Inclusion, Emotion and Voice:

Permanent Public Art made by Community Members

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Debbie Maree Qadri

Inclusion, Emotion and Voice:

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Abstract

Community participation is high on the agenda of all levels of government, but in ‘permanent public art’ commissioning, the community are rarely involved. This research explores the meaning of permanent public artworks which have been made by community members. The research is important because socially engaged art is increasingly being used in ephemeral public art practice and theorised in terms of democratic and civic engagement. Although many permanent public artworks are made by community members, this practice is rarely included in public art policy, literature and discourse.

The project uses the methodology of Portraiture, as developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, to study two permanent public artworks made by community members and a self-portrait of the researcher’s own practice of working in the field.

The research reveals a strong emotional context in the artworks, present in the reasons for initiating the artwork and in the process of forming a community and working together to make it. The permanently installed art object is the symbol of that process of coming together towards a common end as well as being the protagonist of the process. Permanent public artwork also draws attention to our rights to contribute to public space. The thesis is a reflection not only of the inclusive practices of permanent public art made by community members, but also of inclusive research processes and outcomes.

To practice reciprocity and ethical community engagement, the thesis writing style is unconventional, weaving in traditional and contemporary writing approaches, drawing, displays and websites to enable greater ‘public’ access to the research outcomes.

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

"I, Debbie Maree Qadri, declare that the Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Inclusion, Emotion and Voice: Permanent Public Art made by Community Members", is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work".

Debbie Qadri **September 2018**

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisors, Professor Maureen Ryan, Dr Mark Selkrig, and Dr Siew Fang Law.
Mark, thank you for your assistance with the preparation for candidature, helping me understand what a research degree is, and taking the project through the ethics process. Maureen, thank you for allowing me to see how far I can stretch the boundaries of research, and always encouraging me to follow my nose - offering trust, that I will work it out and bring the project back home to bed. Siew Fang Law, I most enjoyed your surprise when I turned up with drawings larger than the table, and your way of welcoming the *new* into the world of research. I have been encouraged by the wonder and interest offered by my supervisors.

Very sincere thanks to the people who agreed to be interviewed for this research; Amanda Gibson, Cliff Overton, Shane Kenny, Doug Tarrant, Steve Pascoe, Andrew Garton, Michelle Haymes-Bishop, Wendy Fox, Robyn Szechtman, Deborah McIntosh, Wendy Butler, Mauricio Alejandro Arias, and Serge Thomann.

Thank you to Rosie and Yusef who never questioned why the kitchen table was often covered in clay and the entire house an artwork and studio. Thank you to my parents Trevor and Eileen Harman, who during my childhood, provided the endless paper and art materials, the example of making art, and the example of community service, which came together to form a passion in my adult life.

Thank you to my voluntary editors - Yvonne, Annette and Deborah - for your time, attention and insightful comments. I often felt you were sitting there beside me in the little caravan, when I read your comments and feedback.

Thanks to those people who assisted with the display of the thesis, the staff at Wadamuk Community Centre in St Andrews for the display of '*The Blacksmiths' Tree*', and Maddison Connor who assisted with the installation.
Thank you to the staff at VU Metrowest for their assistance with 'Drawing the Thesis', particularly Bec Carey-Grieve, Katrina Gubbins, Hayden and Raine. Thank you to my friends who came to help prepare the exhibition over two weekends; Beka Hannah, Evie Connor, Melissa Brosnan, Suzanne Balding, Michelle Barry. Thank you to Beka Hannah and Reece Connor for assistance with the installation of *Drawing the Thesis.*

Thanks to Paul Filev, who always enquires about my projects and my artistic life, and was the first to encourage me to write the whole thesis with drawings. I have always valued your interest in my real work, beneath the scurryings of art projects and making and have felt *seen* as myself and a fellow artist/writer.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated first of all to the people who have got their hands dirty, voluntarily assisting me in making public art projects, both commissioned and un-commissioned.

I thank these people because they not only contributed to the practical making, but also towards the meaning of the artwork, the philosophical aspects of making the artworks, as well as the development of the reciprocal and ethical concerns in my practice.

Thankyou to: Michelle Barry, Beka Hannah, and members of Damian's Harem - Evie Connor, Suzanne Balding, Melissa Brosnan, and Pam Wingrave - who were the most frequently drawn into my mad schemes as well as; Alessandra Azzone, Judy Bridges-Tull, Trevor Donoghue, Vincenza Fazzolori, Claire Heyward, Daniel Garrett, Georgia Lancaster, Michelle (Haymes) Bishop, June Hannah, Heather Honeybourne, Joshua Illichman, Kellie Illichman, Robert Jackson, Bronwyn Lancaster, Frances McInerney, Rosina Qadri, Yusef Qadri, Anne

Ryan, Maureen Ryan, Annette Signorini, Deborah Wood, Louisa Zaghis, Reece Connor, Robert Jackson. My apologies for those whom I have neglected to include.

Thank you to Mary Bailey Buchanan, who has been my mentor, best friend and art conspirator for almost thirty years. The philosophy and practice of art, espoused in this thesis has been developed, together, over many years of conversations, experiences, making art in the same room and on many collaborative projects in public space. Thank you for your ears, your voice and your art.

I also dedicate this thesis to the people involved in the two artworks, the *Tree Project* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, as well as the people involved in all of the permanent public art projects that I have made because it is from these people that experiences, perspectives and knowledge for this research, have come.

Thank you.

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List of Abbreviations

ABA Vic - The Australian Blacksmiths Association, Victorian Branch.

AGSPAG - The Attorney General's Street Prostitution Advisory Group

CFA - Country Fire Authority

Black Saturday - The Tree Project Facebook Page - has been referred to as *The Tree Project* Facebook Page in this thesis.

CoPP - City of Port Phillip

n.d. - no date

Publications associated with this thesis

‘Lawrence-Lightfoot, Ranciere and Gemma: Reconciling the Subject Matter with Research Processes and Outcomes’, The Journal of Public Pedagogies Journal no. 1, November 2016.

‘What does Public Art teach us? Public Art, public pedagogy and community participation in making’, The Journal of Public Pedagogies Journal no. 1, November 2016.
http://www.publicpedagogies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/QuardiD.pdf

‘Memories in Motion: learning, process, history and art in public space’, Australian Journal of Adult Learning, Vol 55, no.3, November 2015.
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1082518.pdf

Prelude (webpage) The original larger document which records preoccupation, http://
communityasmakers.blogspot.com.au/p/prelude-draft-only.html
The Blacksmiths’ Tree: A Portrait in words and drawings (website), http://theblacksmithstree.blogspot.com.au

St Kilda Walking Public art and Memorial (documentation of public art and memorials in St Kilda, found through walking).
https://stkildawalkingpublicartandmemorial.blogspot.com

The Blacksmiths' Tree: A Portrait (book placed in City of Nilimbuk and City of Whittlesea libraries)

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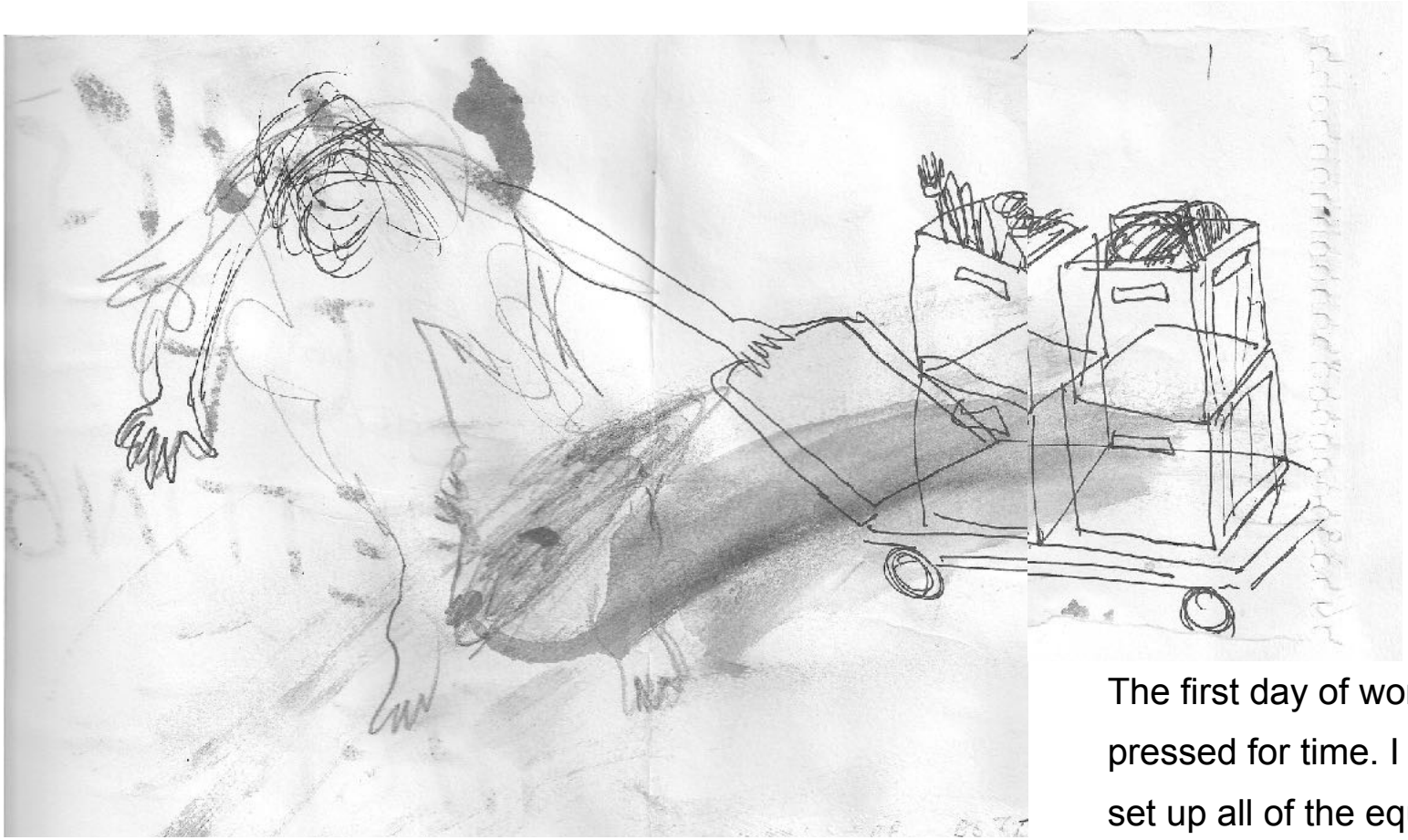
Notes

- References to interviewees, include ‘Interview’, to draw attention to them as primary sources of this research. For further information on the sources of quotes, please see the Reference List.
- References which include the words ‘cited’ or ‘quoted’, were not able to be obtained in their original form by the author and so the source has additionally been acknowledged.
- The spelling of Indigenous words often varies and in this document I have retained the spelling of the author or artwork from which I quote. An exception is the clan name Yulukit Weelam, which had its spelling officially revised in 2017, by the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (https://heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Aboriginal_heritage/Yalukit_WillamThe_River_People_of_Port_Phillip). Variations in spelling are important in the way that language is used for political and cultural purposes (Kleinert & Koch, 2012, p. 1-2).

It’s dark when the alarm goes off, and too early for the birds. On a still morning I can hear the hum of the traffic beginning. Most jobs this year are on the other side of the city so I must leave early to avoid the rush hour. I slowly ease myself out of bed. I feed the cats, boil the kettle and grab the last things I need from the list - lunch, phone, iPad, thermos. The car is laden. I packed it yesterday, making sure I had included the resources needed for the day, odd things like loquat leaves, photos labelled ‘birds’ and ‘bugs’ from the collection in the shoebox on top of the bookshelf. The car is full of crates of rolling pins, wooden boards, underglaze colours, tubs, slip in containers, cloth drop sheets for the tables and clay. I also have my trolley.

At a stop light I notice that the magpies and the hum of the heater have replaced the traffic noise.

I am at the school and it is the calm before the storm. This is a lovely moment of stillness as I eat muesli, drink from the thermos and read. I have time to contemplate the day, read, and write notes. I will wait in the car till 8am, when from the corner of my eye, I see the world begin to warm up - parents bring their children to the Before School Care, then teachers arrive and scurry in.



The first day of workshops is the most pressed for time. I must unload and set up all of the equipment in the first hour. We must think about how the work spaces and equipment will be arranged.

I have met the teacher once or twice before to discuss what she had in mind, to negotiate how it might work, and, plan carefully. The teacher doesn't know quite what to expect, but she is eager, excited and willing to help set up. I begin to give directions.

The work necessarily involves teaching processes, as I explain and instruct, the teacher, the teachers' aides and the students. We all work together on the process of making so that we can get the best out of this time together. Alongside this are the inevitable conversations that wheel towards personal experience and sharing. Questions are asked about the other jobs I have done and these experiences are brought to bear on this new project. My philosophies of making artworks with people are incorporated as part of the process.

'I don't believe in templates, I want the work to have the option of being as individual for each person as possible'.

Instructions offer choice.

Above: Student making a tile for the *Moonee Ponds Creek Mural* at St Vincent de Paul Primary School, Strathmore, Melbourne.

The teacher and I discuss with the students the process of making and firing, the installation and the afterward. We tell them their work will be at the school and they can come and visit it, and that we hope it will be there for many years. As we discuss what we are making, we imagine the future of the artwork. We make it towards its future.

We begin to make.

1

Prelude

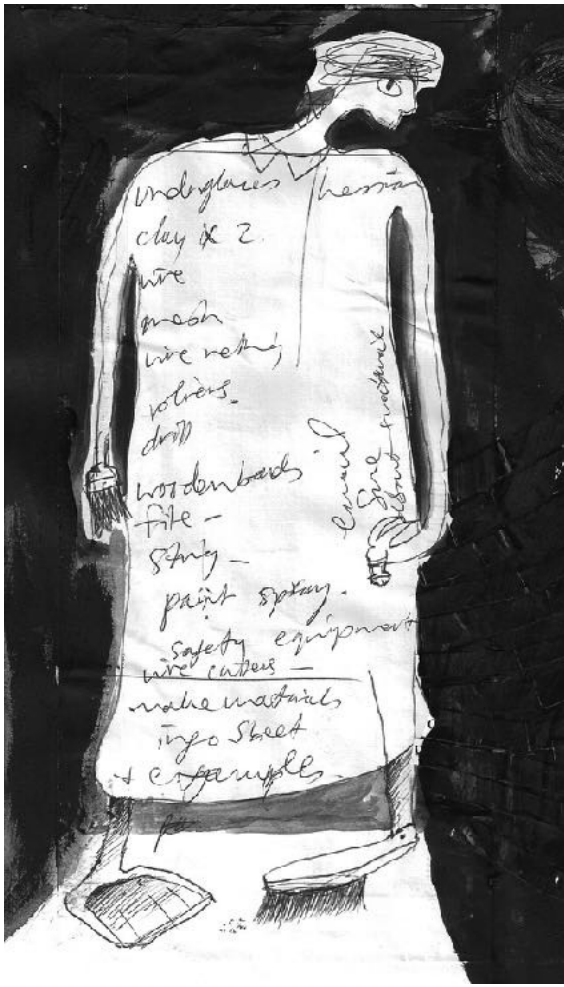
The Voice of Pre-occupation

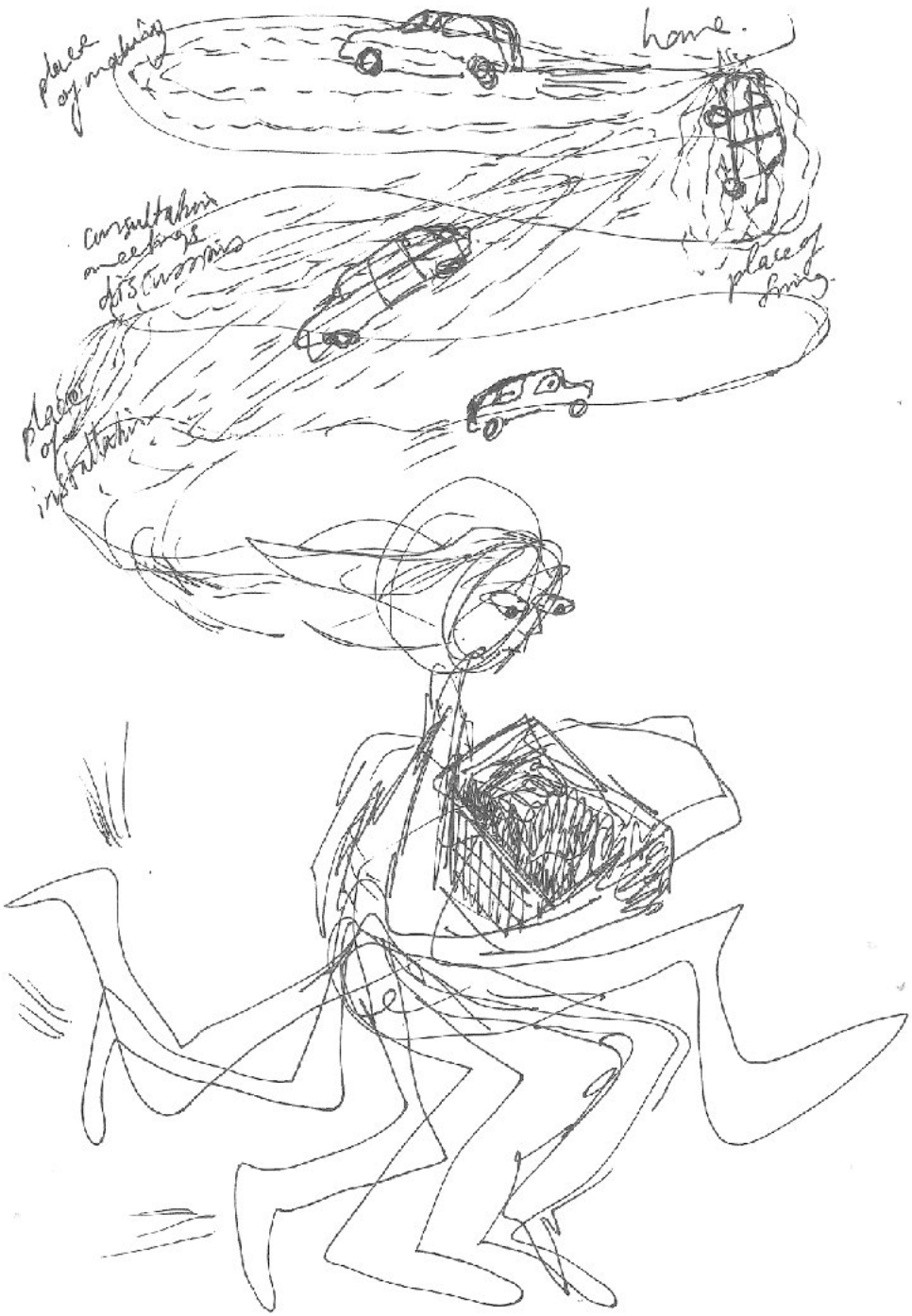
My practice of working with communities to make permanent public art, has been the prelude to this research. I saw my practice in a particular way and from my perspective of my experiences came questions that I could not answer.

The Artist's Practice

Like some big lump that sinks and settles at the bottom, solid but churning, the artist's practice and experience sit heavily within the gut and is carried around. An organic conglomeration of ideas, physical materials and processes, energy transformed into action and dialogue, all organised within the limits of time which is metered out by the sun, and also moulded by the needs of surrounding people (stakeholders/friends/family).

A little tug of war plays out between what the artist would do if she had no limits (the fantastic, but time-consuming ideas that come into her head in the early hours of the morning), what she will do for money (in order to make a living) and what she will do voluntarily in order to experiment and extend her practice. The dreams of potential ideas and the magic of art are constricted by the realities of - money, the site, materials, collaborative design, the commissioners, how the community makes the artwork, time, and, the daily circumstances of physical and emotional life.

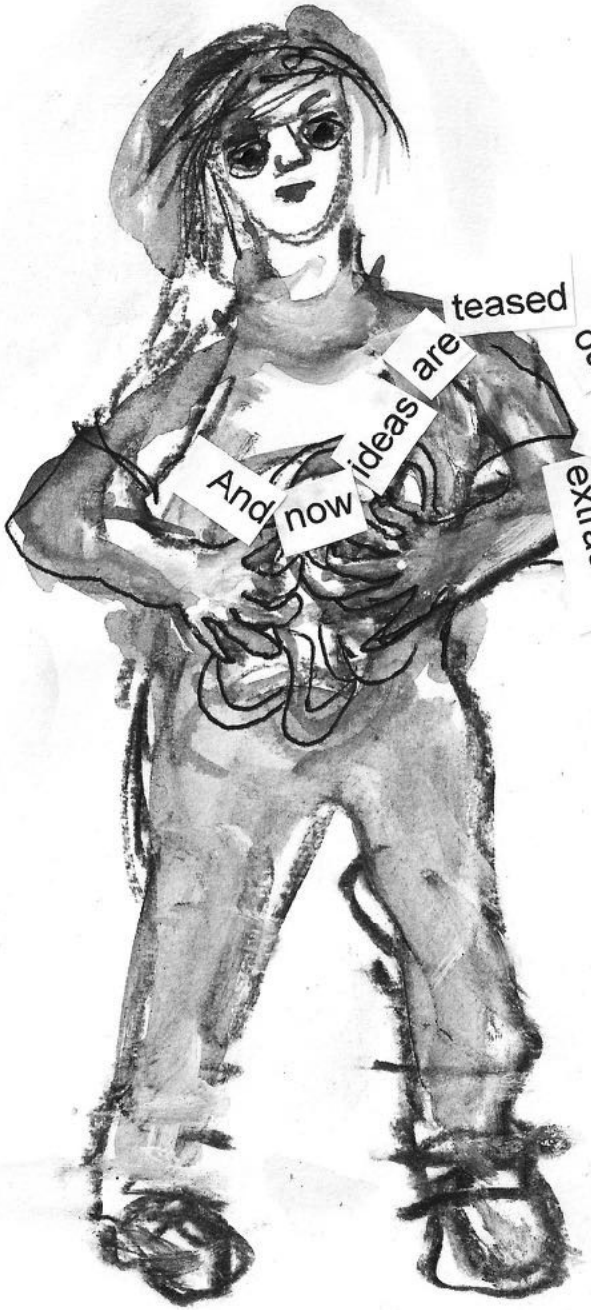




She must rush off and buy chalkboard paint and organise the cement sheet, unpack and pack the car amongst eating, house chores, family and a social life. The physical and mental selves contribute to the artwork. Buzzing around the artwork process and its outcome (the object), are the ongoing effects of the physical world ready to intervene at whim. It’s not pure, this art. It is heavily influenced by everything that’s going on around her.

Underneath it all lies the philosophical approach to the artwork, the reasoning of why she does what she does, tempered by experience and cultural ideas learnt from family, the culture she grew up in, from school, technical college (TAFE), university, through work and her art practice.

Debbie Qadri



And now ideas are teased out and extracted from that stuff in the gut, but have to be made into a long line of text.

The history of my practice making permanent public art

I found some tiles and had a go at mosaicing. But I loved clay. I wondered if I could put the mosaic in between the ceramics to make large pictures. I was also a school teacher so I imagined how it would work with students. With the art teacher at my children's school we made a small 70 X 120cm triptych with three classes. The following year the school commissioned me to do a larger twenty square metre project with the whole school. Word of mouth spread, and soon another school wanted one, so it continued and a practice of working with communities developed (schools, pre-schools, councils, community groups). And then a business through which I earned my living part-time, then full-time for several years.

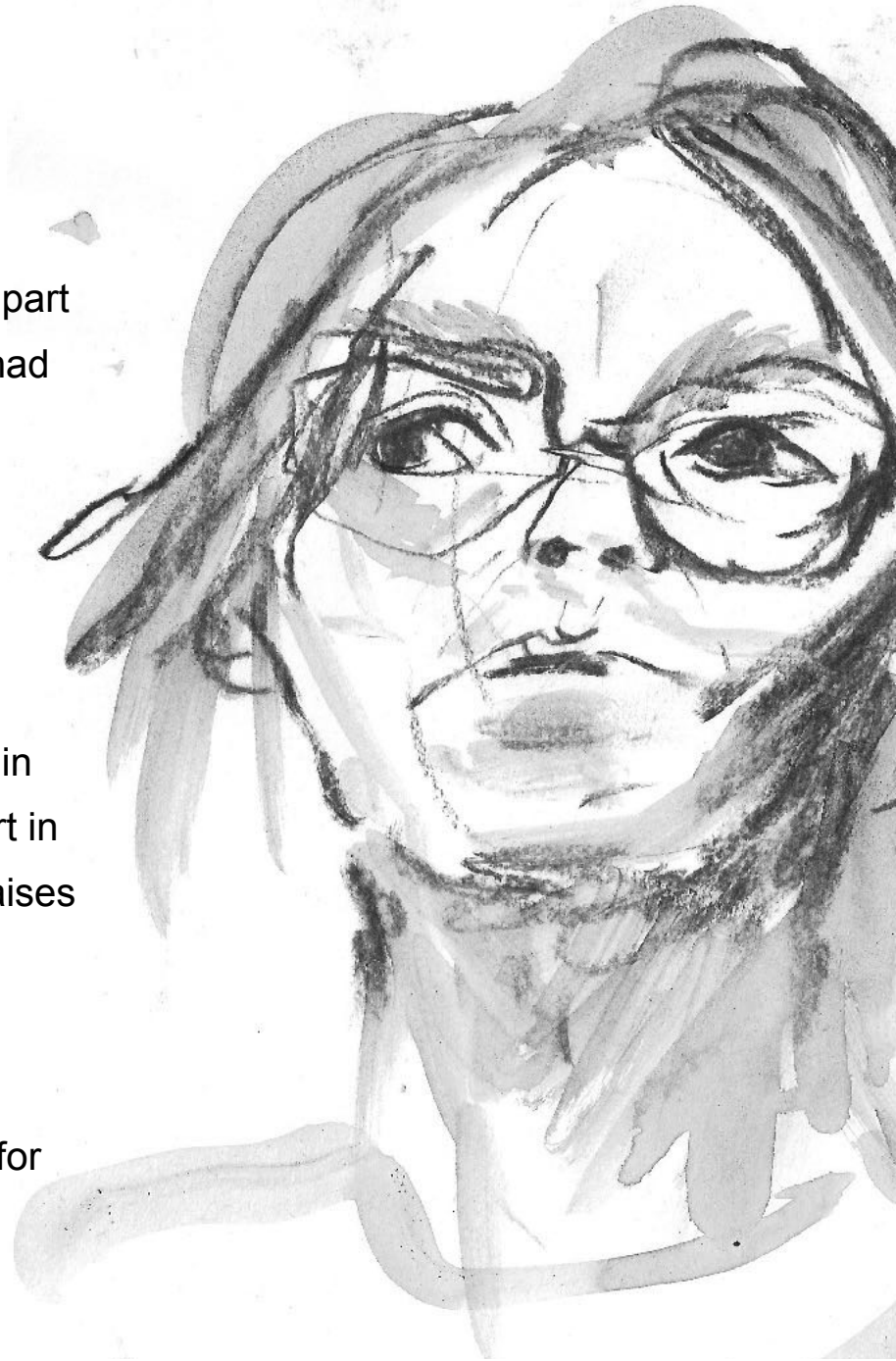
Photograph of Debbie Qadri (author) installing the *Noah's Ark Mural* at Overnewton College, Keilor. Photographer unknown.

Art in public space

I also became interested in using ceramics in public space as part of my individual art practice. But when I first began doing it, I had this feeling that I should involve the people who lived and inhabited the area because I was using their public space.

Public space led back to community.

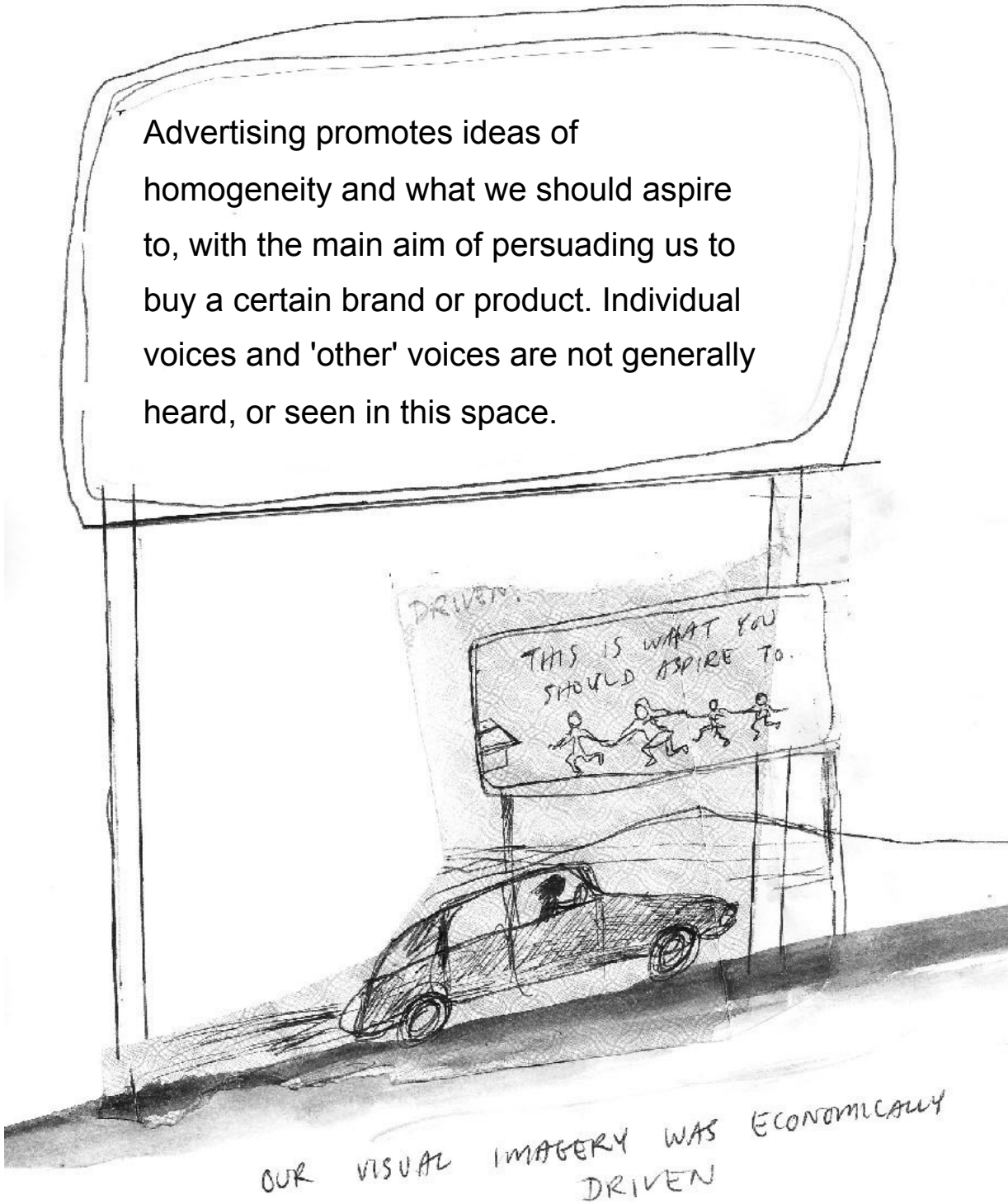
This is an ethical dilemma which has continued, as I place art in public spaces in a range of contexts. But I continue to place art in public space because I am interested in how, by doing so, it raises questions about who has the right to do this. Very few people have the legal right, but some people and organisations with money, power or authority have a greater ability to place their ideas and imagery in public space and these are rarely voted for or chosen by the community.



I am interested in the individual's ability to mark or alter public space, as it becomes, seemingly more and more controlled.

I think what we see in public space (art, advertising, architecture) influences our thinking and affects how we learn and know things and how we think about ourselves and our place in society.

Public space is an amalgam of visual expression, which doesn't always reflect gender equality, ethnic diversity, or other realities and histories.



In one sense the control of public space by authority attempts to prevent discrimination, slander and vandalism, but on the other hand it allows those in power and those who have the money, to speak in public space. One argument of graffiti is that it raises questions about our rights to public space. In this context I see permanent public artworks made by community members as another way of drawing attention to these rights and providing opportunities for community members to speak.

I COULD SEE THIS MOVEMENT GOING ON FROM IMAGINING WHAT IT COULD BE LIKE

WE COULD PUT THIS ART OUT THAT ADDED WOMEN, OTHER NATIONALITIES, INDIGENOUS STORIES AND OTHER HISTORIES INTO THE SCENE.

Debbie Qadri

ME TAKING THE MASSES
TO DEFEAT THE PATRIARCHAL STATUARY.

Process and object

When I make permanent public art with communities it is about bigger things than my own personal art practice. In comparison with exhibiting in a gallery, I am excited about the much larger and broader audience for art in public space, facilitated by its permanence - the potential of this longer duration, and subsequent ability to be where many people see it as they pass.

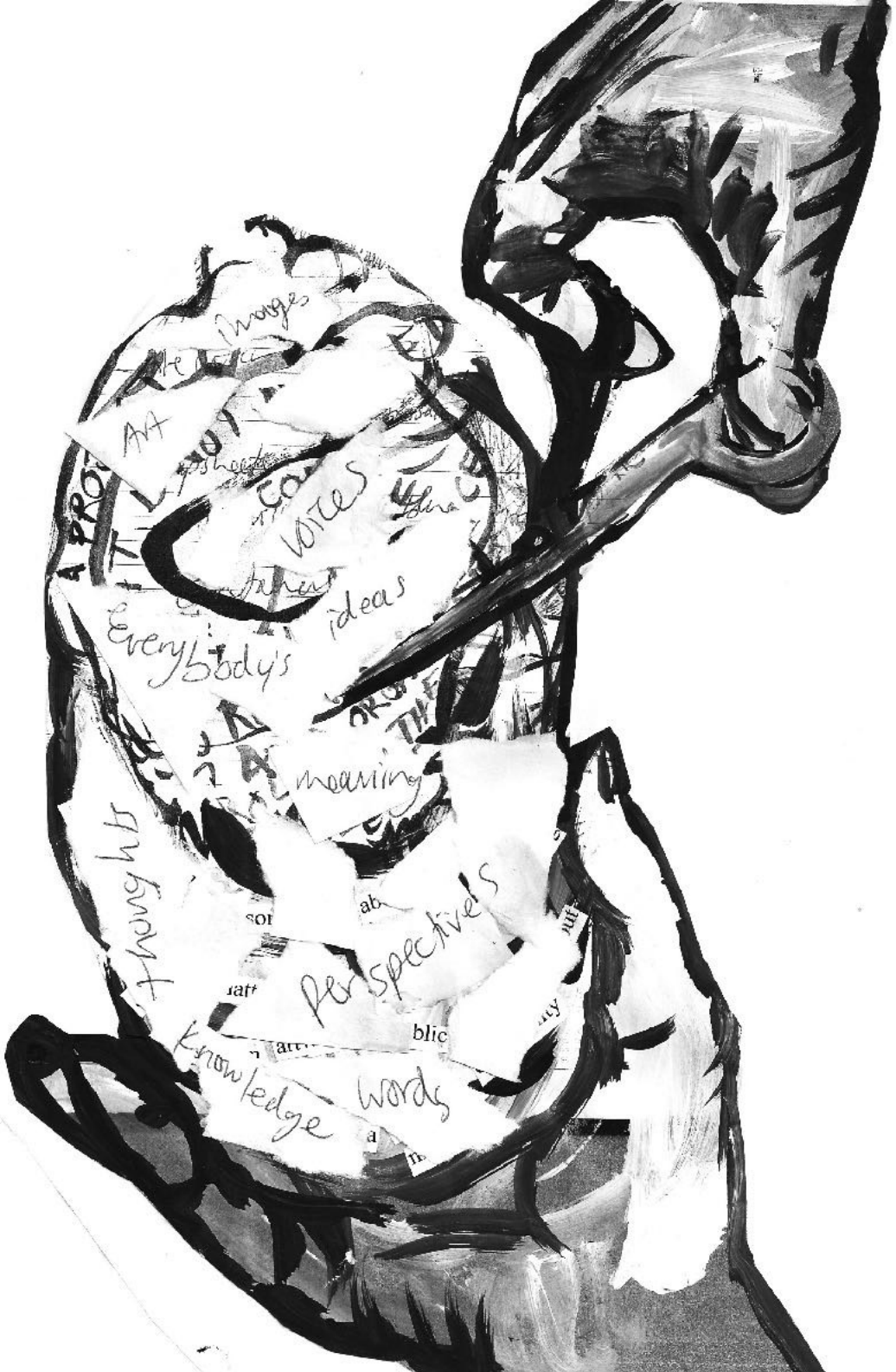
When many people are involved in the making of the artwork the process and the object have so many more ideas and meanings layered into them. The collaborative process gets people working together and talking. People gain the experience and pride in making art which is permanently displayed and have a stake in something that sits permanently in the community.

Community collaboration to make artwork creates an interesting dichotomy in that it can represent an individual in public space (their identity and choices), but also represents working together as a community (collaboration, compromise, negotiation, shared ideas and values). The artwork is about individuals and about having been made by a community. The artwork itself conveys this dichotomy through offering the audience the individual pieces in the work, and also through its being a community-made object.

Above: Individual tiles installed (but not grouted) in the *Celebrating the Value of Education Murals* at Camberwell Girls Grammar School, Canterbury, Melbourne.

The artwork focuses on communal knowledge, understandings, experiences and perspectives, becoming a small but potent representation of the surrounding culture. Through the collaborative process the artwork is organically processed and moulded by many people on its way to becoming the final static, permanent object. The installed artwork is the physical remains of the process, which involved many minds, ideas and physical making together over time.

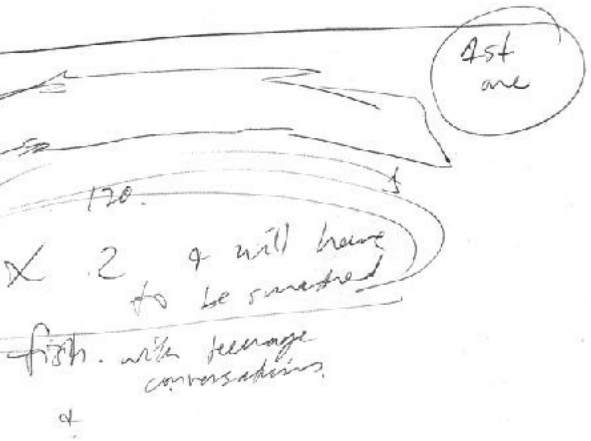
Debbie Qadri



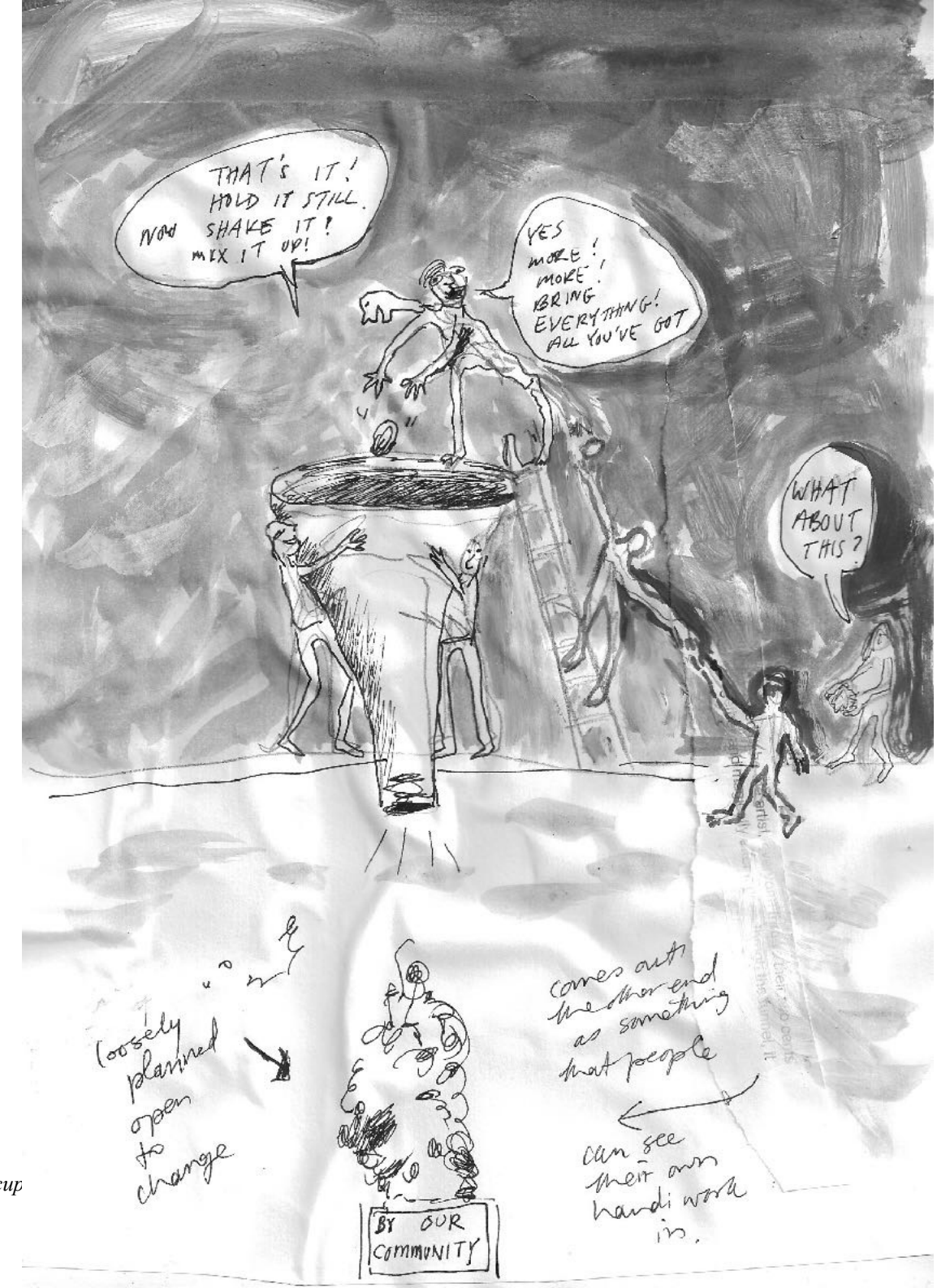
1 Prelude - The Voice of Pre-occupation

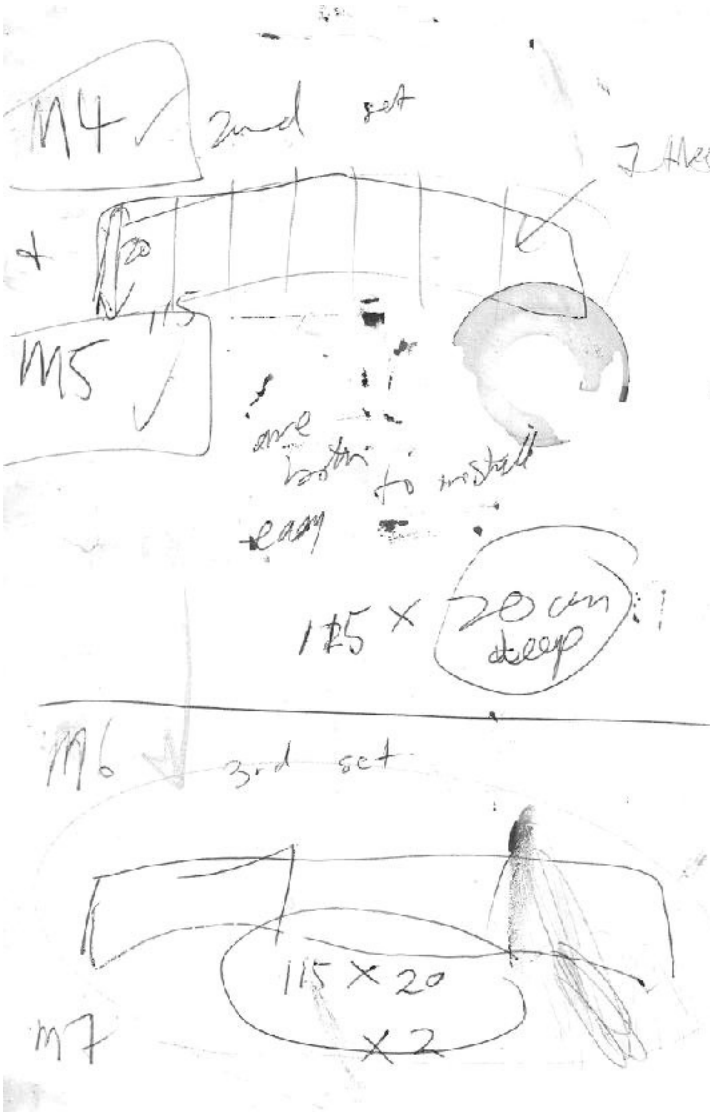
Role of the artist

The artist becomes a technical assistant, a leader, a facilitator, and as they guide others to become artists, they themselves become one amongst many artists. People experience having their ideas and artwork permanently in public space and the authorship and pride of the artwork is shared amongst many. For the artist, authorship and control of the artworks is exchanged for the participation of others.



