the gallery, (figure 33), and finish at the left hand side of the gallery (figure 34). This was my way of developing upon the levels of information I aimed to communicate. This movement of information was an essential way for me as the artist to show the work, as it acted as a timeline of my journey and encounters with the Shipibo artists, in chronological order.



Figure 33 View of *Iraqi*, from the gallery entrance (right hand side). (Desmarchelier, 2011)

The first piece of Shipibo cloth on the right hand side is a stitched Shipibo Kene (cloth) called a Manta, which I placed to act as a sentinel, to create a presence of the Shipibo from the outset. Kene were placed either side of the gallery to mark the point of entry for an audience, (see also figure 34).



Figure 34 View of *Iraqi* from gallery entrance, (left hand side). (Desmarchelier, 2011)

I had placed hand-written information regarding the making, the maker and the process, on the walls next to appropriate works in the gallery. I consider this writing with a graphite pencil as another material, and the act of writing in this way as part of the creative action. *Iraqi*, is presented visually in this sequential nature, in order to gain insight and embed the narrative. By sequencing events and experiences, my intention was not to present a travelogue, but rather to acknowledge the cumulative nature of the intercultural dialogue. By bringing the fragments together, I am reflexively situating the works. When naming the images, I state their significance within the intercultural discourse. The images and works are placed using the reflexive model, to further contextualise our intercultural exchange, as social and creative exchanges. Indeed, placement of the works continue the dialogue and in this instance with the audience in mind, where creative praxis becomes the social act.

6.3.2 Shipibo Artists within an intercultural interface.

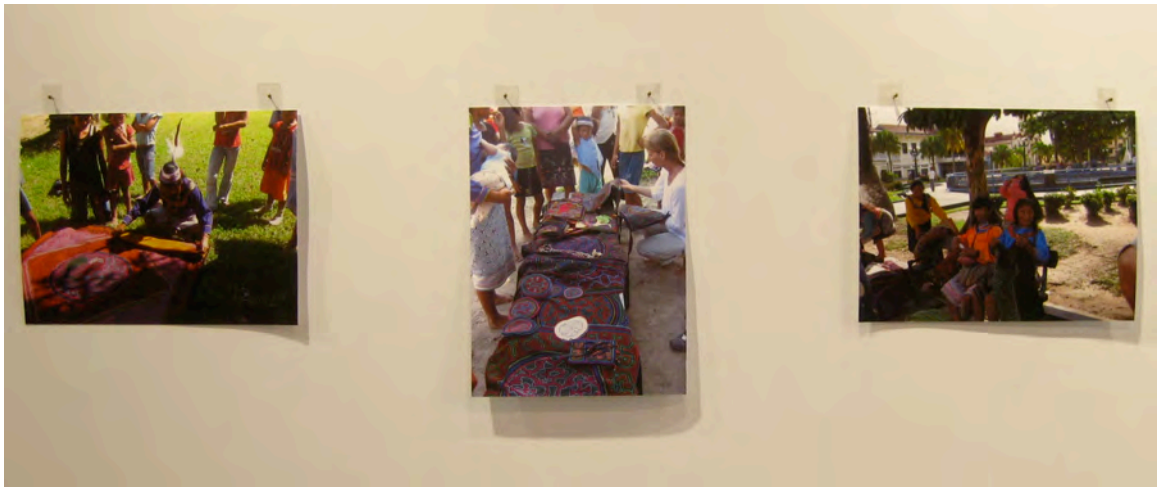


Figure 35 The first two images are from a community called Calleria, up the Ucayalli River. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

Figure 36 The image to the far right is of artists selling cloth in a park in Iquitos. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

I had met many of the artists in (figure 35), who are showing me their cloths. I knew whose cloth I was buying as I had stayed in the community called Calleria, which is a day's journey up the Ucayalli River. I intended to buy cloth in the streets of Iquitos from Shipibo artists (figure 36), who I didn't know. I included both of these negotiations with Shipibo artists to acknowledge my engagement has also required reflection on how and where we were in negotiation with each other, and how this then affected our discourse. One such situation shown in (figure 36), depicts the intercultural exchange here, where the cloths are placed both on the ground, and within a public market place, and acknowledges a traditional way of making and living that is not exotic or untouched by commodification. The making of the cloths and the hand-stitching are the processes of our creative intercultural exchange. The selling of the cloths however is complex and also part of the day-to-day life for the Shipibo, which I entered. Throughout this exhibition, the photos are 21 cms. X 30 cms. in size. This is a way of creating a sense of intimacy, as the audience physically moves into the image in order to view it.



Figure 37 Shipibo artists selling their hand-stitched cloths on the street in Iquitos. (Desmarchelier, 2011)



Figure 38 The cloth beside Gwana will be the last piece she stitches. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

Gwana, the first of three artists I refer to in this section, at 75 years old is now going blind. Gwana left her traditional community, to live with family in urban Pucallpa after she lost a grandson to cholera, while he was in her care. The grief and loss still live vividly within her. This piece is a Chintonti, (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984, p. 276) the

traditional skirts the Shipibo women wear. Such skirts are woven, pieced together in the middle, and then hand stitched.

My reason for placing this cloth in the exhibition was to respect Gwana's longevity of traditional practice and the placement of her practice in the everyday. Gwana had begun to learn traditional ways of stitching when she was nine years old, which was the Shipibo custom of her time. She is photographed in her home, within the day-to-day elements of her life, and knows this is the last piece of cloth she will stitch. I placed an image of Gwana, next to the cloth and my hand written information (figure 39). The handwriting indicates a transient quality, together with the intimate photo of Gwana.



Figure 39 Elisa Vargas is a mother, grandmother, artist and Shaman.

Elisa Vargas, (figure 39) is dressed in her traditional clothes. Her skirt, a Chintonti, her blouse, a Coton and beads are worn both around her waist and neck. Elisa also wears a silver pendant in her nose, and around her wrists she wears beaded bangles, one of which she gave to me. In section 2.0 I tell of my encounter with Elisa.

Elisa is significant to this exhibition as she acknowledged her Shamanic path, which is unusual for a Shipibo woman. Elisa introduced me to her children and grandchildren. As well as spending time with me as she made meals and looked after her family. I have included Elisa as an artist as she exemplifies a life deeply embedded in the day-to-day, as well as within Shamanic traditional practices. I have included one of Elisa's stitched cloths in *Iraqui*, (figure 45). Elisa indicated that the memory and meaning of some of the "old ways" of stitching the cloth designs live within the cellular memory of the Shipibo people, an example of transferable tacit knowledge (Polyani, 1974, 2009) and indicated the deep impulse to make their cloths is multi-layered, and not least of all, out of economic necessity. I often saw her in Pucallpa selling her cloths to support her family and community. Elisa is vital to this exhibition as she contextualises the breadth and depth of the Shipibo artists, as well as the creative intercultural dialogue we shared within our social act of hand-stitching.



Figure 40 Jobita teaching me some Shipibo stitches. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

The significance of placing Jobita and myself (figure 40) in this exhibition is to acknowledge her as an artist and teacher. I also acknowledge Jobita became my teacher and I her student and she is featured in the film, (figure 54). Jobita asked to teach me some Shipibo stitches and patterns and it was through this form of shared

hand-stitched, creative practice, that intercultural dialogue took place. This is different to my experience with other artists, where the shared act of stitching did not have this hierarchical context. In (figure 40), Jobita takes the position of teacher and mentor and, as always with the Shipibo, time was open-ended. Jobita and her son, Eder, who became my interpreter, introduced me to their extended family, both in the various communities along the rivers as well as in Pucallpa. It was Eder and Jobita who introduced me to Elisa.

6.3.3 Shipibo traditional cloths.

The Shipibo artists' designs are drawn from sacred geometry, which informs their cosmology (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984). I was told briefly about the dyeing and staining of cloth. The current meanings of the circle, the cross and the leaf shape, are not fixed. I have incorporated these motifs in my stitched works within both exhibitions as part of my reflexive praxis, to reflexively respond to the cultural interface with the Shipibo. What was significant for me was not to critically analyse or examine their cloths, but to acknowledge the significance of our intercultural dialogue within the creative hand-stitching process, and the reflexive impact of this on my creative praxis.



Figure 41 Shipibo Chitonti cloth.
(Desmarchelier, 2011)



Figure 42 Shipibo hand stitched cloth on black cotton by Jobita. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

I placed a cloth by Jobita (figure 42) in the exhibition due to the fineness of her stitching. Audience members from traditional quilting and stitching backgrounds were deeply impressed by the quality and mastery of Jobita's work. It was not uncommon when an audience member turned the cloth over to see the back-side of the stitching, marvel at the finesse and accuracy of the intricately rendered stitches and patterns. Many thought because of the geometric perfection of the stitched patterns the stitching was made by machine. This exchange between the audience and cloth, I posit, is another layer of intercultural dialogue, not only between Jobita and myself, but also between Jobita and an audience within the socially engaged context of the gallery.



Figure 43 Shipibo hand stitched cloth, dyed with Caoba. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

I decided to include a work by an unknown Shipibo artist to acknowledge the artist who made it (figure 43). I bought this cloth on the streets of Iquitos (figure 37) and this intercultural exchange placed the traditional makers and cloths within a post-traditional context.

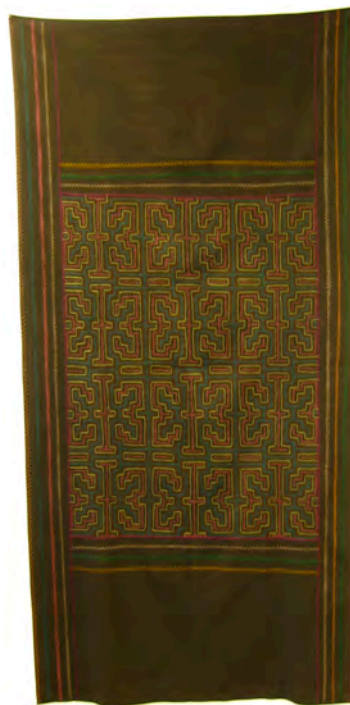


Figure 44 Manta, sentinel, view from the gallery entrance, (right hand side). (Desmarchelier, 2011)

Another cloth exhibited in *Iraqi* was by Elisa (figure 44). This cloth is significant in this exhibition, due to the fact it is quite old, and because I had not encountered another cloth with this particular pattern, though there could be others. The placement of the cloth at the beginning of the exhibition, invited the audience to engage visually with a piece of patterned stitching that may be unfamiliar to them, and so alert them to a different and potentially new creative work, and the intercultural narrative within the exhibition.

6.3.4 My hand-stitched pieces resulting from my residency with the Shipibo artists

The Shipibo artists' designs are drawn from sacred geometry, which informs their cosmology (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984). Although I was only told about the dyeing and staining of cloth and the meaning of the circle and the cross by the Shipibo artists, there is a great deal of literature supporting many different perspectives and meanings of the fractal geometric patterns on the Shipibo stitched cloth. Many authors have documented experiences and information around traditional rituals and the Shipibo cloths. There are a number of papers written by musicologists, describing phenomena between the Shipibo songs and the hand-stitched cloths of the Shipibo and many of these texts are readily available through the Internet. The seminal authors are, Gebhart-Sayer (1984), Rittner (2007), Charing (2006, 2011) and Brabec de Mori (2011, 2012, 2013). The significance of my research, however, is how my creative intercultural exchange with the Shipibo impacted on my creative praxis. It was through shared creative process that the intercultural interface with the Shipibo was manifested. I was not looking at the Shipibo cloths as objects, in a culturally fixed (Bhabha, 1994) way, my approach was more contemporary than that, and focused on the tacit exchange within the intercultural interface between us.



Figure 45 *Untitled*. Raw, recycled, Indian silk, dyed in Puffball, hand-stitched in linen thread, with a red flower. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

The significance of the placement of *Untitled* (figure 45), in the exhibition was to show the movement on the surface of the cloth - the undulating texture - a result of continually stitched concentric circles. I made a point of not flattening the surface of the cloth, as a way of allowing a form of tacit movement between the cloth, needle, thread and my hand. The circles are concentric, overlap, coincide and cover each other (figures 46 and 47). This material sense of overlapping, concentric and coinciding of the stitches on the cloth became a metaphor for me of the intercultural, tacit exchange.



Figure 46 Detail of image of cloth in figure 45. This is an example of the stitched overlapping concentric circles. (Desmarchelier, 2011)



Figure 47 Detail of the flower stitched onto the surface of the cloth in figure 45. (Desmarchelier, 2011)



Figure 48 *Crossings*. Hand stitched, dyed and stained, wool and silk.
(Desmarchelier, 2011)

In the Shipibo tradition, the cross, crossing, can mean, coming together, a communication between people. Developing this, I constructed *Crossings* (figure 48), so that the making of the marks referenced the intercultural process. The wool and silk pieces in the cloth, were wrapped in bundles around Peruvian jungle plants, and then placed in plastic bags to bake over time in the sun of the hot Amazonian. As a result of this alchemy, the cloth absorbed the plant stains and markings from the vegetable dyes (see section 6.1 figures 10-18). This process as noted in the text was repeated here in Perth, in suburban Hamilton Hill, using the already printed cloths from Peru. The overlay of the local colour and marks came from Eucalyptus trees in the Fremantle area (see section 6.1. figures 19-22).

The significance of *Crossings* is to alert an audience to the time-consuming processes of dyeing and staining and hand-stitching (Tsoubaki, 1991). It was significant to communicate to the audience the intercultural overlay of the plants, both from Peru and Fremantle, used in the dyeing and staining. *Crossings* for me, acted as a physical

map and was testament for the audience, to intercultural exchange through material processes that had taken place (as is described in section 6.1).

I placed a Shipibo cloth on either side of *Crossings* also stained with clay and tree bark, to acknowledge the tacit resonance of the processes used by both the Shipibo artists and myself. These three cloths have also undergone similar processes and so my aim to reveal to an audience the material and process resonance within the intercultural exchange between us. This was clearly stated in the hand-written text on the gallery walls next to the cloths.

As stated in the Literature and Contextual Review in section 3.0, Tsoukas notes that it is via praxis, through social action, that new knowledge comes about not when tacit becomes explicit (2002, p. 16). This supports my experience with the Shipibo artists and acknowledges the continual unfolding of the tacit through our shared making, where new insights and knowledge emerged as a result of our creative engagement with each other. It was this I aimed to communicate to an audience.



Figure 49 Detail of *Crossings*. (Desmarchelier, 2011)



Figure 50a & 50b *Untitled 11* Red hand-stitched cloth, and Shipibo hand-stitched Shipibo cloth. (Desmarchelier, 2011)

In this exhibition I was aware that it was impossible to accurately reflect my contact and interactions with people of a traditionally oral culture. It is not my intention to try to translate using a written form or create an overlay of western modes of thinking, in order to “make sense”, of what transpired (Rittner, 2007). It is only possible to hint, through creative praxis at the tacit intercultural exchange between us. The leaf shape, which I use in my cloth *Untitled 11* (figure 50a), indicates a boat, the main mode of transport in the Amazon. The leaf is also the bridge between the myriad worlds, and is food, a dye and medicine, and gives oxygen. I reflected the

colours used in the Shipibo cloth (figure 50b) in my cloth *Untitled 11* (figure 50a), predominantly using variations of red and blue. The Shipibo cloth (figure 50b) creates an electric dynamic of colour, and my hand-stitched work (figure 50a), using similar colours but in different shapes and proportions, created a tacit resonance. This is what I aimed to communicate to an audience.