Through working together, we all learn something about the context of the artwork, and the techniques and the materials that we are using to make the artwork. When I work with people to do something, I also learn things from them. I am hired because I have the experience in moving the work from ideas into the permanent object within a timeline. I listen to the ideas that the community has and work with them on a design that will create a good process as well as an aesthetically pleasing physical structure that can last over time. Whilst being prepared to accommodate new ideas and developments, I need to lead, and take the community on a journey through the process, which culminates at the installed artwork.

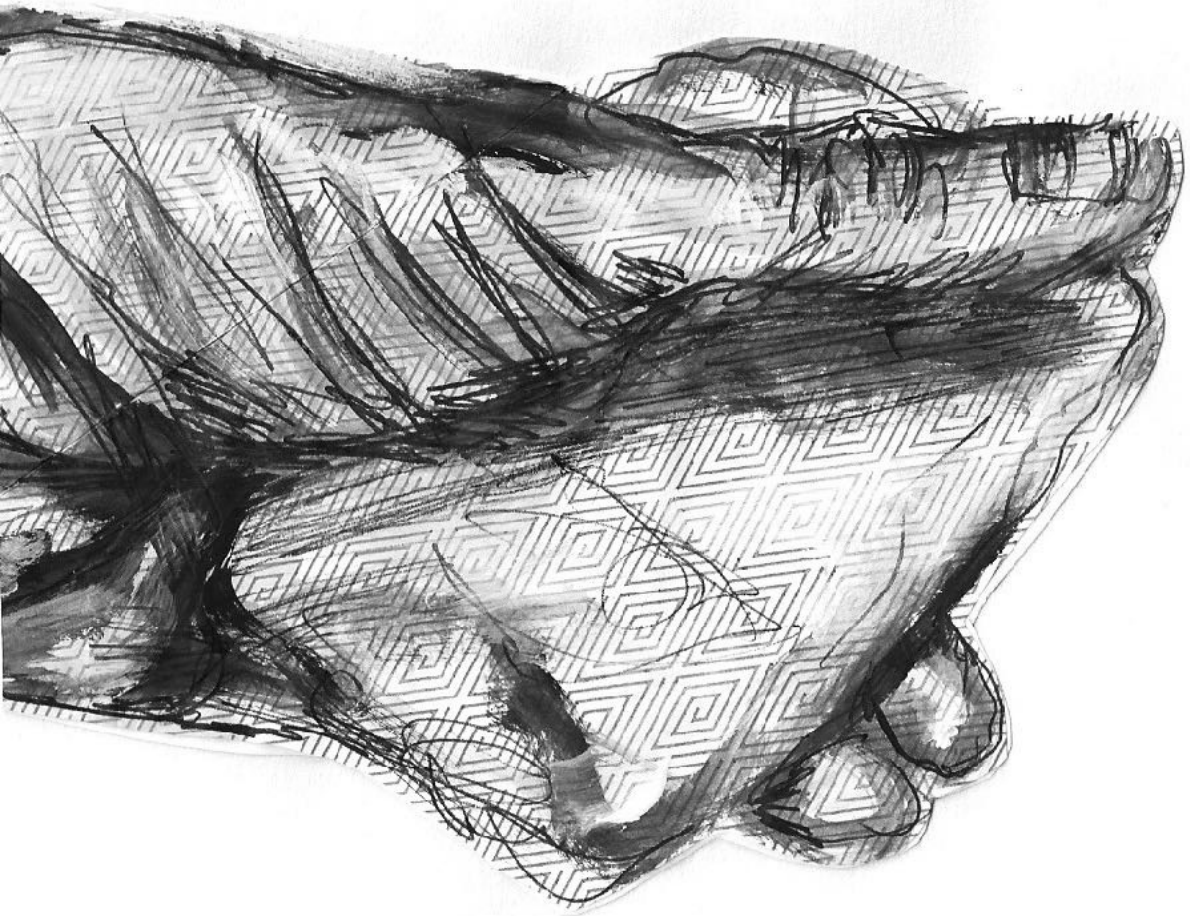

THAT'S IT! HOLD IT STILL. NOW SHAKE IT! MIX IT UP!
YES MORE! MORE! BRING EVERYTHING! ALL YOU'VE GOT
WHAT ABOUT THIS?
loosely planned open to change
comes out the other end as something that people
can see their own handi work in.
BY OUR COMMUNITY


M4
2nd set
20
115
M5
are both easy to install
115 × 20 cm deep
M6
3rd set
115 × 20
× 2
M7

Hope and Trust

When people commission me to make an artwork with them, they have to trust me and I also have to trust them. Participants create the artwork in the hope it will be part of the permanent artwork. Instead of taking their creation home and owning it individually, they entrust their work to me, and then to the community, when the work sits in public space. It is also a gift of the creative and physical effort and time, of the people who make it together.

The makers may not understand why they need to make the clay a certain thickness, smooth the edges, paint it in a particular way. It is difficult to imagine, how their artwork will look after firing and how it will become part of the larger artwork. They have to trust that what I say is true, and that what they make will be valued and used in the final artwork. We must embark together on a journey of interdependence. There is an excitement about the artwork and its relationship to a large number of people that my own private art enterprises rarely find. Through different forms of communication (conversations, texts and emails) I experience people coming together with enthusiasm and enjoying the artwork.



Debbie Qadri

Hands

When I involve people in making the artwork I usually use clay. There is consultation and engagement with the design, but also each member of the community directly uses their hands to make the artwork. They have to act on the material and it becomes marked by the hand and fingerprints of the community member. The hand is the agent of the person's ideas, the connection between their idea and the artwork, the mind connecting down the arm and through the hand into the clay.

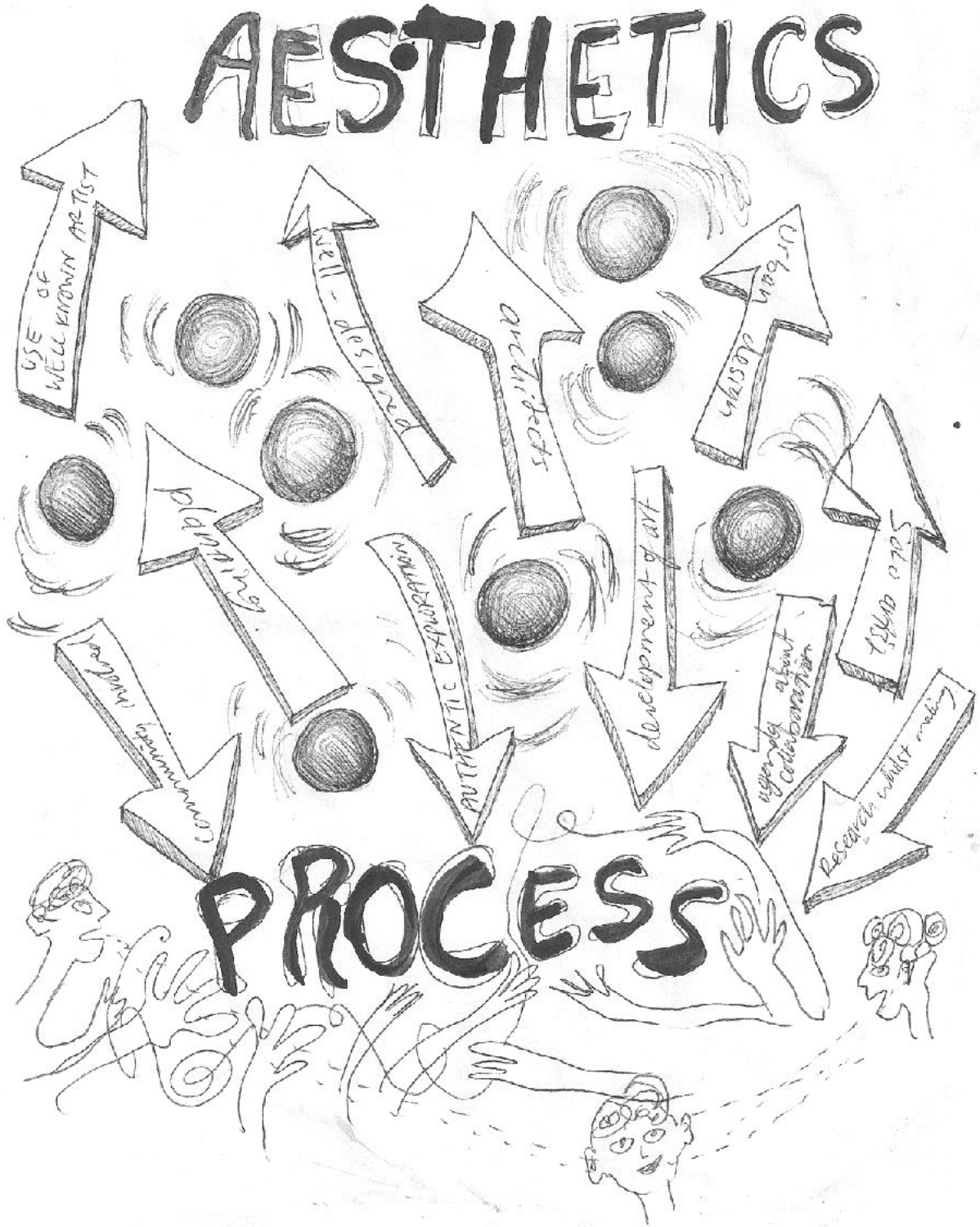
When I photograph the involvement of people in making the work, it is their hands we see, manipulating the clay, using tools and painting the artwork. The hand in the photo emphasises that a person is making the artwork. When it becomes a finished artwork in public space people like to touch the work in order to connect with it.

For many years there has been persistent imagery of legs and hands in my artwork which signify agency. I see a parallel in people having their ideas and artwork in public space, that it gives them agency, a voice, an opportunity for action which makes a claim for their own 'selves' being in public space.

Above: Students looking at their artwork in the *Celebrating the Value of Education, Murals* at Camberwell Girls Grammar School, Canterbury, Melbourne.

Conglomerate, organic, aesthetics

When you allow community members to make choices in making their contribution to the larger collaborative artwork, this choice will be reflected in the aesthetic. Many individual voices can be seen and read. In collaborative artworks we are all bound by compromise, where the design of the artwork is aligned through materials, colours, shapes, themes - but within the making process, choices allow individuals to create part of the work as their own. With choice, the artwork becomes organic, and naturally deviates from the plan.

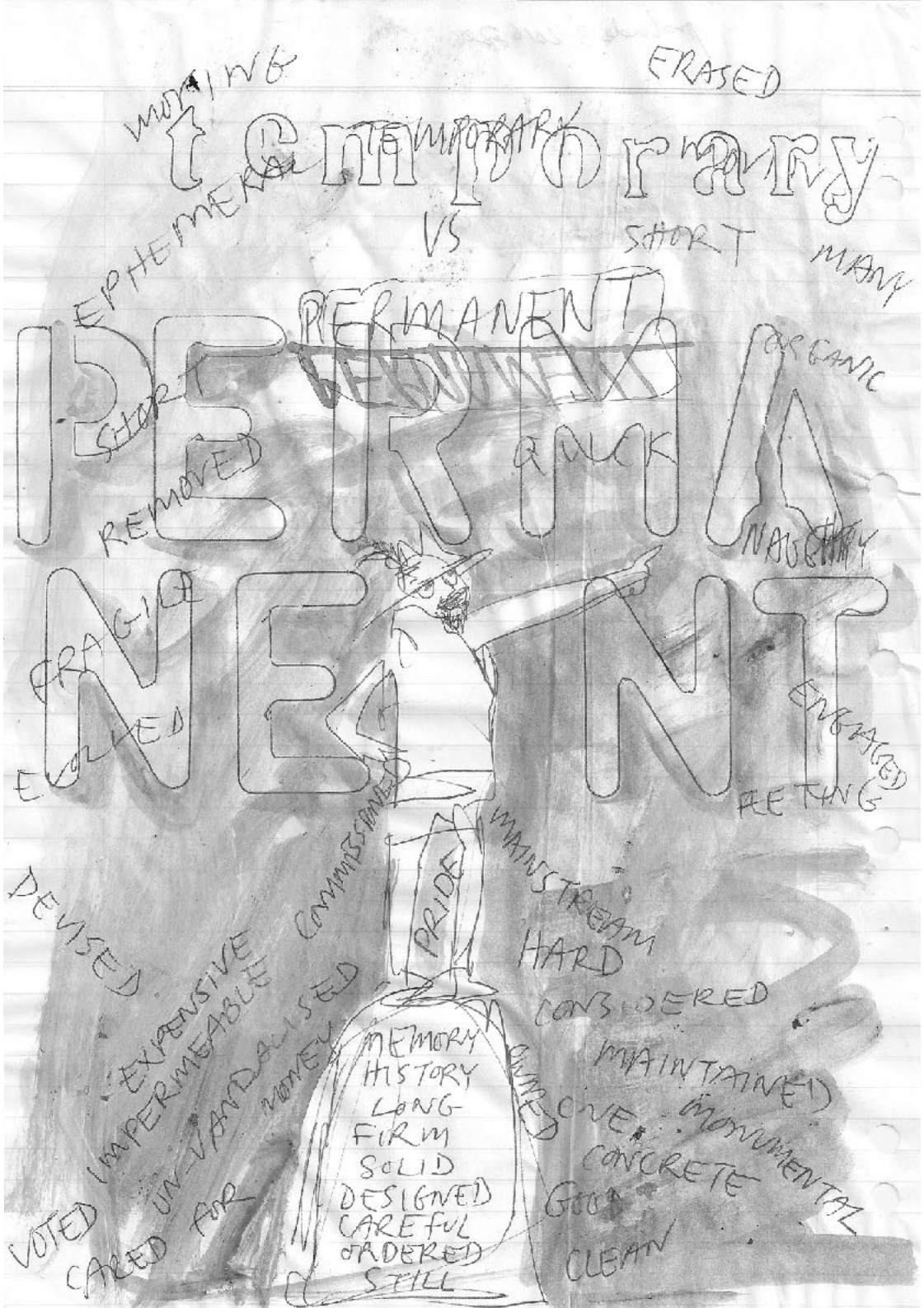


The outcome is a mix of disparate parts, a conglomerate, an amalgam of voices, ideas and personal styles. The two opponents - individuality and collaboration - clash together, and in the final artwork we also see differences - the evidence that many people worked together to make the work.

Right: Self Portraits by children in *The Deer Park History Mural,* Deer Park, Melbourne, Victoria.

Permanence - duration - time - outcomes - object

I feel that when I make permanent artworks in public space (when they exist over time) they generate an identity in that place and there is more time for the audience to reflect on their meaning. As part of a local landscape, many people will come across the artwork and have conversations about it. It will play a role in the community's life (whether loved or disliked) and it will become part of the place.


MOVING
ERASED
temporary
EPHEMERAL
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VS
SHORT
MANY
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EXALTED
ENGAGED
FEETING
DEVISED
COMMISSIONED
PRIDE
MAINSTREAM
HARD
CONSIDERED
EXPENSIVE
IMPERMEABLE
UN-VANDALISED
MONEY
MAINTAINED
MONUMENTAL
CONCRETE
GOOD
CLEAN
VOTED
CARED FOR
MEMORY
HISTORY
LONG-
FIRM
SOLID
DESIGNED
CAREFUL
ORDERED
STILL

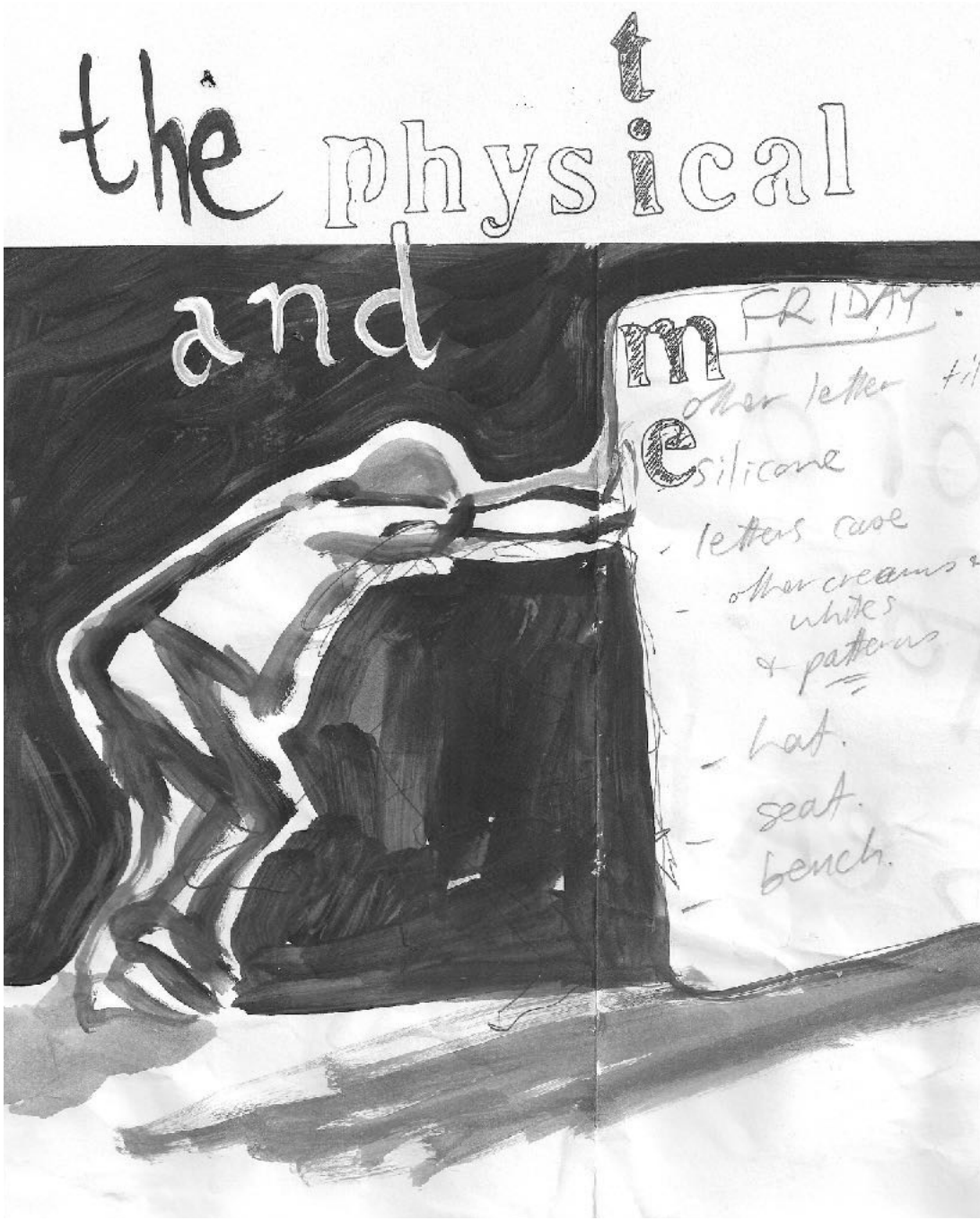
I don’t know much about how the artworks that I have made with people have become part of a place, but I have been moved by the way in which they become owned by the community. An example of this is an artwork that I made with pre-school children which acknowledged the Australian Indigenous history of the place. One of the parents offered to conduct a Smoking Ceremony for the artwork, which included people gathering together, and the making of a ritual fire. It was an instance of the artwork becoming part of the community and being embraced as something valuable.

Wave of Fish Wall, which acknowledges the Traditional owners of the land - the Yulukit Wilum People. Altona North Early Childhood Centre, Altona North Melbourne, Victoria, 2013.

Effect on the artist:

Physical - time - body - emotion

Making the artwork with a community often involves a financial exchange, in return for materials and the time of the artist. When working out quotes, my need to earn a living has to be weighed up against the opportunity of doing the job. There is a lot of work involved behind the scenes and risk (financial and time-wise), which is difficult to explain in a quote. The available budget has to be counter-balanced with my own desires and needs. New ideas and experimental projects often have to be self-funded. The potential existence of each artwork is constrained, altered, shaped or perhaps even vetoed by the practical needs of time and money (both of the artist and of the commissioners).



Once upon a time at the New Delhi Airport, I met another Australian. She overheard my accent and so we began a conversation. She asked what I did for a living. At that time I earned my living mainly as a school teacher, so I said so.

‘But', she said, ‘you also do something else?’

Yes, I did, but I was surprised that she knew.

She said she could tell by my hands. My hands are worn and marked by the physical nature of my work.

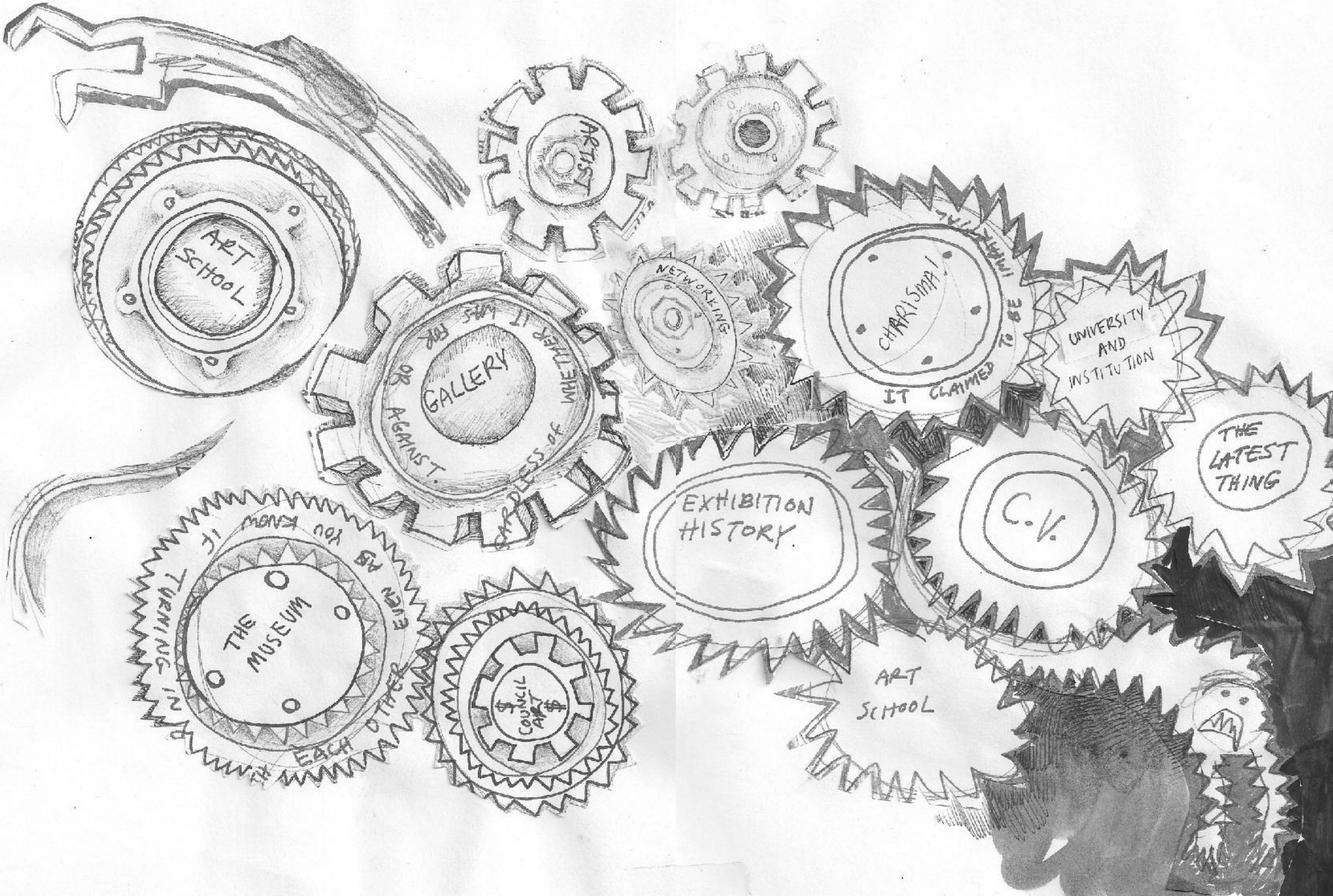
I have to wear protective clothing to work to avoid injury, including boots, long sleeves, trousers, a face mask, gloves, apron, safety glasses. I have a rule of wearing work-boots to work, wherever I go and they have saved me from injury on many occasions.

Debbie Qadri

I also carry the weight of each project several times in purchasing materials, preparing them and taking them to the workshops, moving the clay to my home studio to dry and ferrying it to and from the kiln in my vehicle, then back to the place of installation. I have a physical relationship with the artwork from carrying it. The body is involved in the project, including the voice - dialogue with people during the process of planning, making, installing, celebrating. I have to demonstrate how to do things in each workshop, through speaking and body actions, manipulating the clay and tools with my hands, fetching the materials and explaining the process.

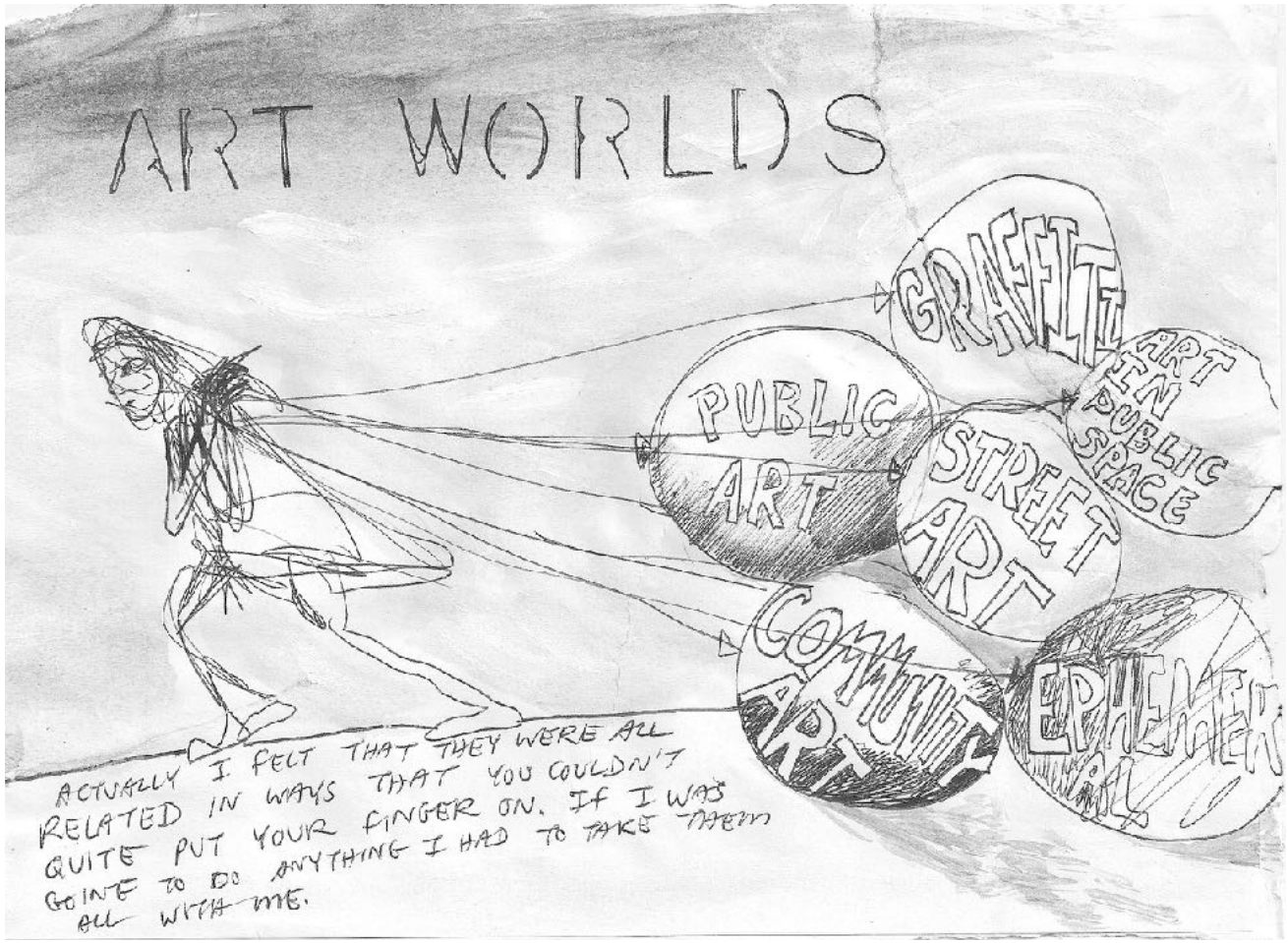
When I work with communities to make permanent public art, the use of my body in the process paves the way for an emotional connection with the artwork. Likewise, the community members who contribute by making the work (spending their time, energy and intellectual thought in making it) are also likely to develop this emotional connection with the artwork.

1 Prelude - The Voice of Pre-occı

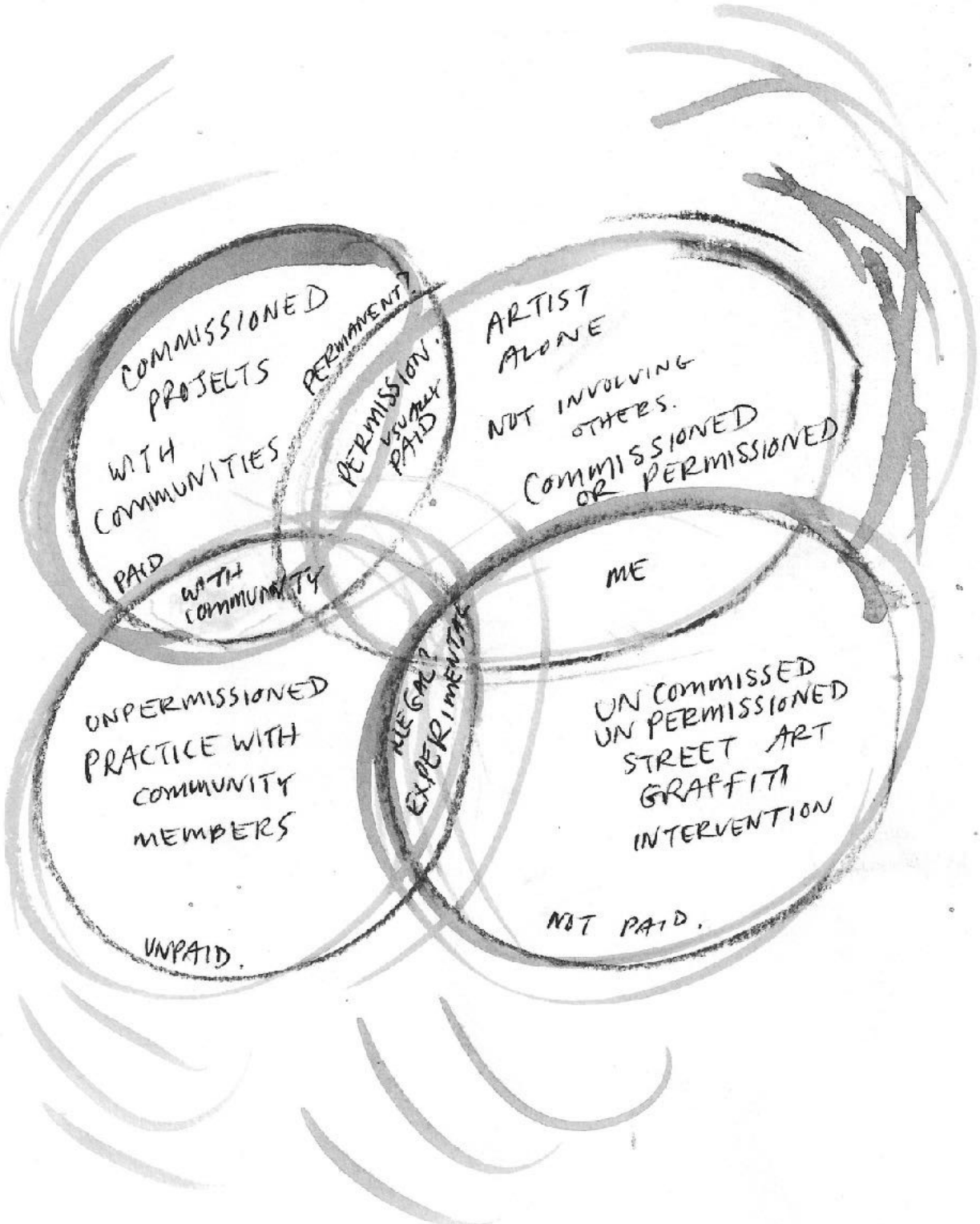

ART SCHOOL
ARTIST
GALLERY
OR AGAINST.
CARDLESS OF WHETHER IT WAS FOR
NETWORKING
CHARISMA!
IT CLAIMED TO BE IMMATERIAL
UNIVERSITY AND INSTITUTION
THE LATEST THING
C.V.
EXHIBITION HISTORY.
ART SCHOOL
THE MUSEUM
EVEN AS YOU KNOW IF TURNING IN EACH OTHER
$ COUNCIL ART $

Between art worlds

I might work with clay and mosaic for the day with a community, then come home and work on the thesis with typing, drawing and reading, then sit down and make some textile art, paint or make ceramics. My practice is this great interactive pile of things which work alongside each other, and the philosophy of what I think I'm doing, threads through them all.



When I was asked, ‘How do I see my whole practice in public space?’ I immediately imagined four circles. Across the circles, the practice could be divided along the lines of permission and who was involved, with the circles on the left being most relevant to this research but every circle informed my practice and this research. Although the practices within the circles had differing purposes, they interacted with and informed one another and the lines between them blurred.

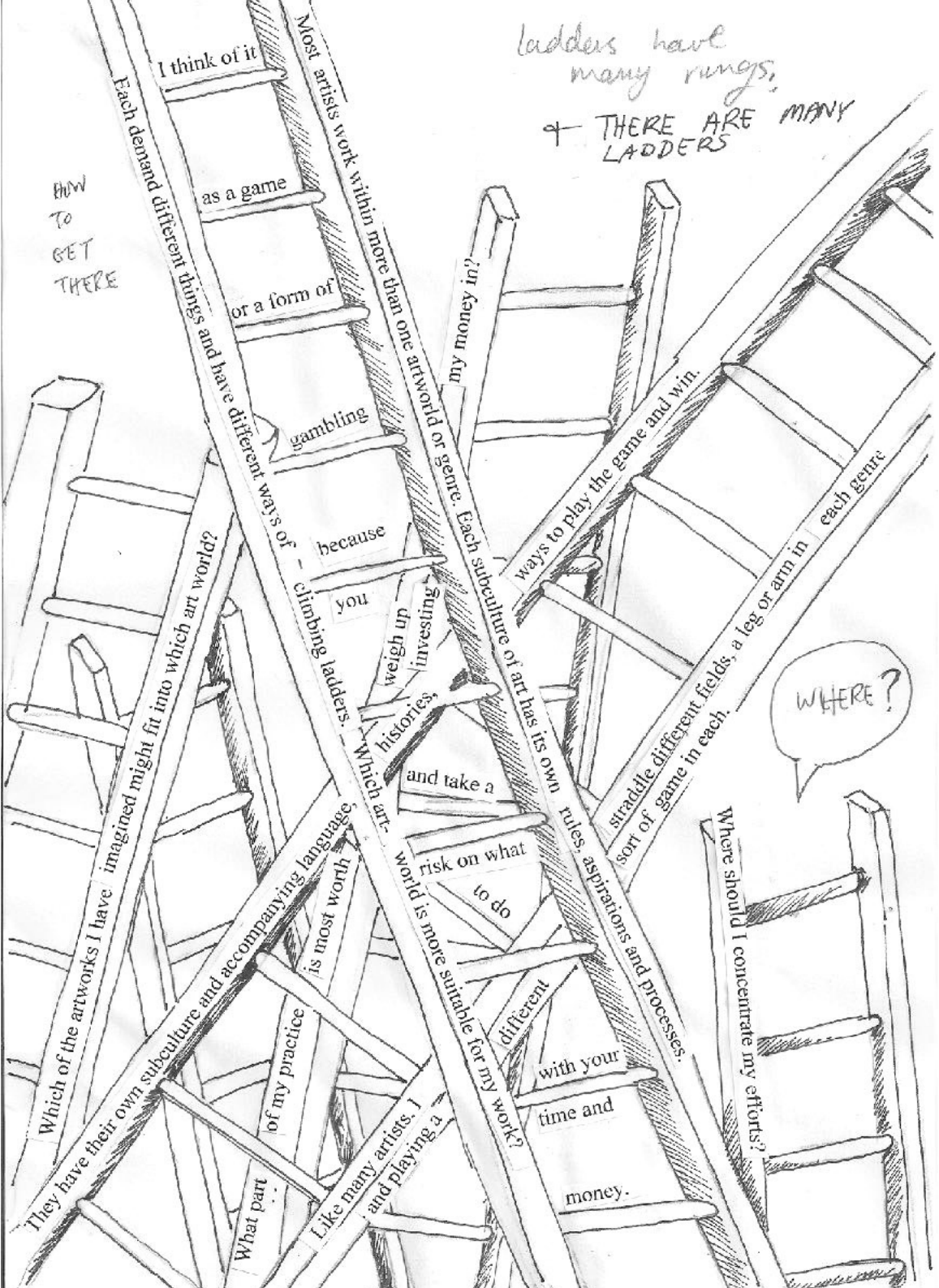


“Actually, you are always making yourself’, she said. (Anne)

‘Yes, you are right!’ I said.

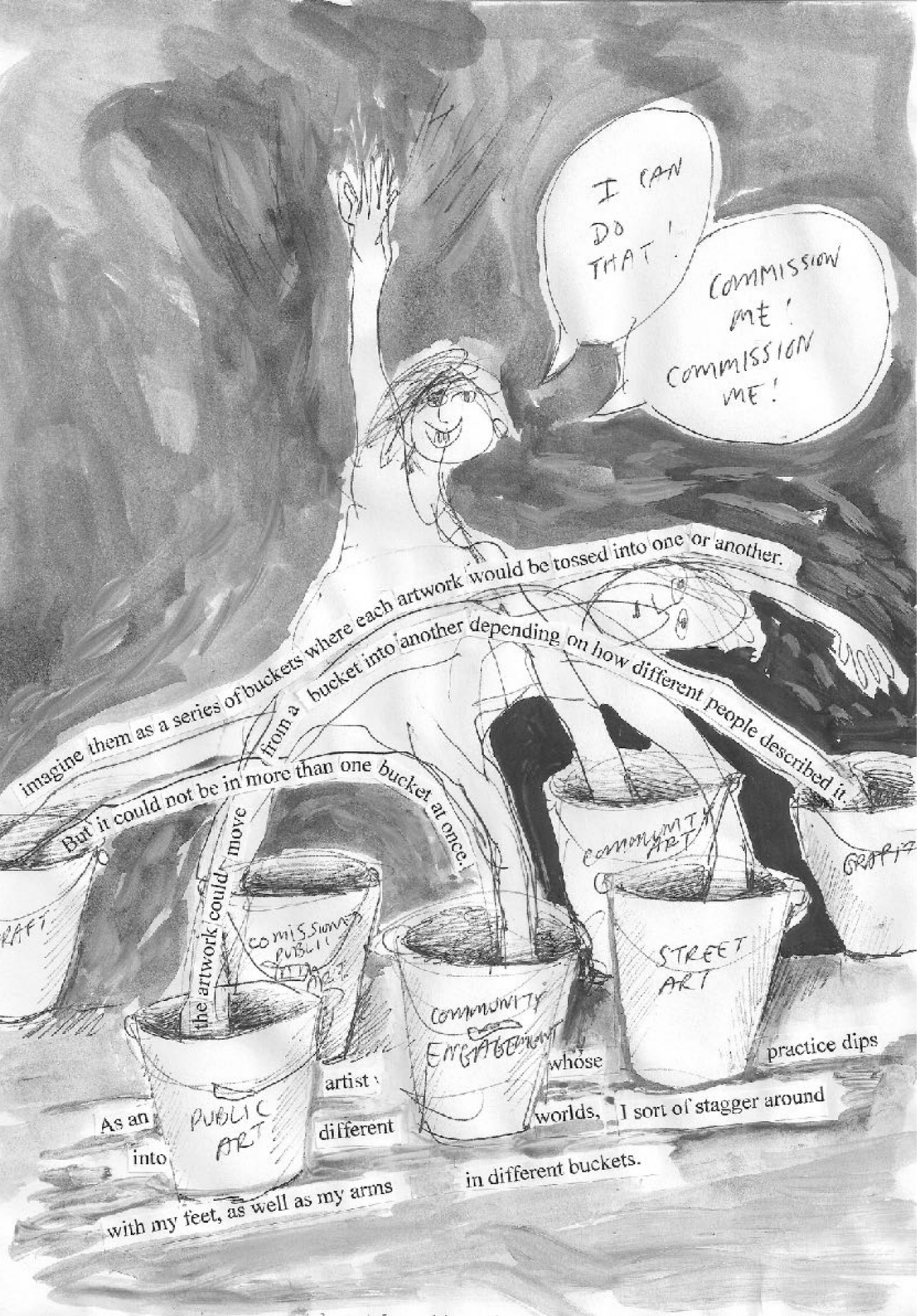
‘I am always working towards what I want to do and how I project myself in the world, even when I make the artwork with others. It is a part of how I see myself’.

Debbie Qadri



I feel I am always working within several different art worlds. Each world has its own rules, aspirations, processes and different ways of climbing ladders. They have their own language, histories, and cultures. I straddle different fields, a limb, an ear, an eye in each genre - playing a different sort of game in each. I think of it as a form of gambling because you weigh up what you will take a risk on in spending your time and money. These galaxies of moving art worlds interact with each other, bounce off each other, are affected by each other. Sadly, they mostly rotate around the ideology of ‘high art and the official ‘art history’.

Debbie Qadri



As an artist whose practice dips into different art-worlds, I stagger around with my feet, as well as my arms in different buckets on different planets.

Fairly torn.

(I want to examine one small thing, but so many things are connected to it, so intertwined and woven deeply. Picking out one thread for a sentence, is to tear it away from how it is embedded in culture. I feel in these limitations of words, pen and paper, time and limited pages, I can only give you a patchwork of tiny fragments of the whole. The danger would be to make it look complete, smooth and truthful.)

What part of my practice is worth investing
my money in?

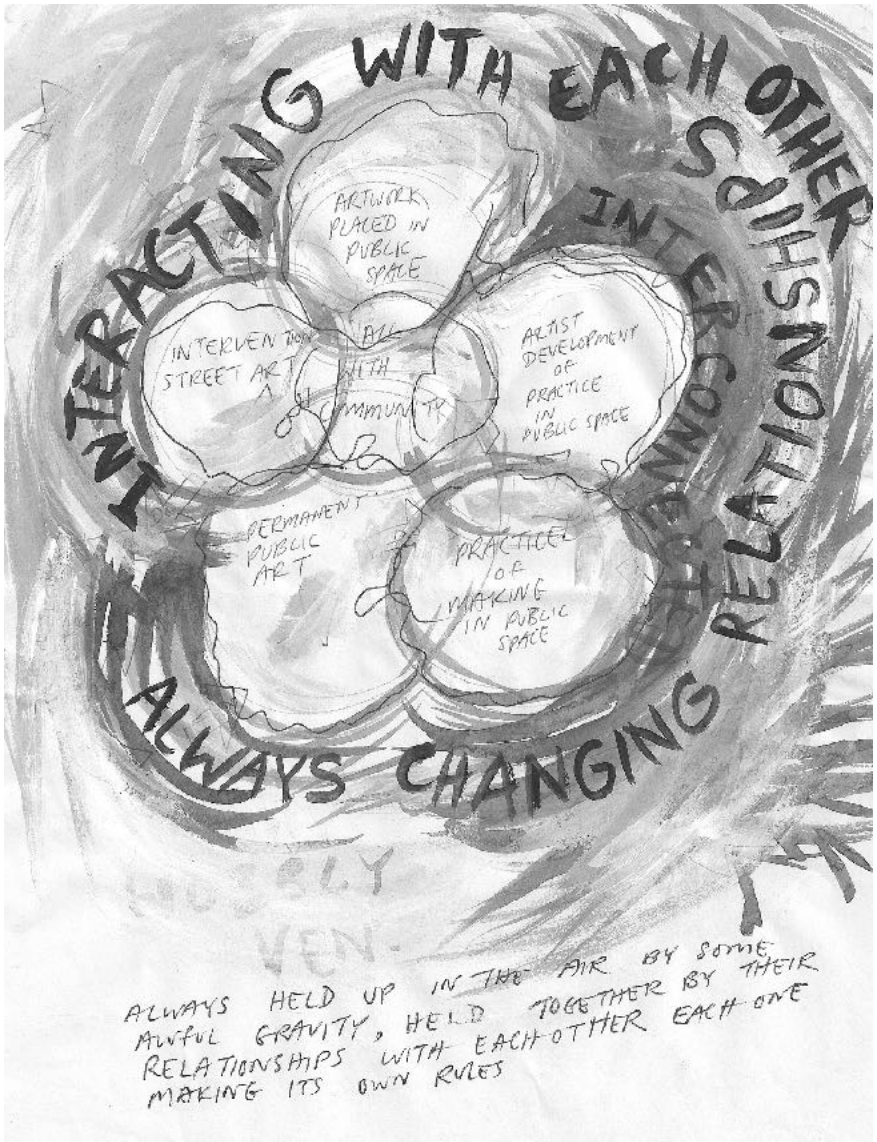
Should I participate in the art-world games?