6.3.5 The film: differing layers of contact with the Shipibo life-world.



Figure 51 Still from the Film. (Duration: 15 minutes, 20 seconds). (Desmarchelier, 2011)

I chose to construct a film in three sections to create a sequential narrative and to communicate to an audience the differing layers of contact with the Shipibo life-world. This was to hint to the diversity of the intercultural exchange and dialogue that took place. The first section of the film is contextualised within the daily life-world of the Shipibo on the river as we made our way to the Shipibo communities. The second section is Pashin Yaca, at one of the communities singing the song of welcome which is the namesake of the exhibition *Iraqi*. The third section

documents the creative exchange with Jobita, as she teaches me to stitch in a community context.

The film begins with the sound of a boat moving down the Ucayali River. The sound is loud, repetitive and mechanical and permeates the daily routines of the people living along the river. These are the sounds of the everyday in Pucallpa on the river, the sounds surrounding and supporting the tacit (Polyani, 2009, 1974) exchange between us. Additionally the sounds continually accompanying our creative exchanges, and heard in the film in the gallery, were Chicha music, the barking of dogs, the sound of motorised rickshaws passing, the screech of the large scavenging birds, political messages booming over loudspeakers, and all the myriad echoes of the minutiae of daily life in the Amazon.

It was important to have this documented to an audience, as this was the context in which the creative, intercultural exchange took place, between us. My notion of studio was flexible, as noted in the Literature and Contextual Review 3.0, and was always in accordance with the everyday (Sullivan, 2005), “as a site of inquiry” (p. 81). This approach contextualises us and informs the “social cultural actions” (p. 81) as we interculturally and creatively engaged. The significance of this to an audience was to visually and aurally introduce the various contexts of the everyday of the intercultural context.

The second section of the film is the song of “welcome” sung by Pashin Yaca a Shipibo artist. The significance of this song for this exhibition is to introduce an audience to Pashin Yaca welcoming us to her home, her place and her country. As previously mentioned at the beginning of this section, the Shipibo word for thank you, *iraqui*, became a part of my ongoing dialogue with the Shipibo. *Iraqui*, thank you, became a depository of tacit exchange between us. While Pashin Yaca sings, the Shipibo stitched cloths pass across her face, like shadows of information.

The third section of the film shows Jobita and her son Eder, teaching me the Shipibo stitches. Both Eder and his mother Jobita stitched, and often they corrected my progress. The significance of this exchange to an audience was to introduce the intimacy and tacit (Polyani, 2009,1974) intercultural dialogue between artists, within seemingly informal settings. As noted in the Literature and Contextual

Review 3.0, the transformative tacit nature of maker, aesthetic and material, can be explained only through the act of making; however, it can be witnessed and the process of the making shared (Crouch, 2013) via reflexive praxis. Hand-stitching is the tacit communication between the material, the maker and processes of making, and in my exchange with the Shipibo, between maker and maker; this is the action of tacit knowledge. The tacit is underpinned via my praxis, which is “contingent upon a social and cultural environment” (Crouch, 2000, ¶ 14) always open to negotiation and acting together with the Shipibo artists and not upon each other.

The purpose of *Iraqi* was to introduce an audience to the Shipibo artists; expose the power of the day-to-day as the context for shared creative process; to appropriately, ethically and creatively demonstrate the intercultural dialogue together as artists; and to then situate our intercultural communication via praxis within a western gallery. The works in this exhibition were informed by these ideas of globalisation, intercultural communication, tradition and post-tradition and the intersubjective (as discussed in 3.0). *Iraqi* also prefaced the tacit exchange between us; however, this is not the main focus of this exhibition, but became central to my second show.

6.4. *We know more than we can say...* Spectrum Project Space, Mount Lawley, Perth, W.A. August 2013.

The aim in *We know more than we can say...* was to communicate the ideas around the tacit exchanges, between the Shipibo artists and myself, within a post-traditional context. In this second exhibition, however, I included only two Shipibo cloths, instead focusing on the tacit and the sensory reflexive experience of the audience. Additionally, I aimed to make this manifest through my traditional hand-making practice and using some non-traditional materials.

This perspective regarding creative praxis was developed by my examination of Polyani’s (1974, 2009) concept of the tacit. This has been established within the Literature and Contextual Review (section 3.0). Polyani (2009) alludes to the intangibility of learning and shared intelligence when he states, “we know more

than we can tell” (p. 4). This relates to the title of this exhibition, as I acknowledge that as the Shipibo and I came to know each other, it was via our shared hand-stitching practices, and therefore the tacit – as this could not be articulated in words (Polyani, 2009, p. 10).

The tacit, via sensory information, is the means by which we exchanged our subjective, seemingly, informal, intercultural communication. As I have stated in the Literature and Contextual Review (section 3.0) there was enormous flexibility and range of information I tacitly received from the Shipibo, and I came to understand, that the philosophy of the Shipibo allows for, “complete freedom in maintaining, transmitting, creating and changing of [traditions]” (de Mori, 2007, p. 7).

This research has required a reflective and reflexive approach as a result of adopting praxis as a model. The creative work has been developed through my research to acknowledge the intercultural dialogue between us. The intercultural creative interface reflected in praxis, within these exhibitions, is a rigorous and critical analysis of how the exhibitions reflexively support my reflexive praxis. Given this, the second exhibition reflexively builds on the first focusing on tacit communication via the creative, shared act of hand-stitching. I assert that the documentation of the exhibitions is a reflexive unfolding and links with the exegesis and vice versa - this is a central tenet of praxis, and is therefore central to this research.

6.5 Reflexive overview of the works and their placement in, *We know more than we can say...*

There are significant differences between *We know more than we can say...* and *Iraqi*. *Iraqi* showcased some of the Shipibo work, and was my attempt to distill to an audience the intercultural exchange between us, via the social act of hand-stitching. In this second exhibition, these ideas were further developed in two streams. Firstly, because of my reflexive relationship to *Iraqi*, where what is evident, is my reflexive engagement with the Shipibo works and the artists who are immersed in a traditional way of hand-making. Secondly, I explore how *Iraqi* has

revealed and developed new ways of working and communicating the tacit within the intercultural exchange.

We know more than we can say... relates directly to Polanyi (2009) when he alludes to the intangibility of learning and shared intelligence when he states, “we know more than we can tell” (p. 4). These concepts of the tacit are developed in the Literature and Contextual Review (section 3.0) and developed continually throughout the research. The works in this exhibition, *We know more than we can say...* exemplify a committed and deep understanding of the nuances of the intercultural act and the tacit exchange that has taken place between us within an everyday context. The works in this exhibition aimed to communicate my engagement with the embeddedness of the tacit exchange within the processes and materials used, in an attempt to grasp, however fleetingly, the intercultural moments of tacit exchange and communicate them to an audience.

The intercultural act for me as an artist, focuses on communication and all that is implied by that: both objectively (Giddens, 1991) and subjectively (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) through thoughts, actions, social factors and the individual lifeworlds as part of the exchange. Most importantly though, and what is most significant for me, is how the Shipibo artists and I communicated, via the traditional processes of hand-stitching. It is this creative, shared, social, exchange, the social, creative exchange that for me rendered a third space, in which the act of hand-stitching, became a social act and indeed an ethical one. What is significant is that the creative act is understood to be a social act, in order to develop and communicate the tacit exchanges between us. I assert that in this research, the act of hand-stitching both within a western paradigm and within the intercultural context is contextualised within the everyday.

The following parts of this section (6.5 – 6.5.5) reflexively examine various aspects of *We know more than we can say...* In 6.5 I provide a contextual overview of the layout of *We know more than we can say...* This is important to communicate meaning to my audience via the overall placement of my works. In 6.5.1 I give a contextual analysis of the industrialised (acrylic) materials I used and the process of making and stitching them. As the hand-stitched industrial material sits within a

post-traditional context, I discuss the creative relevance of this to my praxis. In 6.5.2 I acknowledge traditional hand-stitching with industrial materials, as a site of tacit creative exchange between the Shipibo and myself via the layering of materials and their meaning. In 6.5.3 I discuss how I creatively expand my hand-stitched cloths from *Iraqui*, to further develop the tacit as a vehicle for intercultural communication. In 6.5.4 I include and place Gwana's cloth within the exhibition, to acknowledge the longevity of the creative act in her everyday life as an artist. In 6.5.5 the film is discussed and I acknowledge the embeddedness of the creative intercultural exchange with the Shipibo, within the day to day. There are however, some distinct changes from *Iraqui*, and the significance of which is discussed.