If so, which ones?

Where should I concentrate my efforts?

Which art-world is more suitable for my work?

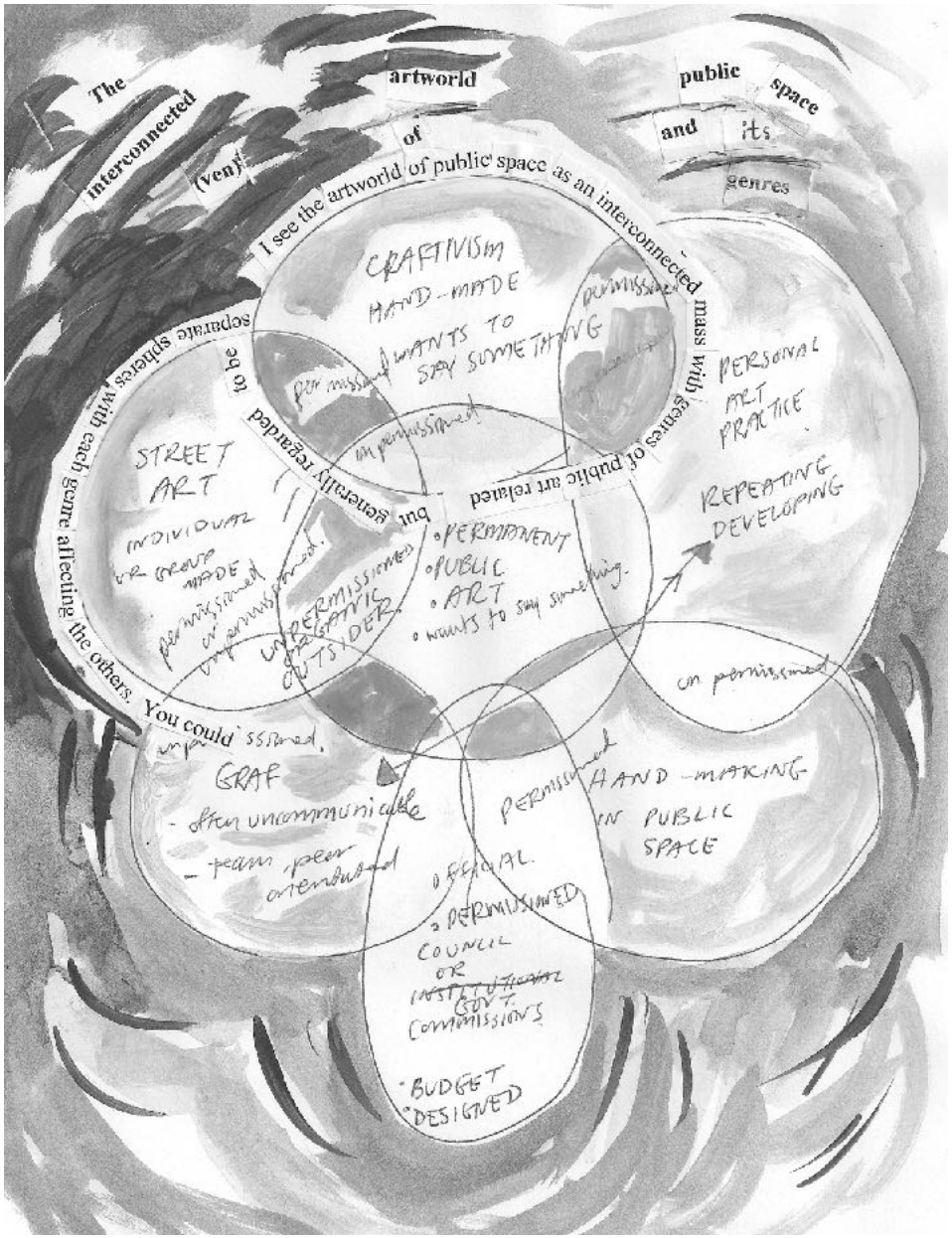
1 Prelude - The Voice of Pre-occupation

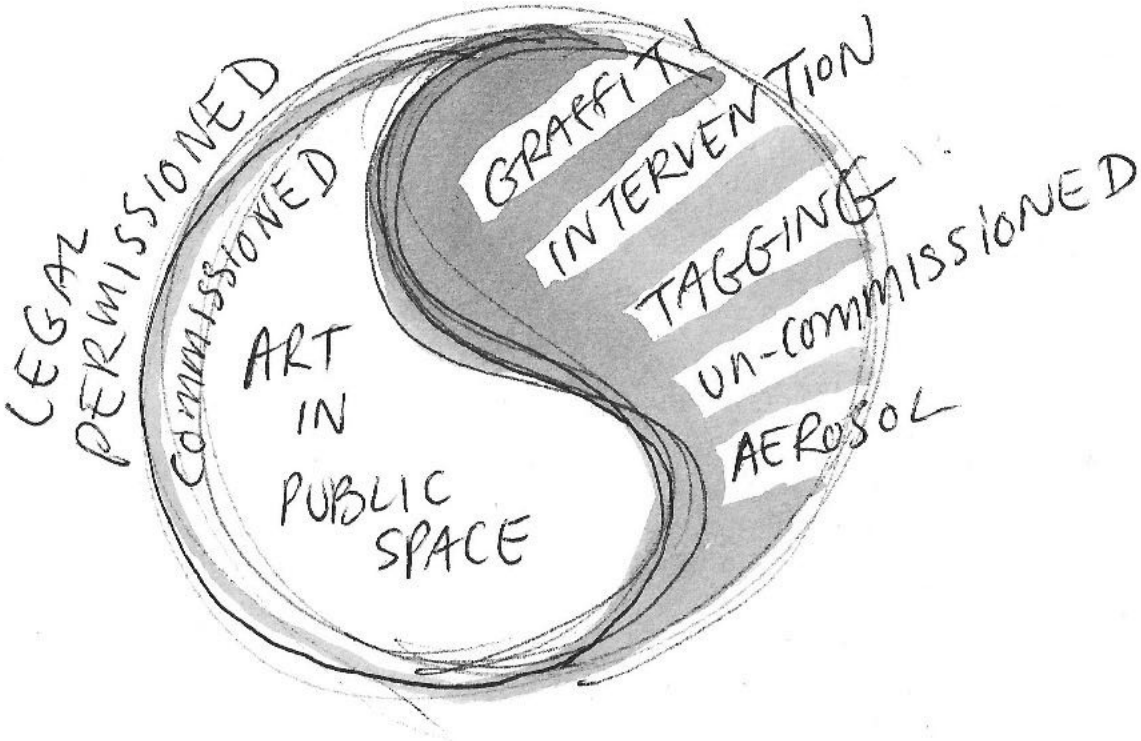


I categorise the many types of public art into genres, (graffiti, commissioned art, intervention, collaborative artwork made by community) which all contribute different ways of thinking about the role of art in public space, as well as provoking debate and argument. I sometimes visualise this world as a Venn diagram, but a complex moving one where the jostling spheres (planets) merge into one another repeatedly and with different aspects of their genre coming into the light. They all share the art world of public space and battle for attention. The whole thing is elastic and changing because of the crossovers and merging between the genres. It is not able to be seen objectively because we all view it differently, through our own experiences and perspectives.

The rules of public space

The graffiti movement affects the way we think about public space and our right to make individual marks on it. Rules which have been made to prevent tagging, also influence the way in which we view public space as a place to make artwork. ‘Public art’ is defined, in contrast to other art which is discouraged, prevented or removed. The rules are often tangled when graffiti art is collected by museums or artists are commissioned to install permanent murals using the same paint and styles of graffiti. The galaxy of genres of public art shifts and spins.





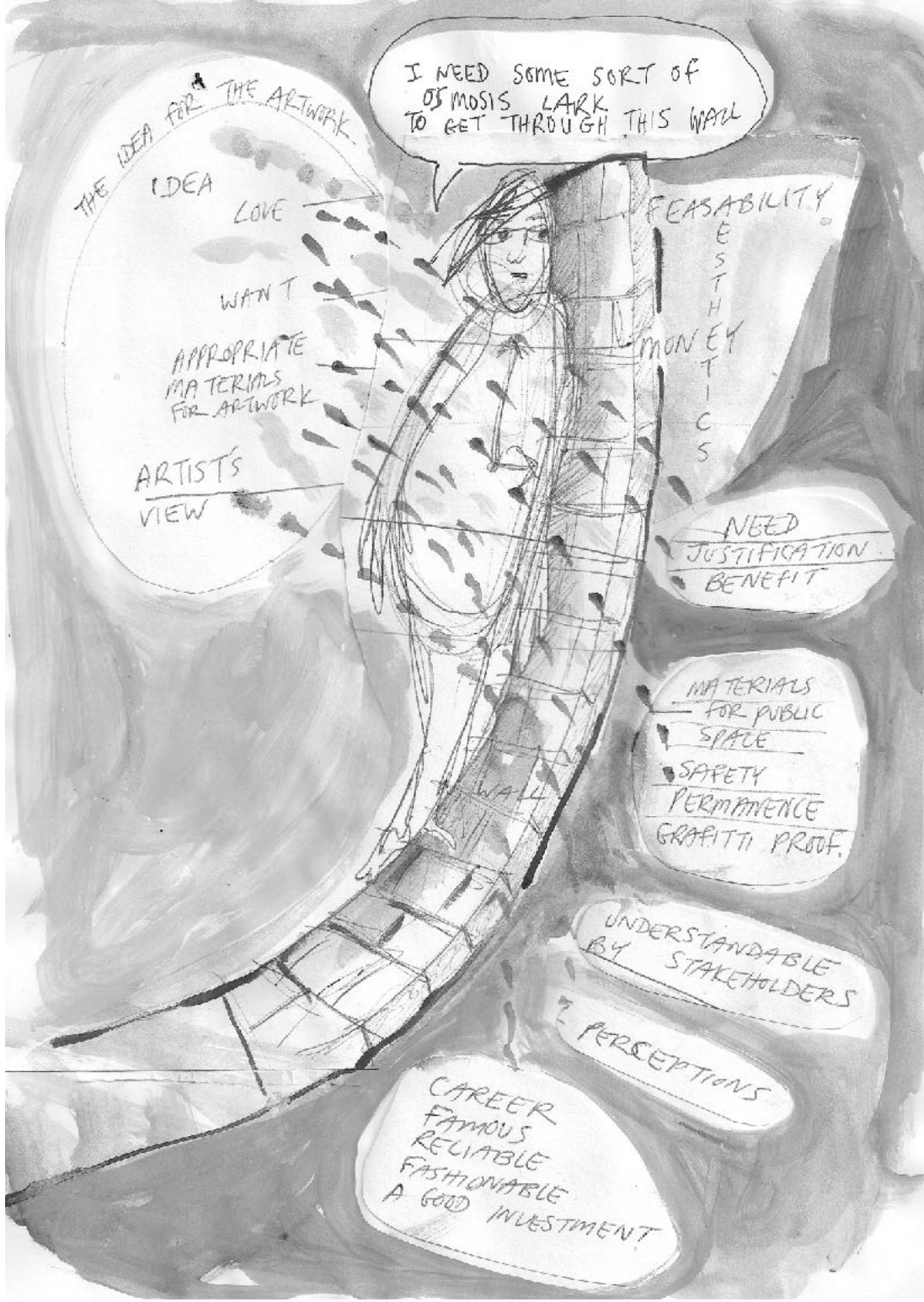
When you propose an artwork in public space the way that graffiti might affect it is taken into account by the planners and also the audience. Once when I was installing a community artwork in a public thoroughfare, at least half of the people who commented began their sentences with ‘I hope it doesn’t get graffitied.’ It points to the interaction between the genres of public art and the tendency for people to think about art in public space, in relation to the un-commissioned genres of public art.

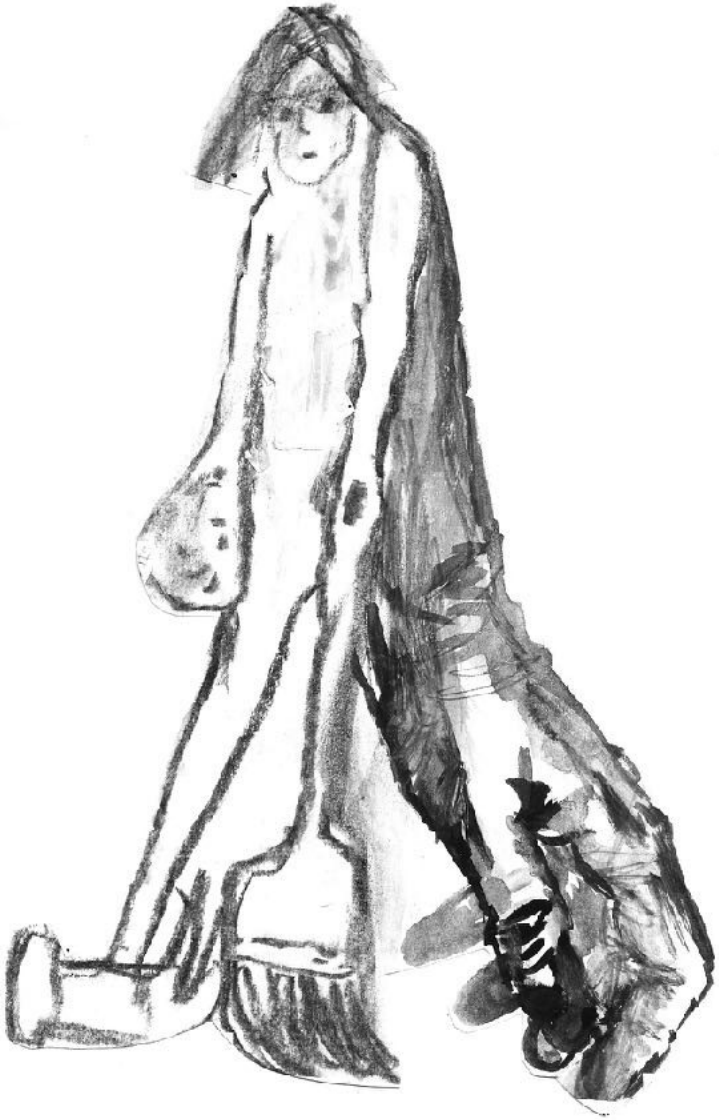
Debbie Qadri

Community art, and permanent public art and graffiti could be viewed as poles away from each other but they are related in my art practice.

Brick walls, obstacles and perspectives

My income derives from small commissioned projects in community settings, but I cannot seem to take this method of involving community members in making permanent public art, into larger council commissions. This affects my ability to make a living out of this work. I have to do many small projects instead of fewer large budget ones. The reasons are unknown to me, but I feel it is to do with how the artwork by non-artists (community), is perceived and the idea that artworks made by community members are different from ‘permanent public artworks’.





Debbie Qadri

IT IS DIFFICULT TO
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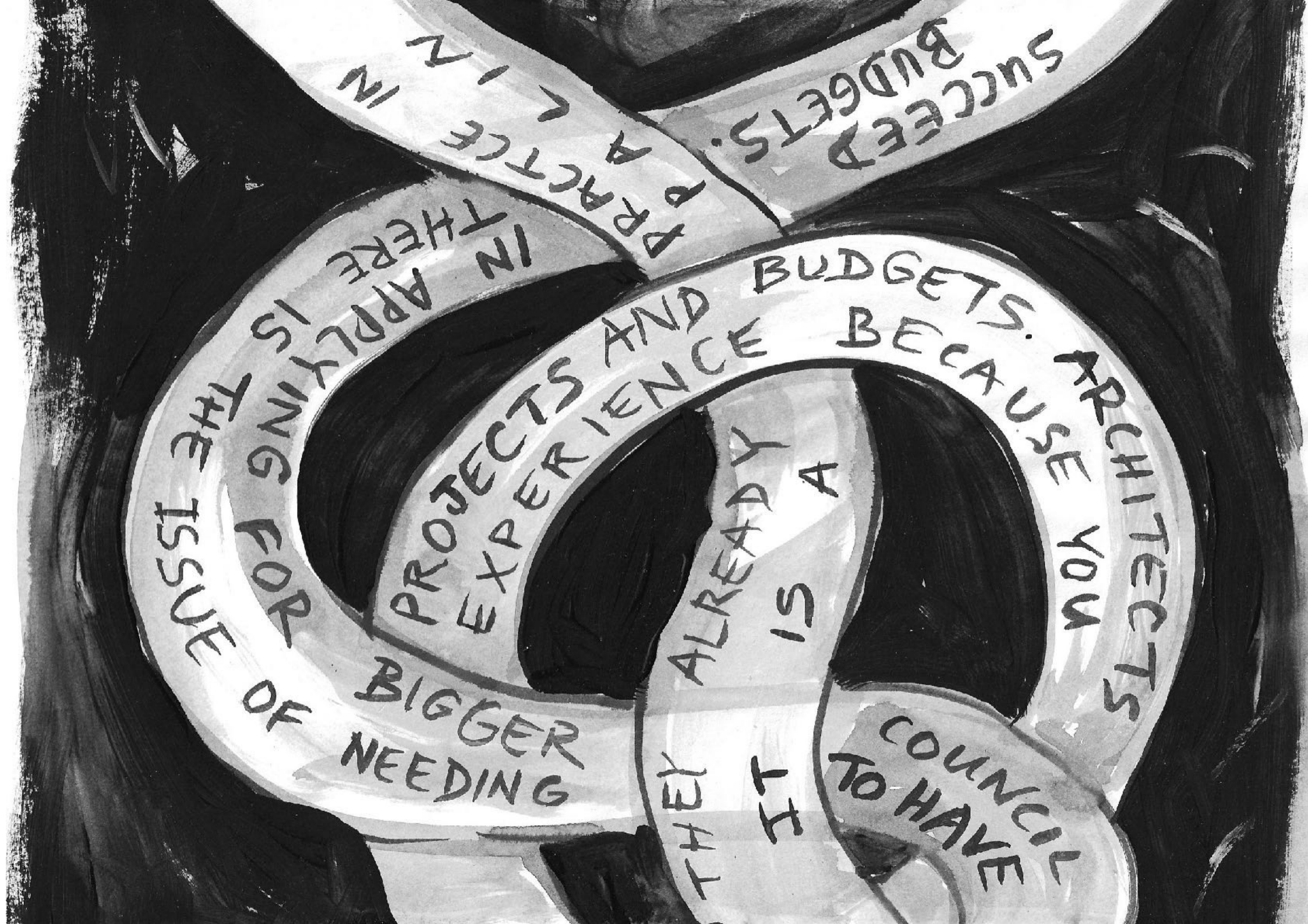
SUCCEED BUDGETS.
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IN APPLYING FOR BIGGER ISSUE OF NEEDING
THERE IS
PROJECTS AND BUDGETS. ARCHITECTS
EXPERIENCE BECAUSE YOU
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NOT HAVING THAT BIGGER WITH
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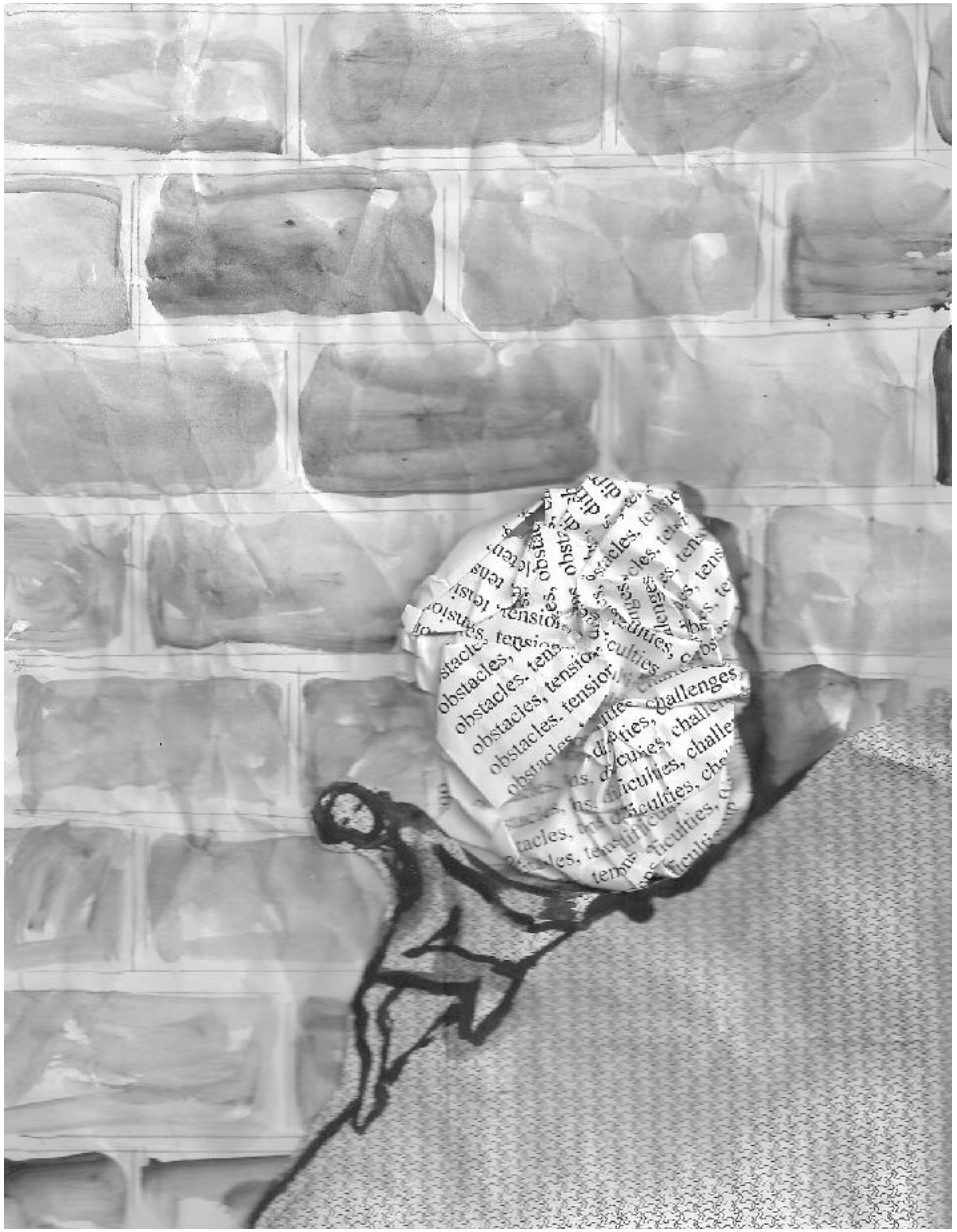
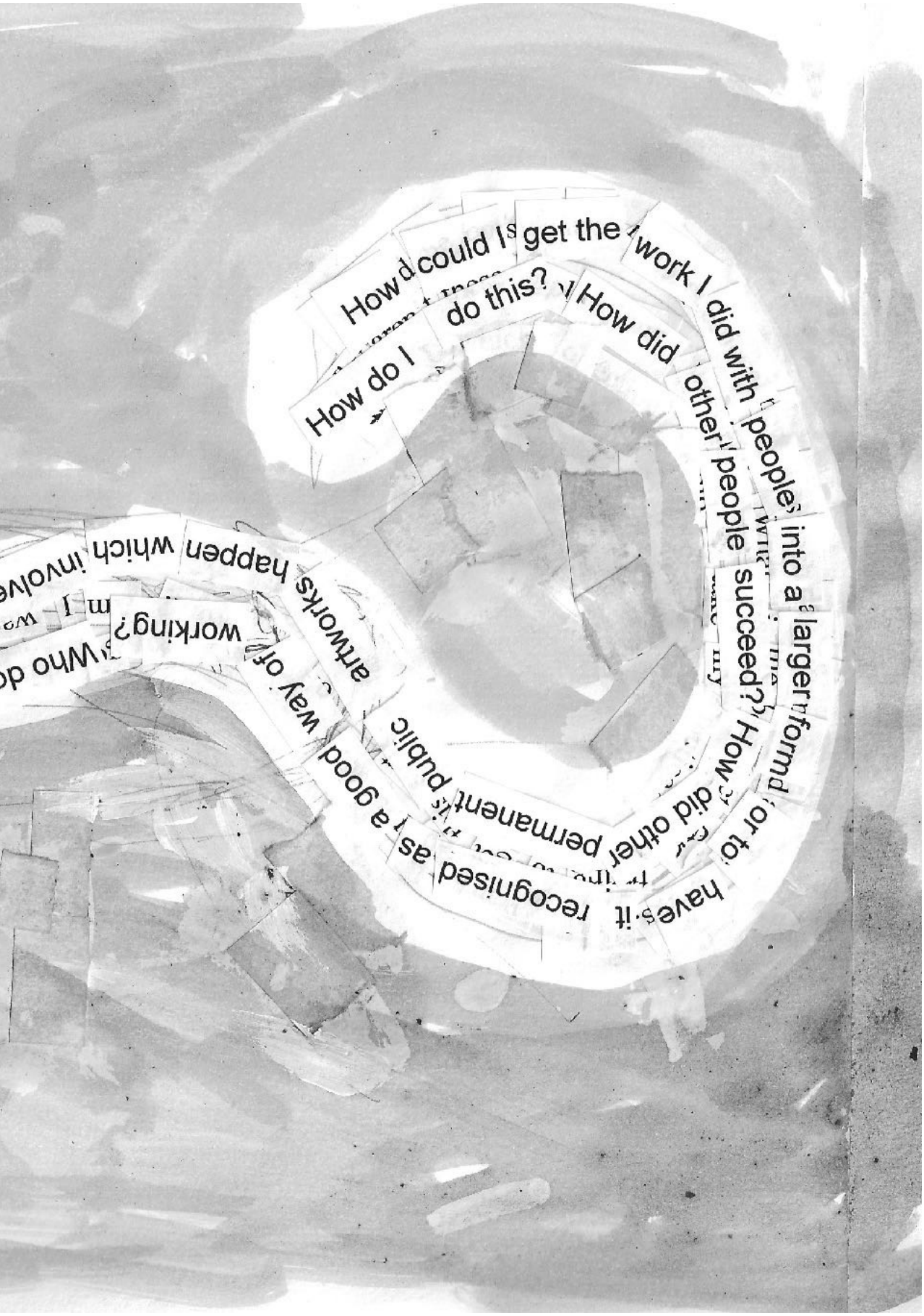


1 Prelude - The Voice of Pre-occupation

Usually in large public art commissions the artwork is designed before being commissioned. When large amounts of money are involved, the stakeholders want to know what the final artwork will look like.

Community participation in making artwork necessitates being open to changes during the making process, so that the art-makers have individual input and choice.

Debbie Qadri


How do I
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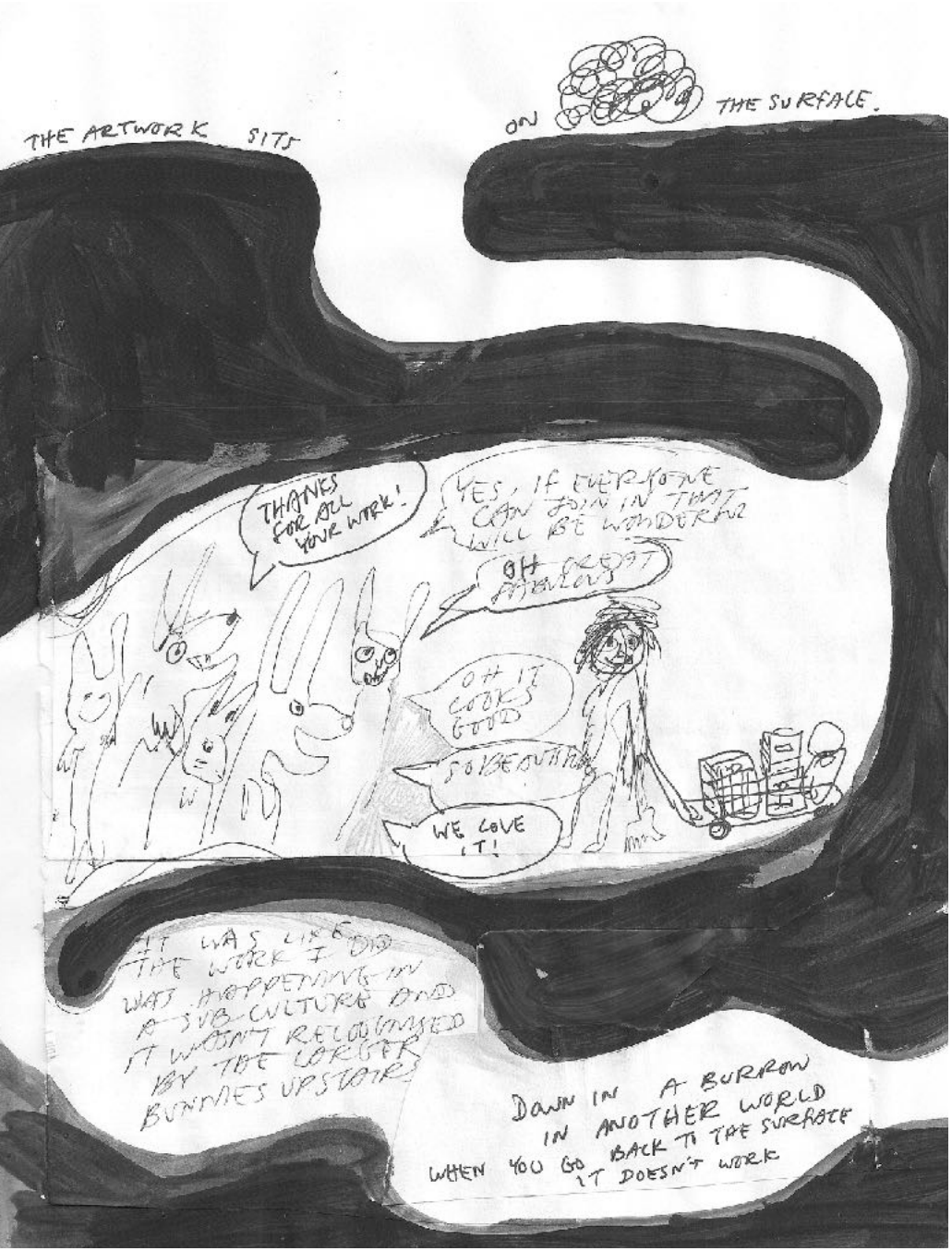


It's not only an economic aspiration, but also philosophical. I imagine the potential of this community collaboration in other types of public places and in larger size and believe that community making art is important and artworks made by community members should be more valued in public space.

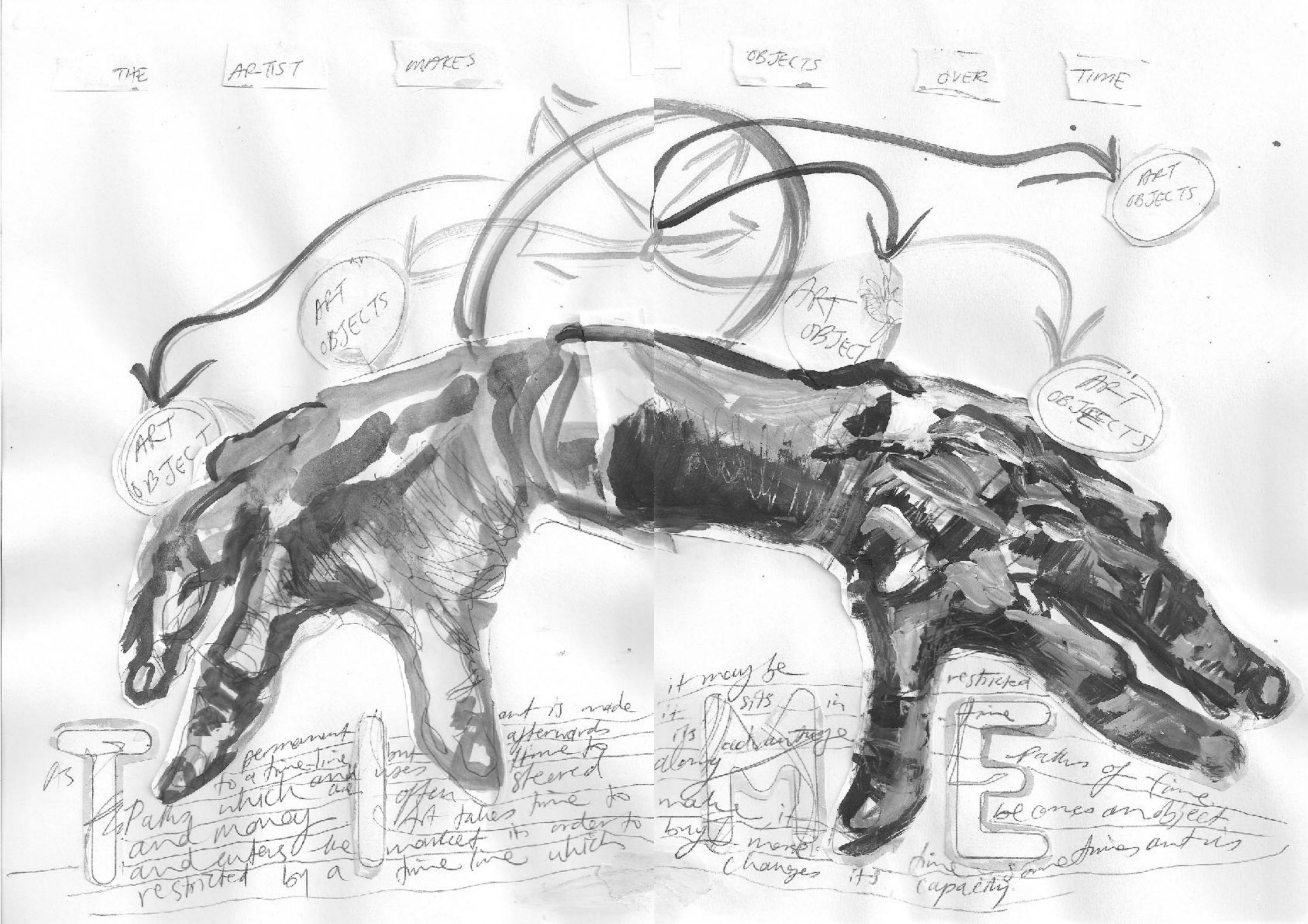
I became increasingly aware that my understanding of my practice, its importance and its potential, was not seen in the same way by others. They did not share my experiences and perspective. I feel as if the final artworks sit on the surface of the real world but that I worked with communities underground. Nobody saw the details in the process of what we did and the meaning of the process.

It's like we need to break through the surface of things, to be noticeable and to change people's thinking.

Sometimes when describing the work that I do, I would mention the community were involved, and the person I was speaking to would say, "Oh yeah community art". Artworks made by community members are not viewed as permanent public art but instead thrown into a different bucket called ‘community art’. There seems to be no place to consider community art as ‘permanent public art’. But there are many of these artworks and they sit in places like schools, community houses, parks and gardens and I view them as ‘public art’.

I feel this is discursive: relating to how public art is defined and described. Everyone can be an artist and we all have the capacity to say something meaningful through making art. I want people to be valued for their input as the artists and their work to be viewed as an artwork.

Debbie Qadri


THE ARTIST MAKES OBJECTS OVER TIME
ART OBJECTS
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becomes an object
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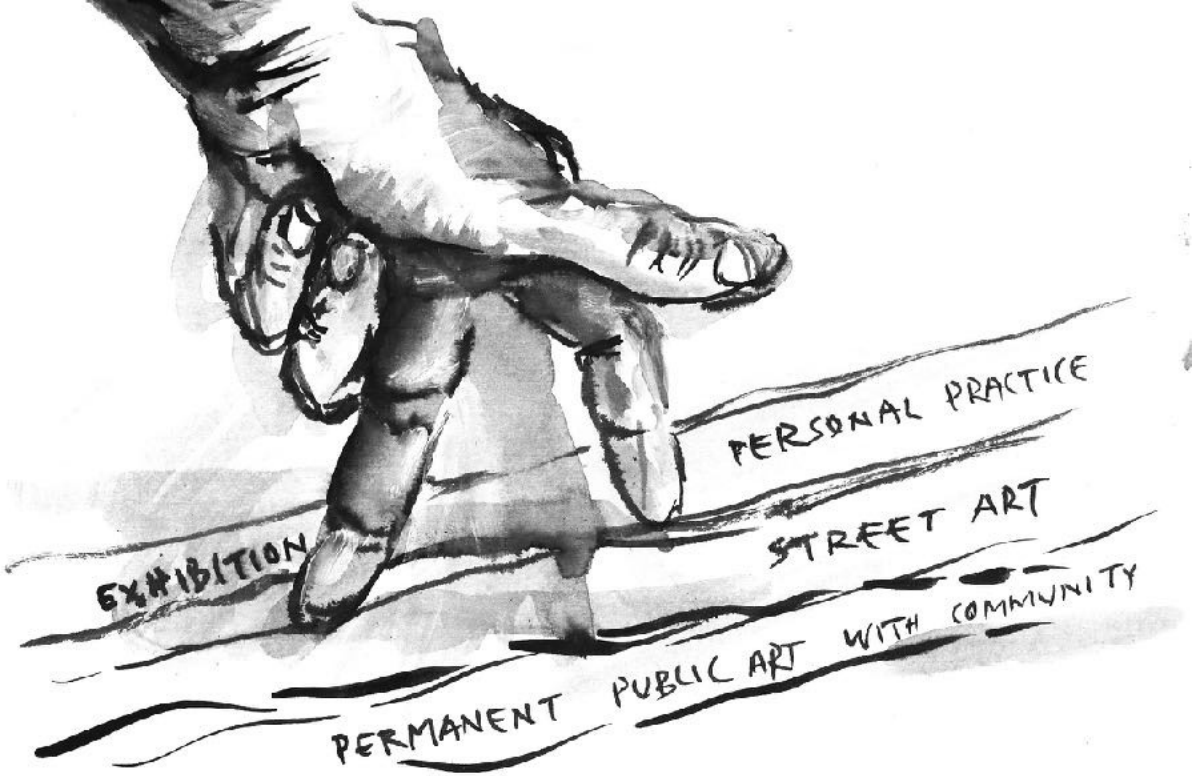
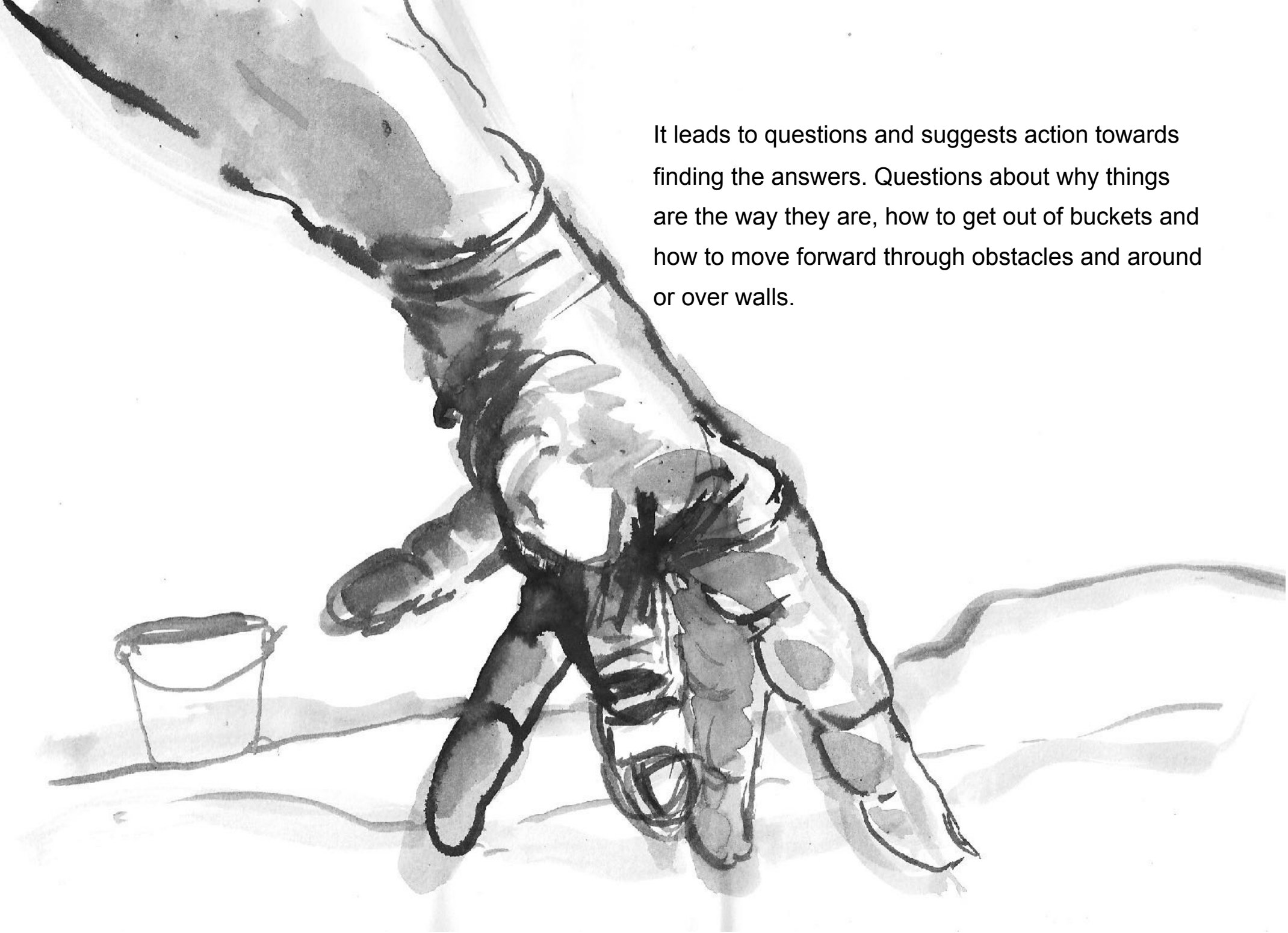
some times ant is
capacity

Journey and Questions

The artist's practice and this thesis writer's practice is a journey. It is limited chronologically and by the artist being physically in one place at a time. If she works in multiple fields, then she skips from one lane to another, but the roads are parallel, always relating to and informing one another along the way. Within one week she might have an exhibition, install some street art and work with a community towards their permanent public artwork. Her thoughts move across the practices in different art worlds.



A narrative runs inside her head about her journey, developing the reasoning for what she does and why, but it is always changing. Each time she circles her artworks mentally (often knee-deep in the process of making them), she revisits past works, re-evaluating her practice from the new perspective offered from where she currently stands. This moving lanes, thinking across art-worlds and reflecting on past practice, is very important in attempting to understand where permanent public art made by community members sits. It brings the information, experience and practice from one genre to another. It assists with explaining the divisions, the overlaps and the buckets.



It leads to questions and suggests action towards finding the answers. Questions about why things are the way they are, how to get out of buckets and how to move forward through obstacles and around or over walls.

Notes:

Many of the permanent public artworks made by the writer with communities are documented on the following websites:

Celebrating the Value of Education, Camberwell Girls Grammar School, Ormiston Campus
https://celebratingthevalueofeducation.blogspot.com

Noah's Ark, Overnewton Anglican Community College
https://noahsarkatovernewton.blogspot.com

The Kororoit Creek Wurundjeri Acknowledgment Mural
https://kororoitcreekwurundjeri.blogspot.com

The Deer Park History Mural
https://deerparkhistorymural.blogspot.com

Wave of Fish Wall, Altona North Early Childhood Centre
https://waveoffishwall.blogspot.com

Central site for all artworks made with community by Debbie Qadri
https://www.blogger.com/profile/14189288512391879057

2

‘My rebellious temperament may be the cause of a congenital antielitism’

Howard S Becker (1982, p. ix)

PERSONAL CONTEXT

This research is about permanent public artwork made by community members. The first chapter of this thesis ‘Prelude - The voice of Pre-occupation’, sets out my experience, and perspectives before research commences (thus exposing my political and ideological bias). It is the first part of a self-portrait of my own practice in making permanent public art with community members, which appears in the thesis in three main sections (Prelude, The Scroll, and Epilogue) as well as being present in other sections where I draw attention to myself as the researcher.

My experience of working with communities in making permanent public art was very intimate (between me and those communities) and I wanted to investigate its place in the greater context of public art, and to more deeply understand my situation as an artist practising in this field.

Originally I had always imagined the PhD as something that I would do using my art practice with communities, but I changed my mind after looking for literature on the topic. I was dismayed by the small amount of literature about permanent public artworks made by community members: it was as if the practice didn’t exist. But I knew it existed. Through my introductory coursework, I became aware of the influence that academic writing, theory and philosophy, have over discourse. I decided that the PhD would be more useful in my field of practice if it engaged with academic writing (through the thesis and papers) and communication beyond the academic world. So I decided to

write a traditional thesis in order to engage with (as well as challenge), theory, literature and discourse on the topic.

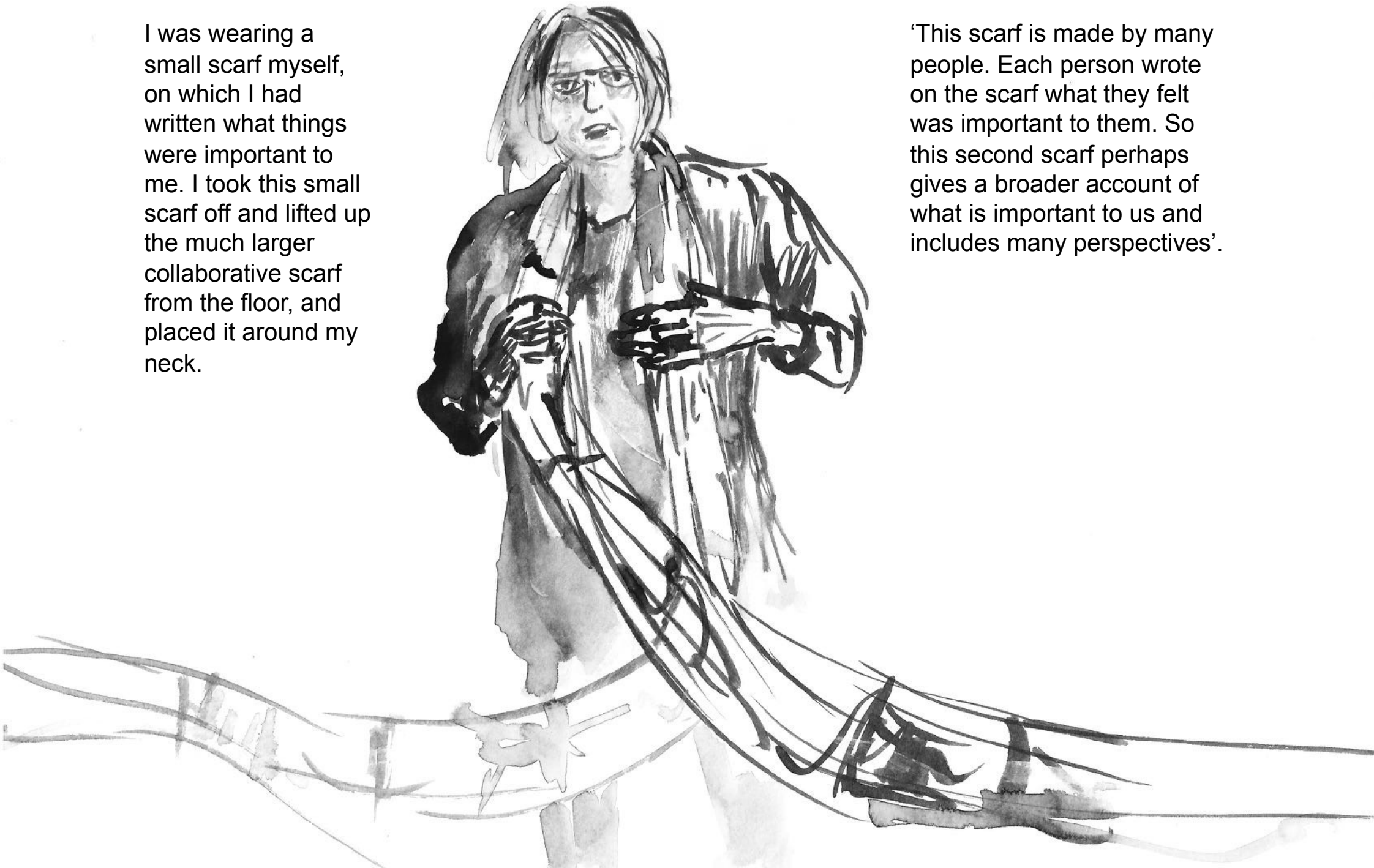
In this light, I decided to use the PhD to undertake basic exploratory research, (beginning from ground up) exploring the phenomena of communities making permanent public art. What is it? and what does it mean?

In 2015, as part of my introductory coursework, I presented my research project to my peers using a handmade scarf as a metaphor. The scarf was many coloured material patches joined together and on each patch I had asked people to write what was important to them. The scarf was a collaborative object which contained a myriad of texts about what a number of people feel are the important things in life.

I arranged the scarf in a heart shape on the floor, and said,

> ‘The heart of my research evolves from of my work as an artist with communities, making artworks where the communities are involved with the actual making’

I was wearing a small scarf myself, on which I had written what things were important to me. I took this small scarf off and lifted up the much larger collaborative scarf from the floor, and placed it around my neck.



‘This scarf is made by many people. Each person wrote on the scarf what they felt was important to them. So this second scarf perhaps gives a broader account of what is important to us and includes many perspectives’.

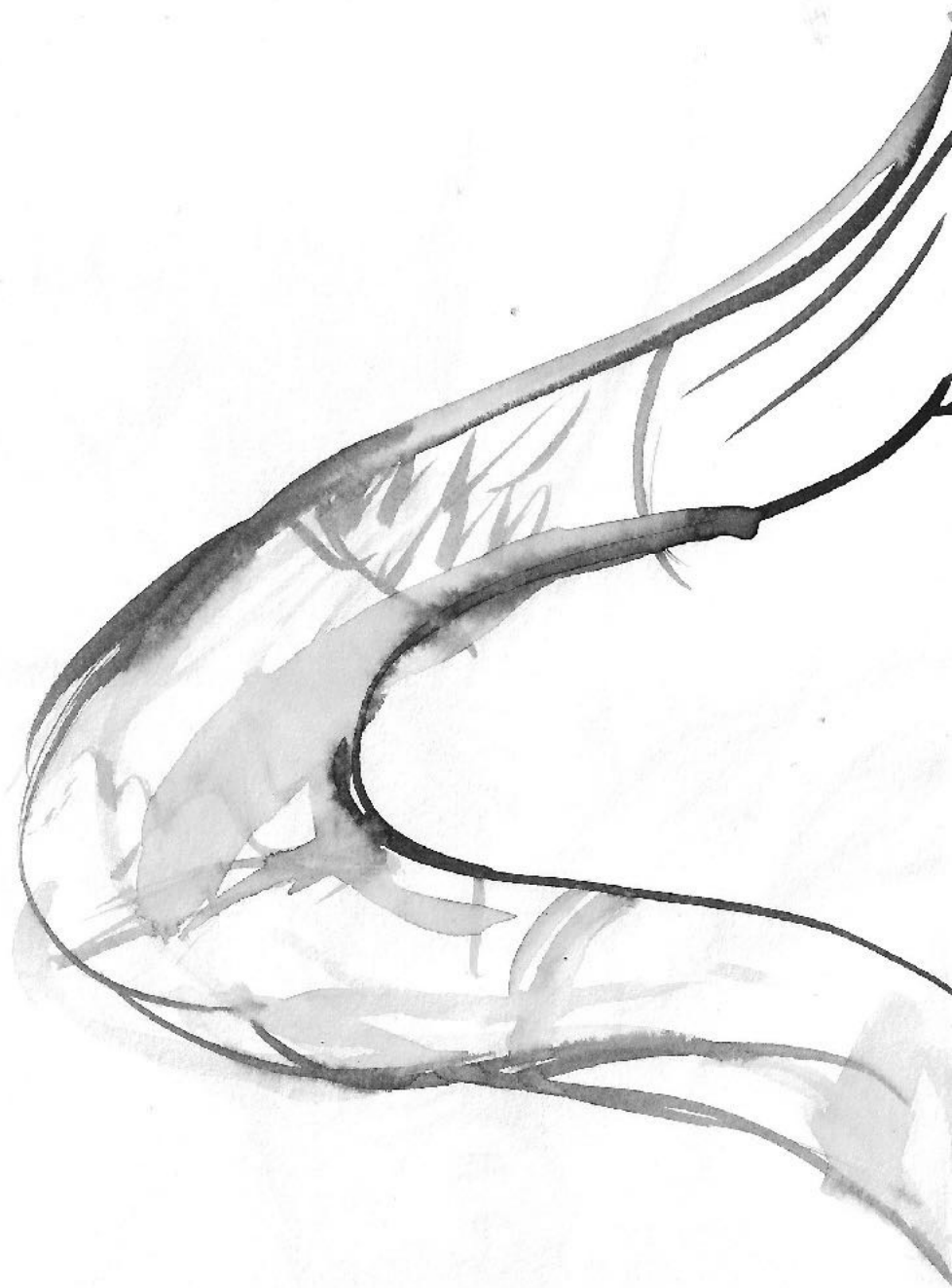
In retrospect, I look back on this moment as identifying my emotional connection with the subject of this research.

The broader context of this research will be outlined in more detail through the literature review which follows.

AIMS

- Explore the rationales, meanings, emerging issues in permanent public art made by community members.
- Explore the current discourse that informs permanent public art and how permanent public art made by community members relates to this discourse.
- Explore the relationships between the philosophical arguments of cultural democracy (Gattinger 2011; Hope 2011) and permanent public art made by community members - focussing on inclusion, diversity and access to cultural production.
- Bring to light the stories of permanent public artworks made by community members and the meanings and outcomes for those involved and the local community. Give voice to a broader range of perspectives about this form of public art (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005).
- Explore and develop theory about the practical and philosophical implications of permanent public art made by community members.

- Disrupt existing notions of how art making is privileged in certain spaces with certain types of art-makers.
- Expand understandings of the knowledge and learning community members contribute through making permanent public art.
- Change the way in which Permanent Public Art made by community members is generalised (Bohman 2015; Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005).



VALUE

Documentation of permanent public artworks made by community members

The research will produce new perspectives and understandings about practical methods and philosophical approaches to involving community members in making art for permanent public art projects. Why permanent public art made by community members is important and good will be explored through researching and analysing two artworks.

Research that serves a broad audience

The research outcomes are intended to be accessible, useful and engaging to a broader audience (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis 1997). The portraits have been written for the communities of the artworks and presented to them through a website, public display and being placed in book form in local libraries. The research also aims to be useful for those who work and make decisions in the field of public art such as council arts and culture officers, artists who work with communities and people who are interested in community engagement and participation. A display of the final thesis and all of the original drawings was presented at Victoria University MetroWest in mid 2018, in order to share the research with the student community of Victoria University, as well as with the local community of Footscray and the Western Suburbs of Melbourne.

The research outcomes also contribute to the academic discourse of public art, through the contribution of three papers, conference presentations and the thesis.

Contribution to the literature

Community made artworks have been given sparse attention in academic literature. They have been predominantly theorised in the field of community arts, generalised, stereotyped and rarely brought into the context of permanent public art. Most literature which tells the stories of permanent public art made by community members, takes the form of reports which lack rigorous analysis, and contextual frameworks. In this form, they have little opportunity to be utilised in academic theory. This research will focus on the process, as well as redressing the lack of theory about the art object itself. This research will bring to light particular stories of permanent public artworks made by community members and the meanings of the artwork for those involved.

Giving respect and voice to the makers

The community members who participate in making public art are often viewed as receivers of experiences and their participation is often framed by concepts of ‘welfare’ and ‘engagement’ (Jacob 1995). These are narrow perspectives about the outcomes of community participation in art making. This research broadens our understanding of what is good about community members making permanent public art as creators, artists and contributors of knowledge. It will also benefit those people who have been involved in this type of art by telling their stories and sharing their perspectives and experiences.

Discourse

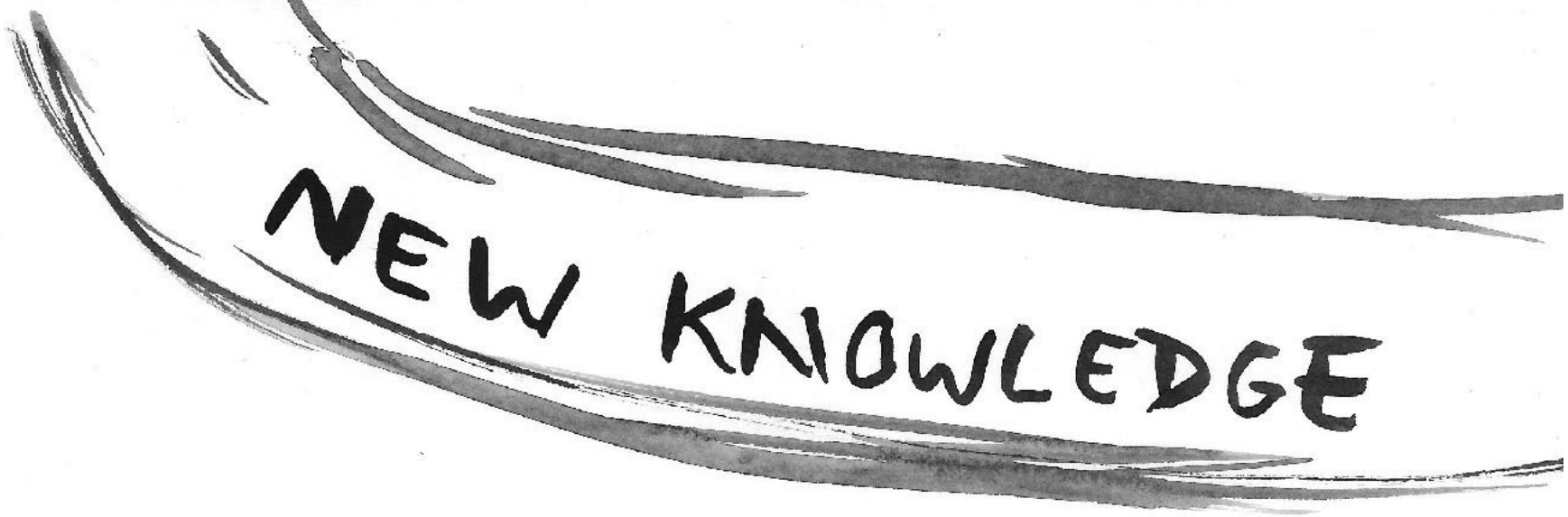
This research provides new insights, perspectives and knowledge which will shape the way in which other artists, art-workers and theorists approach and understand permanent public art made by community members. It will disrupt discourses which narrow the focus of public art by defining it in terms of commissioned works by the authorities of public space and its being made by artists within ideologies of the art-world. These dominant discourses separate art in public space from the public.

I seek to broaden the discourse of public art by including perspectives about permanent public art made by community members.

Socio-political processes of learning

This research examines how permanent public artworks made by community members play educative roles in public space, in particular ‘socio-political processes of learning stimulated by art’ (Schuermans, Loopmans & Vandenabeele 2012, p. 677). Within the context of public pedagogy, public artworks made by community members can be seen as an enactment of citizenship within public space and as an educative arena where norms of public space and dominant social discourse are challenged (Sandlin, O'Malley & Burdick 2015). Likewise, these artworks can be seen as educative, as over time they have the opportunity to shape identity and history of a place, and also to create discourse about permanent public art made by community members.

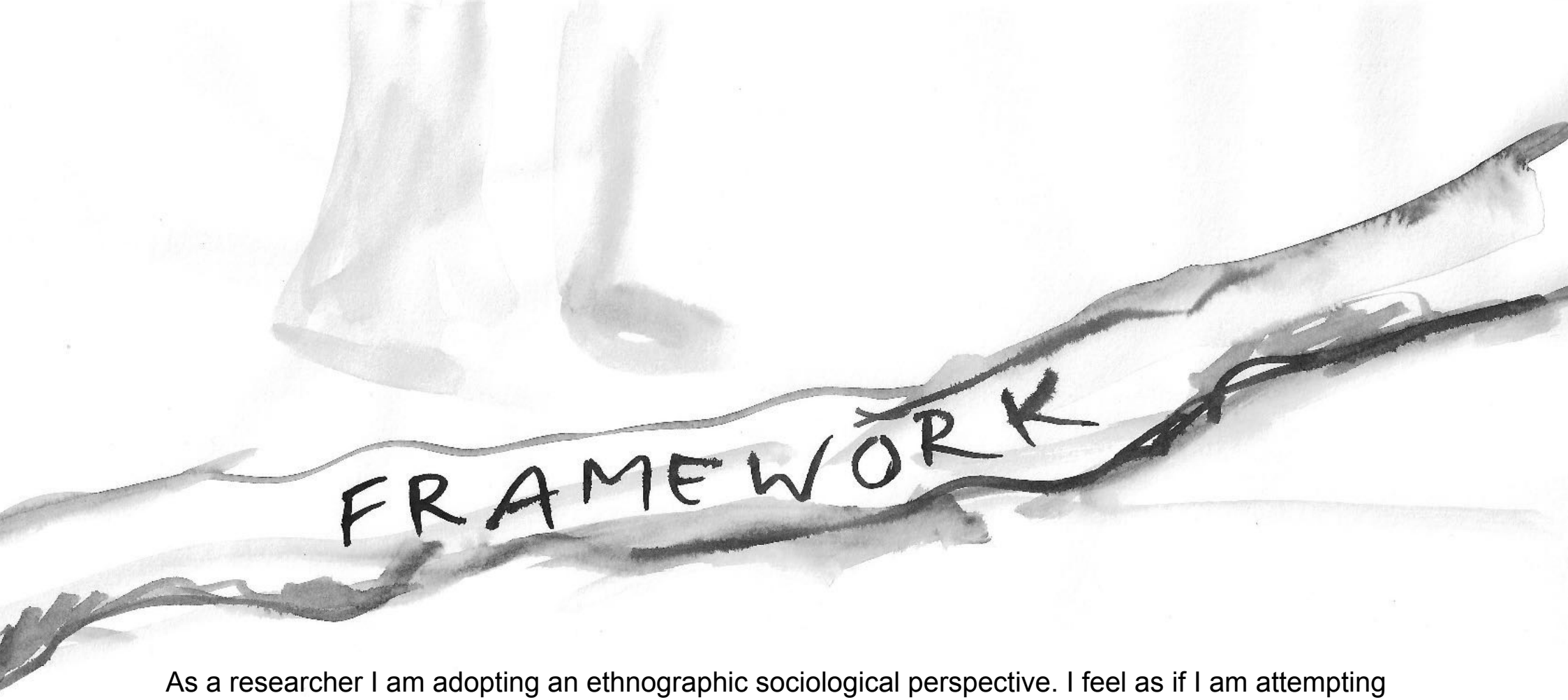
Debbie Qadri



I will be adding to the knowledge base about permanent public art which has been made by community members. This research will present the perspectives and experiences of the makers in an area where first-hand accounts are rare.

Through my research I will be weaving together the areas of cultural democracy, social and political readings of public space and current theory from the areas of public art and social art fields. By drawing from disparate areas of theory which contribute to our understanding of art in public space, my research will allow new knowledge and a broader range of perspectives to emerge (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005).

WORLD VIEW
AND
THEORETICAL



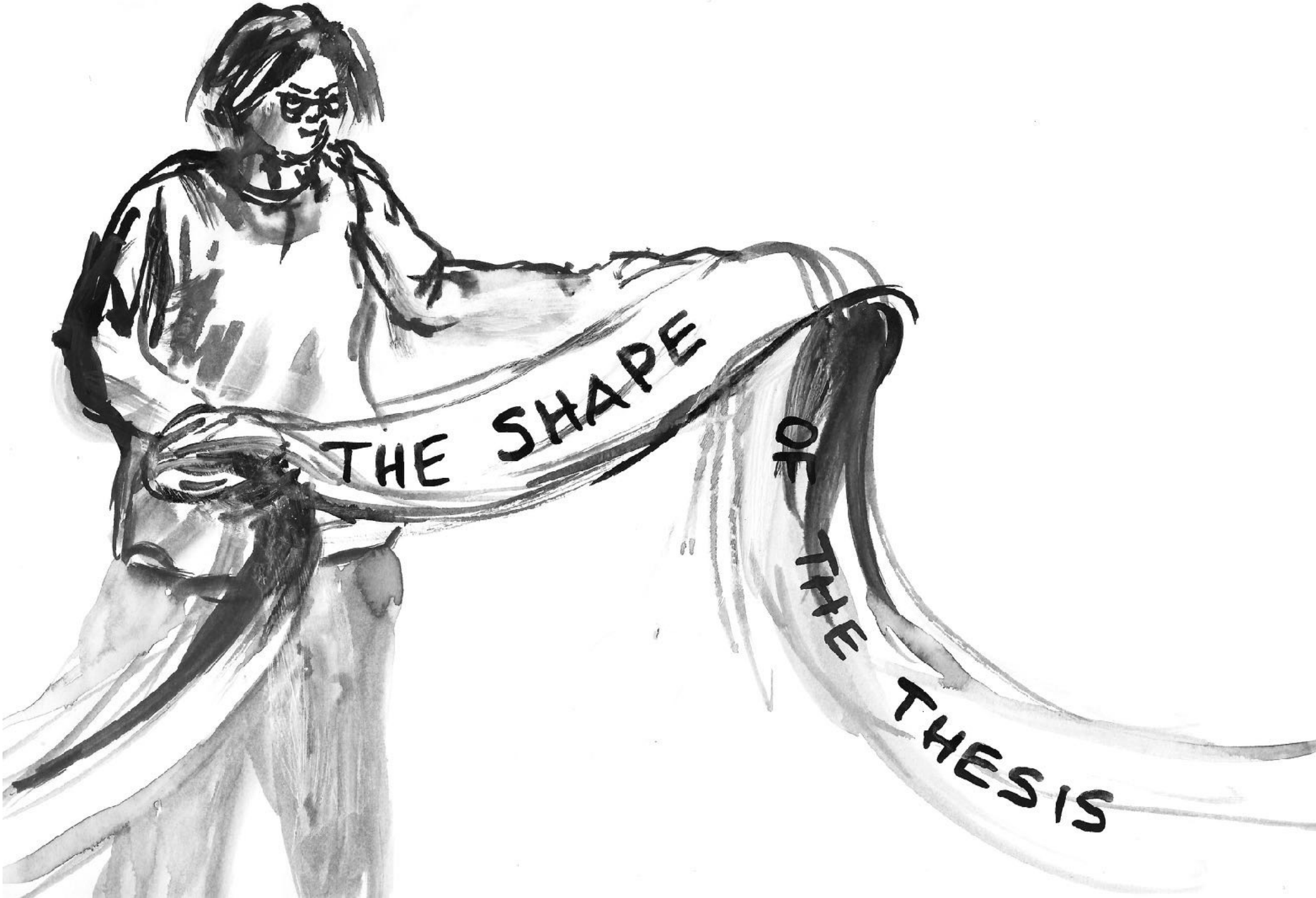
As a researcher I am adopting an ethnographic sociological perspective. I feel as if I am attempting to research from a position outside of the art-world/s, which I regard as being culturally constructed. However, in my role of being an artist, I am also inside the art-world and need to work within it. I need to incorporate the ideology of art worlds into my art practice, in order to operate as an artist in these worlds.

Miwon Kwon refers to the paradox I experience:

> ‘Artists. No matter how deeply convinced of their anti-institutional sentiment or how adamant their critique of dominant ideology, are inevitably engaged, self-servingly or with ambivalence, in this process of cultural legitimation’ (Kwon 2002, p. 38-39).

An example would be that in order to apply for a space to display this research, I had to submit a profile that demonstrated my status as an artist. In order to practise as an artist, with communities in public space, I have to project the idea that I am an artist with experience, a good reputation, and that my artworks are of value. I construct the ‘artist self’ and present it on a Curriculum Vitae, on websites, and through the role I play when I meet with prospective commissioners. Art worlds may be viewed as ideological and culturally determined, but engagement within them is inevitable if you want an audience, a place to show your work, funding or commissions.

Contrary to what ‘Art History’ would tell us, my contention is that every person has the ability to make art and participate in producing culture. I believe that being able to contribute to public space is an integral aspect of democracy and an action towards greater equity. I am interested in how permanent public art made by community members contributes to these ideas. Instead of viewing this as ‘community art’, or separate from what artists do, I view it as people contributing to the visual imagery in their own public space and contributing as producers of art and culture. In this thesis, I often refer to ‘artists’ as those who self identify as artists or work professionally (for wages), but I also want to claim that anyone can be an artist, that we all have the potential and capacity to speak through visual language and that we all have something valuable to say.


THE SHAPE
OF
THE THESIS

This research follows the methodology of Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1995; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997) for data collection, analysis and findings. The data and analysis have been rendered into three portraits, comprising: a self-portrait, and two portraits of artworks - *The Tree Project* (*The Blacksmith's Tree*) and *The Great Wall of St Kilda*.

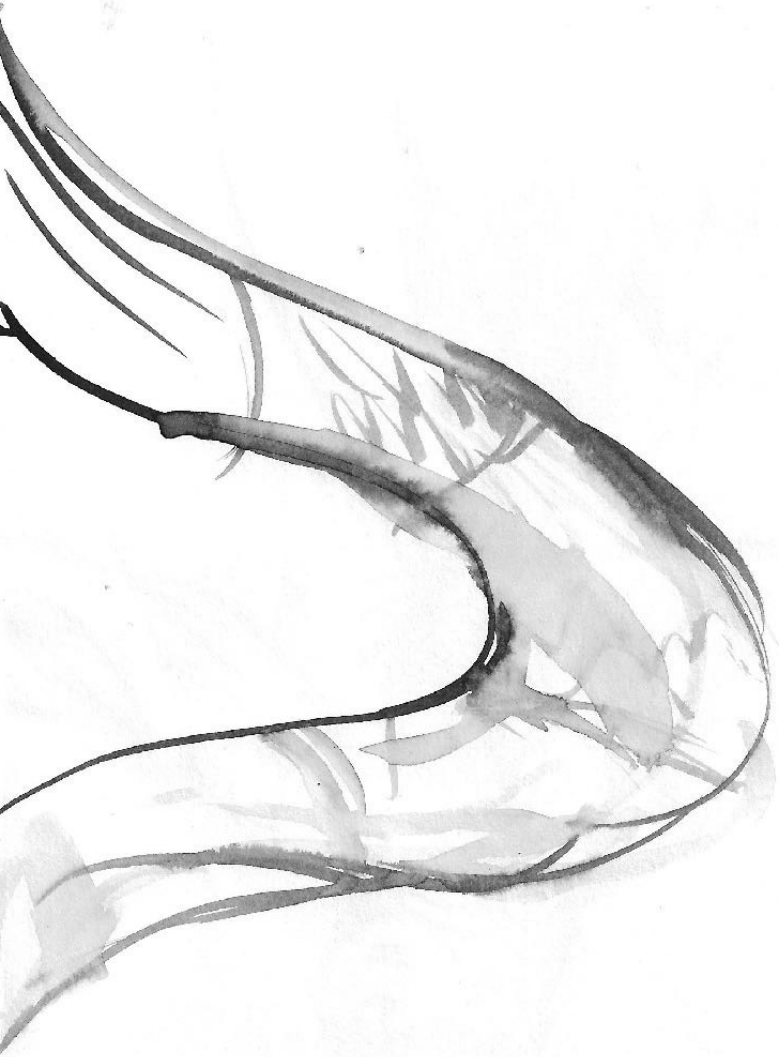
The self-portrait is divided into three parts, 'Prelude' (first part which sets out the researcher's experience, perspective and bias before research commences), 'The Scroll' (which explicates the development of the methodology) and 'Epilogue', (which presents the findings of the research within the researcher's personal journey).

The methodology of the thesis is in three sections; 'Research Design', 'The Scroll', and 'After the Scroll'.

The table below shows how aspects of research (listed as headings top right) have been incorporated in respective thesis chapters and clarifies where the portraits are situated. Darker shades represent more overt inclusion of research aspects.

Aspects of Research Within each chapter	*Literature Reviewed*	*Method And methodology*	*Portraits*	*Self-portrait*	*Analysis*
Prelude					
Introduction					
Literature Review					
Drawn into Portraiture					
The Scroll					
After the Scroll					
The Blacksmith's Tree					
The Great Wall of St Kilda					
Analysis					
Epilogue					

Fig.1 How aspects of research have been incorporated across the thesis



CURLING

An important focus which emerged during the research was ensuring that ethics of the research methods and outcomes were compatible with the research subject, or to ‘reconcile the subject matter with the vehicle that’s carrying it’ (Qadri 2017). This was borne of paradoxes between my art practice with communities and the traditional methods and outcomes of research. In my mind, the subject matter was about access and agency for all, but traditional academic writing was skewed towards a very narrow and specialised audience and was difficult to access. During the process of this research, there was an upheaval and up-turning, so that the focus and format of the thesis was turned towards an imagined audience of the community involved with the subject matter, instead of a predominantly academic audience. This audience of ‘community’ was given priority before others. In this way I imagined that the ethics of my community art practice and the ethics of my research had become in sync, curling or spooning together.

The two portraits of artworks have been created for and were presented to the communities involved in the artworks, before being placed in the thesis. Details of this is explained in more detail in ‘After the Scroll’. Three related papers were also published during the research process and these are included in the Appendices.

During this research, I also developed a wariness of curling. For one of the papers I wrote for an academic journal, I had re-drawn many of the images, which fitted together and had a consistent

style - but I had lost the sharpness, emotion and the gut-speaking voice of the original works. Like ‘fantasies of public space as a unified totality without conflicts or difference’ (Kwon 2002, p. 79-80) the aesthetics and the continuity (smoothness and self-containment) of this thesis, should also be considered with skepticism. I continue to reserve suspicion about the aesthetic roles of public art and the academic roles of thesis writing. Research is subjective and both writing and art are seductive. I urge you to proceed with caution.

3 Public Art and Power: Review of Literature

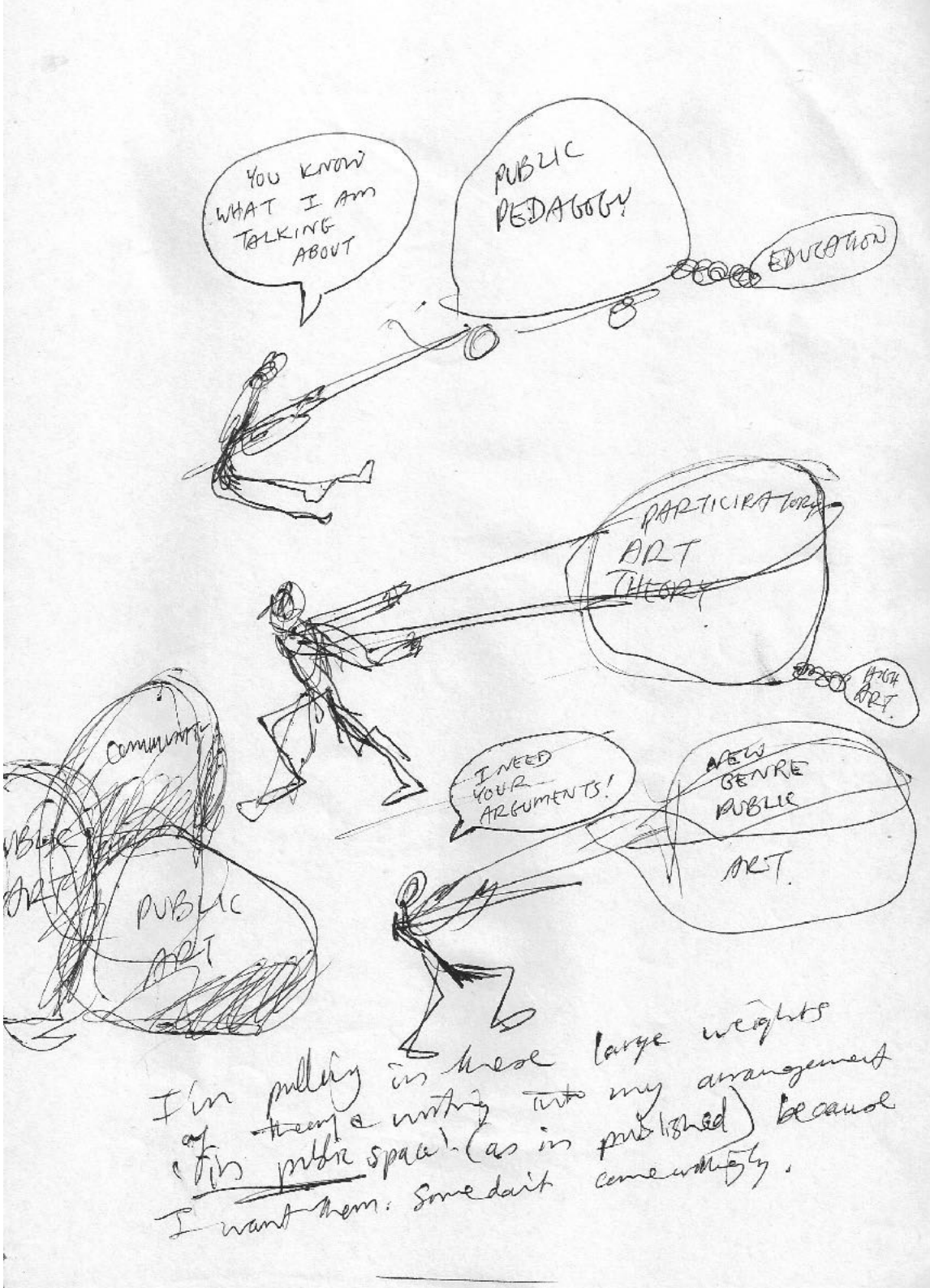
Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to review literature which contributes to the practice of permanent public art made by community members. There seems to be no central field of literature that pertains specifically to the practice - but there is a wealth of writing about permanent public art and about a range of participatory practices where community members contribute to making temporary public art. Seldom do these two fields meet in literature but they have much to contribute to our understanding of permanent public art made by community members.

Those who write about public art come from diverse fields of research, including disciplines of human and cultural geography, art history, anthropology, and sociology (Zebracki & Palmer 2017). Subsequently, in this review literature has been drawn from a broad range of areas which contribute to the topic.

It could be that my perspective about ‘permanent public art made by community members', is not the general way of thinking about it, not ‘common sense’ (Mouffe 2000, p. 6), or ‘sensible’ (Ranciere, 2004b). Most of the philosophical underpinnings of my experience of working in this field seem to be echoed by authors writing about new genre public art, social art, community arts and community cultural development, but few of these writers engage with the idea of what it means when the art made by community members is permanent and in public space.

Through reviewing the literature, it became clear that democracy and power are integral aspects of any discussion of public art, its role in public space, its relationship with the public. Some theorists argue that public art often reiterates dominant ideology and excludes ‘other narratives’ - including; gender, race, colonisation, class and exclusion. Participatory art processes, contrarily, have been imagined as having the power to invert these power relations through their inclusion of public participation and political aspects.



Art worlds and Western narratives

This research focuses on public art in a western world context and utilises the concepts of art worlds as being culturally and socially constructed; in this way producing the discourse of public art. Becker describes art worlds as being constituted from the activity of a large number of people in co-operation, in both producing artworks and the life of the artwork, affecting the production and consumption of art (Becker 1982). Irvine (2017) contends that, 'the primary function of the art-world is to continually define, validate, maintain and reproduce the cultural category of art, and to produce the consent of the entire society, in the legitimacy of the art worlds authority to do so' (par. 1). Struggle for power and hierarchy within art worlds are evidenced in discourses which seek to value particular types of art, art-forms or artists above others. Hierarchies are developed through the use of terms such as 'high art', and 'popular art' (Hawkins 2012; Kristeller 1951). Kristeller (1951) traces the origins of 'high art', to the separation of 'high' or fine arts and crafts in the eighteenth century. He argues that art it is not 'universal' and 'timeless', but is instead 'historical' (Woodmansee 1994, pp. 5-7).

Structure of Review

Key Terms - explores the key terms of the research, in particular, those in the title phrase ‘permanent public art made by community’, and in what context they are used.

Public Art - explores the definition of public art and identifies ensuing paradoxes within the field.

Notions of Community and Public - explores the ways in which ‘community’ is understood within theory of public art, and how the related terms of: *participation*, *engagement*, *consultation*, and *public* are used.

Permanent and Public - explores aspects which are particular to the artwork being permanent and public (materials, objects, site and place, permanence, audience, aesthetics and duration), that constitute differences from community and participatory art.

Practice - surveys literature specifically about permanent public artworks made by community members, and how this contributes to our understanding of the field.

Moving Forward - Summarises gaps in literature and opportunities for future research.

Key Terms

This thesis specifically examines the area of ‘permanent public art made by community members’, and, in the following, these terms are framed for how they will be used in the research.

Community Members: In this research ‘community members’ refers to a gathering of people not identified as artists who have a role in making the artwork, and ‘where different people find the same work meaningful’ (McLeod et al. 2004, p. 20), with ‘a unity in purpose and intent’ (Murphy and O’Driscoll 2015, p. 347). There is a need to be critically aware of the term ‘community’, as it is ubiquitously used. Although the term is rarely used unfavourably, unanimity is not always good (Murphy and O Driscoll 2015). Kester offers three ways of imagining how people can be grouped into a community: through spatial or institutional boundaries, in relation to specific issues, or, in connection to specific identities. In any given project these categories overlap and complicate each other (Kester 1995). Community members could also be envisaged as individuals who act alone in making artwork in public space and, although this is mentioned, it is not the focus of this research.

Making and made by community: In the context of this research, ‘making’ is where the community member individually manipulates the materials with their hand or tools, and/or their creative work exists in the final permanent artwork - thus, there is a direct relation between making and the final art object. In some public art

commissions there are instances where intellectual contributions such as phrases and information are contributed by community members but are edited, transposed or rearranged. In this research I focus on the direct inclusion of text in the final artwork. I noticed that when I explained the research to others I usually said that the work is 'made' by community or it is 'community-made'. I realised that I focused on the artwork itself, suggesting that the artwork is different *through being made* by a community. This research subsequently focuses on the object - the permanent public artwork that is *made* by community.

'Made by community members' also infers a difference between a community member and an artist. In this research, the term 'artist' usually refers to someone who self-identifies as an artist, although I also want to say that everyone is an artist and can make art.

Permanent: Of course no artwork is really permanent. 'Permanent' in this thesis refers to artwork which is not ephemeral and which is intended to be permanent in the foreseeable future. The two artworks presented as portraits in this thesis were purposely made to survive 100 years.

Public Art: The term 'public art' in this thesis is used to denote artworks which are situated in the public realm, or places where the public frequent. Cartiere and Willis (2008) expand the definition of public art using terms which 'continually evolve', such as; interventions, political activism, service art, site-specific works, community-produced projects, spatial practice, interdisciplinary activism, contextual practice, and social

practice art (p. 8). They suggest, ‘it is only the public art administrators and officials who seem willing to simply use the term public art’; and again they tend to only include artworks which are produced by their own programs (ibid., p. 9). Many theorists define public art through the ‘context in which the artwork is received’ for example within the ‘public-art sphere’, rather than within ‘artworld institutions’ (Baldini 2014, p. 9), and locate public art outside the spaces and conventions of galleries and museums (Miles 2005). This definition is countered by Shaffrey (2010) who includes art inside publicly funded buildings. Differences are caused because what constitutes public space is problematic (ibid.), and likewise, the relationship between public art and the art world.

Differing understandings and uses of these terms will be explored in more detail in this review.

What is Art?

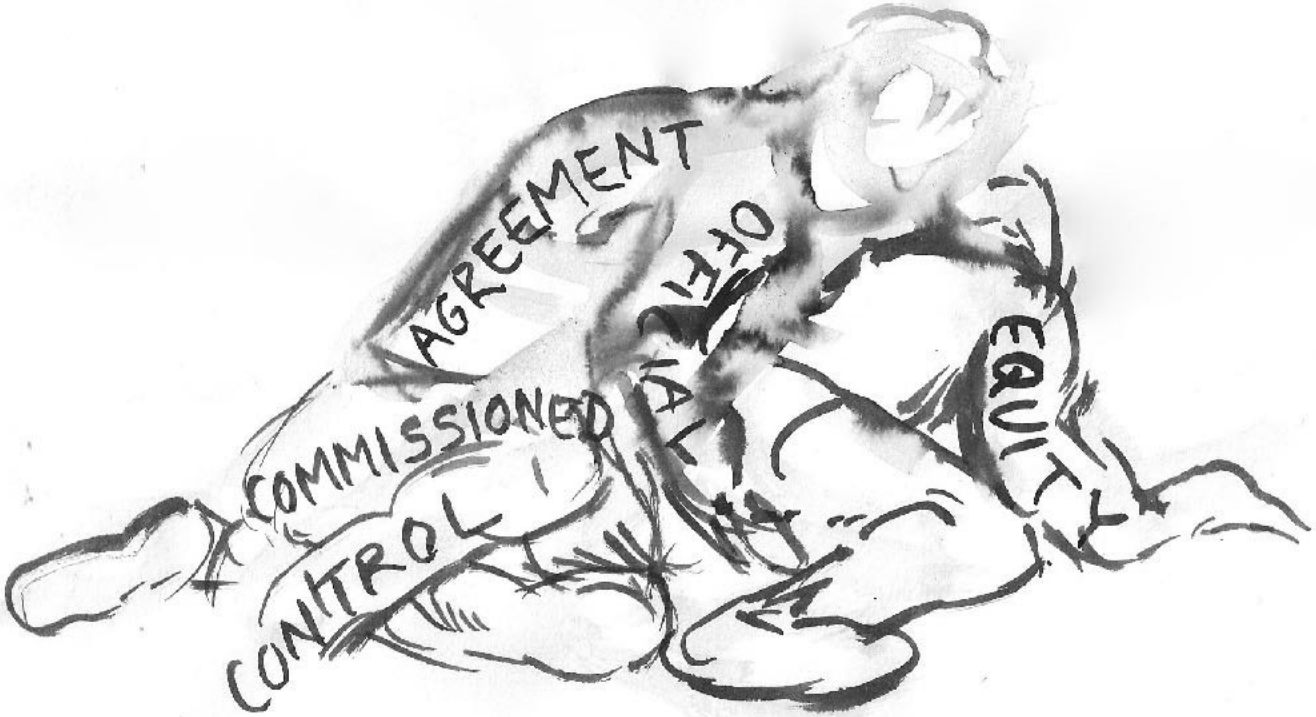
Something which cannot be said.

> 'According to Aristotle, man's highest capacity of contemplation whose chief characteristic is that its content cannot be rendered in speech' (Arendt, 1958, p. 27).

O'Sullivan (2001) says that art is *apart* from the world, and it is this apartness which constitutes art's importance. Arendt (1958) explains it is 'removed from the exigencies and wants of daily life', 'not used', and 'not able to be worn out' (p. 167). In this description Arendt alludes to how art is imagined as apart, but also permanent and immortal:

> 'It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by human hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read' (Arendt 1958, p. 168).

Arendt (1958) later goes on to say that every object is *seen* and in this way transcends its functional use, 'its beauty or ugliness, is identical with appearing publicly and being seen' (p. 173). In both of the above statements art is related to the urge to *speak* and the need for an audience in order to be *read*, *heard* or *seen,* but also then opened to judgement.


AGREEMENT
OFFICIAL
EQUITY
COMMISSIONED
CONTROL

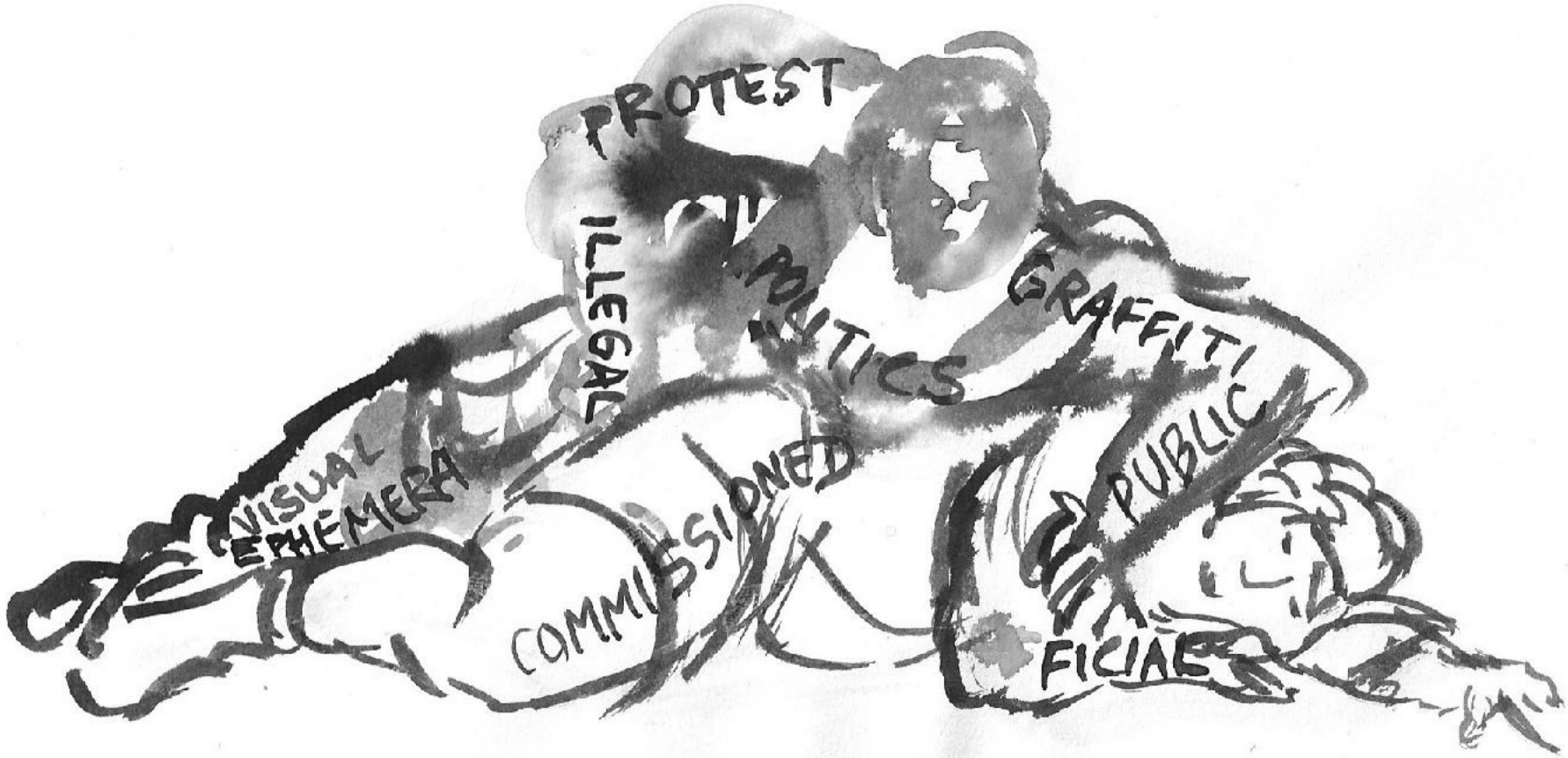
Anderson and Conlan (2013) reflect that it is through the arts that human beings have always found their most deeply held values and beliefs. In my own practice, I feel that art is often the artist's method of searching and finding, and the artist then *speaks* in order to be *heard* or *seen* through the work. The audience in turn search the artwork in order to find its meaning. Some which is *found* in the viewer's individual interpretation.