The sub-sections are structured by referring directly to images placed within the exegesis, showing the interface of the traditional ways of making and the non-traditional materials. This is to demonstrate my creative response to the tacit exchange between us within the intercultural dialogue. The images act as a way of ordering the reflexive analysis of *We know more than we can say...* as I refer directly to them in the text.

Specific works in – We know more than we can say...

I decided to place my workbench (figure 53) and a DVD on a monitor of me stitching in my home studio (figure 54) at the entrance of the gallery. This was to highlight to the audience the importance of the everyday and the domestic and to render these elements explicit and therefore embedded within my work. I use the workbench in my home which is portable and filled with cottons, needles, cloth, stitch samples, pens and pencils - my tools for making. The workbench brings the the domestic into the gallery, and was my way of intervening into the space, to share with the audience that my creative processes are embedded within the everyday lifeworld. Furthermore, and in the case of my research, it links with the lifeworld of the Shipibo artists, and how their making is also embedded within their everyday lifeworlds. This commonality was important to communicate to an audience, and also to further develop the communication of the tacit exchange that may take place with them.



Figure 52 The work bench, from my home and placed within the gallery. (Desmarchelier, 2013)



Figure 53 The video, placed on a monitor of me hand-stitching. (Desmarchelier, 2013)

My aim of placing the video (figure 53), at the entry and fixed to the wall renders the repetitive act of stitching visible and is a reminder of the everyday. The video is looped, creating a continuum, and communicating the endless and time consuming process of stitching. Many of the processes I use, as stated, speak of time and certainly stitching is evidence of the passage of slow time (Else van Keppel, 1997).

An acrylic disc was placed on either side of the entrance to the gallery, behind the table (figure 52) and my workbench (figure 53). The placement figure (56), both on the left hand side and on the right hand side (figure 57) of the gallery, echoed the sentinel cloths in *Iraqi* (figures 33 & 34). My aim was to alert an audience to a transient quality within the exhibition, via the shadows cast through the patterns on the discs by the way they were lit.

In addition to this section of the exhibition, I placed the acrylic discs, throughout the exhibition. I placed the laser-printed discs in close proximity to my cloth works (figures 60 – 65). Immediately to the left behind the white wall is the large *Mandala* (figure 59), which is not placed in full view of the audience from the entrance to the gallery. Adjacent to the *Mandala* is Gwana's cloth (figure 66). The projected film is in the central part of the gallery (figure 67).

The overall reflexive decision when placing and positioning the works, was to communicate to an audience the tacit and ephemeral nature of my communication with the Shipibo, deeply embedded within shared hand-stitching practices and contextualised within an intercultural and everyday setting.

6.6 A contextual analysis of the use of industrial materials to communicate the tacit and the process of making and stitching them.

It was of critical importance to acknowledge the tacit exchange between us via hand-stitching to an audience. It was also imperative to communicate the commonality of our traditional hand-stitching practices within a post-traditional context (figures 57 – 61).

The patterns of the Shipibo cloths, by their very nature were ephemeral. By this I mean, as I have noted repeatedly that all interpretation was fleeting, momentary and changeable - yet the Shipibo patterns are powerful, electric, colourful and dynamic. I sought to communicate to an audience, via traditional hand-stitching, the ineffable, tacit quality of communication that informed our creative intercultural

exchange, and always contextualised within a post-traditional context that we both inhabit.

I considered one way of doing this was to use a common universal material, plastic, which in all its varying forms is found all over the world. By using this I aimed to reference some of the common threads within the post-traditional context of our lifeworlds. I chose to work with acrylic and create discs with Shipibo patterns etched and stitched into them. This was a way for me to bring the traditional in the Shipibo designs and my hand-stitching on the discs, together with the industrial acrylic material. By layering the traditional skills and patterns with the industrial materials, I aimed to position the mutual lifeworld context of the Shipibo artists and myself within a post-traditional context. I chose the circle to reference the shape used in many of the Shipibo cloths and with which I also work.

Out of respect, I have used a universal symbol to acknowledge the personal and unfixed nature of information regarding the Shipibo patterns. Gebhart-Sayer (1984) confirms “Their [the artists], designs are intensely personal, and on the village level an artists work can be recognised by its individual touch or [handwriting] ” (p. 26). The Shipibo designs according to traditional myths, come from Ronin, the great world Boa, “who unites all designs on his tari [skin]” (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984, p. 7). Traditionally when the Shaman ingested sacred herbs, the designs originating from this ritual, and were said to be “medicine” (1984, p. 7). I appreciate the layers of information and the methods of the communication are many. In order to convey such complexity I decided to use specific designs of the Shipibo on a global plastic material, cut into the universal symbol of the circle, etched with a machine which I then hand-stitched. By doing this I aimed to communicate to an audience the multi-layered experience of the traditional and the post-traditional and the tacit exchange of this information, through hand-stitching, between us. I focused on the sense of transparency of the acrylic, to communicate the tacit exchange as a force of ongoing, ungraspable and yet potent dialogue.

The process of transferring the sections of the Shipibo patterns on to the discs was time consuming and complex. After selecting the section of pattern, it was scanned into the computer. Each section was then hand drawn, (using the mouse), line by

line, to create a template of the design. I then created another template from the original and positioned a layer of dots over each angle of the pattern. This was to enable holes to be laser drilled for the hand-stitching. These layers needed to be flush i.e. each dot/hole was required to be lined up with each angle on the pattern. This was essential otherwise the stitching would not be flush with the underlying etched design. I found out through experience and the time consuming process of stitching the discs that the alignment of the holes was imperative for the finished stitching to match the underlying pattern and so reflect the original Shipibo artworks. I took the finished artwork to a commercial acrylic fabricator to be laser etched and drilled using templates of my chosen designs (see examples below of the artwork in figures 57 & 58).

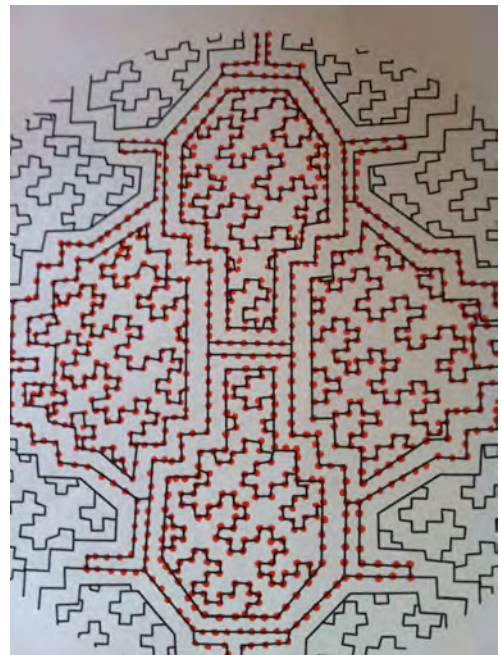


Figure 54 & Figure 55 Preparation of patterns on paper, with black lines and the red dots indicating the holes to be made in the etched discs for stitching. (Desmarchelier, 2013)