Public Art

Narratives and Discourse

Literature referring to ‘public art’ tends to be about official and sanctioned public art that is commissioned. Public art policies, guidelines and strategies mostly define public art as commissioned work. Simpson (2017) exposes the currency of this idea when she says, ‘public art can be considered any work of art purchased through public funding via donation or by government commission’ (Simpson 2017, par. 3). Likewise, Fazarkerley (2008) says, ‘public art refers principally to government sponsored or funded artwork; created by (or with) professional artists; and legally sited in publicly accessible venues’ (p. 4). These definitions focus on agreement, control, legality and the financial exchange of the art object. This is a discourse generated by the official bodies of public art and the authorities of public space and often focuses on commissioned works by artists (Cartiere & Willis 2008; Young 2016).

In contrast to the way authorities define public art as commissioned works, some theorists use terms, paradigms, and models to describe a more inclusive field of ‘public art’. For example; art-in-public- places, art-as-public-spaces, art-in-the-public-interest (Kwon 2002, p. 56) site specific, expanded field (Krauss 1979),


PROTEST
ILLEGAL
POLITICS
GRAFFITI
VISUAL
EPHEMERA
COMMISSIONED
PUBLIC
FICIAL

street art (Young 2016) post-graffiti, urban painting, tags, throw-ups, pieces, stencils, stickers, posters, urban art (Waclawek, 2008). Kwon identifies a complexity of competing definitions which emerge and operate in the field of public art (Kwon 2002). Lippard (1995), likewise, broadens the field of public art, by making a list of 'genres of "outlooking" art about place' (p. 121) which includes a range of types of visual imagery including community made works, small and large, illegal and un-permissioned.

Some theorists draw connections across fields of art in public space. Murphy and O'Driscoll (2015) refer to graffiti, protest prints and handwritten placards in their discussion of how visual ephemera in public space engages the participants and spectators politically, and creates emotion and effects. Links are made between graffiti, and the 'mainstream art world', advertising (Young 2016), the history of art, and lettering in the landscape (Waclawek 2008). All of these could be seen as part of a 'wider outdoor arts and media landscape' (Iveson, McAuliffe, Murray & Peet 2014, p. 5). This can be imagined as a space of tension and interaction between genres in an ever-moving, ongoing, push and pull scenario, where commissioned permanent public art (perceived perhaps as the most powerful in terms of being authorised, funded, and durational) is affected and altered by the other genres around it (Qadri 2016). Image-making in the contemporary city is always in flux and always contested (Young, 2016) as 'inter- twined multiplicities of public art, space and identity are constantly renegotiated' (Zebracki & Palmer 2017, p. 5).

We could also imagine a type of wrestling where authorities use policy to promote their understanding and use of ‘public art’, but where, at the same time, un-commissioned art forms challenge this by being also in the same space - often in the same form and materials as the official ‘public art’, but in differing contexts. The wrestling could also be imagined in the process by which artworks ‘get up’ and how discourse is developed to favour one above the other. Michel Foucault reminds us that discourse doesn’t merely occur - it is *produced*.

> ‘In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers’ (Foucault 1970, p. 52).

Literature about public art often focuses on power. From Foucault’s viewpoint it is power outside the artwork (in the structures which contribute to the artwork’s being). For example, he imagines discourse as being controlled, but also desired, ‘the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized’ (Foucault 1970, p. 53). We can imagine the discourse about public art as one which is, selected, organised and redistributed by those in control, and by its various ‘disciplines’ (Foucault 1970, p. 61).

The Western Narratives of ‘Public Art’

Australian Aboriginal rock art and the cave paintings at Lascaux could be considered early examples of public art (Lacy 1995; Young 2016; Shaffrey 2010). Likewise, socially engaged arts practice has existed for centuries (Badham 2010).

In considering the ‘history’ of public art, some theorists urge caution. Lacy (1995) suggests ‘with history . . . the construction of meaning depends on who is doing the making’ (p. 21). ‘Public art’ history tends to draw on a particular western narrative (ibid.,), it is one story of ‘public art’ which has excluded many artists and practices. Hence Paton’s (2018) comments about the ‘canon’ of art history, that it is; ‘a story that’s told about which artworks are the most resonant and the most important’, and that ‘a single oppressive canon has been questioned for so long now that I think most of us are attuned to the fact that there are many contending stories’ (Paton 2018, in Gadsby (film)).

It is with this understanding of history as a story - a construction which was selected, organised and redistributed by those in control (Foucault 1970), that I retell the western narrative of *the beginnings of public art*. These are usually attributed to the USA and UK government ‘per cent for art’ programmes (Cartiere 2008; Lacy 1995; Finkelpearl 2001; Shaffrey 2010). Finkelpearl (2001) describes the thinking behind the movement as an ‘elitist’ and ‘top-down approach’, created to give the public access and exposure to the best art outside

of museum walls (p. 22, 44, 45). Programs where new building infrastructure required a percentage of the budget to be used for public art, assisted the art form's proliferation (Lacy 1995). In Australia, The Visual Arts Board, of the Australia Council, established its Public Art program in 1973, which has been criticised for privileging only certain art forms, certain definitions and the practices of professional, rather than amateur artists (Fazakerley 2008).

Thus above, we see the origins of public art in the Western narrative as emerging from government bodies which are concerned with bringing art to the people and into public space.

Suzanne Lacy (1995) suggests an 'alternative history of today's public art could be read through the development of various vanguard groups, such as feminist, ethnic, Marxist, and media artists and other activists' (p. 25). We could also tell the history of public art through the lens of political mural movements in Mexico and Ireland, through graffiti, or community arts practices.

Roles of Public Art

Many roles and functions have been attributed to public art, including: ideological, cultural, economic, and aesthetic.

Ideology

Ideological roles include social benefits such as civic pride, social interaction, a sense of community, local identity (Schuermans et al. 2012; Pollock & Sharp 2007) and the preservation of cultural tradition and historical continuity (Deutsche 1996). The ideological agendas of permanent artworks ‘endure over long periods of time and can create, inform and shape narratives of history and culture’ (Qadri 2016, p. 36). For example, Tola (2017) explains that statues have the ‘power to immortalise an intended ideology’, through their representation of, ‘the religion, history, culture, art, socio-economic and political practices’ of the nation (p. 35). Brophy (2015) suggests some of these statues are viewed as ‘distasteful symbols of discrimination and oppression' (par. 5) which cause continuing harm (ibid.).

Theorists who approach public art with the perspectives of critical theory, feminism, post-colonial theory, and political interpretations, raise the issue that public art usually perpetuates dominant narratives (Lippard 1995). Although it is argued that audiences are shaped by their cultural, social, political and psychological experiences which inform their encounter with the artwork (Shaffrey, 2010), the artwork also has an effect on

the viewer. Pollock and Sharp (2007) suggest that material permanence such as bronze and concrete, ‘renders such narratives fixed and incontrovertible’ (p. 1063). This raises concerns about how places become ‘heritage’, ‘as the appropriation of the past is discerning, certain pasts are inevitably excluded’ (ibid., p. 1063).

Lippard (1995) writes about the importance of researching and taking into account the local, the locale, the location, the locality and the place (histories, class, race, gender, cultural divisions, common grounds, land use/abuse, geography, environment, town-planning) as part of an ethical art practice. For example, she says ‘if only white history is studied, the place remains hidden’ (ibid., p.118). Lippard draws our attention to one of the obstacles to this ethical practice - the current system of distribution where, ‘art must be relatively generalised, detached from politics and pain’ (ibid., p.114). Murphy and O’Driscoll (2015) attribute ephemeral interventions as transforming places into spaces of ‘representation for those who have been denied them, or mechanisms for disseminating authoritarian representations of space’ (p. 334). These arguments (and others like them) contribute to the knowledge that public artworks are powerful in terms of their capacity to express ideology.

History and Commemoration

Pollock and Sharp (2007) remind us that ‘traditional urban public art tends to serve a commemorative function: war memorials and statues of the distinguished but deceased are an accepted part of the urban vocabulary’ (p. 1061). Leib 2002, explains how statues create symbolic landscapes. His research of an

avenue of southern civil war monuments in Richmond, USA, revealed underlying debates on issues of race relations, identity and power. Leib explained that the ideological roles of statuary are being challenged because they represent the history of particular regimes:

> 'Symbols, such as monuments, are a central element of a political territory's iconography, the set of common symbols, ideas and values, promoted by a state to bind its citizens' loyalties to that state' (Leib 2002, p. 289).

Likewise, in Australia and New Zealand, statuary which celebrates colonial heroes (such as Captain Cook) has been defaced as part of the ongoing debate about their role in representing the white colonial narrative of Australian history (see Higgins-Desbiolles 2017 & Ainge Roy 2016).

Economic Value

Public art is intrinsically connected with economics through how it is funded and rationalised in economic terms. There is a growing trend to justify funding of permanent public art in terms of economic development and industry, the attraction of tourists and investors to the area (Schuermans et al., 2012) and urban revitalisation (Pollock & Sharp 2012; Lacy 1995). These aspects of public art are often contentious. Deutsche describes this purposeful connection between art, economics, new architecture and landscapes as 'serving as the aesthetic arm of oppressive urban growth policies' (Deutsche 1996, p. 291). Similarly, Kwon (2002b) warns that the paternalistic basis of public art, where 'artists and architects, as well as the sponsoring

government agency, know best what is good for the public', carries across from art that will benefit them, to 'a commercial mode of public address' (p. 3). Public art which has a heritage context, also is seen as having economic value (Pollock & Sharp 2007) as tourism.

Michel Foucault (1970) draws our attention to economic practices which might 'rationalise themselves, and justify themselves in a theory of wealth and production' whilst also being used to support a discourse (p. 55). The context of economics, confirms ideas about 'public art' as being commissioned works and excludes art which is not part of financial exchange or economic benefit.

Architectural Landscapes and Urban Regeneration

Public art's partnership with architecture in situations such as urban revitalisation, civic beautification, urban regeneration and place-shaping (Kwon 2002; Deutsche 1996; Usher & Strange 2011) is often criticised. When public art is used *with* architecture, the involvement by architects and engineers can be viewed as drawing it away from being 'art' and towards being 'work which attends to architecture' (Richard Serra, quoted in Kwon 2002, p. 72, original source not supplied).

Public art can also play a role in assisting to 'clean-up' problem areas of the city. Young (2016) tells how Adrian Doyle's artwork 'Empty Nursery Blue', was one of three interventions in the Hosier/Rutledge lane precinct in Melbourne used to stop disorderly behaviour. It is an example of 'how street art can be put to use

by a municipality as a mode of urban governance' (ibid., p. 179). In a similar vein, benefits of community art in public space are explained as 'the reduction and control of graffiti' and the 'reduction of vandalism to community assets' (ACT Government, 2015). Likewise, legal graffiti murals are described as 'effective at deterring vandalism' (Verel 1997, p. 4). Again, we see the power of commissioned public art to control the use of the space and its narratives.

Public Art's Relationship with Ideas of Art and the Art World

Many argue that public art has been valued in the terms of art world ideology, 'like extensions of the museum, advertising individual artists and their accomplishments (and by extension their patron's status) rather than making any genuine gesture towards public engagement' (Kwon, 2002, p. 65). Public art has a difficult relationship with the art-world because it is often modelled on the art world, but differs through its commissioning processes, placement in public space, attributed political and social roles and accessibility to a broader audience.

Public art is often criticised as not relating to real art. Cartiere and Willis suggest 'there has been an unspoken consensus in the fine-art establishment that 'public art', is synonymous with compromise and dilution' (2017, p. 72), and, that there is a general distaste for the mass proliferation of public art through urban regeneration programs (Hawkins 2012). Public art is often criticised for its lack of relationship to the site and the public - described as 'overblown versions of studio-based sculpture' (Phillips 1995, pp. 65-6), and, enlarged replicas

of works normally found in museums and galleries (usually by internationally established male artists) (Kwon 2002). In these instances, what makes these artworks public is their size, scale and being sited outdoors in publicly accessible places (Kwon 2002). Patricia Phillip's description of some as 'overscaled abstract sculpture' highlights the paradox of public art's ideological connection with the art world, and its (sometimes) non-connection with site or audience, through retaining a meaning 'embedded in the artist's intention' (Phillips 1995, p. 66). Artists parachute into the place (Kelley 1995; Lippard 1995). These artworks 'plonk' (Winikoff 2015) or 'Plop'(Kwon 2002b, p. 2), having little relationship with where they are 'dropped' (Lippard 1995, p. 212).

Miwon Kwon suggests that 'site-specific art', was a reaction to the glut of 'plop art' and an interest in making artworks more accessible and socially responsible in public space (Kwon 2002, p. 65-66). However, a further issue with public art is that sometimes when it is designed for a particular site, it gets moved by public demand, and without the artist's input, thus destroying its original (artist designed) site specificity (see Senie 1989).

Artists working in public space have multiple and often complex roles, needing to consider the needs and desires of the commissioners (council staff and urban developers), and the artwork's reception and audience (Phillips 1995). Artists often need to work in collaboration with architects, engineers and committees, and their work is made to serve a specific purpose. Given the number of stakeholders in any public artwork and the

power and pressures involved, the artist in this situation is often viewed as being compromised (Kelley 1995; Sharp 2007). Miwon Kwon (2002) suggests that the role of the artist has become ‘cultural-artistic service provider rather than a producer of aesthetic objects’ (p. 4), that of: ‘facilitator, educator, co-ordinator, and bureaucrat’ (p. 51).

These paradoxes arise in the differing roles that public art plays. Although in some aspects seeming opposite to art, modernist ideas about art objects and artists remain innate in the discourse of public art. Public art for the ‘public good’, demonstrates a paternal understanding of the role between those who make and place public art and the public who receive it, who will undoubtedly benefit from access to high quality art (Lacy 1995; Kwon 2002b). A distinction is created, between artists (who are renowned, and genius) (Gablik 1995; Badham 2010) and the public - a majority social body presumed to lack education and cultural refinement, who will be transformed through exposure (Kwon 2002b). Kelly (1984) says that although the idea of the genius still lives on, ‘there is no evidence to support this view of artistic genius’, nor evidence of difference between acts of genius and ‘the acts of the rest of us’ (p. 59).

Philosophy about community involvement in making permanent public artworks does not sit easily in either of these areas. Future research might address how these differences could be reconciled or viewed differently.

‘We must shift our thinking away from bringing great art to the people to working with people to create art that is meaningful’ (Lynn Sowder cited in Lippard 1995, p. 126).

Notions of Community and Public

This section explores the ways in which ‘community’ is understood in the theory of public art, and how the related terms of: *participation*, *engagement, consultation*, and *public* are used.

Community Consultation, Participation, Engagement

In Western art culture there is a current focus on public art as a vehicle for community participation (Pollock & Sharp 2012), and this is often seen in public art projects funded by government sources. For local government, there is a mandate for democratic decision making to be ‘legitimate (representative and accountable)’ and a ‘statutory obligation to engage in wide consultation’ (Brackertz et al. 2005, p. 6).

Consultation, participation and engagement are seen as democratic processes in public art commissioning but there has been little research about whether they provide democratic outcomes. Many consider the use of these terms as little more than ‘tokenism’ (Pollock & Sharp 2012, p. 3063) and as methods of involving the public in the commissioning process in order to prevent or forestall potentially hostile receptions to artworks (Kwon 2002). The terms participation, consultation and engagement have been applied to a variety of processes such as, feedback on designs, choosing the design or the artist, contributing stories, knowledge or

subject matter and having community members on a decision-making board. ‘Community consultation’ is an important phrase in public art commissioning policy, where it is seen as a means of establishing agreement. ‘Consultation is the process of informed communication between council and the community on an issue prior to the council making a decision or determining a direction on that issue’ and ‘participation means that the community is involved in governance activities’ (Brackertz et al. 2005, p. 10).

Consultation does not form part of this research but I have included it in the discussion of public participation terminology because it plays a role in attenuating to the ‘public’ of public art. It indicates a perceived need for community involvement in public art commissioning, and a concern with the audience of public art and the constituents who contribute to the public money which funds it - the ‘public’ of public art.

Participation

From the literature, the term ‘participation’ seems to fall into two main areas of public art practice: participation in the development, design and decision-making of permanent public artworks made by artists, and participation in making ephemeral artworks which are made or located in public space.

Participation in public art, often utilises participatory art philosophy and rhetoric (for example see Bishop 2006). Bishop identifies reasons for the funding of participation in public art at various places and times. For

example, in Northern Europe in the 2000s, participatory art was funded ‘as a way to reinforce social inclusion agendas, in the USA, social practice evolved in relation to social injustices and in Britain the rhetoric of socially engaged art was used (Bishop 2006). Bishop argues that participatory art emerges in times of political upheaval and there is often a political aspect attributed to community participation (Bishop 2014).

Participation in public art is often used in urban renewal projects, reflecting the influence of new genre public art approaches (Sharp 2007). Often participatory workshops and activities contribute knowledge and designs for a permanent artwork solely made by an artist. Participation does not necessarily guarantee inclusion. Pollock and Sharp (2012) express their concerns about the rhetoric of participation in public art because, through their research, they found that participation processes may cause community members to feel disenfranchised and antagonistic.

Conflations - Community, Democracy and Public?

Rosalyn Deutsche (1996) claims that the discourse about public art 'is a site of debates about the meaning of democracy (p. 271). Relationships between the community and the artwork are often established through concepts of *consultation, participation* and *engagement*.

> 'Democracy, then, has a difficulty at its core. Power stems from the people but belongs to nobody' (Deutsche 1996, p. 273).

The paradox of democracy is that individuals make up community. There is a dichotomy of individual interests and the community well-being. Arendt (1958) writes; 'In man, otherness which he shares with everything that is distinctness, which he shares with everything alive, become uniqueness, and human plurality is the paradoxical plurality of unique beings' (p. 176). The community is always made up of individual people, and the involvement of community in any artwork is also the involvement of unique individuals. Likewise, community consultation is not often with the community, but with a small number of individuals.

Democratic concepts are often used to establish the relationship between the community and public artwork. I have attempted to use the terms *consultation, participation* and *engagement*, sparingly in this thesis, as they are often used uncritically to engender ideas of democracy. Although my research is about community

members directly making the artwork, the above terms are more prominently used in theory about community involvement in public art. It is important to understand how these terms are used within the discourse of public art to establish relationships between the artwork and the community/audience/public. Often these ways of involving community in the artwork infer that the community have had input into the artwork, but they also encapsulate power relations.

For example, the word 'public' has several uses some of which are related to discriminating, positioning and power. Finkelpearl writes:

> 'The word "public" is associated with the lower classes (public school, public transportation, public housing, public park, public assistance, public defender) as opposed to the word "private" which is associated with private (private school, private car, private home . . .). Art is generally associated with the upper classes, at least in terms of those who consume it - collectors and museum audiences' (Finkelpearl 2001, p. x).

Finkelpearl (2001) suggests 'public' is a problematic word because 'the history of public art is most often told with an emphasis on the word 'art', and very little consideration of the public context' (p. 5).

‘Public art’ is also referred to as a contradictory and contested notion because it can be considered neither *public*, nor *art* (Rendell 2006; Zebracki 2013). Deutsche (1996) also questions how it constitutes ‘public’, considering the ways in which it is orchestrated and put into place:

> ‘When for instance, arts administrators and city officials draft guidelines for putting ‘art in public places’, they routinely use a vocabulary that invoke principles of both direct and representative democracy; are artworks for “the people?” Do they serve their “constituencies?” Public art frequently alludes to democracy as a form of government but also to a general democratic spirit of egalitarianism: Do the works avoid “elitism?” Are they “accessible?”" (Deutsche1996, p. 269-70).

Kester (1995) says the terms "public" and "community" imply ‘two very different relationships between the artist and the administrative apparatus of the city’.

> ‘The public artist most commonly interacts with urban planners, architects, and city agencies concerned with the administration of public buildings and spaces, while the community-based public artist more commonly interacts with social service agencies and social workers (women's shelters, homeless advocates, neighbourhood groups, etc.). In each case the interaction between the artist and the "public" or community is mediated through a discursive network of professional institutions and ideologies’ (Kester 1995, p. 2).

We could also ask why art *made* by the public (as a community or an individual, commissioned or otherwise) is not always called ‘public art’.

Participatory Art - (Engagement)

Alongside the interest in engaging the community in consultation and participation in permanent public art commissioning, there has also been an interest in engaging the community in producing artworks for public space. These artworks are not usually permanent and are usually generated by an artist’s practice. Sometimes these artworks are called participatory art and they appear in public space, as well as in art institutions and galleries. Finkelpearl (2014) says participatory artworks are not unified by a medium, but ‘by the fact that they were created through the participation of people’ (par. 3). Ironically, sometimes the participants are described as the artist’s ‘medium’ (Irwin 2015, p. viii; Bishop 2012, p. 6).

These practices focus on ‘the sphere of human inter-relations’ (Bourriad 2002, p. 28) and generally emerged from the 1990s onwards (Bishop 2006; Bourriad 2002). Each with differing conceptual frameworks, they include; the Social Turn (Bishop 2006; Boros 2011), New Genre Public Art (Lacy 1995), Relational Aesthetics (Bourriad 2002), Dialogical Aesthetics (Kester 2000), New Community Art (Kester 1995), Dialogue-based Public Art (Finkelpearl , 2000), New Situationism (Doherty, 2015) and Spatial Aesthetics (Papastergiadis 2006) amongst others. They share a common interest in process, the use of public space, and the

involvement of ‘the public’ as part of the artwork. There is an emphasis on participation and process, with a de-emphasis on the object, materiality and permanence of the art (Jacob 1995; Sharp 2007). These practices are ‘linked by a belief in the empowering creativity of collective action and shared ideas’ (Bishop 2006, p. 179). Where traditional public art has been presented in a manner which confers a sense of community good in an unproblematic fashion, participatory practice alternatively advocates resistance (Kwon 2002). One of the values of participatory art is that it is able to question mainstream ideology.

New genre art has taken on an importance in the field of ‘participation’ in public art (Sharp 2007, p. 275). It has been described by its protagonist Suzanne Lacy (1995) as a genre of public art in which artists practice, and also as a *discourse*. Kwon (2002b) says, ‘It seeks a “democratic” model of communication based on participation and collaboration of audience members in the production of a work of art’ (p. 2). In *Mapping the Terrain*, Lacy (1995) creates a theoretical position for new genre public art, and offers it as an alternative narrative which ‘re-visions’ history through the lens of leftist politics, social activism, redefined audiences and relevance for communities. She argues that new genre public art communicates and interacts with ‘a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives’ and that it has its base in engagement (ibid., p. 19).

Within the chapters of *Mapping the Terrain,* strong connections are made between public art, community making and equity. This discourse values the cultural input of community and celebrates what is good about

involving community members in doing the artwork. New Genre Public art also utilises concepts such as "empowerment" and "participatory democracy" in its rhetoric (Kester 1995, p. 3).

However, the philosophy of New Genre Public Art, participatory art and social art practices do not substantially explore the practice of permanent artworks made by community members. New Genre Public art tends to promote temporary works and lacks focus on the materiality, the objects involved in the process and end product (Kester 1995; Sharp 2007). Bishop (2014) suggests that as a consequence of this emphasis on process, the aesthetic, and the audience, are not given enough consideration. O'Neill (2010) articulates the irony that although participatory art does not often place emphasis on the end product, it is this end product which is often documented, written about and experienced.

Mary Jane Jacob (1995) contends that although participatory art practice has been adopted by art institutions, it is often devalued because it looks like social work, that it is made by the community instead of the artist, and therefore is not art. Clare Bishop (2006) warns that although participatory and collaborative art works are increasing, these practices 'have had for the most part, a relatively weak profile in the commercial art world - collective projects are more difficult to market than works by individual artists - and they're also less likely to be 'works' than social events, publications, workshops or performances' (p.178). The artwork could even be a meal, a dance party or a free school (Finkelpearl 2014).

New Genre Public Art does not clearly advocate community members making public artworks and often retains the paternalistic relationships between ‘artists and the collaborating audience members’ (Kwon 2002b, p. 3). Bishop suggests that contemporary movements in social art and New Genre Public Art do not align themselves with the idea of ‘community art’ and alludes to the difference in terms of ‘authorial status’ as these new aesthetic movements retain the artist as the author of the work, whereas community art tends to renounce authorship or attribute it to the community (Bishop 2006, 2016). This means that the terms 'community-based art’, and ‘participatory art’, are separated from ‘community art’, by how authorship is designated and the differentiation between the artist and participants/collaborators/audience.

Kwon (2002) also suggests that these artists do not see their work as part of the public art movement, but instead as social art practices - part of contemporary art culture or the integration of art and everyday life. This may explain why most of the artworks are ephemeral with less emphasis on the object.

Because social and participatory art practices don’t emphasise object-based work, theoretical engagement with the relationships between community participation and permanent public artworks have not been a focus in this field, and remains an area of opportunity for further research.

Discourse of ‘Community’ - Undercurrents of Power

Miwon Kwon (2002) warns that the term ‘community’ is ambiguous - consistent with discursive slippage around ‘audience,’ ‘site’ and ‘public’, which is a distinctive trait of community-based public art discourse. As such, Kwon argues, ‘the claims made of and for the ‘community’ by artists, curators, administrators, critics and various audience groups demand extensive critical analysis’ (ibid., p. 94).

The term ‘community’, is often automatically construed as being innately beneficial for the community involved - and so when the artwork is about a social issue, the community and the artwork become cast in a particular narrative (Pollock & Sharp 2007). Kester (1995) says, ‘the institutional authority of the artist, their privileged relationship to channels of 'legitimate' discourse about the project (through media coverage, their alliance with sponsoring and funding agencies, etc.), conspire to create the appearance of a harmony of interests even where none may actually exist’ (p. 8).

Finkelpearl (2001) relates how the word ‘community’ carries connotations about class and also relationships with the art world:

> ‘The category of well-heeled art lovers does not qualify as a “community” in this sense - art created for insiders in the art world is never referred to as community art. So, when one refers to community-orientated public art, the terms are laden but the usage is fairly clear: it is art that includes people from the lower classes in its creation, consumption or both’ (Finkelpearl 2001, p. xi).

Kester (1995) warns that community or social art, is typically centred around an exchange between an "artist" (who is understood to be "empowered," creatively, intellectually, symbolically, expressively, financially, institutionally, or otherwise), and a given subject who is defined a priori as "in need of" empowerment, access to creative/expressive skills, etc.’ (p. 20). The idea of transformation of the participants is a dangerous model where the participants are grouped in terms of their need for transformation and empowerment (ibid., p. 14).

The role of the artist also becomes broadened to include being a facilitator (Kwon 2002) or community development practitioner (Badham 2010). Although participatory art offers the idea of empowered participation through ‘consensual collaboration’, power-relations are still intact, and have to be mediated (Hope 2011; Conrad & Sinner 2015).

Thus the ‘community’ is differentiated from the artist - one is able to assist with the transformation and benefit of the other, who is in need and not able to help themselves. When the terms of participation are part of a power structure, the artwork’s claim to be democratic needs to be critically questioned.

Power and Authorship

The relationship between the artist and the community, when producing an artwork together, is complex. Kester (1995) explains, the artist can be ‘differentiated (or aesthetically "distanced") from the community as an enunciative channel, matrix, or catalyst. Each of these functions in turn implies a particular representational relationship of speaking "for," "through," "with," "about," or "on behalf of" other subjects’ (ibid., p. 5).

In many projects, the artist’s role is to ‘represent’ the community but Kester (1995) suggests, ‘in many community-based public art projects it is precisely the community whose voice is never heard’ (pp. 5, 8). Hope (2011) says there are inherent power relations within ‘participation’, for example, ‘the inviter and invited, the funder and funded, the paid worker and the volunteer’ (p.10).

Badham (2010) suggests that theorists of socially engaged art have been more interested in the reputation of the individual artist than the aesthetics of the more dispersed authorship in the community context (p. 94). In

THE TROUBLESOME TERM OF COMMUNITY ART
NO ITS NOT COMMUNITY ART BECAUSE I'M MAKING IT
THIS IS PARTICIPATORY
I'm NOT MAKING IT WITH THE COMMUNITY, I'M USING THE COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT
THEY ARE THE MATERIALS

contrast to this Cockcroft et al. (1998) describe the intention of some mural artists of being anonymous, and seeing their role ‘as that of a medium through which the community can express its own message’ (p. xxiii).

In what ways permanent public art made by community members is situated in these concerns is worth researching, in consideration of the power relations involved and the way in which authorship is negotiated.

Community Art and Community Cultural Development

The term ‘community art’ can refer to many things, including a practice where community members work together to make art (which perhaps has been ongoing since the beginning of humankind), and, a particular movement which happened in Western culture in the late 1960s - 80s (Bishop 2012).

Bishop notes that there is scant academic literature about community arts, and most publications ‘tend to comprise reports and evaluations of specific projects rather than a synthesised narrative’ (Bishop 2012, p. 163). In its context as a political arts movement of the 60’s, community art is often referred to as ‘past’ (personal conversation) and considered ‘over’ or old fashioned (Mulligan & Smith 2009). Bishop (2012) explains that community arts was ‘grassroots level community activism’, with ideological motivations such as, ‘attention to the marginalised, whom they sought to empower through participatory creative practice, and through an opposition to elitist cultural hierarchies’ (p. 177). In Australia community arts emerged out of political discourse, funding and policy in the 70s (Whitlam era), ‘framed within the social democratic demand for increased access to and participation in the arts’ (Hawkins 1993, p. xviii).

The term, ‘community art’ still has much currency through its description of a practice where community are involved in making, and permanent public art made by a community is often referred to as ‘community art’. It remains a much-used term to denote community involvement or making.

Monica Gattinger (2011) identifies the ‘democratisation of culture’, as a philosophy which focuses on the ‘civilising value of the arts’ and prioritises access of the general public to mainly European forms of high culture’ (p. 3). She suggests that Cultural democracy ‘emerged in European cultural policy debates in the 1970s, largely as a critique of democratisation of culture, which was seen as a ‘top-down’ elitist homogenising approach to culture that ignored cultural expressions and practices outside of the mainstream canon’. She says Cultural democracy ‘goes beyond a focus on access to cultural works to incorporate access to the means of cultural production and distribution’ and ‘also calls for recognition and inclusion of diverse cultures in public decision-making processes’ (ibid., p. 3).

Marnie Badham (2010) frames this shift as moving from ‘democratisation’ (art for a community) to ‘democracy’ - (art by and with community) (p. 86). Badham argues, ‘these tiny prepositions [of: *for, by*, and *with*], might seem insignificant but they alter the meaning substantially in regard to power relationships and ownership of voice, aesthetic and artistic content’ (ibid., p. 87).

Badham also differentiates community arts and community cultural development (CCD) as differing in their focus on who does the making. In early versions of Community Arts (1970s) Badham finds that democratisation was about extending access to cultural products (Badham 2010). In the 1980’s community

cultural development was interpreted by artists as *with* community and also art *by* community' ; there was a shift towards community having more control of their own cultural trajectory (ibid.).

An alternative view is offered by Owen Kelly's research (1984), which sees the beginnings of community arts as a radical political movement which changed over time to become more institutionalised, through funding and policy (Bishop 2012; Kelly 1984). It has been argued that community arts has been created in response to funding (Bennet 1993; Bishop 2012). Tony Bennet (1993) says that only those who were enthusiastic about community arts, wrote about it, and 'they tended to construct common-sense definitions which could be easily used for policy purposes' (p. ix).

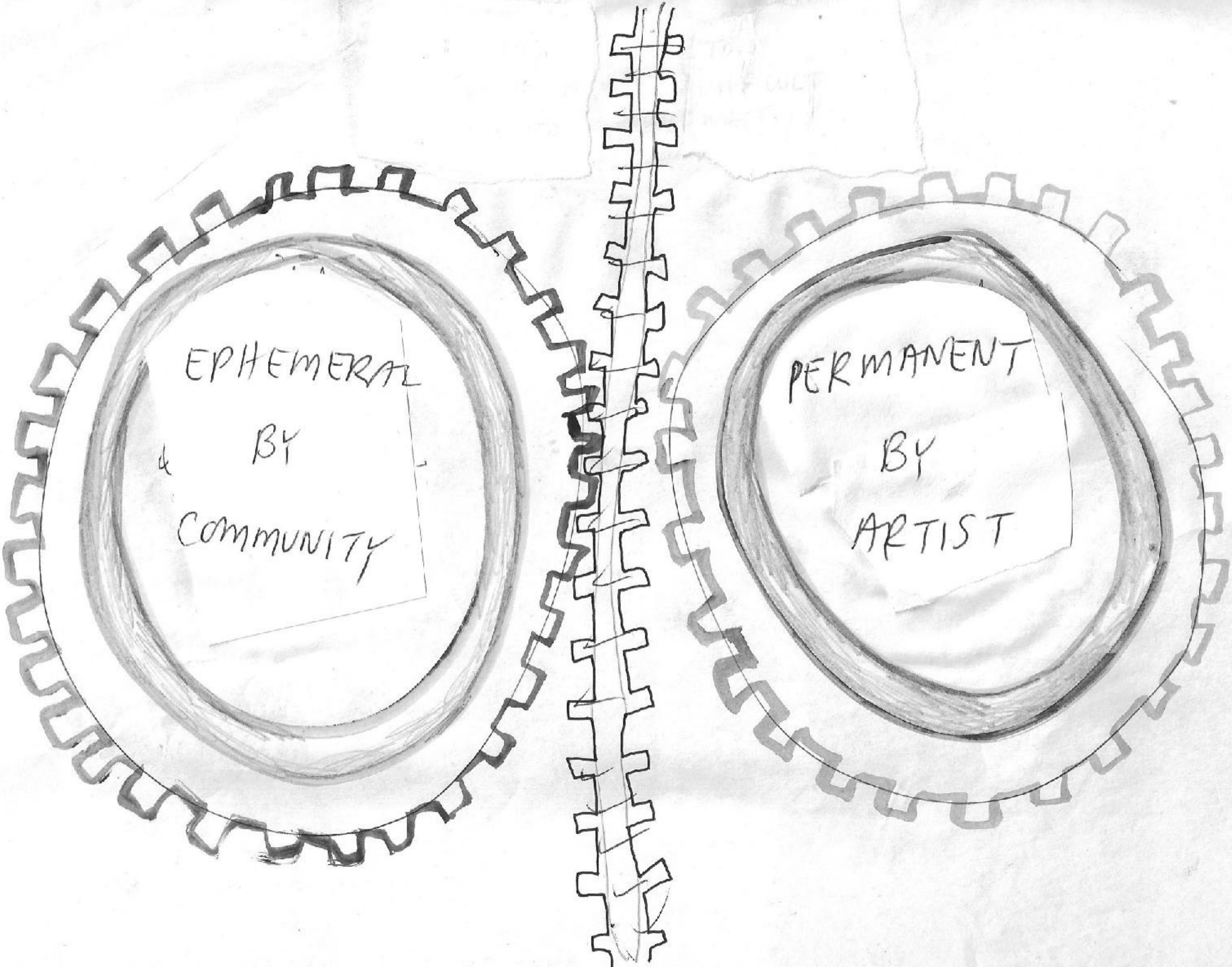
There are also strong connotations between community art and welfare. Kester (1995) warns that this entails problematic implications because, 'it presumes that the "cause" of poverty and disenfranchisement is primarily individual rather than systematic. Within this dynamic the reform subject (the "poor," the "homeless", etc.) are understood as a kind of raw material to be transformed' (p. 20-21). The 'community's involvement in the artwork, in this 'welfare' model, places the artist in the role of being not only the authority of the work but also the 'model' to which they aspire, and through their involvement in the artwork the individuals can transform and gain confidence. Kester finds this problematic, because it implies that 'the individual is morally or emotionally flawed'; 'that this flaw bears a causal relation to their current (economically, emotionally, socially, or creatively) "disempowered" status' and 'that the artist is in a position to remedy this flaw' (ibid., p. 21).

These ideas of welfare focus on its role as a transformative process and move the produced artwork, away from its status as ‘art’.

Internationally, researchers have found evidence linking arts engagement and cultural participation with increased democratic participation and enhanced community wellbeing (Badham 2010). However, within the field of community arts (past and present practices), there is a lack of comprehensive theory (ibid.) and, historical, scholarly and critical writing (Bishop 2012). The emphasis is placed on social processes rather than outcomes, and on ethical positions rather than achievements (ibid.).

Art practices which focus on process, are less well regarded for their aesthetic merits (Badham 2010). Few theorists explore what merits the artwork gains through being made by non-professional artists working together as a community. This thesis specifically researches and analyses these values.

Permanent public art made by community members is a type of ‘community art’, and my role in making these types of artworks is similar to that of a community artist’ except we work towards a final permanent public artwork. The two words *permanent* and *public*, describe aspects of the artwork which move it away from ‘community art’. In the context of this research, the literature of ‘community art’ and ‘community cultural development’ contributes to our understanding and knowledge about art made by community members, but does not focus on the permanent public artworks made by community. The literature contributes to our


EPHEMERAL
BY
COMMUNITY
PERMANENT
BY
ARTIST

understanding of how the discourse of artwork by community has been rationalised for funding and policy, seen in a ‘welfare role’ and not as ‘real art’. The continued tendency to name things made by community as ‘community art’ and the lack of focus on the aesthetic of the completed art object, has perhaps prevented public art made by communities from being considered part of the discourse of ‘public art’.

Hierarchy, Legitimacy and Economics

As authorities and official discourses of public art continue to denote 'public art' as that which is legal and commissioned, a hierarchy of perceived value is established - determined by legal and economic processes. The discourse of public art also infers hierarchical value by using the language of the high art world to define quality in public art.

For example, the term 'street art' has contradictory definitions, described as 'Illicit' (Young, 2016, p. 7) unsanctioned (Baldini 2014) un-commisioned (City of Melbourne) or legal (Iveson et al. 2014). Allison Young (2016) identifies a hierarchy of value (determined by authorities of public space), whereby commissioned street art is given greater value than illegal street art, graffiti and tagging. Baldini (2014), uses terms "official" public art and "unofficial" public art which signify legitimacy. Extreme differences exist between commissioned 'street art' (employed for commercial purposes, corporate development, beautification, and local council efforts to deter vandalism) and 'graffiti' (where the artwork is removed and the artist put through the criminal justice system) (Young 2016). Divisions are demarcated by legality and economic exchange.

In a similar manner, the ability to place text and imagery often depends on access to finances, more than anything else.

> ‘I’ve never quite understood why a fast food chain can blatantly display their ideas in the streetscape, yet graffiti and street art is considered the work of criminals’ (Hickey 2010, p. 163).

> ‘For, in a sense, are not companies like Nike, Coca-Cola and McDonalds prime examples of what might be termed “corporate taggers”, “corporate muralists” and “corporate sloganeers”?’ (Halsey and Young 2002, p. 180).

Anna Waclawek (2008) questions why graffiti has such a low status. It is an ‘art’ form which has contributed to art culture for over forty years, been studied by anthropologists, cultural historians and sociologists, but remains largely ignored by art historians, un-recognised by art history, and, not included in public art discourse.

Various forms of art in public space (both commissioned and illegal), reside in the same spaces and are made using the same materials and the same types of sites, but their definition as ‘public art’ depends on their legality, and not any innate aspect of the artwork. Susan Bird highlights the paradox that cities such as Melbourne promote street art as a tourist attraction but take a strong stance against illegal street art (works with the same materials and aesthetic, which they did not commission, or control) (Bird, 2009). Street art is an example of public artwork which can be either a serious crime, a commissioned artwork or a commodity, depending on permission (Bird 2009; Young 2016).

Value is also bequeathed by fame and signified by preservation (thus permanence). If the artist becomes famous, the work is more likely to be preserved. Works by Banksy (which are illegal but preserved) are an example of this. John Pitman Weber (2003) in his discussion of community public art murals and 'whose murals get saved", explains that in the USA all the early community murals of the late 1960's community mural movement are now gone. Weber changed to using more permanent materials, such as mosaic and concrete for murals because it made removal more costly, if not impossible without demolition of the building, in order to make them more difficult to remove or destroy.

Theory about 'public art' necessarily includes issues about control, ownership, and rights to public space. Any artwork outside privately owned land has to contend with a negotiation about how it is placed in that space. There are few avenues for the 'public', who want to make art in public space, as Halsey and Young (2002) suggest: 'Increasingly, the ability to "legitimately" (that is, legally) leave one's mark is becoming directly related to one's capacity to buy or rent space' (p. 180). Similarly, commission involves a product, which can be funded, bought and sold. Bird (2009) observes, 'it appears money can buy the individual right to alter the aesthetic of public space' (p. 7).

As citizens, our participation in public space 'needs to navigate with governmental and/or commercial interests' (Duncum 2011, p. 350).

Deutsche (1996) suggests that power over public space in American cities is ‘dominated by the articulation of democracy in authoritarian directions’ and this power is exercised by ‘the foundation’, ‘state power’ and ‘business improvement districts’ (p. 275). Lippard (1995) approaches these issues by offering a new method of defining public art;

> ‘I would define public art as accessible work of any kind that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment. The other stuff is still private art, no matter how big or exposed or intrusive or hyped up it may be’ (Lippard, 1995, p. 121).

We need to question whether public art practice lives up to its claims of inclusive involvement, or otherwise remains complicit in contributing to exclusion (Zebracki & Palmer 2017). Public art provokes debate about the right to make or place artwork in public space.

Broader Public Space as Ideological

> ‘We don’t just exist within the physical spaces of our world, but actively interact with them; we shape them, invest them with meaning and are influenced by them. As such, these spaces stand as locations of cultural production and expressions of who we are (or see ourselves as being)’ (Hickey 2010, p. 162).

Public art sits within the broader field of public space as a reflection of culture, because streets are ‘actively inculcated in the production of culture’ (Hickey 2010, p.161). In the idea of ‘street-scape’, Hickey (2010) identifies, authorized signage, billboards, commercial signage and unauthorised detournement (including graffiti and street-art) to signify streetscapes with meanings and intentioned communications. Similarly Kwon (2002b), suggests they can be theorised as ‘public address’ or ‘publicity’ (p.1). As imagery in public space, billboards provide an indicator of what we consider being collectively important (Hickey 2010) and also play a pedagogical role (Luke 2010). If we consider that something which proliferates may indicate its importance in our culture, we might view graffiti in a different way - condemned as vandalism and crime against property, it has been ‘ignored or denied the possibility, that it may be ‘art’ or ‘culture’ (Young 2016, p. 26-27). I imagine a similar analogy for artworks made by community members. They can be found in many places, and so should be regarded as an important phenomenon in the context of public art.

Community Making as Offering Other Narratives

Community involvement in the making of permanent public art provides opportunities to speak and make heard other narratives. Within the concept of cultural democracy, these artworks not only enable community members to individually express themselves in public space, but also to collaboratively produce meaning and knowledge in public space (Qadri 2015, 2016). When Judith Baca first began making murals with youth gangs in East Los Angeles recreational centres in the 1970's, she wanted the murals to 'rise out of communities' and 'elevate a vision of the community for itself' (Baca 1986, p.107). Baca's vision of *inclusion* was not only of the young people, but was also about the heritage of their families and an inclusion of imagery in public space by and about these people.

> 'What I was propagating with the kids is, they had a common cultural connection - a heritage - that was something beautiful and proud. And to put the images on the wall that were images of themselves and their grandmothers and their families was an outrageous act. You have to understand that there wasn't a billboard with a brown person . . . I mean there was nothing that basically was controlled by the Latinos, or by Chicanos. So to see an image like that on the wall was, like, it was startling . . . at the time [early 70's], the image of a brown, first person's face on a wall was a big deal' (Baca 2014, p. 94).