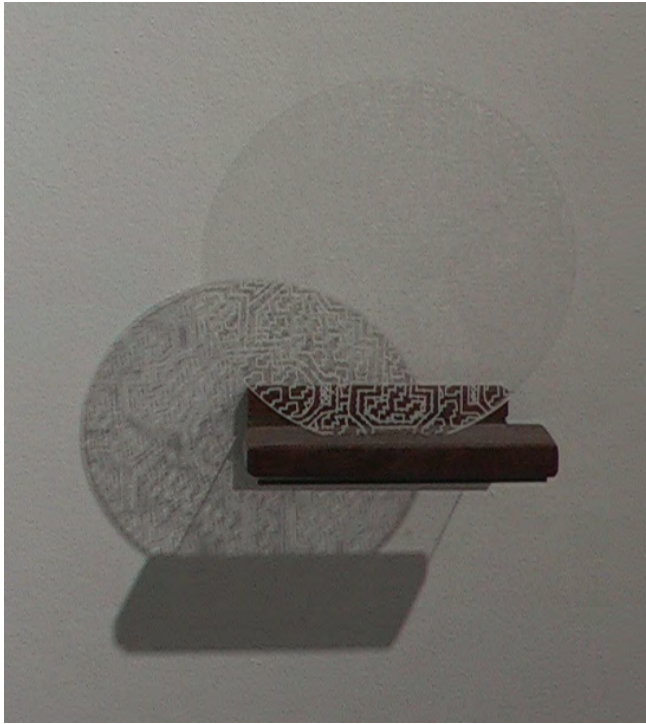


Figure 56 Acrylic disc with Shipibo pattern etched on the surface. (Desmarchelier, 2013)

At the front entrance, next to the acrylic disc (figure 56) was the following handwritten text: *These patterns are maps and act as a trace for the Shipibo's vision of the universe* (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984). The importance of the text was to alert an audience to the indescribable and ineffable quality. Furthermore, the industrial acrylic and laser-etched discs - as discussed in sub-section 6.6.2 - was a way to feature the Shipibo patterns on a common globalised material. The acrylic discs (figure 57) were placed on a fine, glass shelf, which was almost invisible. The light reflected from above, onto the disc and the shelf, created a layering of shadows and edges, that could not be contained and that moved with the position of the audience. The shadows for me became the visual metaphor for the ephemeral and multi-layered tacit knowledge that passed between us.

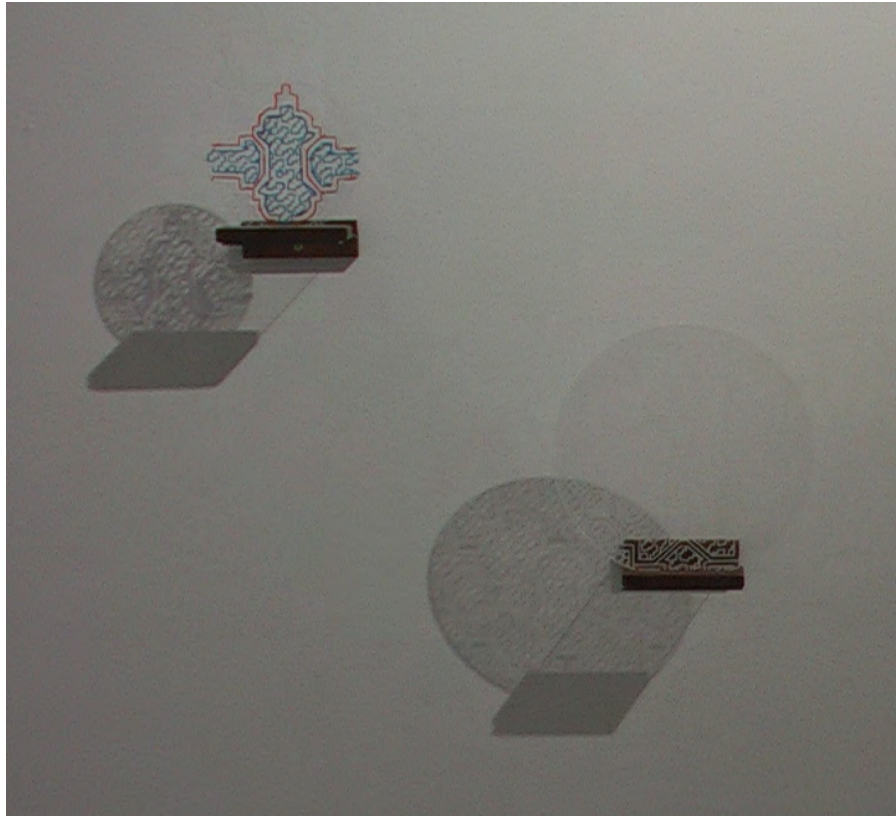


Figure 57 Discs hand stitched with cotton thread. (Desmarchelier, 2013)

The inclusion of hand-stitched acrylic discs (figure 57) was also to acknowledge the hand stitching. This was done with white cotton and coloured cotton. Stitching into the discs was also time consuming, requiring very fine needles to hold the thread. The acrylic was 1.5 mm thick and required very fine holes. This was a reflexively aesthetic decision for me as I wanted a quality of refinement to express the ephemerality of the tacit. Stitching into a rigid material is not as forgiving as stitching into cloth. The intended significance to an audience of this work (figure 58) was to communicate the interface between traditional stitching methods and the non-traditional materials as a way of referring to traditional practices within a post-traditional context.



Figure 58 *Mandala* (Desmarchelier, 2013)

I reference a mandala, a circle made up of a series of circles, which is a universal symbol (figure 58), and which has been discussed previously. I am framing the concept of universal within Polyani's (2009) notion of "universal intent". By this I mean, I am not claiming a universal, all-embracing validity regarding the mandala and the circle, but rather concur with Polyani when he asserts, "I speak not of an *established* universality, but of a universal *intent*, for the scientist [artist] cannot know how his claims will be accepted" (2009, p. 78) (italics in original text). I acknowledge there are many ways of understanding symbols, their meanings and communicating this information to an audience. The symbol is a non-verbal means of communication and conveys ineffable knowledge and information via the tacit.

Cooper (1987) expands on this and clearly states the potency of symbols, and that in fact both macrocosm and microcosm are contained in a symbol, and purports:

The symbol does not merely equate; it must reveal some essential part of the subject to be understood; it contains the vast-ever-expanding realm of possibilities and makes possible the perception of fundamental relationships between seemingly diverse forms or appearances. (¶ 4)

Cooper, I would suggest invites us to suggest how the purpose of the symbol is to alert us to a consideration of time, space and information that implicitly and tacitly exists within the seemingly diverse parts of the larger whole. This indeed was my experience when being with the Shipibo artists. We were embedded within our everyday shared, creative, lifeworlds as concomitantly being part of a larger world context.

A mandala is a geometric figure and symbol representing the universe in a number of spiritual traditions, as well as being a generic term for a plan, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos (Cooper, 1987). The geometric reference within the mandala resonated with me as a way of acknowledging the Shipibo cloth patterns. The mandala can be symbolic or metaphysical. Another interpretation of the mandala is as a microcosm of the universe (Bruce-Mitford, 2000, p. 104). The latter is what I reference in these works, together with the tacit and ephemeral, and the every day materials together with the human presence in the stitching of the patterns. The acrylic discs included in the exhibition are of varying sizes, all etched with the Shipibo designs, some are hand-stitched and some are not.

The social, public sphere, of the gallery, is embedded within the reflexive process. By this I mean each piece within the exhibition was placed systematically and not arbitrarily. What I aimed to communicate in this exhibition was a dialogue between maker and maker, a dialogue that communicates the tacit intercultural exchange between the Shipibo and myself, with the audience. I would assert that the audience within the gallery became part of the dialogue, as they brought new meanings to the work via their respective lifeworld experiences. Dr. Noel Nannup (2011) in his *Welcome to Country* when he opened *Iraqi*, indicated there were three cultures present, the Shipibo through their stitched cloths, the Indigenous Australians via Dr. Nannup and contemporary multicultural Australia, represented both by myself as

maker and the audience within the gallery. In this way the personal, tacit exchange of maker and maker is exposed to greater critique and attention and I would argue the audience becomes active participants, within this exchange, within a social, public, space.