Many theorists view art in public space is a vehicle for ongoing shifts in ideology, arguing for a strong relationship between art and politics, exhibiting an optimism for what art can do and the possibilities and capacities it might set in motion (Beyes 2010; Carnevale & Kelsey 2007; Duncum 2011).

Patricia Phillips (1995) claims that public art's position outside general art history, provides it with a 'border' condition, from where it can 'frame and foster a discussion of community and culture' and provide a view of the 'relation between institutionalised culture and participatory democracy' (p. 60). Likewise, Rendell (2006) suggests that public art has a possibility as a 'critical spatial practice' to 'work in relation to dominant ideologies but at the same time question them' (p. 4). Chantal Mouffe (2008) situates the work of artists in public space as a crucial dimension to democracy, in that they 'disrupt the smooth image that corporate capitalism is trying to spread', they play an important role in subverting dominant hegemony, and they contribute to 'the construction of new subjectivities' (p. 13).

Antagonism, Agoraphobia and Anarchy, Conflict, Disrupt, Division, Instability, Subvert, Act out

Planned public art could be imagined as promoting the 'fantasies of public space as a unified totality without conflicts or difference' (Kwon 2002, p. 79-80), a 'total environment' (Cockcroft et al. 1998, p. 37), and 'controlled aesthetics' (Waclawek 2008, p. 76). This idea of control is physical and ideological. Public art is also envisaged by some as a tool to solve social conflicts, and quieten 'legitimate concerns or

objections' (Phillips 1995, p. 64). It is associated with ideas 'of public space and democracy with the goals of building consensus, consolidating communities and soothing conflicts' (Deutsche 1996, p. 281-2).

Miwon Kwon (2002b), suggests the fantasy of the public sphere is:

> 'Always necessarily an ideal, an idealised construction (fantasy), insofar as it imagines a possibility and potential of overcoming social differences to debate issues of common concern. In the past, this notion of the "common" was heard as a universalising tendency asserted by the dominant ideological regime that obscures not only minority or marginalised constituencies but maintains and naturalises the power structure of this regime' (Kwon 2002b, p. 4)

These views of public art are about suppression of difference, but an opposite role also imagined for public art (particularly for participatory art, street art and graffiti) - is that of expression and disruption (Waclawek 2008). Public art is visualised as a powerful political tool which gives minorities a voice (Baldini 2014).

Deutsche (1996) cautions that the idea of "community involvement" should not be taken for granted as 'democratic', because this would 'presume that the task of democracy is to settle, rather than sustain conflict' (p. 270). Public space evokes democracy, and:

> ‘Conflict, division and instability . . . do not ruin the democratic public sphere, they are the conditions of its existence. The threat arises with efforts to supersede conflict, for the public sphere remains democratic only insofar as its exclusions are taken into account and open to contestation’ (Deutsche 1996, p. 289).

Public space is seen by some as ‘inherently devoted to contestation in the pursuit and protection of human rights’ (Duncum, 2011, p. 348). Rendell (2009) argues that ‘public art should be engaged in the production of restless objects and spaces, ones that provoke us’ and ‘demand that we question the world around us’ (p. 8, 9).

In this context public art is a cultural product in public space, and also a ‘mode of struggle’ (Duncum 2011, p. 351). Artist, Daphne Wright (2014) says that public art should be; ‘creating a democratic space and within that space it should be able to facilitate debate, discussion, public art that’s attacked, public art that’s graffitied . . . a very fought over space’ (video).

Baldini (2014) makes an argument for the power of public art in pluralist societies. He argues that pluralist societies have a tolerance which allows ‘the reception of public art into a site for contestation, where citizens can freely express their dissent, while challenging others’ views and the ‘status quo’’ (p. 7). This tolerance ‘releases art’s capacity to facilitate dialogue and discussions among diverse groups and individuals and liberates its contesting possibilities’ (ibid., p.7). Here we see contesting, and dissent as positive roles that

public art can play. Or, as Ranciere (2011) says of political dissensus, it is about who can or cannot speak. Public art can provide opportunities to speak.

Ranciere (2011) proclaims, ‘disagreement is not only an object of my theorisation. It is also its method!’ (p. 2), and this could be the catch cry of many instances of public art.

Public Pedagogy

The idea of public art as pedagogy offers a position from which to speculate about the role of public art and in particular art made by community members in their role as producers of knowledge (Qadri 2016). Public art creates knowledge and learning in public space because it can challenge or confirm particular cultural narratives, and discourses, fitting with a definition of public pedagogy as a form of educational activity that exists in a cultural space (Burdick and Sandlin 2010). Miwon Kwon (2002) refers to the possibility of a site being ‘discursively determined’, and ‘delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate’ (p. 25). Writers have explored the pedagogical role of a broader field of visual imagery in public space, including billboards, graffiti and street art (Duncum 2011; Luke 2010; Hickey 2010; Qadri 2016).

Pedagogy can also represent action and possibilities - the action of teaching, learning, creating and presenting knowledge. We can envisage the wider field of visual art in public space as a potential field for public pedagogy in light of Sandlin's idea of public pedagogy as an enactment of citizenship within public space and as an educative arena where norms of public space and dominant social discourse are challenged (Sandlin et al. 2005). We could also begin to look beyond 'the meaning "embedded" in artworks, to consider the socio-political processes of learning stimulated by art' (Schuermans, Loopmans & Vandenabeele 2012, p. 677). Public art made by community members also enacts public pedagogy because community members produce cultural knowledge through making art in public space (Qadri 2017). Community members in their roles as artists can be considered educators who engage with audiences (Schuermans et al. 2012). Furthermore, in the instance of permanent public art, duration and time endorse and strengthen these narratives and pedagogical meanings (Qadri 2016).

Therefore, in terms of democracy and ideas about public space, we can consider two reasons why community members should make` permanent public art - firstly, that the community are the public who should be able to make the public art, and secondly, the content and meaning of that artwork should come from the community if it is to have a relationship with 'public'.

Permanent and Public

This section explores concerns which arise through the art object being permanent and public: materials, object, site and place, permanence, audience, aesthetics and duration. This review does not explore all in depth, but many are addressed later in the thesis.

The layers of difference that being permanent and being public contribute to the artwork is difficult to express. In this research I propose that permanent public art made by community members is different to community art, community cultural development and participatory art, because it is *permanent* and *public*. These two aspects move it away from temporary and restricted audiences and also give the work agency through contributing ideas and knowledge to public space as a form of pedagogy.

Permanence

> ‘Public art neither starts with the artists’ idea nor ends upon its installation or execution. Put simply, encountering public art is done by all and has no ‘use-by date’ (Zebracki & Palmer 2017, p. 4).

The text above draws out two particularities of permanent public art. Firstly, that it is not usually the artist who begins the process - instead it begins with many things including the commissioners, community, the art-world and ideas about public art. Secondly, the artwork doesn't end upon installation - it goes on. As long as it is there, and even after the end of its material life, it may exist in memory or literature, and may be encountered 'by geographically dispersed publics in material-digital (i.e. hybrid) spaces' (Zebracki and Palmer, 2017, p. 4).

Site, Space and Place

The term 'site' tends to mean the 'place' for art (Kelley 1995, p. 141) but there are differences:

> 'One might say that while a site represents the constituent physical properties of a place - its mass, space, light, duration, location and material processes - a place represents the practical, vernacular, psychological, social, cultural, ceremonial, ethnic, economic, political and historical dimensions of a site. Sites are like frameworks, places are what fill them out and make them work. Sites are like maps or mines, while places are the reservoirs of human content, like memory or gardens. A place is useful and a site is used' (Kelley 1995, p. 142).

For the work to become permanent, it needs to go through institutional permission, and 'the contingencies of locational and institutional circumstances' (Kwon 2002, p. 93), in order to be approved and permanent at the

site. Although much has been written about site-specificity, it has often been in terms of participatory ephemeral artworks. Further research could include considering the context of the site of permanent artworks made by community members, before and after installation.

Aesthetics

The concept of aesthetics becomes more critical when the work is permanent. If something is going to be in public space, in order to survive, it needs to be aesthetic. Public opinion has the power to physically move the work: many public artworks have been shifted or destroyed using arguments about their aesthetic[1].

Ranciere (2004a, 2008, 2013) would argue that aesthetics are intrinsic to the Western 'aesthetic regime of art' which is predicated precisely on a confusion between art's autonomy (its position at one remove from instrumental rationality) and heteronomy (its blurring of art and life) (Bishop 2006).

The notion that art is functionless or autonomous of social function, has led some scholars to link aesthetics with ideas of class (Eagleton 1990) intrinsic to a 'discourse' to differentiate a cultural elite from the 'mass' of society (Tulloch, 1993, p. v). 'Aesthetics' is an idea used for many purposes, not only for judgement, but also as a discursive tool for differentiation.

Becker (1982) identifies one of the activities of art worlds as:

> ‘Creating and maintaining the rationale according to which all these other activities make sense and are worth doing. Rationales typically take the form, however naive, of a kind of aesthetic argument, a philosophical justification which identifies what is being made as good art, and explains how art does something that needs to be done for people and society’ (Becker 1982, p. 4).

Some participatory art ‘activists’ ‘reject aesthetic questions as synonymous with cultural hierarchy and the market’ (Bishop 2006, p. 180). But the rejection of concerns for the aesthetic of a work is accompanied by difficulties because it also rejects traditional understandings of valuing art. Aesthetics is often replaced with a concern for process and what art *does*. Bishop (2006) points to a danger in critical writing about artworks in terms of the ethics and morality of the collaboration instead of the aesthetics of the work because the emphasis is ‘moved away from the specific artwork’, towards the morality of the process (p. 180-1). Badham (2010) likewise raises the concern that artistic integrity is often undermined or overlooked if the critical dialogue lacks this inclusion. Bishop (2006) draws out this argument:

> ‘The discursive criteria of socially engaged art are, at present, drawn from a tacit analogy between anti- capitalism and the Christian “good soul.” In this schema, self-sacrifice is triumphant: The artist should renounce authorial presence in favour of allowing participants to speak through him or her. This self-sacrifice is accompanied by the idea that art should extract itself from the “useless” domain of the aesthetic and be fused with social praxis’ (Bishop 2006, p. 183).

Many of the above theorists also link aesthetic and quality to the artist who controls the artwork when community are involved in making. The role and ability of the artist persists in discussions of works which involve community. Conwill Majozo (1995) explains that when community participants who are not necessarily artists are involved, ‘it is feared the participant’s aesthetics will bring down the quality of the work’ (p. 90). This indicates a space for research into the role that aesthetics plays in artworks where community members, instead of an artist, has control of the artwork.

Deutsche (1996) says it has been proven, ’that the meaning of a work of art does not reside permanently within the work itself but is formed only in relation to an outside - to the manner of the work’s presentation - and therefore changes with circumstances’ (p. 295). Subsequently the aesthetic value of the artwork depends on its framing conditions, including the physical apparatus that supports it, the prevailing discourses about it and the presence of viewers (ibid.). In this argument the aesthetic is subjective, not universal and ‘the significance of an artwork is not simply given or discovered, it is produced’ (ibid., p. 295).

Bishop (2006) warns that if the subject of aesthetics is avoided in social art, it poses a danger of not being taken seriously and not becoming part of a discourse within the mainstream art world. She refers to Ranciere's position that we can't ignore the "aesthetic regime of art", which was 'inaugurated by Friederich Schiller and the Romantics and is still operative to this day' (p. 183). Ranciere offers that although aesthetics operate as part of the current art system, it still offers the promise of social change through art's otherness and separation from life (Bishop 2006). In this context, it is important to recognise that aesthetics is intrinsic in any discussion about art, and needs to be included in research. How aesthetics play a role in permanent public art made by community members, would be a valuable contribution to the current discourse, particularly given the aversion or rejection of the topic in social and participatory art practice.

Audience

> 'The art object remains, life goes on. Art; whether we like it or not, continues producing affects' (O'Sullivan 2001, p. 126).

After installation, the artwork has the power to affect the audience. But there is an exchange both ways - where we give meanings to objects, but they also have the power to affect us - they have their own agency, causing beliefs, and physical action (Osborne 2014); they can cause us to stop in our tracks (Winterson 1995).

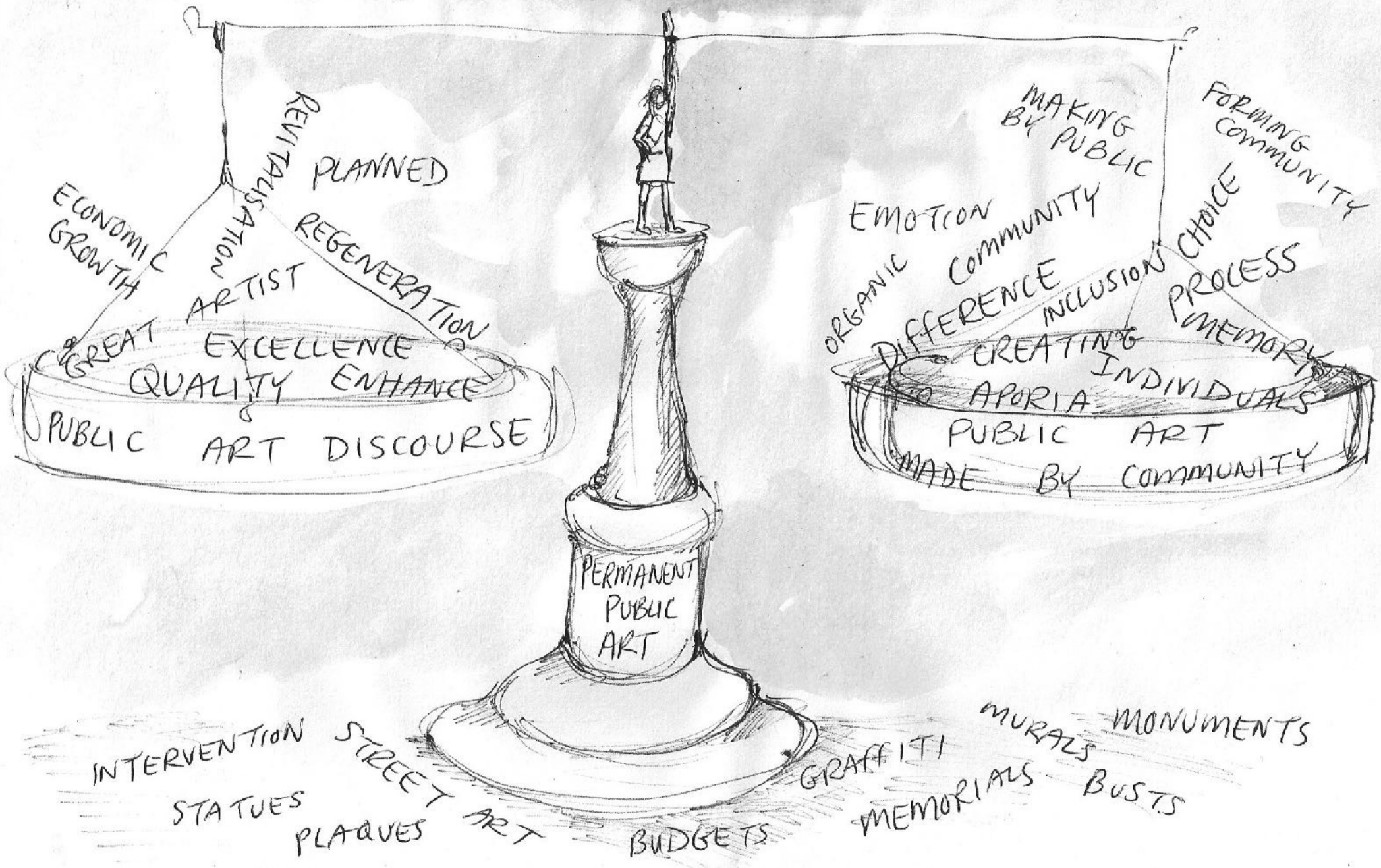
Patricia Phillips (1995) enjoins that public art is ‘never an independent, autonomous event’ and is instead, ‘embedded in the political, economic and ethical considerations of cities and communities’ (p. 64). Pollock and Sharp (2007) explain that if ‘the intentions and process underlying the creation of the work are not visually apparent, there is no guarantee that the viewer will be able to distinguish or read them’ (p. 1064).

The artwork is encountered by each audience member with their own cultural, social, political and psychological experiences which inform their encounter with the artwork (Shaffrey 2010). Furthermore the audience are active and unpredictable participants in producing the cultural meaning of the works (Sharp 2007). De Certeau (1988) suggests, that as the audience of these objects in public space, we are not just consumers, instead we pick and choose; we adjust and manipulate things.

The short film ‘Millennium Man’ (Robb, 2015), about a sculpture in an Australian shopping centre, reveals how the original meaning of the sculpture is unknown to locals, but one of those interviewed explains its meaning as nostalgic when he says, ‘It triggers back to when I used to come here as a kid, it . . . brings happiness and memories’. This short statement suggests that memory and personal associations with the past may be important in the meaning of public art.

Nicholas Bourriaud (2002) argues that the audience's role is a necessary ingredient in the artwork, and thus, 'any artwork might thus be defined as a relational object, like the geometric place of a negotiation with countless correspondents and recipients' (p. 26). The artist often seeks an audience and public space is attractive because it allows an artist to reach a far greater audience for the image, than a gallery would provide (Young 2016).

Schuermans et al. (2012) suggest there is a problem, in that 'the actual agency of public art – what happens when art is 'out there' in public space – is barely understood' (p. 676). Cartiere and Guindon (2017) claim, 'the question of which 'public' public art is created for comes into question, but is seldom analysed from a perspective other than the position of art criticism' (p. 72). Theorists have identified gaps in knowledge about how the artwork is received after installation, and this is an area which could be more readily understood through further research.


REVITALISATION
PLANNED
ECONOMIC GROWTH
REGENERATION
ARTIST
GREAT EXCELLENCE
QUALITY ENHANCE
PUBLIC ART DISCOURSE
MAKING BY PUBLIC
FORMING COMMUNITY
EMOTION
COMMUNITY
ORGANIC
CHOICE
DIFFERENCE
INCLUSION
PROCESS
MEMORY
CREATING
INDIVIDUALS
APORIA
PUBLIC ART
MADE BY COMMUNITY
PERMANENT PUBLIC ART
INTERVENTION
STREET ART
STATUES
PLAQUES
BUDGETS
GRAFFITI
MURALS
MONUMENTS
MEMORIALS
BUSTS

Practice

This section surveys examples of literature specifically about permanent public artworks made by community members and how this contributes to an understanding of the field. Many small scale permanent projects exist which involve community members as makers, often in parks, schools and community centres. These are rarely described as permanent public artworks; recorded on council websites as part of their public art collection; theorised as part of the history of public artworks; or discussed in academic literature. Research has likely been undertaken and written but is not readily found through library and academic literature searches. The small amount of literature discussed here does not reflect the actual amount of literature which has been written or published, but more the fact that it likely exists in less accessible places, and often written for local audiences with smaller print runs. Thus, this review discusses a very limited sampling of the literature about community-made permanent public artwork.

Murals

> ‘Current discussions of public art for the most part omit muralism, following the art world pattern of ignoring community-based artists in favour of those who cater to the marketplace’ (Lippard 1998, p. xi).

In *Toward a People’s Art: The Contemporary Mural Movement*, Eva Cockroft, John Pitman Weber and James Cockroft (1998) trace the history of the North American mural Movement from 1965 onwards, compelled to write about the movement because of the lack of critical attention. They locate its beginnings in civil unrest and political movements of oppressed minorities, (civil rights, gay liberation, antiwar, Chicano and feminist movements) (Keppel 1998; Cockroft et. al. 1998). Keppel (1998) identifies several movements in painted murals, which include the Chicano mural movement and Street art [2].

Two types of authorship are commonly identified; of artists alone, or of community members (and called community-based murals, often with a lead artist). Cockcroft et al. (1998) describe the rationale for community-based murals as ‘working for the local audience around issues that concern the immediate community using art as a medium of expression of, for, and with the local audience’ (p. 30).

> ‘From the outset, the murals have had an audience; community residents have celebrated, loved and protected them because they have had a part in them. They have seen images of their humanity reflected in the murals. The murals have

> told the people's own story, their history and struggles, their dignity and hopes' (Cockcroft, Weber, Cockcroft 1998, p. xx).

Murals are often durational over many years but rarely permanent. Keppel (1998) points out that the lives of murals are 'perilous' because they have never held a high position in the hierarchy of cultural achievement in society, and the aspects of the medium itself - both natural and political makes mural art more difficult to preserve than gallery art. Murals are often short-lived because neighbourhoods change rapidly, and the image and context of the mural is often not relevant to incoming residents (Lippard 1998).

The history of mural movements provides much insight into issues of community involvement in making and also the meaning of the work's permanence. However, the ongoing replacement of buildings which housed permanent murals has meant not only an erasure of the artwork, but also an erasure of the visibility and ensuing discourse of murals which were made by community members. This perhaps highlights the importance of permanence, as an attribute which gives the artwork and its subject matter value and time to speak, but also duration as something which enables a discourse about the method of the art-making to continue and be developed, so that it is not 'in the past', or 'over'.

A wealth of writing refers to the mural work which Judy Bacca made with community groups, providing a rich source of the theory and philosophy for later chapters in this thesis.

Three-dimensional Works

Amongst the few articles which refer to permanent works by community members, I found that Patricia Skinner's article (2012) about Pete Codling's project *One Million Pebbles*, has much to contribute to the topic, although the artwork itself is scattered and unable to be viewed in one place.

One Million Pebbles involved 400,000 people making ceramic pebbles (on which they were also able to carve text and imagery). These were fired by the facilitator, Pete Codling, and then thrown into the sea at Southsea, Hampshire, in the United Kingdom. The artwork exists permanently, but in pieces, which are in the sea, on the beach or as collected works in people's homes. Skinner (2012) identifies its difference from other public artworks in: the mutual knowledge about the project; the 'shared social memory' of the participants (p. 621); and the bond of trust which was developed when people handed their work to the facilitator/artist to fire and then throw into the sea (ibid.). Other themes which emerged included its capacity to allow community-makers to make their pebbles into 'commemorative objects' (ibid., p. 619), and how the project was not able to be controlled by the artist. The project did not reach its goal of one million due to lack of funding and the artist/ facilitator's intention that people would continually throw the found pebbles back into the sea, did not

eventuate. Instead, the pebbles became collectibles, and were documented online, which extended the project into the public realm in an unforeseen way (ibid.).

Other art projects, such as the AIDS Memorial Quilt and 5000 Poppies, resonated with communities which is evidenced by the large extent of community involvement in the projects[3]. These projects exist permanently but not in one place. They become public when they are displayed, in various formats and places.

The Benalla Ceramic Mural[4], which is three-dimensional artwork on the banks of a river, set out to be a 'true community project' where 'everyone in Benalla, no matter what their skill levels were, would be invited to be involved' (Jensen and Moore 2013, p. 8). One of the main artists, Judy Lorraine, said that the aim was that it be a learning experience, not only in technical aspects, but also in 'the human aspects of being able to work for a common goal' (quoted in Jensen and Moore 2013, p. 41). This mural has been documented in a booklet, but, like many other community-made artworks, its role in contributing to our understanding of public artwork, has not been theorised through academic literature.

It was difficult to find academic writing about three-dimensional permanent public artworks made by community members.

Moving Forward

Public art is an increasing phenomenon and this survey of literature draws attention to the need for more research in the field. The following summarises the gaps indicated by the literature surveyed as well as opportunities for future research.

Cartiere and Guindon (2017) suggest that there is limited data on the impact that public art has, and there is no ‘mechanism’, to socially or culturally evaluate the processes of public art (p. 74).

In regard to socially engaged public art, Bishop (2014) has articulated a need to look beyond the process of artworks which involve the community. Likewise, Finkelpearl (2014) writes that, ‘discussion of participatory art seems to be in its infancy’ (par. 15), with no set criteria for evaluation in place (ibid.,). Both envisage the field of participatory public art and community involvement as in need of further research.

Given the context of increased concern for civic engagement and democratic decision-making, research about how permanent public artworks made by community members contribute to these aspects should be researched further; particularly in relation to assumptions that artworks involving community members are beneficial and democratic (Pollock & Sharp 2007). This research explores relationships between philosophical

arguments of cultural democracy (Gattinger 2011; Hope 2011) and permanent public art made by community members - focusing on inclusion, diversity and cultural production.

From surveying the literature, it is evident that permanent public art tends to foster conservative and mainstream ideology whilst ephemeral participatory art is more often attributed to democratic, inclusive and political aspects. The power difference between permanent works and temporary artworks has not been a focus in current literature about public art, and this warrants deeper consideration. The durational (and thus far reaching effects) of permanent artworks, in comparison with the short-lived and often non-object ephemeral works, points to a disparity in power. This constitutes an area which needs to be investigated further in light of the tendency to theorise the involvement of community members in ephemeral works.

Understandings of permanent public art made by community members can be enhanced by research which presents the stories and meanings of these artworks, as told by their makers. In this way, 'sensible' (Ranciere, 2004b) notions of how public art should be made by professional artists, can be challenged. Considering the role art plays as pedagogy in public space (Qadri 2016), further research would also expand understandings of the knowledge and learning community members contribute through making permanent public art.

Permanent public art made by community members has been given sparse attention in academic literature. This research will focus on the process, as well as redressing the lack of theory about the art object itself. I

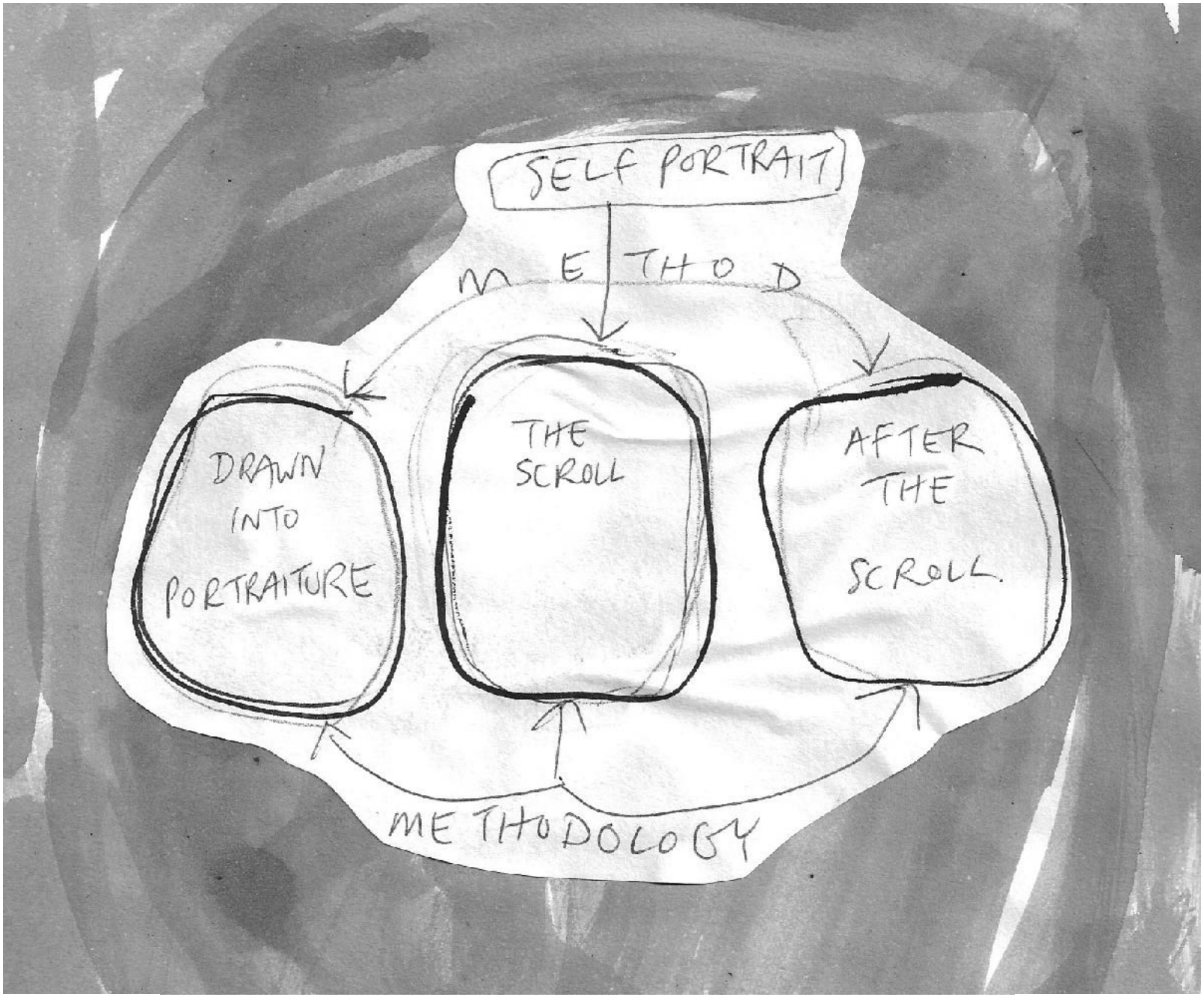
seek to broaden the discourse of public art by including perspectives about permanent public art made by community members (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005) which will contribute knowledge, whereas previously the practice has been generalised and stereotyped. This research will bring to light particular stories of permanent public artworks made by community members and the meanings of the artwork for those involved.

[1] For example Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* - see Senie 1989.

[2] Many inspired by the Mexican Mural movement of the 1920's, emerging from the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution (Charlot 1998, p. vii). For more information about movements in Northern Ireland see Grant-Smith & Matthews 2015), in Australia see Humphries and Monk 1982.

[3] Over 300,000 poppies had been contributed to the 5000 Poppies project by 2016, and the Names Quilt is ongoing and with more than 48, 000 panels contributed.

[4] The Benalla Ceramic Mural made by the community of Benalla, Victoria Australia.


SELF PORTRAIT
METHOD
DRAWN INTO PORTRAITURE
THE SCROLL
AFTER THE SCROLL.
METHODOLOGY

The following three sections explain the research design, method and methodology of the research.

4 **‘Drawn into Portraiture’** - tells how the research method developed, how the methodology of portraiture is employed and discusses the drawn aspect of the research.

5 **‘The Scroll’** - describes a reflexive journey during the research which changed both the process and outcomes of the research. It is also part of the larger self-portrait in the thesis.

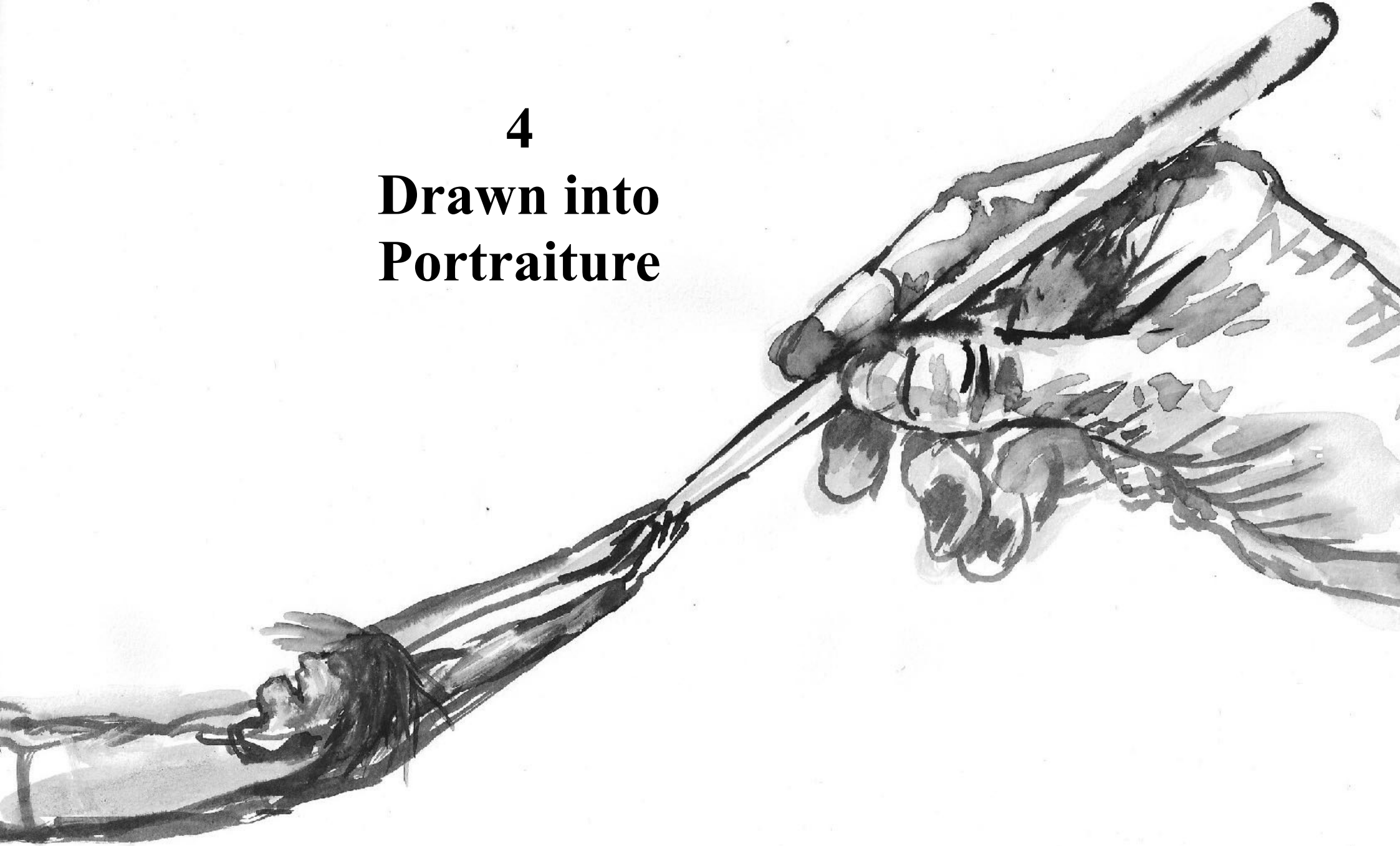
6 **‘After the Scroll’** - outlines how the analysis was undertaken and the research outcomes shared, in light of the ethical focus brought about by the ‘Scroll’ journey.

However, you are invited to choose your own adventure, and if you feel at any time interested in skipping ahead to read the portraits, please feel free to do so. The two portraits of the artworks made by community members are:

7 The Blacksmith’s Tree (p. 341),

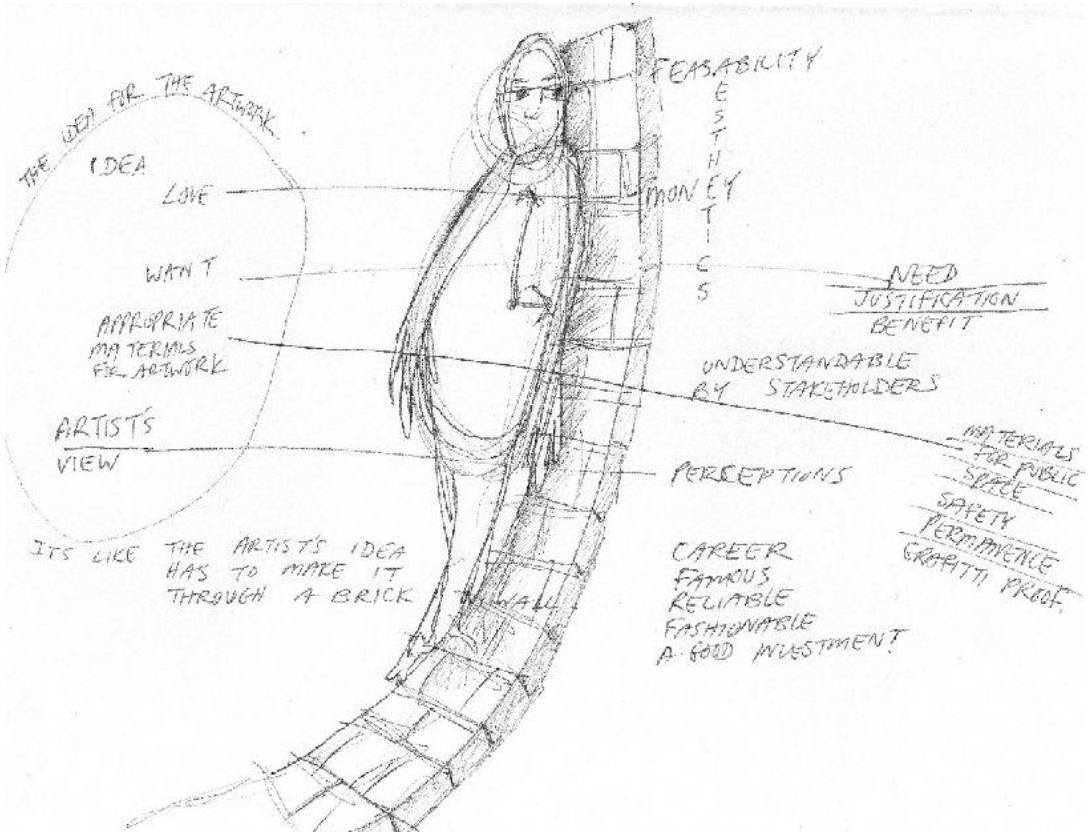
and, 8 The Great Wall of St Kilda (p. 595)

4
Drawn into Portraiture



Impetus

This research springs out of my own practice as an artist working with communities to make permanent public artworks, so it has an origin in experience, a particular perspective and an emotional trajectory. I have a need to understand how permanent public art made by community members relates to the discourse and theory of permanent public art. As discussed in 'Prelude', I often feel as if I come up against a brick wall which prevents the practice from being used in larger commissions. Perhaps the brick wall also prevents people from understanding this type of work? I need to find a way around, over or through the barrier that separates the work I do with communities from the discourse of public art.



My personal emotion and motivation are acknowledged and included in this thesis. In ‘Prelude: The Voice of Pre-occupation’, the research begins with identifying the burning questions which arrive from my experience of my art-practice (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016). Acknowledging this experience and subjectivity enables me to actively research new perspectives.

World view

As discussed earlier in the introduction, my understanding of art worlds is that they are constructed culturally and discursively. I also engage with, and inside these art worlds through practising as an artist, as well as in the academic world through researching and writing articles, and the thesis.

The paradigm that is most suited to this research is that of constructivist/interpretivist, as through the research I will be trying to 'make sense of something', turning it from 'sense impressions', into something that can be ordered and fitted into a conceptual structure, theory, discipline or philosophy (Lincoln & Guba 2013, p. 45). Portraiture is 'framed by the phenomenological paradigm . . . sharing many of the techniques, standards and goals of ethnography. But it pushes against the constraints of those traditions and practices' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 13).

It follows the rules of good research but is also ‘in part about breaking the rules of traditional positivist research’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2016, p. 25-6). The method is drawn as a combination of empiricism and aesthetics, of ‘artistic resonance and scientific rigour’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. xv) where ‘Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying’ (ibid., p. xv). In this sense Lawrence-Lightfoot can seem to be using a constructivist epistemology, akin to Swandt’s (1994) idea that ‘what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective’ (p. 125).

My world view is heavily influenced by critical literary theory (feminism, Marxisim, post-modernism, post-colonial perspectives) as well as the broader project of post-modern critical theory and its focus on democracy and equity (Bohman 2015) which I encountered during my undergraduate studies of literature and writing. My experiences of working with communities to make artworks have affected the way I think about public artwork made by community members philosophically. I believe it has a relationship with democratic expression in public space.

The positive and good - portraiture, a way forward

My initial exploration of literature about the topic identified a gap in knowledge about permanent public art made by community members as I encountered few references to community *making* permanent public art. Faced with this absence, it was important that I researched the topic in broad terms and, through writing about it, make more of a place for the practice in academic literature.

My principal supervisor offered the book, *The Art and Science of portraiture* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997) as a possible methodology and this was an important turning point in the research. I was immediately drawn to the idea of ‘portraits’, and their form of aesthetic narrative, to tell the stories of permanent public artworks which were made by community members. I visualised the potential of rendering the research aesthetically and engaging a broad audience created more possibility that the research would affect discourse.

I had been focusing on issues and absences, but Portraiture offered a positive way forward by a rationale to search for ‘what is good and healthy’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 9) and tell the stories of how communities were inspired to do the projects, how they overcome difficulties, went forward, and achieved their desires (ibid.).

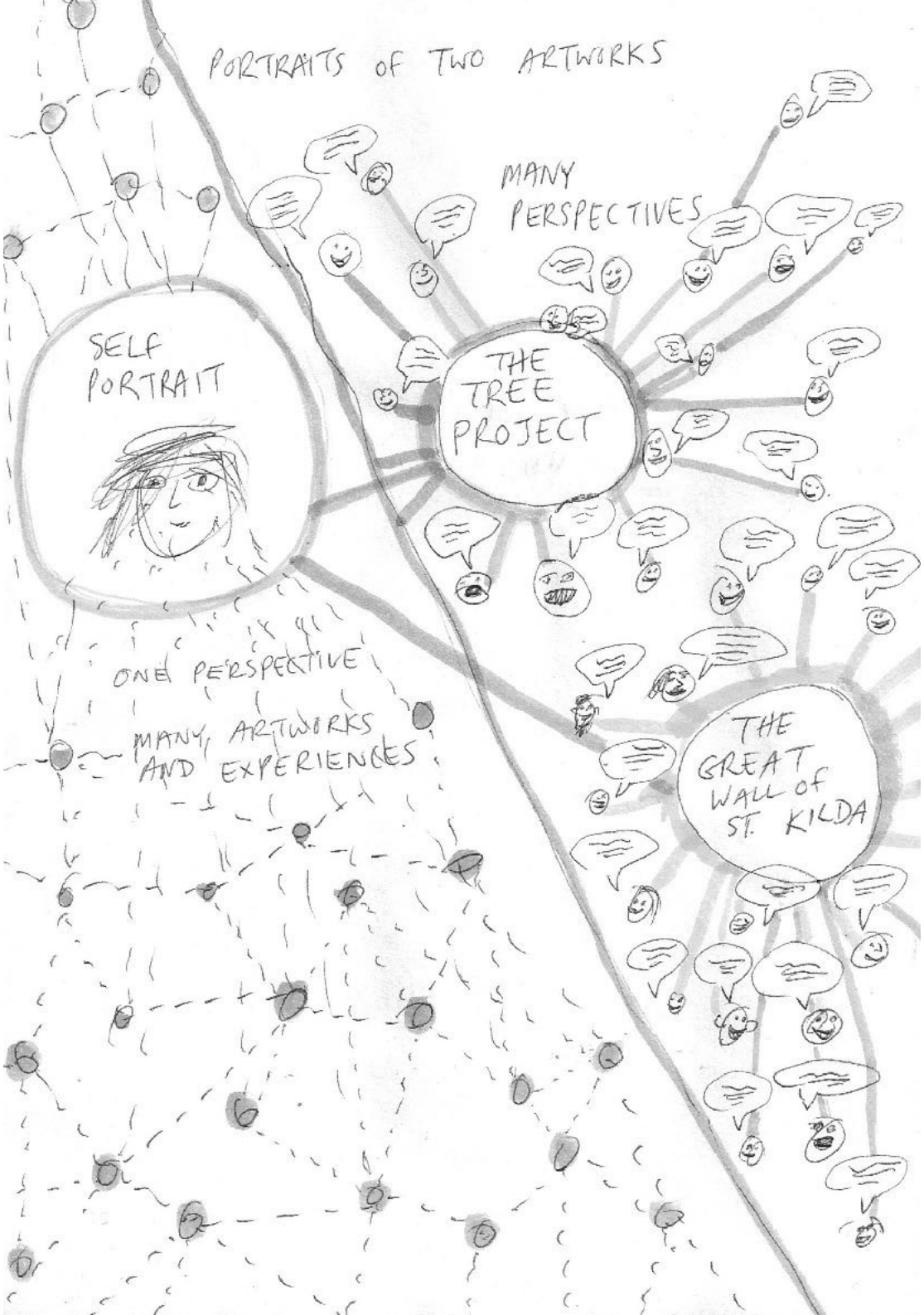
Portraits are ‘shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one participating in the drawing of the image’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 3). They aim to capture, ‘the richness, complexity and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating the experiences’ (ibid. p. 3). Portraits are usually written texts in the form of narratives, but I extended Lightfoot’s ‘aesthetic expression’, to combine text and sketching (More will be said about this later in the chapter).

Instead of proving prior theoretical positions, through Portraiture I, ‘generate theory’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 186). Through examining how the artworks contest the mainstream discourse and understandings of public art, I present them through Giroux’s (2004) vision of performative practice, as ‘sites of possibility’, of ‘emancipating politics’ and ‘democratic

transformations' (pp. 61,60). By searching for and sharing narratives of good, and through sharing alternative perspectives, I open up possibilities to change the way that permanent public artworks made by community members are thought about and 'generalised' (Bohman 2015).

The research includes three portraits. One is a self-portrait, which examines my own experiences, perspectives and knowledge as an artist involved with making these types of artworks and has a secondary role of making my own perspectives and subjectivity explicit. There are also two portraits of permanent public artworks where communities have been involved as makers. These artworks are, *The Tree Project* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda*. *The Tree Project* is a ten-metre-high tree of stainless steel, made by blacksmiths and a wider community in response to the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria in 2009. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* is a large ceramic mural installed in Talbot Reserve, in suburban St Kilda, which includes tiles made by 600 community members. My purpose is to bring these artworks into the light as 'public artworks' and to consider what this means philosophically.

Many perspectives are offered by the three portraits. The self-portrait presents my perspectives about making over thirty permanent public artworks with communities, but is limited by being that of one person (myself). The two portraits of artworks offer the perspectives of many people involved in making but are limited to two artworks.



Scope of the study

The artworks in the portraits and those of my own practice were physically in or near Melbourne. I made a decision to research locally because I wanted to conduct many interviews and repeatedly visit the artworks. Family and work commitments made travelling to conduct research unfeasible. I was also drawn to the local place of Melbourne because it was my experience of being an artist in this place that had drawn me into the research. Although the artworks are local, the research sits within the greater context of *permanent public art made by community members* across the western world (Europe, UK, USA and New Zealand).

My experience of making artworks with community members mainly takes place within educational facilities such as schools or pre-schools. My personal impetus for this research lies in trying to understand how these works happen outside of small communities in a more public space (often a local council domain), where large commissioned works of ‘permanent public art' are sited.

All of the artworks in this research have involved hand-making. I am interested in the agency created by - either directly wielding the artwork, or directly making it with a tool where the person has a ‘hand’ in the making.

Drawing from other methodology

Beside Portraiture, I utilised a range of methodologies, in particular those which incorporated drawing and the inclusion of the 'self', into research. In this manner the methodology of this research is 'purposefully interdisciplinary' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 2005, p. 8), drawing on Portraiture and other methodologies for ethics, data collection, analysis, drawing and writing the thesis. These include autoethnography, a/r/tography, and arts-based research methods. Case study methods (Yin 2003a, 2003b, Stake 1995, 2006) also contributed to the research design, selection of research subjects (the artworks), development of interview questions, data gathering and analysis.

The use of multiple portraits addresses the exploratory nature of the research towards a broader understanding of the field of permanent public art made by community members. The three portraits facilitated finding commonalities in perspectives and experiences but also brought into the light their uniqueness and particularities (Stake 1995). As in multiple case studies, the subject matter could be viewed through a variety of lenses 'which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood' (Baxter & Jack 2008, p. 544). Multiple portraits could also potentially

provide triangulation of emerging themes, and points of convergence (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1995).

The Self-portrait and I

I have included a self-portrait for two reasons. Firstly, to explicitly draw on my experience and knowledge as an artist working with communities to make permanent public art, and secondly, to make explicit the voice of the researcher.

The self-portrait encases the research, bracketing the thesis at the beginning and the end, (Prelude and Epilogue) and emerging in the methodology as 'The Scroll'.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) suggests that in traditional qualitative research the voice of the researcher is 'purposely silenced' but their hand is evident in the conceptual orientation, the disciplinary lens and the methods and design' (p. 86). Likewise, personal experience influences the research process, including, 'who, what, when, where and how to research' (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, p.1). And 'researchers are selective in defining and shaping the data they collect and the interpretations that flow from their findings' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 13). Thus, in working towards validity in research, Patti Lather (1986) urges us to 'construct research designs that push us toward becoming vigorously self-aware' (p. 66).

In the methodology of Portraiture, the researcher's perspective is made clear, thus creating a space for the alternative views of any reader (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 172).

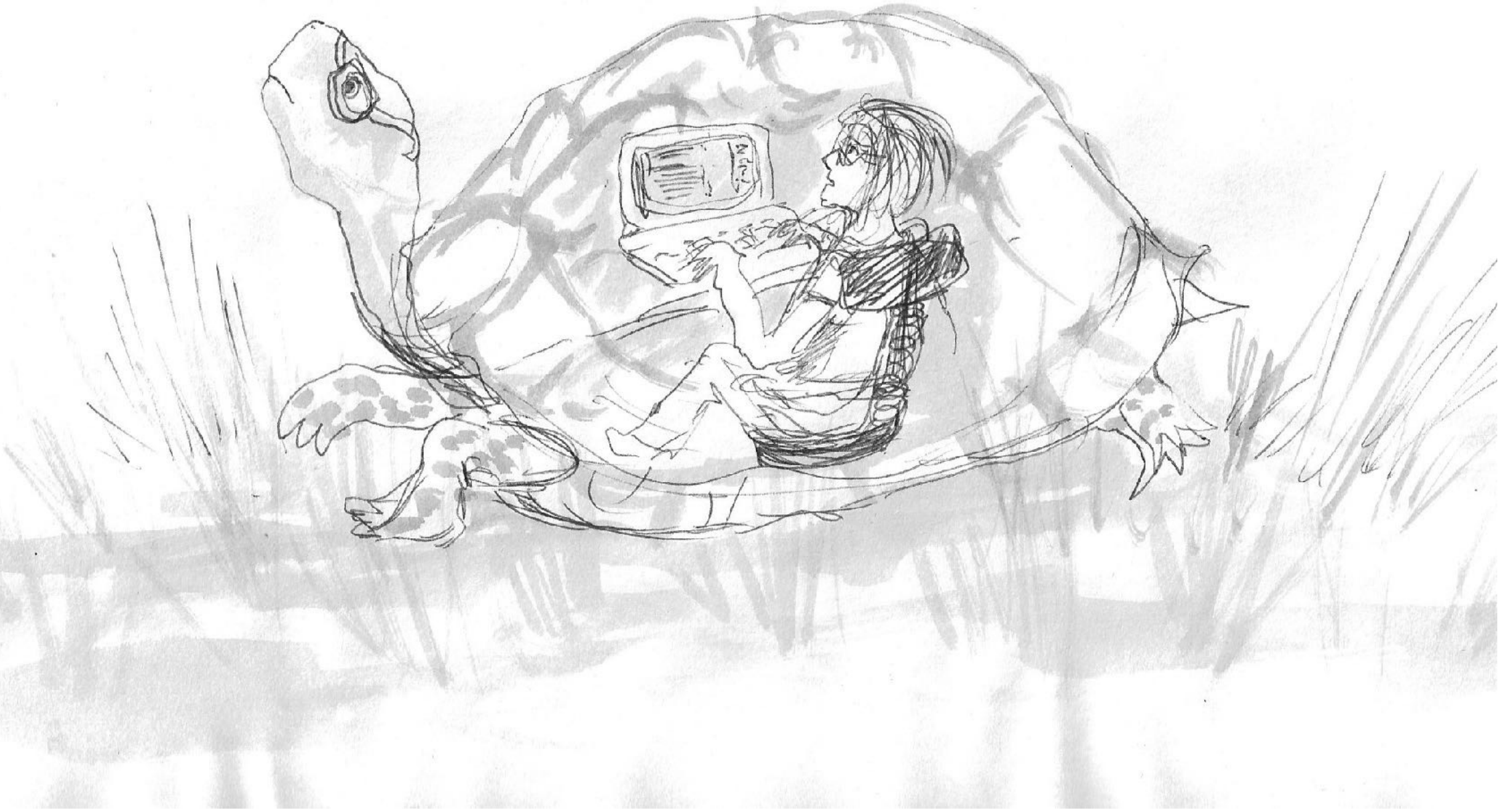
Debbie Qadri

My self-portrait is a reminder of ‘I’ as the researcher - my desires, motives and perspective. Throughout the thesis I draw attention to myself, reminding the reader of my presence, subjectivity and experience.

During the research I continued to work part-time as an artist making permanent artworks with schools and communities. This ongoing work in the field provided me with a continual immersion in the subject matter and cause to continually consider my role in the research and my art practice.

One day, in my role as an artist who works in public space, I was walking across a public place with two people. The first, a person who had the power to control what happened in the space and the second, a person who was trying to implement an artwork with local community members in the space. I was the potential artist and my role was to contribute ideas and possibilities for artworks in the space. As we moved over the site, things came into the conversation which included; personal visions for the site, differences in opinion about what would look good, concerns about budget, what materials and processes would be feasible. I realised that so much of what is decided in public space has to do with individual preferences of people who have an opportunity to put something into public space. At that moment, the three of us were the power-brokers of the future of that place.

I saw myself as a shelled amphibian with my identity as a researcher, hidden from them. I was lurching alongside the conversation attentive in my role as the artist, but I had my second head inside my office, (which was also under my shell) dipping into my research and leafing through the pages, cross-comparing sentences as they emerged from the conversation I was hearing. I had become a little detective, acting and playing out my role as an artist. I was consulting the files of my whole practice and my research done so far and I was typing madly on the computer my thoughts about what I was experiencing.



Auto-ethnography gives credence to the renderings of subjective and lived experience as research: it acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotion, and the researcher's influence on research (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, p. 2). Instead of focussing only on an academic audience, this method allows a wider and more diverse audience to understand the research through its use of storytelling and by relating personal experience to the research topic (ibid., p. 4). ‘Layered accounts often focus on the author's experience alongside data, abstract analysis, and relevant literature’ (ibid., p. 5).

The methodology of a/r/tography provides support for recognising the other roles of the researcher - those of artist and teacher, and is a ‘means to inquire in the world through a process of art making and writing’ (Springgay, Irwin and Wilson Kind 2005, p. 899). It is a process of double imaging that includes the creation of art and words that are not separate or illustrative of each other but instead, are interconnected and woven through each other to create additional meanings (ibid.).

I work in the role of an artist teaching people how to make permanent art and through this, teaching my philosophy about the rights of people to be artists, to have their art and ideas in public space, and to have them valued. Alongside these two roles was the third, of being a researcher. In Kalin's (2009) experience, a/r/tography 'allowed for a re/searching of my identities, practices and understandings as relational' (p.18) and this also became my experience as my research journey developed. Recognising the differences and similarities in these roles, and acknowledging the discomfort between them, made me explore in more depth the paradoxes and ethics of being an artist/teacher working with communities and being a researcher.

The self-portrait also resonates with the reciprocal relationship between research and creative practice, which is part of the cyclic methodology of ‘practice-led research and research-led practice’ (Smith & Dean 2009, p. 12). Throughout the research I have continued my art practice of making public artworks with community and drawn these experiences into research - in turn, the research has affected the art projects that I have undertaken, each being soaked in the waters of each other.

Then these thoughts, perspectives and experiences have been pulled through the wringer of writing and drawing. Expressed, compressed and distilled.

The self-portrait exists explicitly in the ‘Prelude’, ‘The Scroll’ and the ‘Epilogue’, as well as where I draw attention to myself as the researcher throughout the thesis [1].

The Prelude - You encountered the ‘Prelude - the voice of pre-occupation’ in the beginning of this thesis. It takes up Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1997) suggestion of recording the researcher’s ‘voice of pre-occupation’ at the beginning of the research (p. 186).

> ‘It is important that she record her framework *before* she enters the field, identifying the intellectual, ideological, and autobiographical themes that will shape her view. The more conscious and explicit she can make this voice of preoccupation’ (and we suggest writing these reflections down in a form that encourages rumination, analysis and critique) the more open she will be to what she encounters in the field’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 186).

In this spirit the ‘Prelude’ was constructed early in 2016 before I began interviewing research participants. It recorded the starting point of the research - my experiences and perspectives, and reasons for embarking on the PhD. It unearthed my understanding of ‘what I do’ and ‘how I think’ when I work as an artist in communities to make permanent public art and served as a marker, to use later, in considering how my perspectives had changed during the research 2.

The Scroll - The Scroll, which follows this chapter, tells the story of an ethical journey which affected how I undertook the research process, analysis and the outcomes.

Epilogue - The last chapter of the thesis presents the summary, findings and recommendations as well as my own understandings and perspectives of the research.

Portraits of artworks and how they were chosen

The Tree Project

I encountered *The Tree Project*, as a member of Doris (a women's blacksmithing group) when we began to meet at The Blacksmiths Barn, under the auspices of the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victorian Branch). I followed the project from a distance, my ears pricking up each time it was mentioned and when beginning this research, I envisaged *The Tree Project* as an artwork which needed to be written about. It was an unusual example of a permanent public artwork made by a community. It began as a project without funding or council involvement, with no principal artist, or council officer leading it. It drew in thousands of people through its making, becoming larger to accommodate inclusion and lengthening in duration. It is also a freestanding sculpture which is rare as far as community made artworks are concerned. I felt it had much to offer as a project that had developed organically from an idea and which grew in ways unforeseen.

The Great Wall of St Kilda

I use ceramics in making permanent work in public space, so I was drawn to researching another work of the same materials, for comparison with my own experiences. Many permanent public artworks made by community members are low relief ceramic sculpture, mosaic, totem poles or carved bricks. Other Victorian options for portraits were the *Benalla Ceramic Mural* and Pamela Irving's *Stationary Faces* at Patterson Station. But when I went to the *Great Wall of St Kilda*, to see how useful it would be for the research I was immediately won over because it featured text that expressed community members' voices on topics such as homelessness, equity, Indigenous culture and place. It appealed to my arguments about democracy and how community-made artworks have the capacity to offer other viewpoints beside official history and advertising.

The table below shows how these two artworks differ.

Aspect	***The Tree Project***	***The Great Wall of St Kilda***
Dimension	Stand alone, three dimensional, sculpture	Low relief sculpture in clay with metal support behind it
Materials	Stainless steel, glass, copper,	clay
Contexts	Acknowledgement of Country Fire Authority volunteer firefighters. Response to natural disaster, The need to do something Community engagement in support of those affected by the fires Growing organically according to response of community	A community engagement project, participation and consultation Interest in doing another project with the artist
Funding source	Self-funded, fundraising and donations,	Local council
Scope of community making the artwork	Blacksmithing the leaves, buds, stems, twigs, branches, welding, contribution of text.	Making and decorating clay tiles

Broader scope of community participation	Teaching, planting, digging, writing, documentation of the project, baking, cleaning, demonstrating and teaching, landscape design, weeding, polishing, event management, writing, engineering, meetings, design, engineering, landscape building	Discussion and feedback on the content and design for the top part of the mural.
Time	Initially envisaged as a six-month project, took five years to complete the Tree to installation. Other aspects such as the benches, gardens and signage were ongoing during the research period.	Tiles made with community 2007-08 Installation and launch in 2009
Number of community participants	Thousands of people	Over 600 people making claywork

Methods of Gathering the data for the portraits of the public artworks

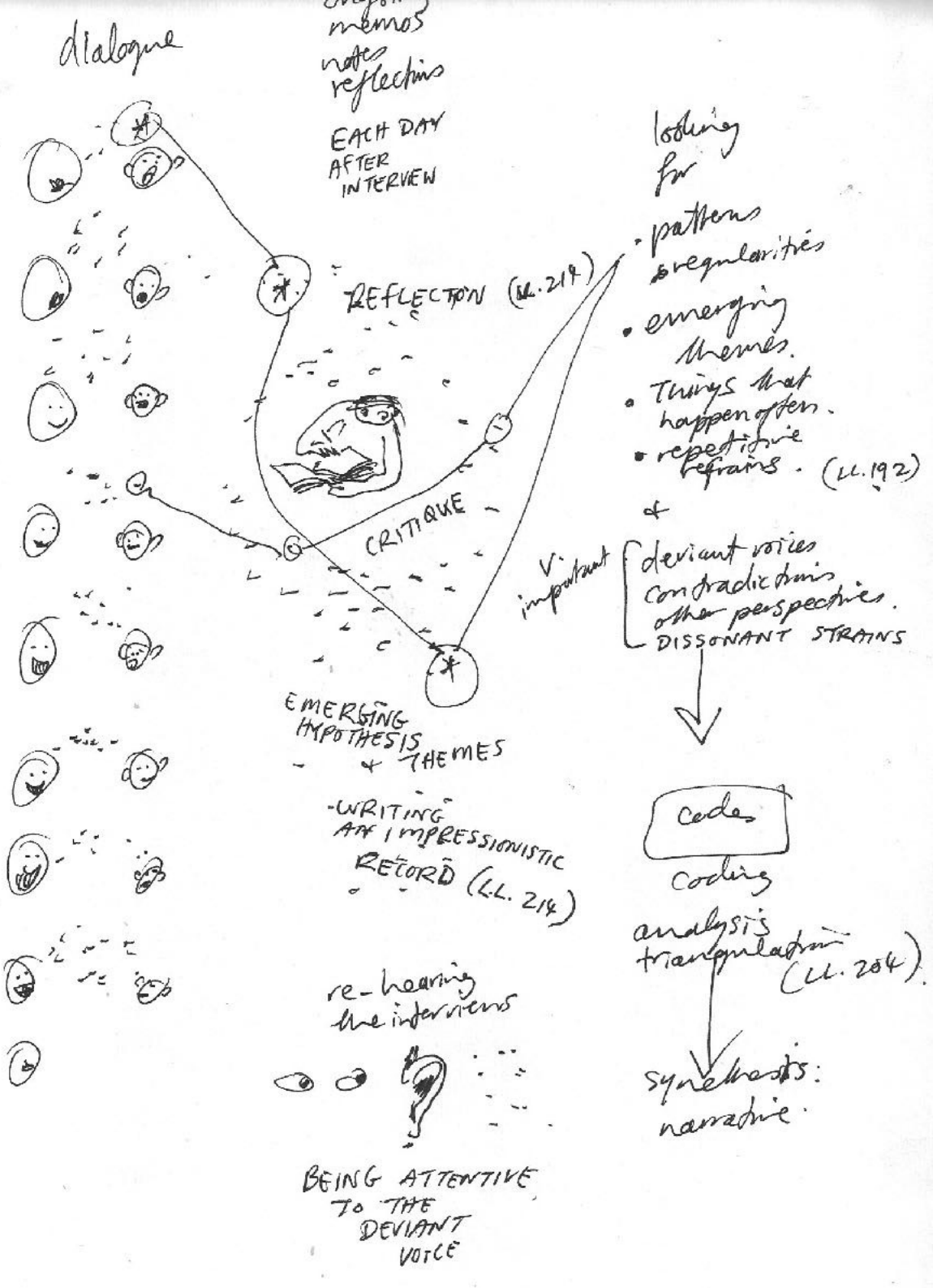
In order to create 'thick description' (Geertz 1973, p. 6; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 8) data for the portraits included interviews/dialogue, written material, media, blogs, and observation of the site.

Interviews

Semi structured interviews of one hour duration were chosen as a method of gathering data of people's perspectives about the artwork. The plan was to record approximately six interviews for each portrait which included people in a range of roles such as; community members who were art-makers in the project, facilitators, artists, community members who live in the area near the artwork.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (1997) suggest dialogue with 'actors' in the portrait to centre on the 'good' of the portrait subject (p. 9). The questions also focused on the practical and philosophical considerations in making the artwork. Please see Appendices for 'List of interview questions'. Eight people were interviewed about *The Tree Project;* Amanda Gibson, Andrew Garton, Steve Pascoe, Shane Kenny, Cliff Overton, Doug Tarrant, Wendy Fox and Michelle Bishop. Five people were interviewed about *The Great Wall of St Kilda;* Robyn Szechtman, Deborah McIntosh, Wendy Butler, Mauricio Alejandro Arias, and Serge Thomann. All interviewees were offered a choice of anonymity or being identified and all chose to be identified. In the portraits sources of information which derive from the interview process are identified by the word 'Interview' placed in the reference.

Using the snow-balling method (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981), I contacted the main facilitators of the artworks and asked them to suggest possible interviewees. The participants did not always fit my simplistic pre-conception of roles, some people were neither makers, nor, audience members (e.g. film-maker, local councillor) but their roles afforded them perspectives of being both outside and inside the artwork process.



Through the interview process I discovered that many of the questions I asked participants were based on my own perceptions about what I might find. Robert Stake suggests that interview questions should be only a guide to assist the research, and the researcher should be open to what they find, and seize ‘opportunities to learn the unexpected’ (Stake 1995, p. 29). I concentrated on listening and allowing the person being interviewed to wander from the questions and provide information about the project that they thought was important. Detailed notes were written after each interview about what I encountered and how this influenced my thinking.

The number of interviews were limited due to the time and resources of the project, not because I reached ‘saturation’ (Saunders et al. 2017, p. 3). Each interview validated some aspects of the artwork which others had discussed, but also always revealed new understandings and experiences of the artwork.

Observation of site

Permanent public artworks are not just physical structures, they also exist in the context of the place in which they are situated which can include; ‘physical, vernacular, psychological, social, cultural, ceremonial, ethnic, economic, political and historical dimensions’ (Kelley 1995, p. 142). I visited each artwork several times to experience and consider the physical setting, and to be open to sources of ‘potential contextual material’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 44, 62). The experience of visiting (and subsequent knowledge of the site) provided familiarity with the artwork which facilitated rapport and more complex conversations with interviewees.

Other data

Portraiture focuses on dialogue and observation of the site, but I felt that a variety of evidence (Yin 2003b) was important in making portraits of the artworks. I referred to case study methodology to gain insight into the other ways to gather data which included; media, blogs, websites, historical accounts and academic articles. I also continually made notes of my own observations and thoughts during the research. This assisted a broader understanding of the artwork through, ‘a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood’ (Baxter & Jack 2008, p. 544).

Broadening data sources provided more data and validity for the context of each artwork and the themes which emerged from the interviews.

Data used for the portraits of Artworks

For *The Tree Project* I interviewed eight people; the project facilitator, three makers of *The Tree*, a film-maker, a representative of the town of Strathewen (the community who received the tree) and two outsiders (audience members). Other resources for the research included; websites, blogs, *The Drift* (the quarterly publication of the Australian Blacksmiths Association VIC.), media articles, and documents forwarded by the co-ordinator of the project. I visited the two main sites of making and on several occasions visited *The Tree* in Strathewen.

For *The Great Wall of St Kilda* I interviewed five people; the co-ordinator, two makers, a local councillor, and a community worker. Other documents include; those of a Swinburne University research study (which used the project as a case study), journal articles, media, websites and historical accounts about St Kilda. I also created a document which surveys other permanent public artworks in St Kilda, so that *The Great Wall of St Kilda* can be seen within this context (this research is online at: https://stkildawalkingpublicartandmemorial.blogspot.com).

Drawing

Very early in the research process of my PhD studies I found myself drawing how I visualised the research. These drawings arranged ideas spatially, and often included emotions and key words and phrases. As an artist I have always used art-making to sort out thoughts and abstract ideas. As a form of mind-mapping it reveals how I connect various concepts and relationships.

Within six months of the research I had hundreds of drawings, and it was clear that drawing would have to be a part of the research even though I was intending to write a standard thesis.

When I turned up to a supervisors meeting with an analysis which was a two metre by one metre drawing/ collage, the question became explicit; ‘Why are you making this big picture?’ Actually, I had three big pictures to show that day. One was a twenty-metre-long 'paper' about my methodology (‘The Scroll’) which I had presented at a conference. The others were my codings for analysis of the artworks, with the themes on paper pieces able to be re-arranged and organised with sticky-tape, one in the form of a map, the other a tree.

The question clarified that drawing, writing, collage and physically arranging things with my hands was an integral part of my thinking process. Efforts to document my visual ideas often developed into diagrams and drawings which spilt outside the standard A4 printed page.

Above: ‘The Scroll’ being made

The drawings also shared the emotional aspects of my work, which were difficult to put into the writing and accommodate what I ‘felt’. Patricia Leavy (2009) suggests that arts-based research often explores aspects of humanness that ‘are often impossible to access through traditional research practices: topics such as love, death, power, memory, fear, loss, desire, hope and suffering’ (p. 3, 4). Art is always subjective, bringing together how we see the relationships between things and how we feel. The drawings enhance the self-portrait’s purpose of creating a space for the subjective experience and perspectives of the researcher. The sketches include; emotions, viewpoints, arguments and experience - as a persisting acknowledgement and exploration of my personal involvement in the research process.

Art practice is both research method, and knowledge (Rippin 2012). The process of drawing can be viewed as an extraction of knowledge and the drawing, as artefact, can be evidence as well as presentation of knowledge. Art processes can be used in all phases of research; data collection, analysis and representation: art can be a subject of enquiry and a pedagogical tool (Leavy 2009).

Drawing VS Text

In a sense, words are clearer. As we write, then edit over and over, we continually refine and clarify in order to communicate clearly. However, visual art is a form of expression which is not clear or didactic. Each line in a drawing, each piece of imagery can be interpreted differently by the viewer - the meaning is negotiated through the interpretation of reader.

As Rippin (2012) notes, ’Once the artwork goes out into the world the maker no longer has any chance of controlling its meaning, and that although sometimes meaning is misconstrued, there are also times when the viewer ascribes levels of meaning that the maker did not and could not intend. This is both terrifying and exhilarating, and represents a generative way of working with research ‘findings’ (p. 311).

Traditionally text in the thesis has a chronology, which is used to present an argument. The reader benefits by reading it in order as the narrative is built on stepping blocks. It can also be seen as constrained. Compelled along a line, written research is linear and has ‘a necessarily sequential character’ (Rippin 2012, p. 306), but this does not reflect life - art has no such constraint or order.

A/r/tography offers insight into how ‘art and graphs, or image and word’ can work when they come together. ‘It is a doubling of visual and textual wherein the two complement, extend, refute, and/ or subvert one another’ (Springgay, Irwin &Wilson Kind 2005, p. 900) and where the two methods of representing knowledge are not separate or illustrative of each other but instead, are interconnected and woven through each other to create additional meanings (ibid.).

The unsayable

> ‘According to Aristotle, man’s highest capacity of contemplation, whose chief characteristic is that its content cannot be rendered in speech’ (Arendt, 1958, p. 27).

Rippin (2012) argues that through her use of visual imagery it was ‘possible to say the unsayable’ and to express the ‘fragmented, fugitive, contingent post-modern identity in a way which is not possible in conventional written research with its necessary sequential character’ (p. 306). Likewise, Kalin (2009) suggests that ‘symbolic and imagistic representations hold the potential to access what otherwise might remain hidden and inexpressible’ (p. 17).

> ‘Arts-based research is an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable’ (Barone & Eisner 2012, p. 1).

Engagement with audience

Drawing has been included in some renderings of Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997; Rippin 2012) and can assist with reaching an audience (Stowe & Sousanis 2016). The use of artwork facilitates the representation of research findings in an immediate way which actively engages the audience, and ‘allows for the co-creation of knowledge’ (Rippin 2012, p. 306-7). Like the co-creation between the sitter and artist, the portraitist and their research participant, the artwork and its perceiver, there is a conversation between two active meaning-makers and a co-creation of the knowledge between the researcher and the audience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997) as the ‘viewer/reader figures into the process of meaning making’ (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind 2005, p. 900).

The hand-drawn is also a celebration of the hand-made, which echoes the research subject of community members individually having a hand in making, touching and melding the artwork that goes into public space. The drawings parallel the complexity of artworks that I write about and also play out the unclear transfer of meaning from artist's intentions to audience reception and contribution to the meaning of the artwork/research. Through the inclusion of drawing in the thesis I draw attention to these parallels.

Segue to ‘The Scroll’

‘The portraitist enters the field with a clear intellectual framework and guiding research questions, but fully expects (and welcomes) the adaptation of both her intellectual agenda and her methods to fit the context and the people she is studying . . . Her methodological plan and conceptual frame - are only starting points, but both are immediately transformed and modified to match the realities of the setting. With the portraitist’s first moves into the setting, the iterative process begins - a dynamic process of receptivity, negotiation, and accommodation that leads to more focussed research questions and a more grounded research design’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 186).

The following chapter is entitled ‘The Scroll’, and is part of the self-portrait. It documents the difficulties I encountered in reconciling the ethics of my art practice with communities and the involvement of research participants in the research. ‘The Scroll’ documents how this changed the methodology of my research, affecting both the process and outcomes.

Notes

1 In most of the drawn self-portraits for this research I accidentally left off my glasses (which I wear constantly and love dearly because they help me to see). An indication that some doubt needs to be reserved about how much of my own practice and self I am able to subjectively record.

2 The original 'Prelude' was made and published online (http://communityasmakers.blogspot.com.au/p/prelude-draft-only.html), the version in this thesis has been edited and shortened.

5 The Scroll

AND READ THE LITERATURE
RANCIERE
KWON
MOUFFE
DEMOCRACY
EQUITY
CHOICE
MY PRACTICE
ITS ALL CONNECTED THE
MENTAL AND PHYSICAL
WHILE
I AM
THINKING
I AM
ITS ALL
ITS ALL
ITS ALL

Left: Presenting ‘The Scroll’ at the 2016 Institute of Public Pedagogies Conference

Background

This chapter had its beginnings as a ‘paper’ (a 15 metre scroll) under the title, ‘Unwelcome Paradoxes: the compulsion to reconcile the subject matter of the research with the vehicle that’s carrying it*’,* which was presented at the 2016 Institute of Public Pedagogies Conference in Melbourne.

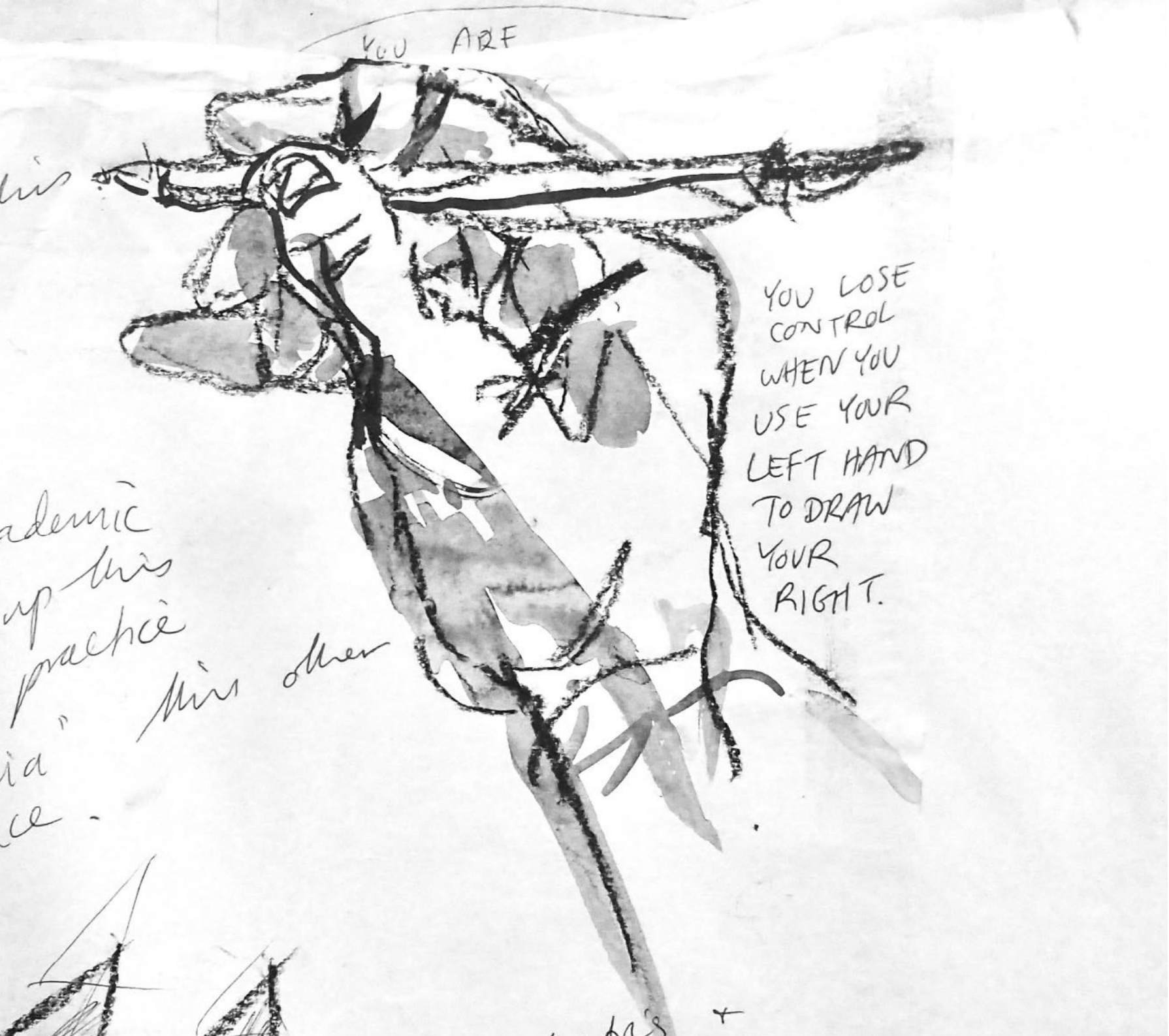
The presentation was developed in an attempt to iron out the contradictions that I was experiencing between the subject matter of the thesis and the traditional practices of PhD research. Constructing the argument on a physical scroll of paper allowed me to expand outwards with drawing and text, negotiating their relationship by typing, drawing, physically cutting and rearranging them into a chronological narrative.

In 2017, ‘The Scroll’ was developed into a paper entitled, ‘Lawrence-Lightfoot, Ranciere and Gemma: reconciling the subject matter with research processes and outcomes’, and published in the 2017 Journal of the Public Pedagogies Institute (http://www.publicpedagogies.org/journal/).

In this paper I reworked the text on my computer and adapted the imagery and metaphors from *The Scroll* into a set of drawings that used knitting and threads as a metaphor. Although it was beautiful and evocative, a great deal of energy, raw ideas, emotion, gut feeling and intuitiveness was lost to the process of making something that had to be contained in A4 layout, with limited words, chronologically argued, aesthetic and cohesive.

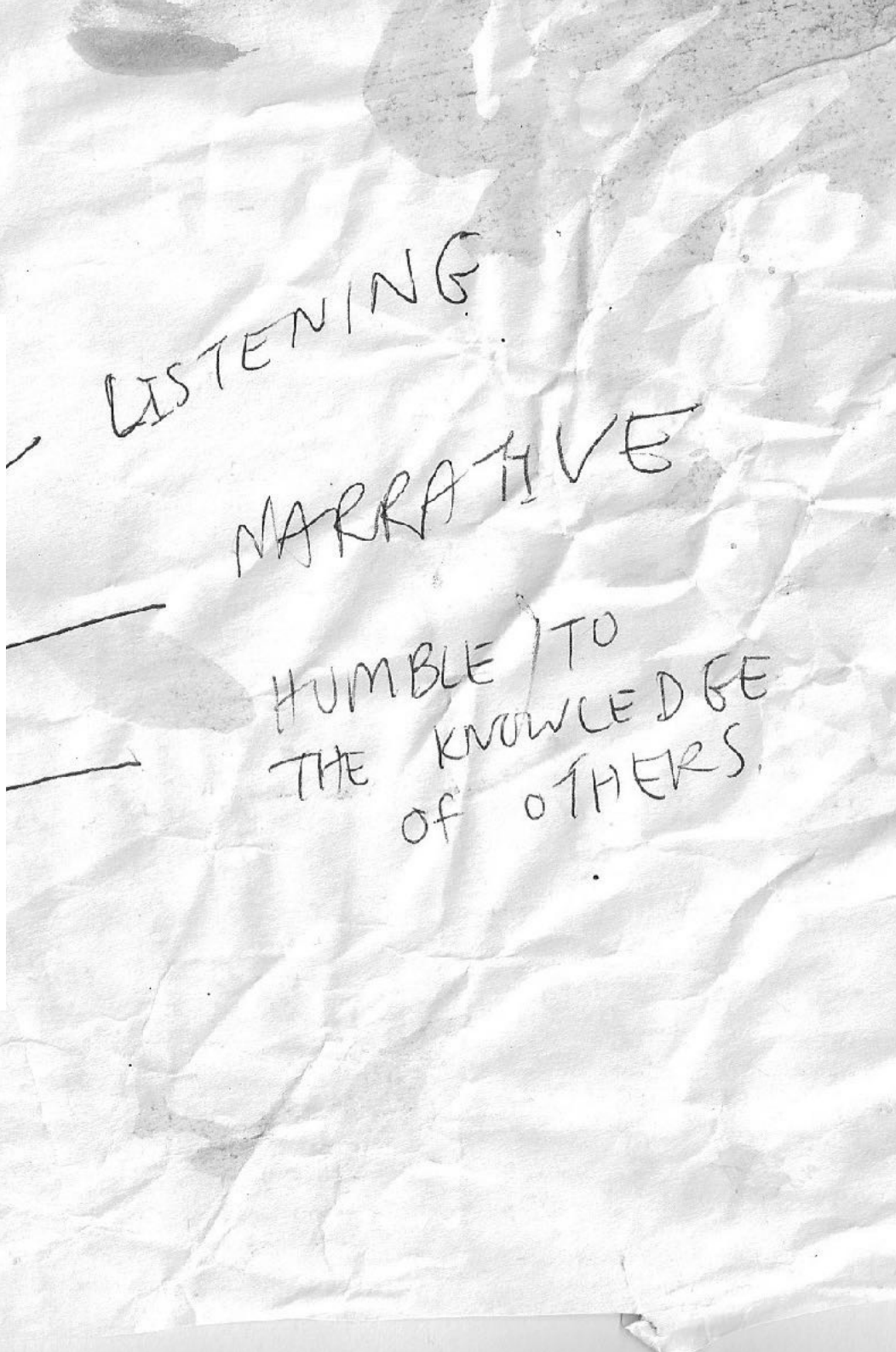
Alas, I had also cut up the scroll with scissors in the attempt to meld it into a digital document. I had destroyed the original physical scroll, which had what Kalin (2009), calls ‘drawing without erasing’ which tracks ‘becoming’ (p. 3). Making the scroll had been an important process of the ‘becoming’ of my methodology for this thesis.

In June 2017, I went to see the exhibition, ‘Museum of Everything’ at the Museum of Old and New Art, in Tasmania (http://musevery.com/exhibition7/). It was a collection of works of ‘non-professional art’, by ‘ordinary people’ (Shine 2017). I was blown away. What I admired was the excessiveness, energy and honesty in this exhibition, reminding me of my original scroll, of the rawness, the un-edited, un-erased and un-curtailed.

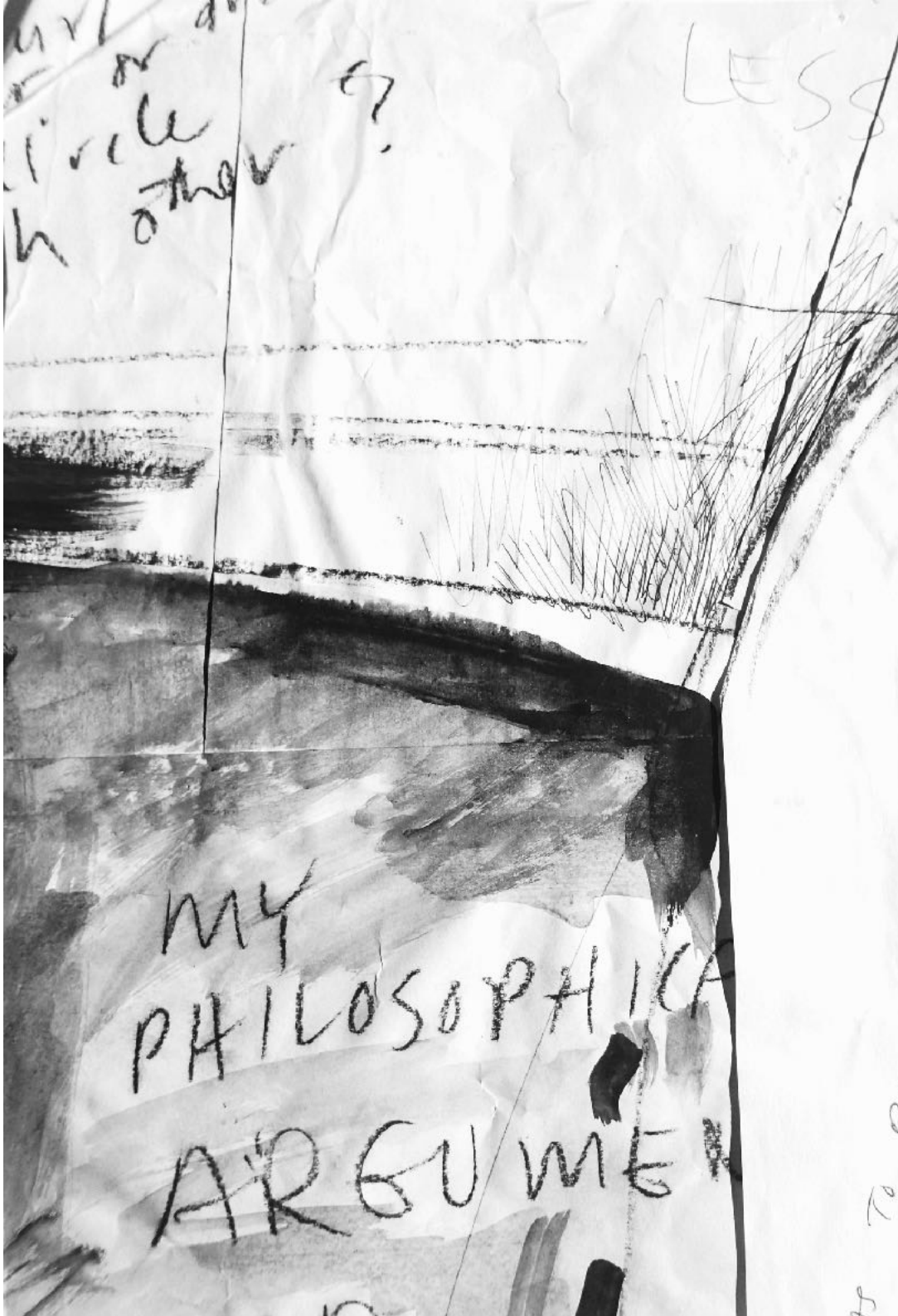


Debbie Qadri

After this I resolved to re-make the scroll and to try to recapture that energy and rawness that the original contained. But compromises were too compelling. The thesis needed to be contained in a form which could be displayed digitally. A long scroll of paper had no part to play in this (particularly since it was designed to roll out to the right and digital documents roll downwards). The raw drawings of the scroll, were brought into this document by digital means, un-erased and becoming, but removed from their original physical presence.



‘The Scroll’ outlines my dilemma of being caught in a place where my practice of working with communities to make art, the subject matter of my research and, the traditions of the PhD and academic research were at odds with each other. It describes a journey which draws on Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot’s methodology of Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997), the work of Jacques Ranciere (1991, 2007), and others, in considering the ethical relationship between the research outcomes and the public, including the people who were interviewed for the research and the community involved in the subject matter.

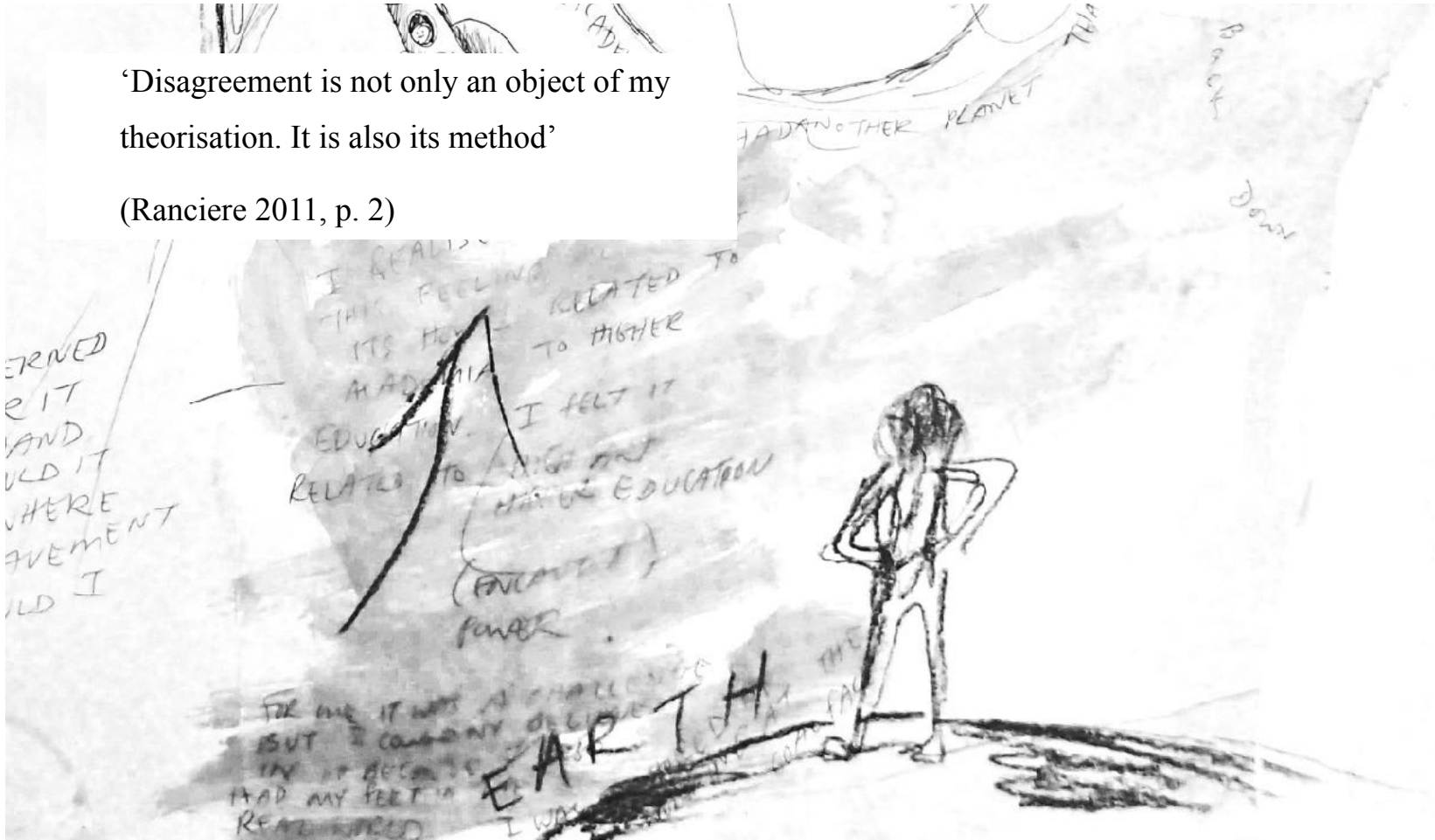


It also explores my subsequent commitment to public research outcomes through seeking to:

- prioritise the community most connected to the subject matter and the public as the primary recipients of the research outcomes,
- create greater respect and acknowledgement for the community members who contributed to the research, and
- create more equitable access and broaden dialogues by using public space to publish research findings.