6.6.1 My hand-stitched cloths from Iraqi further developing the tacit as a vehicle for intercultural communication.



Figure 59 *We are flowers in each others' gardens.* (Desmarchelier, 2013)

The two exhibitions allowed me to reflexively analyse how the tacit could be communicated to an audience. Thus there was reflexive development from *Iraqi*, in how the works could be altered to explicate this. One work in which this is demonstrated is *Crossings* (figure 48 – 50), which was reworked and renamed, *We are flowers in each others gardens* (figure 59). This was my attempt to communicate to an audience my growing understanding of the impact and influence of the tacit exchange between us within my creative praxis.

I came to appreciate that the way that the seemingly wordless tacit, could be communicated to an audience, was via my creative praxis. Hamilton (2004) posits, "Just as naming offers up linguistic recognitions, so too, the repeated act of making, offers up recognitions that are materially embodied. We need both, I need both" (p. 179). Hamilton understands as I do, that the tacit and embodied nature of work is difficult to express, but is "materially embodied". By renaming *Crossings* (figures 49 – 51) after stitching a flower on the surface, I aimed to communicate visually the resonance for me of the staining and dyeing that I experienced with the Shipibo. Once again the flower, a universal symbol also represented the overlay of the plant materials I had used in both Peru and Fremantle, W.A. to stain the cloth. It was my attempt, not at rendering the tacit explicit, as this as I have asserted is not possible (Polyani, 1974, 2009, Tsoukas, 2002). In renaming, *Crossings* (figures 49 – 51) what I experienced with the Shipibo acknowledges what Hamilton speaks of, not only the "materially embodied" but also the "linguistic recognitions", that is by naming the work, I allude to the tacit.



Figure 60 & 61 *Resonance* (Desmarchelier, 2013)

Another of my works entitled *Resonance* was placed with a Shipibo work (figures 60 – 61). The Shipibo work was to provide the audience with the experience within the materiality of the exchange between us. *Resonance* was untitled in *Iraqui*, however, I deemed it important to name it within this exhibition to highlight the resonance of the tacit to an audience. By using different shapes and patterns, but echoing the colours used by the Shipibo I aimed to acknowledge to an audience the material exchange between us. By naming this piece I aimed to provide a linguistic recognition and so building another layer of meaning of communication.



Figure 62 *Synapse* (Desmarchelier, 2013)

Synapse (Figure 62) is a hand-stitched cloth I made specifically for this exhibition, and is critical in how it exemplifies the creative exchange between the Shipibo and myself. The name *Synapse* was chosen because it means: a junction between two nerve cells, consisting of a minute gap across which impulses pass by diffusion of a neurotransmitter (Oxford Dictionary, 2009). It is the only totally new hand-stitched piece of mine in this show. The name *Synapse* and the intensity of the red colours and the shapes of the stitching, I would posit, have an electric quality and illustrate the intensity and power of the tacit exchange between us. This work is pieced together from indigo dyed fragments of cotton.

I carry fabric everywhere with me and the pieces that make up *Synapse* have travelled to many places, including Peru. The acrylic disc, with the etched Shipibo pattern, by its placement, alludes to another layer of communication via the materials. The cloth in *Synapse* can be seen through the transparency of the acrylic disc and the Shipibo patterns cast shadows via the lighting onto the cloth behind as

well as on the wall. Thus there are visual layers of unnamed information, blending and bleeding into each other - which is what I aimed to communicate to an audience.



Figure 63 Detail of *Synapse* (Desmarchelier, 2013)



Figure 64 *Untitled* (Desmarchelier, 2013)

Untitled (figure 64), was placed in the same position as it was in *Iraqi* at the far end of the gallery facing into the gallery. For me, the way the surface falls on *Untitled*, metaphorically implies a sense of being imbued with its own tacit information. The surface of this work has been stitched, so that the texture shifts and changes. This evolved through the making and was not an outcome I could have anticipated, until the works were placed in the gallery setting.

Untitled interfaces with the acrylic hand stitched disc (figure 65), and was my attempt to offer a sense of transparency and layering between the two works. What I aimed to communicate to an audience via (figures 64 – 65) is how we impacted on each other via our shared hand-stitching. The shadow of the hand-stitched Shipibo designs (figure 65), change and shift upon the surface of the cloth behind, always alluding to the unspoken, tacit, creative, exchange.

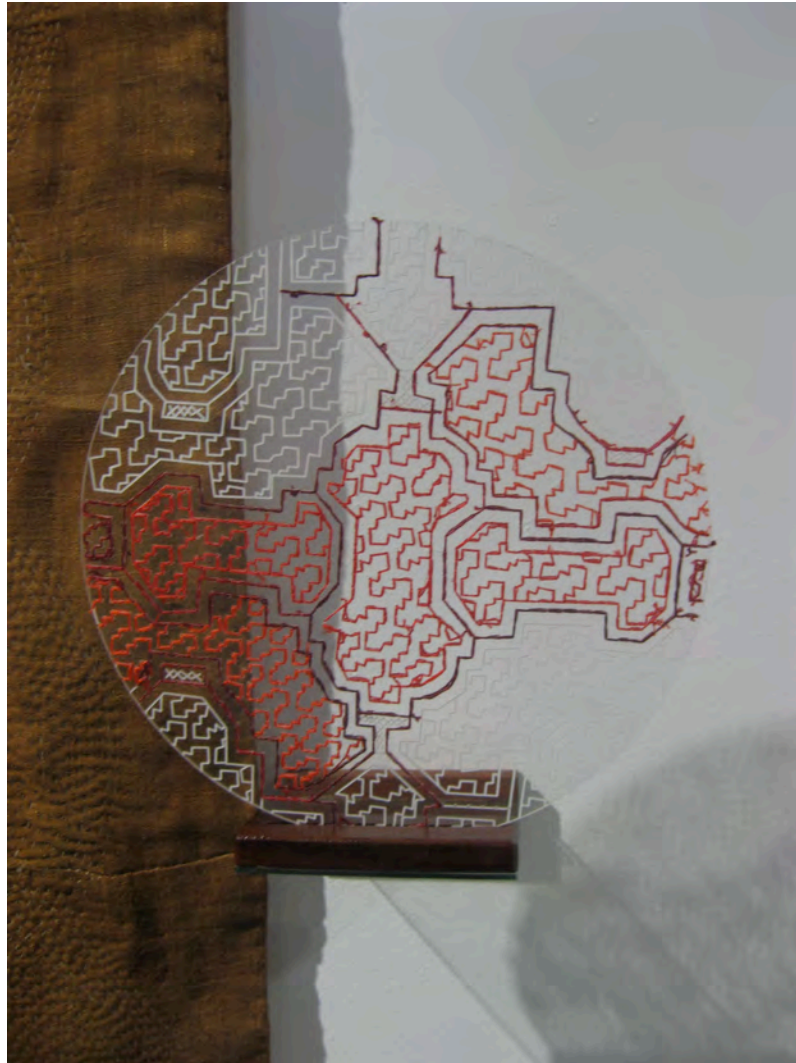


Figure 65 Detail of stitched acrylic disc and interfacing with the edge of *Untitled*.
(Desmarchelier, 2013)

6.6.2. Gwana's cloth

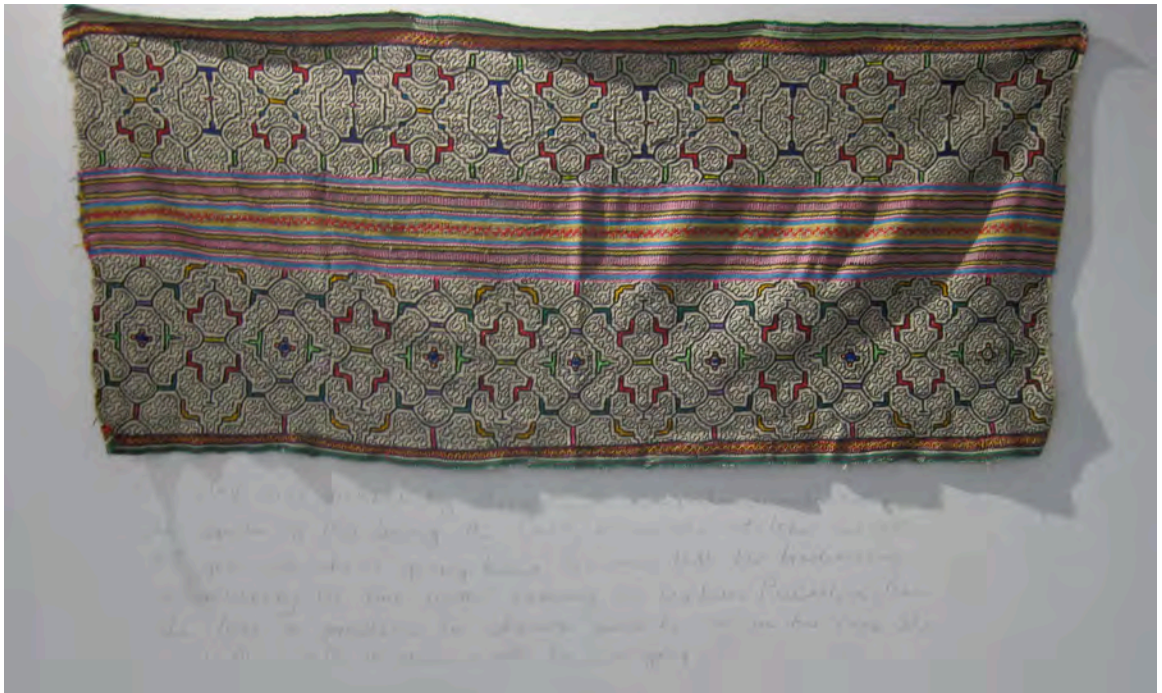


Figure 66 *Chitonti, skirt.* (Desmarchelier, 2013)

I chose to include Gwana's Chitonti skirt in this exhibition as well as in *Iraqui* as it is the final piece of an artist's journey, using traditional hand-stitching processes. I placed this differently in this exhibition, in the position of a landscape, metaphorically referencing the landscape of a long creative life.

This exhibition, *We know more than we can say...* like *Iraqui* includes the use of craft based skills of dying and stitching, together with etched and stitched industrial acrylic, projection works and hand writing. The positioning of two significant Shipibo works (figures 61 & 66), embeds the exhibition. It is imperative for me, that these artists' works, in this exhibition, are contextualised and given equal prominence. *We know more than we can say...* is my reflexive response to *Iraqui*, but more than that, it acknowledges the significance of the intercultural, tacit exchange, that is central to the development of my creative praxis.

6.6.3 The Film: Differing layers of contact with the Shipibo lifeworld.

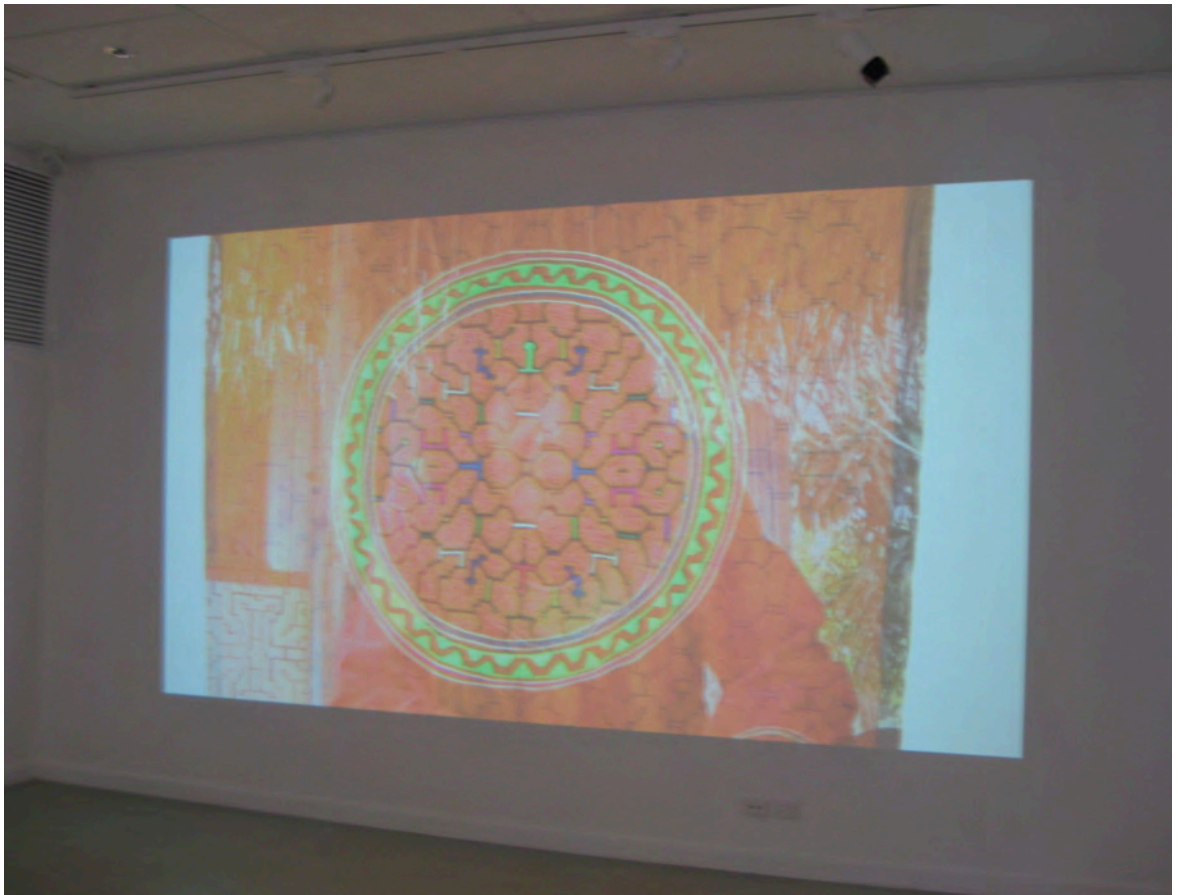


Figure 67 Pashin Yaca singing the thank you, song as part of the film. (Desmarchelier, 2013)

In this exhibition, I kept the film in three sections as I did in *Iraqui*, and the overall content is discussed in 6.3.4. which is also applicable here. The inclusion of the film again in *We know more than we can say...* is to communicate the different stratum of the Shipibo daily lifeworld; to acknowledge the welcoming from the communities exemplified by the song from Pashin Yaca; and in the final section, the experience being taught Shipibo stitches with Jobita and Eder. The importance of again including the film is to step the audience through the diversity of my contact with the Shipibo artists as well as supporting the tacit (Polyani, 2009, 1974) exchange within the intercultural context.

In *Iraqui* three images were faded in and out over Pashin Yaca's face as she sings the welcome song and her face and the cloths were both visible. In the second rendition

of the film shown in *We know more than we can say...* however, more overlays of the Shipibo cloths were added and pass over the face of Pashin Yaca as she sings the welcome song. The image of Pashin Yaca's face becomes less clear and the overlays of the cloths predominate. In this way, my intention was to convey, visually, to an audience, the indefinable layers, via the cloths fading in and out, of tacit exchange. The seemingly silent fading in and out of the cloths, underpinned with the song, the motorbike going by and the bird song, (inclusive sounds in this section), for me, highlights the multi-layered transitory and fleeting quality of the embedded creative exchange.

Through the tacit Polyani (1974) posits, "Though the artist cannot make the public re-live his creative hours, he [may] make them enter a wide world of sights, sounds and emotions, which they [perhaps] had never seen, heard or felt before" (p. 200). This exhibition was my attempt to demonstrate to an audience that there was a universality of tacit knowledge that was exchanged across cultures between the Shipibo artists and myself, using cloth and thread as the silent text situated within a global, post-traditional setting and via my praxis within a western gallery. I have qualified the concept of universal previously and framed it within Polyani's (2009) notion of the "universal intent".

7.0 Conclusion

I conclude this research by acknowledging that tacit communication (Polyani, 2009, 1974) has been integral to the creative exchange with the Shipibo artists of Peru, and was embedded within our socially shared hand-stitching practices. I have approached this research as an artist engaged within a socially communicative act, and I acknowledge that the perspective, direction and influence that I brought to the exchange was not neutral. Given this, I have sought to demonstrate that by adopting a reflexive framework, our communication did not remain solely within the subjective realm, and was always critically situated within broader social and institutional contexts, such as a Western gallery. This I assert opened the intersubjective, tacit exchange between us to a broader critique. The two solo exhibitions, *Iraqi*, (2011) and *We know more than we can say ...* (2013) at Spectrum Project Space, Edith Cowan University, Mt Lawley, Perth, aimed to communicate to an audience the interrelatedness of the various aspects of my research—intercultural, tacit and creative exchange between the Shipibo artists and myself.

I have critically and reflexively situated my praxis within my lifeworld as an artist using craft-based skills and contextualised this within a globalised post-traditional world. By confirming the complexity of my intercultural communication within social, cultural and creative contexts with the Shipibo artists, I contend the impact of the tacit has been critical to my creative praxis. Within the exegesis I recognise and document that praxis is the unpredictable action of ideas. Hence, it is through broad reflexive action, that new thought is supported (Crouch, 2007). I assert this reflexive approach is pivotal in supporting my creative practice and its capacity to reflexively precipitate and communicate experiential knowledge (Imani & Niedderer, 2009, p. 2).

I contend the significance of this research is in its critical examination of the tacit as a means of communication, between artists within an intercultural context, whose shared language is hand-stitching. As such, this research is neither a critical analysis of the Shipibo culture nor is it an examination of the symbols within their traditional hand-stitched cloths, though these are noted. I have included however a personal narrative as an essential component in describing the intercultural exchange. This

situates and acknowledges the Shipibo artists and their creative works and contextualises our shared day-to-day creative context as the site for our tacit intercultural exchange. By doing this I acknowledge the Shipibo artists are not the “exotic other” (Bhabha, 1994) but are contemporary artists within a post-traditional context.

I affirm the longevity of my practice, which has involved extensive international travelling both within India and Peru in order to develop my creative praxis. This ongoing intercultural creative interface, most specifically with the Shipibo artists, has contributed to my examination of the significance of intercultural creative exchange upon my creative praxis.

I have critically identified seminal theorists and texts that have supported me to reflexively position my research. In particular, Giddens (1991, 1994), Pillow (2003), McNamarra (2012), Crouch (2007) and Barrett and Bolt (2009), are used to specifically underpin the concept of reflexivity and its relevance to my art praxis; Habermas (1994), Crouch (2007) and Macy (2000), help to define ideas pertaining to lifeworld; Bauman (2000), Beck (2004) and Giddens (1991, 1994), acknowledge we are all affected by globalisation, by simply living in the world; Feather (2007) and Merleau-Ponty (1945) for their views on intersubjectivity; Jensen (2002), Bauman (2003), Bhabha (1994, 2007) and Samovar and Porter (1991) for their perspectives on the intercultural; Polyani, (2009, 1974), Tsoukas, (2002) and Imani and Niedderer (2009) for their seminal exploration of the tacit; Hobsbawm (1983) who notes tradition is based on longevity; de Mori, (2011), Giddens (1991, 1994) and Donlin (2011), who all acknowledge that traditions respond to the physical, economic, political and cultural movements within our lifeworlds; Lastly contemporary artists Ann Hamilton (2004, 2002), Kimsooja (2004) and Else van Keppel (1997) are artists who are relevant to the research either via their craft-based approach to the making process and materiality, or in their communication of related concepts.

My creative praxis, I have demonstrated, has been the primary vehicle to communicate to an audience the creative, tacit intercultural exchange with the Shipibo artists within this Doctoral research. My creative research as a result of the

investigation has developed inexorably in a number of ways. Within this creative research I have demonstrated that the social act is imperative to my creative praxis, as it removes it solely from the subjective, thus positioning the creative works within a critical context. Polyani asserts, "The act of knowing includes an appraisal; and this personal coefficient, which shapes all factual knowledge, bridges in doing so the disjunction between subjectivity and objectivity" (as cited in Tsoukas, 2002, p. 2). Additionally I have shown that through reflexive engagement, "appraisal", with an audience, within a gallery, as demonstrated via the decisions I made in the placement of the works, demonstrates the importance of the creative communicative act on my creative praxis.

Furthermore, I have demonstrated, that the ineffable quality of the tacit does not mean, "we cannot discuss the skilled performances in which we are involved" (Tsoukas, 2002, p. 1). Indeed new thinking has come about via the tacit creative exchange between the Shipibo and myself, through social interaction (Polyani, 2009). This has been established through shared hand-stitching within a day-to-day context and when the creative works were placed within a public sphere, a Western gallery - opening the dialogue to the further scrutiny of a gallery audience.

The creative processes I used in the form of plant staining and dyeing have affirmed that sustainable methods of mark making on cloth can be used interculturally, and so support my ethical focus when using international local resources. The methods the Shipibo use to dye and stain cloth i.e., with Caoba, clay, local plants and the sun, resonates and further support my ongoing research, in pursuing more traditional, creative and sustainable approaches to my work.

The tacit exchange implicit and acknowledged in the intercultural exchange between us enabled creative understanding within my creative practice, which led directly to the new materials and different steps taken to communicate this to an audience. In using the acrylic industrial material with the hand-drawn Shipibo patterns, laser cut and further hand-stitched, I acknowledged and communicated the complex contexts navigated using traditional ways of making within a post-traditional context and the value of such practices to me as an artist.

The interface between tradition and post-tradition as exemplified materially within the hand-stitched acrylic, has extended my notions of stitch and surface and stimulated new creative possibilities for further creative works. Although my works are rendered differently to the Shipibo's, I understand from spending time in Jobita's company as she showed me the Shipibo stitches, that what is central to this research is my creatively extending and reflexively acknowledging the influence of the tacit exchange between us. Furthermore it was the social act of shared hand-stitching, within a day-to-day context with each other, that has had the greatest impact on my creative praxis.

I have noted that it has been difficult to find an appropriate and accurate language to express the ineffable nature of the tacit (Polyani, 2009, 1974; Tsoukas, 2002). I have stated within the exegesis that it is only possible to hint through creative process the shared tacit knowledge, which passed invisibly between us. Tacit exchange and knowledge have no verbal language. I have written about the work in the exegesis and as noted herein lies the difficulty as I have attempted to describe the invisible, transient and ephemeral, which as Polyani clearly notes, is difficult to pin down (2009, 1974). Further to this I would like to assert that at times the subject matter of the tacit has resisted me, and that it resists language (2009, 1974).

Tsoukas (2002) posits, "In the context of carrying out a specific task, we come to know a set of particulars without being able to identify them" (p. 6). In a similar vein, Polyani (2009) reminds us "we can know more than we can tell" (p. 4). These assertions have been critical to my creative praxis, engendering questions such as; what are the words that describe the tension that gives way between hand, needle and thread, as the needle is pushed through fabric? Is there a way of describing the forces at work that animate my hand and the way my tongue helps it along? What are the words that convey the silent knowing (Polyani, 2009, 1974) and creative exchange between the Shipibo artists and myself?

These phenomena are beyond description; they are the silent minutiae of life. As Polyani asserts, "we may say that when we learn to use language, or a probe, or a tool, and thus make ourselves aware of these things as we are our body, we *interiorize* these things and *make ourselves dwell in them*" (as cited in Tsoukas, 2002,

p. 8) (italics in original). Given this complexity, my creative research praxis – the exegesis and the creative works–have demonstrated through a critical and reflexive examination, the productive role tacit exchange, via shared hand-stitching practices with the Shipibo artists of Peru has had on my creative praxis.

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