Right: ‘The Scroll’ at the 2016 Institute of Public Pedagogies Conference, reaching the end of the classroom and going through the adjoining door into the next room.

The Scroll



‘Disagreement is not only an object of my theorisation. It is also its method’

(Ranciere 2011, p. 2)

Setting the scene – Position

My position is, that I am a PhD student, researching and writing a ‘traditional’ thesis. I am using Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot’s methodology of Portraiture to research two permanent artworks, which have been made by communities **and** my own practice working as an artist in this field. From the outset Lawrence-Lightfoot’s perspective (1997) of the interview process as a *dialogue* and its reciprocal nature, resonated with my practice of working with communities.. There were other dialogues happening also. As well as this dialogue with the interviewees, there was also a dialogue between myself as an artist and myself as a researcher. In my writing of the methodology, I explain how as a researcher I shaped the inquiry, but I must also tell how I was also shaped by my inquiry (Kalin 2009).

Very early on I imagined *the scroll* as having two layers (or two parallels) which ran one above the other to represent the two parts of my life and how they are linked. The top layer is the PhD study, (research, conference presentations, articles, thesis) and underneath is the subject matter of the research which is ‘permanent public art made by community members’. Within this bottom layer I am also embedded because I work in the field of my subject matter - my current vocation is making permanent artworks with communities mainly schools and kindergartens. These communities hire me to assist them to make permanent artwork. I design and plan with them, run the workshops with participants to make the art and then install it as a larger collaborative artwork.

process

to write papers

product outcome

chronological order

the organic way of working with community + as an artist + as an archeologist

time

meant

handmade non-formal organic

Research

Two long parallel drawings which are pinned up somewhere

middle section printed on clear plastic

Subject of research.

explaing the parallels between the research process + product & the subject matter

the essay dips between the two panels. up + down. + (necessarily has to be in chronological order) linked to directions + time use.

oh dear! Tricky!

So I am in both the top and bottom layer. I exist as a researcher of the subject matter but also live within it daily as a worker. For the first two years of my research I continued to work for a living as an artist working with communities, and so my involvement in this field was heavy, taking both substantial time and energy. During this period I worked on twenty seven projects where the community members made the artwork, most of them permanent outdoor ceramic murals.

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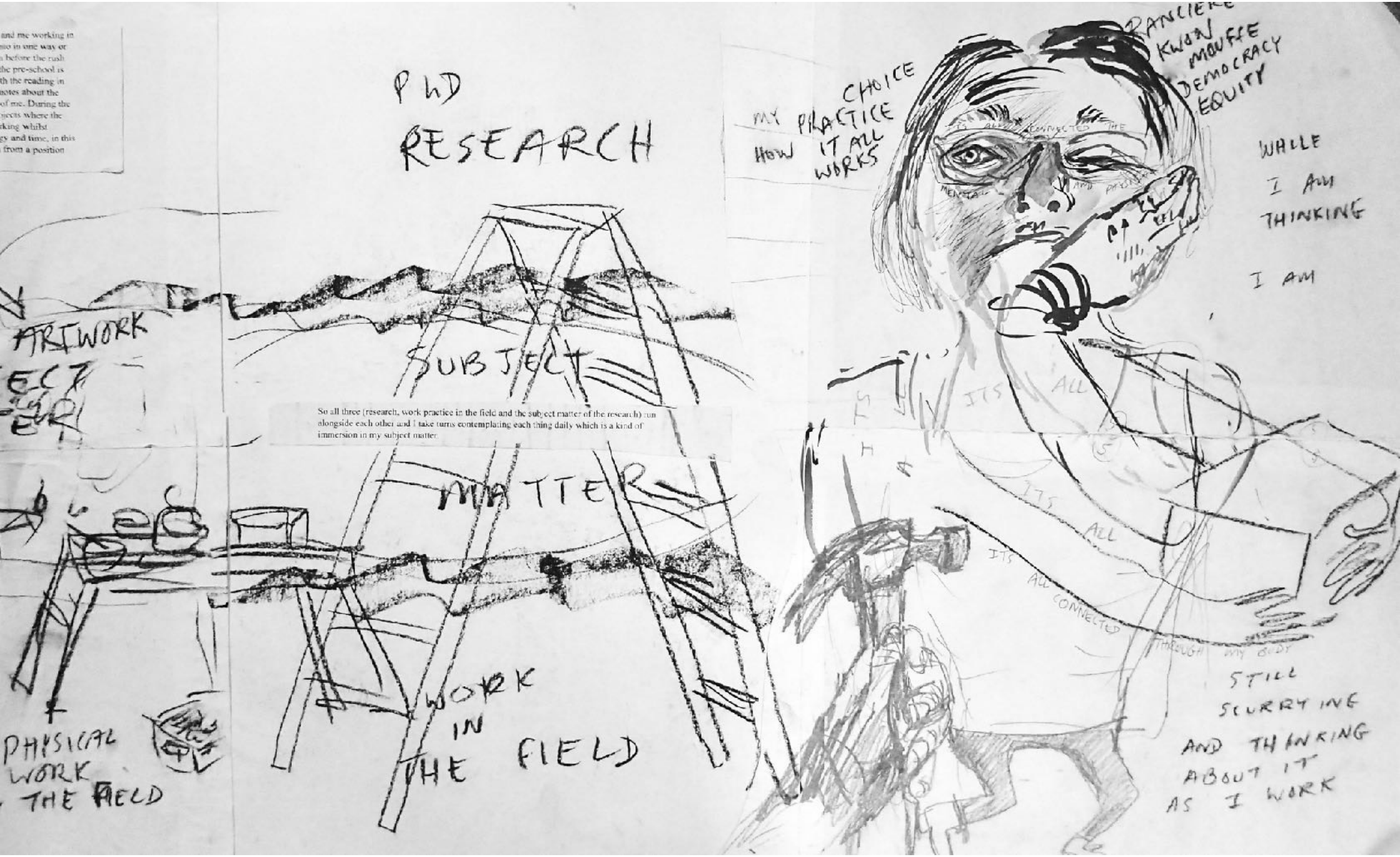
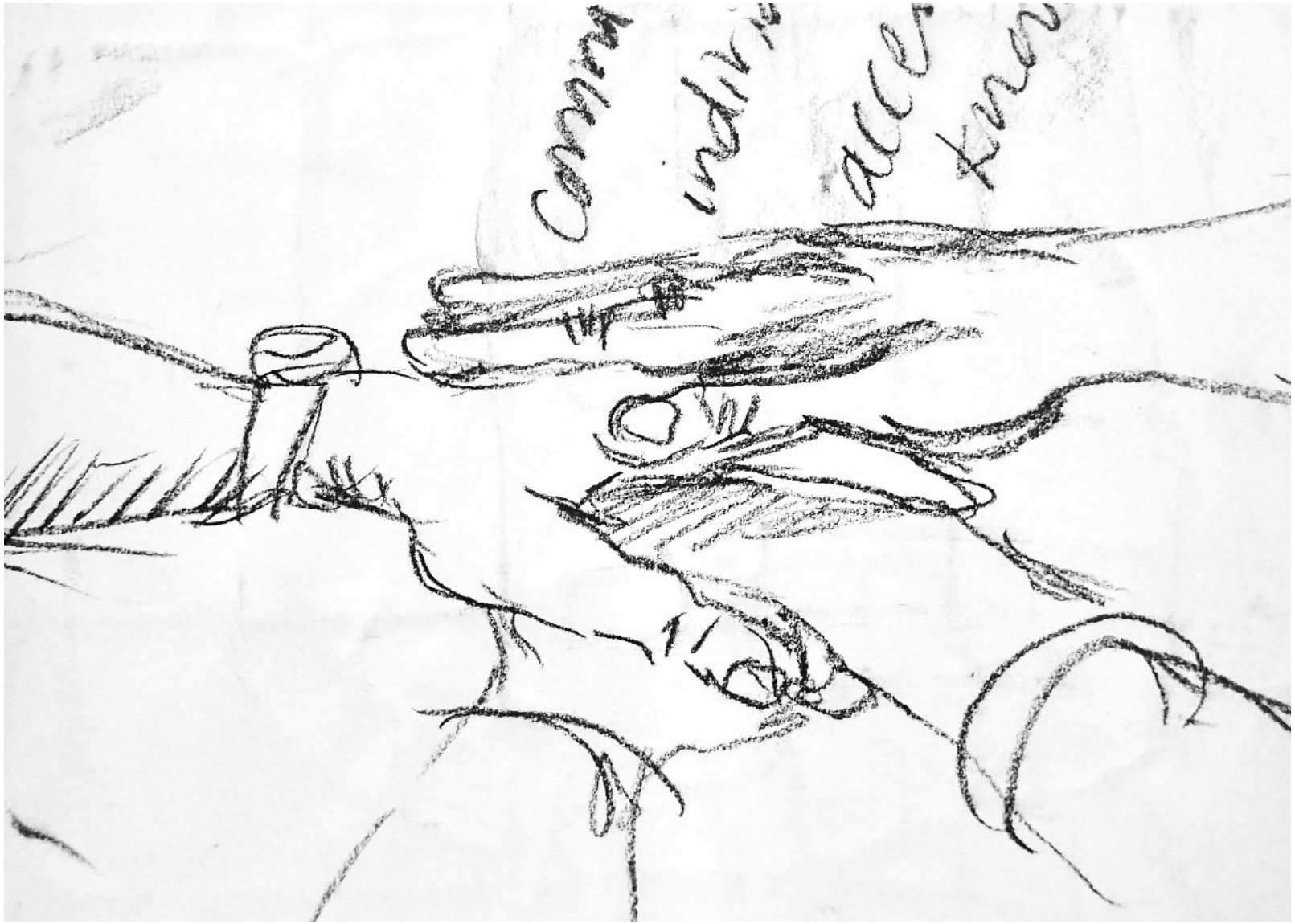


So all three (research, work practice in the field and the subject matter of the research) run alongside each other and I take turns contemplating each thing daily which is a kind of immersion in my subject matter.

Initially, I didn't think of my work as very important in terms of the research, it was just a fact of life, separate from study, which had to be done in order to earn a living. But this time-consuming and very physical work in the field affected how I did my research. My reading and writing were inserted into spare moments at work at the sites of the artworks I was making. Throughout the day whilst at work, at times such as breakfast, tea breaks, and lunch, I would read articles on my iPad and write notes on what I had read and how it related to the work I was doing that day. Often whilst up a ladder, in the workshops or in conversations, ideas came to me, which I wrote down at the time and at the site. This immersion in the subject matter also affected the way I undertook and understood my research.

Daily, there was an ongoing thinking and sorting of what goes on between these two worlds of art practice and research. Literature was read in light of my actual experience, and I was looking for my experience reflected in what I read. It provided continual reflection from a position inside the subject matter.

Through this immersive process I became aware of parallels, inconsistencies, contradictions and paradoxes between the research processes and the subject matter of the thesis. There were both differences and similarities between academic practice and community art practice, between ethical engagements with research participants and my engagements with community members when making art. These *aspects* were confronted daily alongside each other, as opposites which clashed and clanged, as things that did not and would not sit together. It was a bit like that hand game, where as a hand pulls out from the bottom another one is slapped on top. Each new hand slapping down, was like part of a dialogue, which shouted out the ethical issues, paradoxes and dilemmas - a conversation with myself and with the people I was doing research with, with my past experiences making art and how the research process contradicted these.



public
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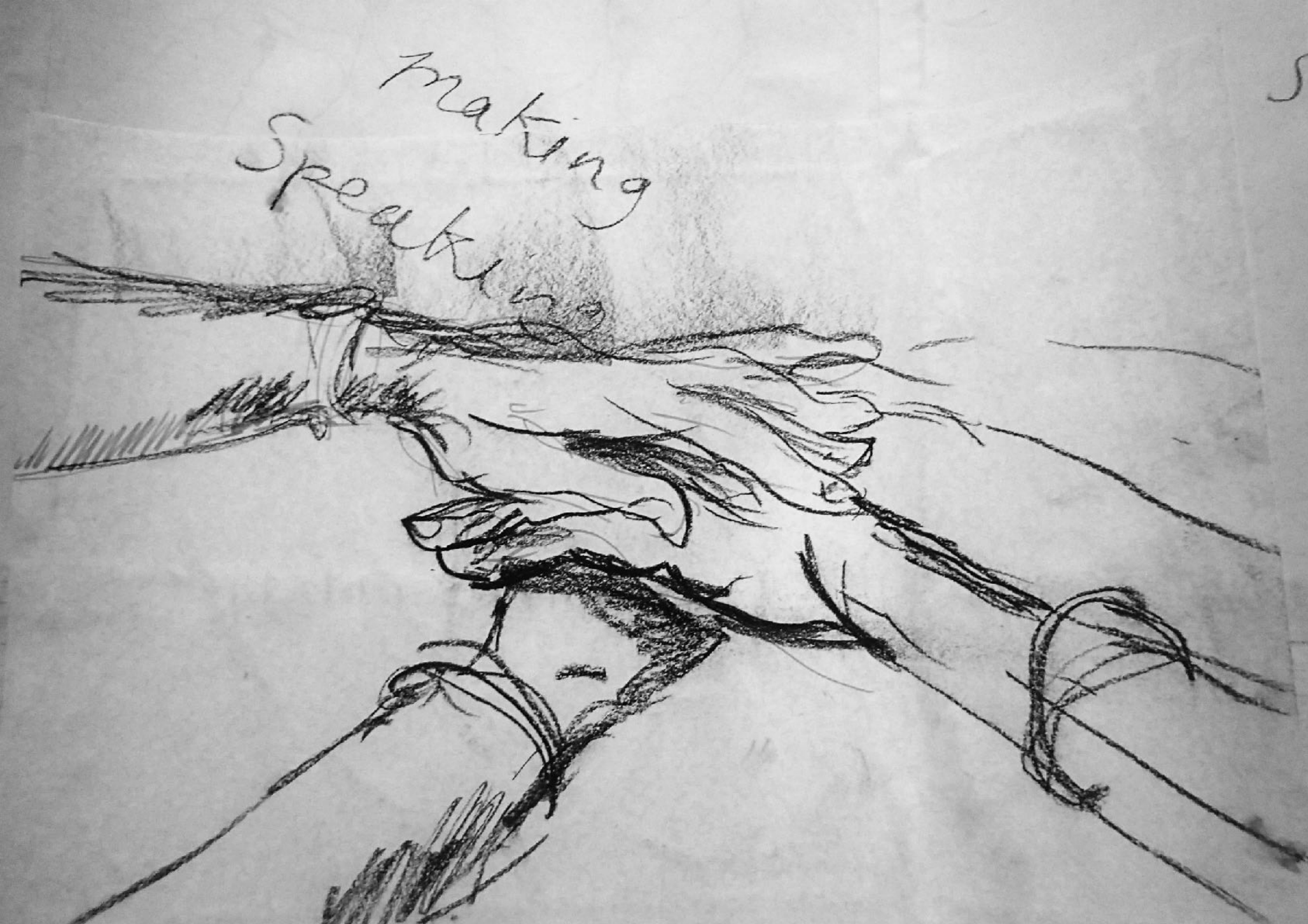
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The change

How I imagined ‘my research’, began to change when I involved participants. I realised that my research has a relationship with many people: it is not just me and the two examiners. When I began to conduct the interviews for my research, I became more aware of possible audiences for my work and the ethics of harvesting knowledge from people and presenting it as my own. The research participants entered my life and the imagined interviews became actual through the receiving of knowledge and stories from real people. They had something to say, and often they had been waiting and wanting to share what they had learnt. They also wanted to be acknowledged by name instead of being anonymous. They said they were looking forward to reading the outcomes of the research. I had under-estimated the depth of knowledge that would be shared with me through the interview process - it provided insights which I would not have been able to gather through other means. I had previously imagined myself the expert and now I was humbled.

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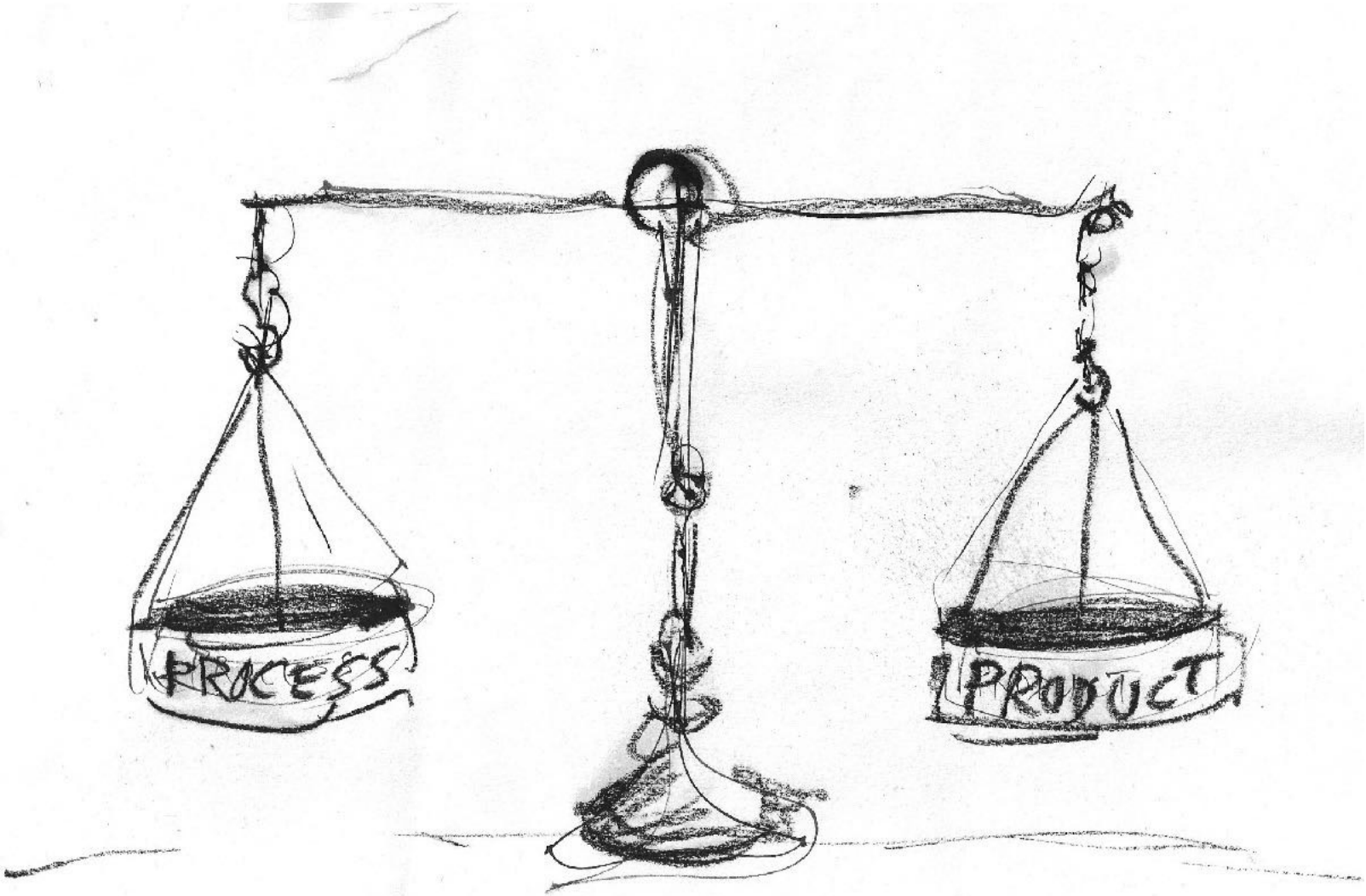
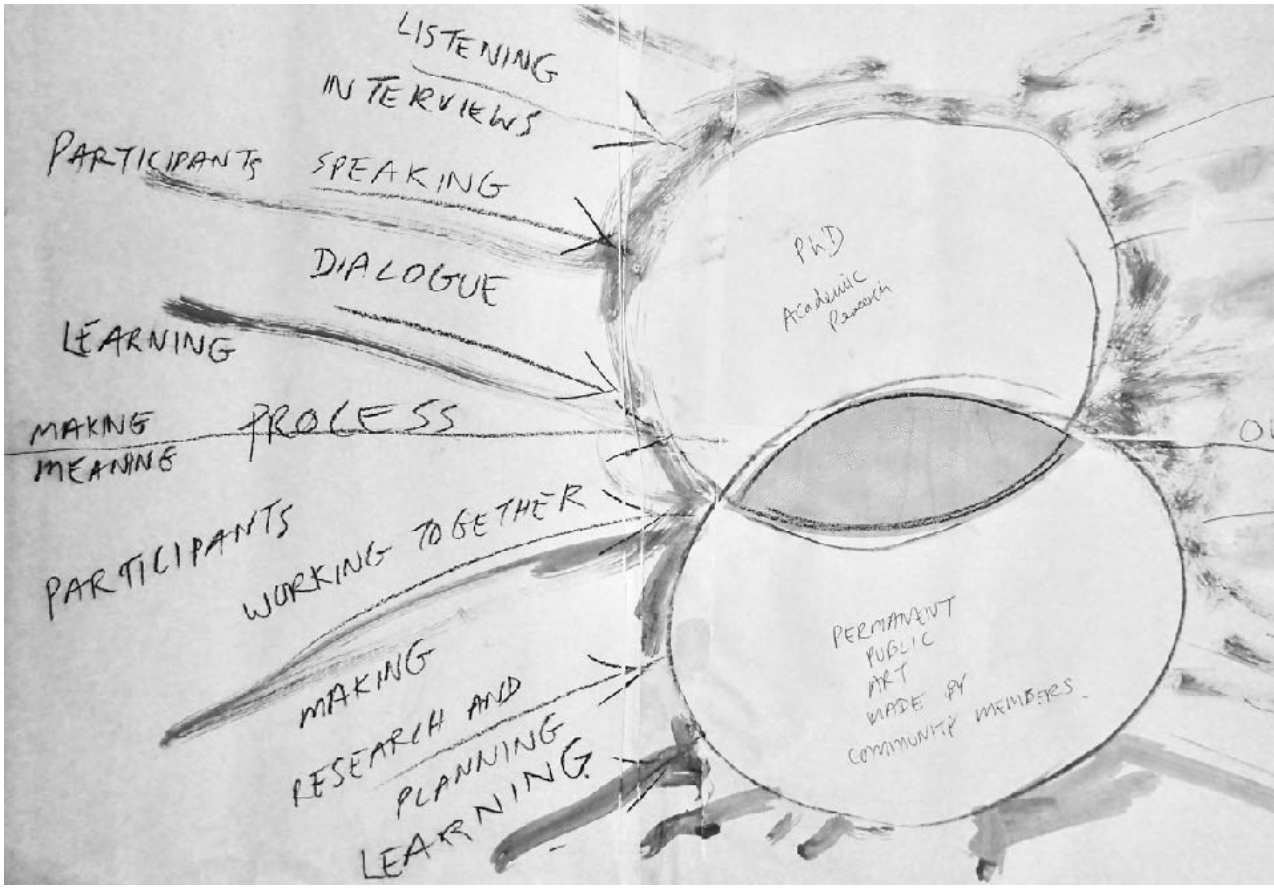
Process vs product/object - both in art and research

Public art made by a community has to consider two very important but different parts, one is the process of making together collaboratively and the other is the permanent object. A difficult aspect of my work as an artist, is that I have to take control of the artwork to make sure it will survive permanently and that it is also aesthetic so that the community love and respect it. But at the same time, I engage the community participants in making their individual contributions to the final artwork with some choice in what they are doing. This gives them individual ownership of the work as well as being part of the community effort. The process of making the artwork moves either side of a line between choice and control. The artist in control is at the opposite end from community involvement. On the other hand, if community members have more individual creative choice it may entail loss of control of the aesthetic and longevity of the work. A balance is needed.


PROCESS
PRODUCT

These paradoxes are paralleled in research when you involve participants. I control the subject matter along the lines of my own agenda. The participants in research give their knowledge to the researcher, who then reshapes it and reproduces this knowledge in the world of academia as her own.I began to understand Portraiture as a reciprocal process between researcher and participant (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997).



I felt the need to honour their contributions, to focus on this collaborative effort and acknowledge the participants and the community (who were involved with the artwork) by prioritising them as the most important audience of the outcomes. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) is concerned that academic texts rarely ‘invite dialogue with people in the ‘real world’, and her concerns are with ‘broadening the audience’ and ‘communicating beyond the walls of academy’ (p. 9). I needed to consider how to make the outcomes of the PhD accessible. In physical form one copy of my PhD will exist in the university library or in the archives and it will all be available online. It was suggested to me, that the usual thing is to address the wider audience after submitting the thesis, when you turn your research into a book. But I felt it was a strange paradox that the broader public are considered after the research has been written with the examiners in mind. Often after the PhD is completed the research student has limited time and energy left to rewrite the research for a second audience.

If we think about the PhD as a learning process and outcomes of knowledge (thesis, papers), the final product of research is a representation of selected parts of the learning process. I began to feel that I needed to consider reciprocity (Harrison et al. 2001; Michel & Bassinder 2013) with my participants and the communities of the artwork in both the process and the outcomes of my research.

Anonymity, Identity, Power and Authorship

I noticed that when the interviewees talked about things which seemed off track, (things I hadn't thought about), that these were important to the meaning and context of the artwork. Interviewees often provided what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997, p. 192 - 3) calls 'divergent' or 'deviant voices' which when pursued, led deeper into the meaning of the artwork.

There was one conversation from the research interviews that lodged in my head and sat heavily in my chest. I was being told that in the artwork, people were discouraged from taking credit for their contribution - those who wanted to jump on the bandwagon for self-gain were given short shrift. The conversation then turned towards research, and I was reminded that sometimes researchers come into communities, gather what they need, then leave and publish the work, taking all the credit. This conversation strikes at the heart of the dilemma between the artist taking credit for their work, or acknowledging the community as the makers. The very act of making an artwork with the community, with a group of non-artists is to say no to the 'self'. Alternatively, if the artist takes credit, the focus on community is lessened, and they are less acknowledged and valued. A point of balance which acknowledges the contribution of everyone needs to be found.

Actually the title of the paper that I wrote based on this chapter, ‘Lawrence- Lightfoot, Ranciere and Gemma : reconciling the subject matter with the academic thesis, research process and outcomes’*,* was shortened.

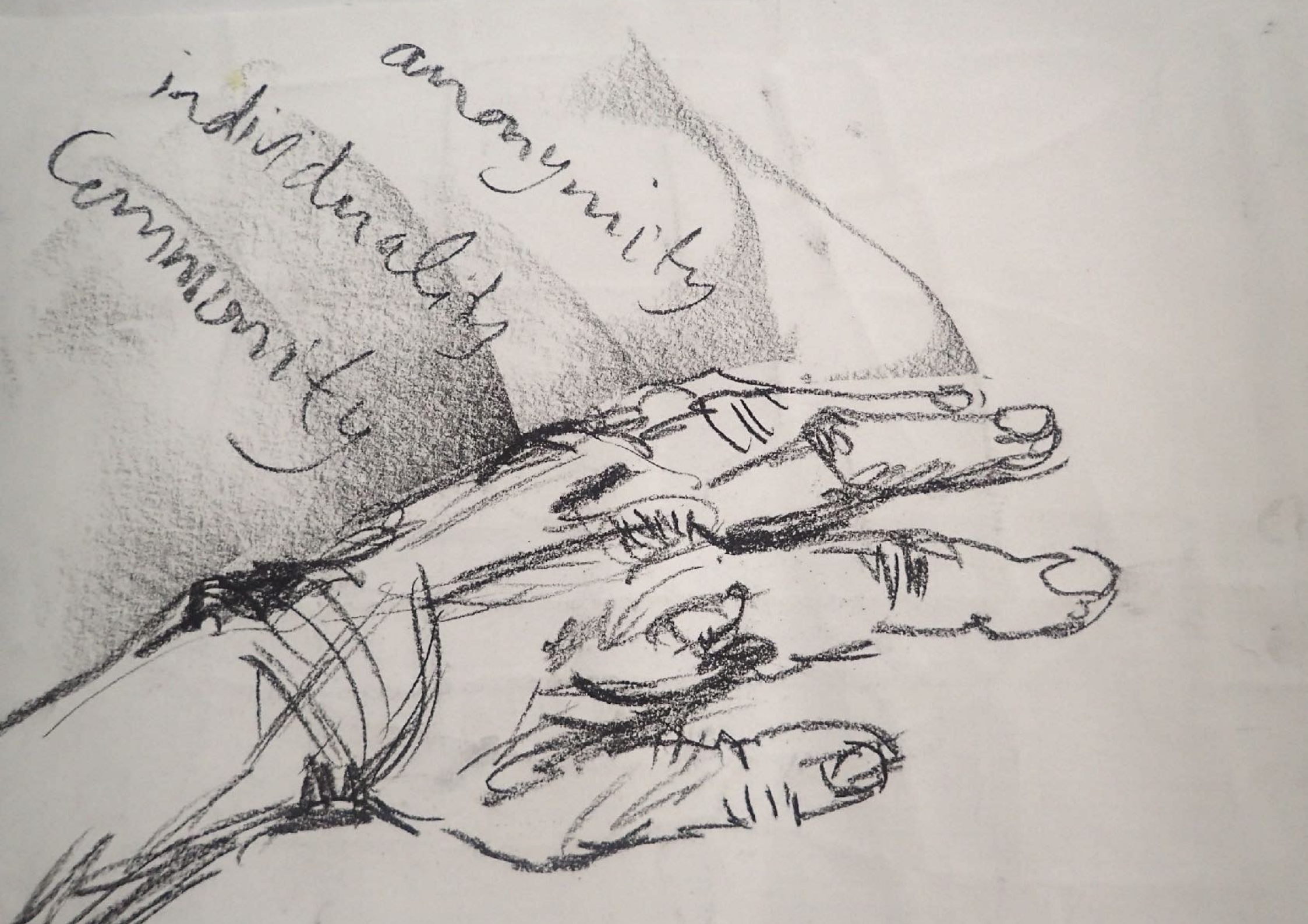
It was meant to be: ‘Lawrence-Lightfoot, Ranciere, Gemma, Sally, Karen, Tariq, Ron, Helen, Alexis, Fatima, Michael and Sonja: reconciling the subject matter with the academic thesis, research process and outcomes*’.*

I wanted to acknowledge all of the research participants in the title, because I felt that they had influenced my thinking, as much as the academic theorists. The research participants had provided me with their experiences, insights and knowledge that could be developed into theory. My participants also had something to say and they wanted to be acknowledged.

However, when I typed up the longer inclusive title, I noticed that I had used the *surnames* for academics and the *given* names of my interviewees, thus accidentally creating a hierarchy. I think this happened because when working with the community it is a common practice to use the first

names of people and children when exhibiting or publishing. This is a practice that sits between acknowledging the participant and protecting their identity. But it also compromises acknowledgement by removing identity and by using the given name instead of the surname, it removes the legal and authoritative aspects of authorship. (Ironically) in this chapter, in order to not link any of the research participants with possible harm, I have used pseudonyms. It exemplifies the complexity of the field of reciprocity and acknowledgement, where working out how to be ethical might sometimes prove difficult given the circumstances of time, materials, space and traditional methods in research and publishing. The concept of PhD research is grounded in western education and research practice, including ethical considerations, which have evolved from western perspectives (Toombs 2016). These traditions of institutional education are implicit in reproducing inequity in power relations. Working towards reciprocity highlights these tensions and the differences in power among researchers and participants (Trainor and Bouchard 2013). Traditionally the researcher is named and the participants in the research (who contributed knowledge), often remain anonymous in order to be protected from possible harm. Researchers and artists have their surnames attached clearly to the work, because authorship is important for their

reputation and ongoing careers through which they may make their livelihood. It was a disconcerting paradox. My own dilemma, as an artist, was whether to not have my name anywhere, thus making the artwork democratic, or to include it an leave a permanent mark of authorship so that the outcome could be attributed to me as part of my oeuvre. As an artist I do a lot of the creative work, but the community **always** contribute intellectually and creatively and more often it is they who conceive the art-work. It arises out of the community needs and desires and wouldn't exist otherwise. Conversely, the artist/author’s name is often attached to the work because it lends credence and value to the final piece. The works joins with the artist’s prior projects to generate the exhibition history of the artist - his or her vitae (Kwon 2002).


anonymity
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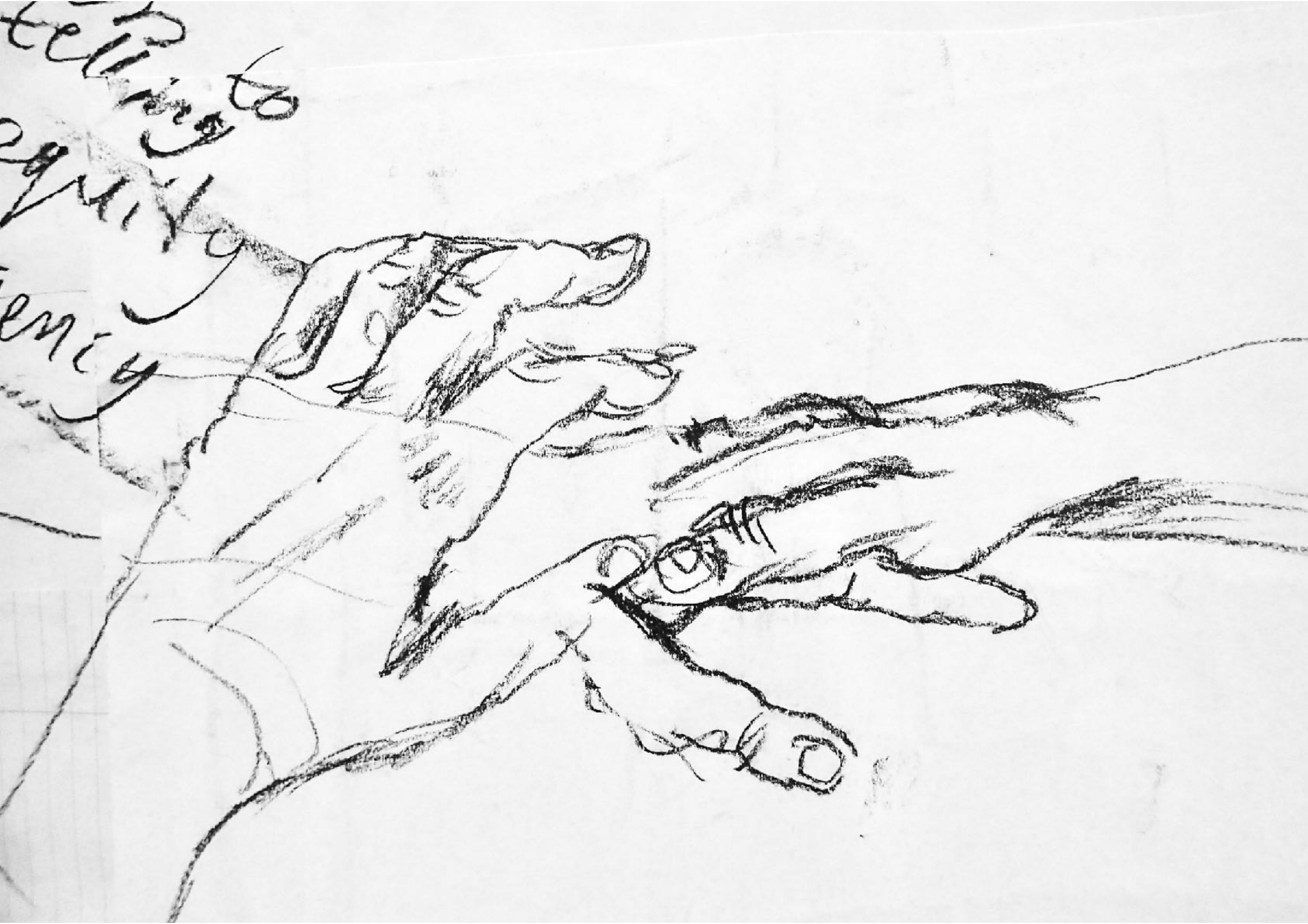


Reciprocity

Disconcertingly I began to feel that I was engaged in some sort of collaborative research with my participants, even though my interview was only an hour with each of the participants, my research was in essence a dialogue with a community of people who all had a stake in the artwork, a stake in the research which stemmed from it and also in the outcomes of the research. Trainor and Bouchard (2013, p. 986) suggest that, ‘participants devote their time, effort, experiences and wisdom to inform and shape the researcher’s study’, and so the relationship has the potential to be reciprocal. The participants had provided me with the knowledge, new learning and understandings of the subject that could not be gleaned any other way. I needed to explore this idea of reciprocity within my research methodology, and how it could be incorporated into my research, including the involvement of participants, the wider community, feedback strategies and the dissemination of research outcomes.

Similarly, when I work with communities to make artworks, they give their time and creative effort to the project and trust me to get the artwork completed and installed in public space (often no mean feat), and to make it aesthetic (visually pleasing). This exchange or reciprocity of working together, making and commitment to complete the final work as an honouring of the participants is a common theme which moved across into (and paralleled) my practice of research. In both practices I felt the importance of a reciprocity of communication, time and knowledge given by the community in exchange for outcomes.

If we think about the PhD as a learning process instead of a thesis and award (certificate) and we instead place the emphasis on this process, the outcomes will have a different direction and emphasis. The final product of research is a representation of selected parts of the learning process. I began to feel that the process was very important, and the way I would respond to ethical concerns about research process and outcomes needed to weigh in above the traditional values of the thesis dissemination targeted solely at an academic audience.

auditorium

The Audience – examiners or the community and the public?

Writing the thesis 'for the examiners' is not a perspective that sits well with ideas of equity, and communication of research results to a broad audience. An important aspect of the methodology of Portraiture is that it addresses a wider audience than academics:

> 'With its focus on narrative, with its use of metaphor and symbol, Portraiture intends to address wider, more eclectic audiences. The attempt is to move beyond academy's inner circle, to speak in a language that is not coded or exclusive, and to develop texts that will seduce the readers into thinking more deeply about issues that concern them' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 10).

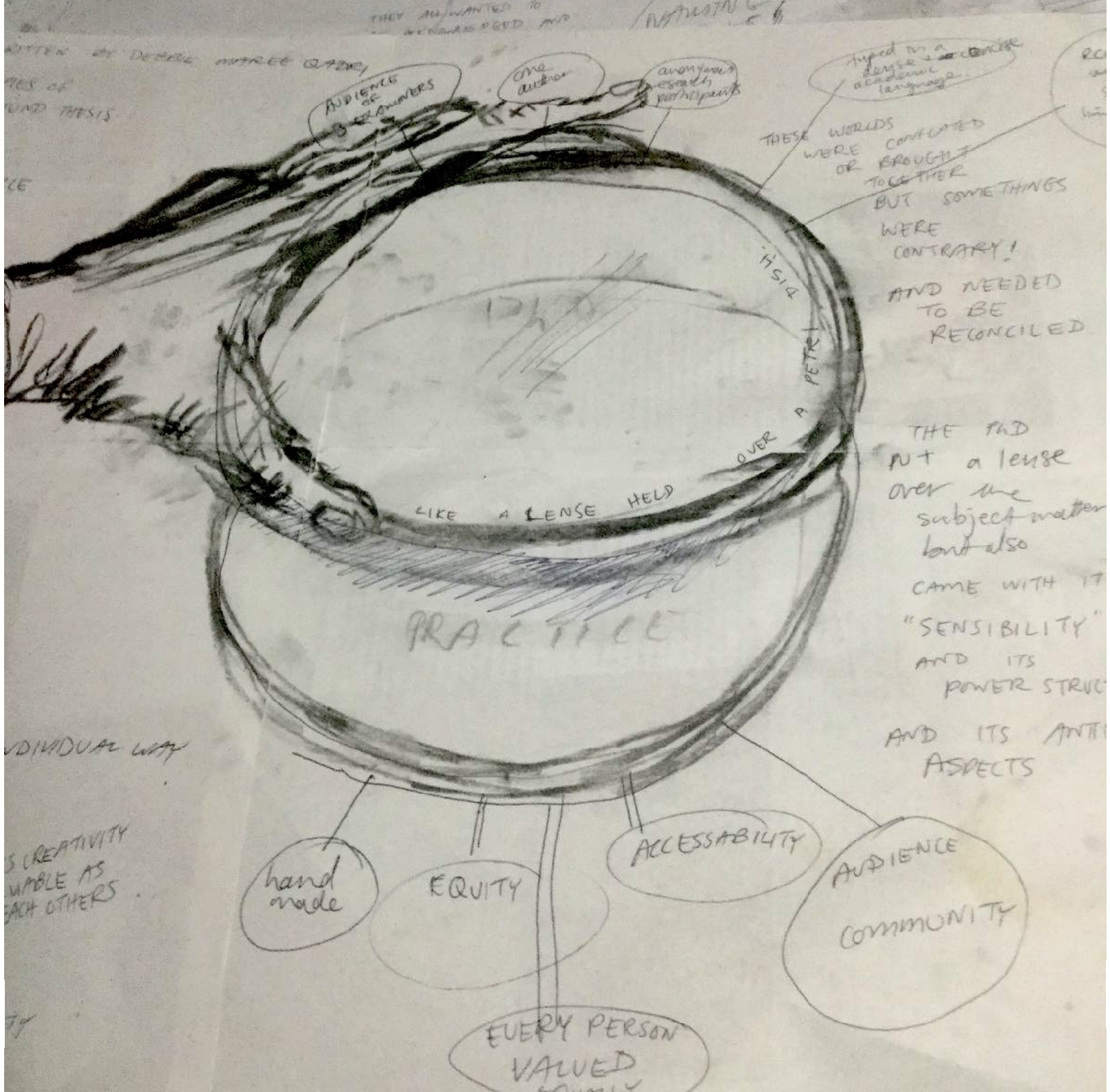
Thinking about these words I hone in on the words ‘wider’, ‘eclectic audiences’ and also the phrase, ‘think deeply about issues that concern them’. Before the interviews I hadn’t even imagined that the research participants would have their own theories and concerns about the subject matter. I was surprised and elated meeting other like-minded people who were engaged with what it meant to make public art with community. I had discovered a very important audience for my work, and they were waiting to see what I would write.

Keen and Todres (2007) express concern about the lack of dissemination of the knowledge gained from qualitative research and a need for more ethical outcomes for research; ‘Though the number of qualitative projects increases year on year, the implications of this work appear to remain on shelves and have little impact on practice, research, policy or citizens’ (p. 2). Likewise Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) finds issue with the fact that academic documents are read by a small audience of people in the same disciplinary field and Trainor and Bouchard (2013) acknowledge that the demands of the field, shape how research is presented and disseminated, but also suggest that unpublished work fails to harness the potential of reciprocity to support change and equality. Stevenson and Holloway (2016), direct their focus onto alternative media and methods in order to amplify the voices of participants in research outcomes, and to bring the work to the attention of a wider audience.

Late in December 2016, I met with the Victoria University archivists, who had been collecting some of the artworks from one of my projects. As they showed me around the archives (which were in a basement, unknown and largely inaccessible to most people), I encountered, housed along a long wall of shelves, an archive of theses. This very real encounter with knowledge which took years to write, (of which only three copies were usually printed) stored in a basement and hardly accessed was another poignant moment for me.

During my research I often looked for documents on the internet before I accessed the journal portal through the library. Through this process I discovered that some are free but others are often difficult and expensive to access if you are not a member of a research library. Access to knowledge is connected in many ways with financial advantage and access to the inside of the university.

This made me aware of the importance of placing my research in accessible places which are financially free and accessible to more than the traditional research audience. In considering the output of research outcomes, we may need to think beyond the usual structures and practices of research of journals, theses and conferences as all of these take place in spaces largely inaccessible to the general public.


AUDIENCE OF ANSWERS
one author
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typed in a dense academic language
THESE WORLDS WERE CONFLATED OR BROUGHT TOGETHER BUT SOMETHINGS WERE CONTRARY!
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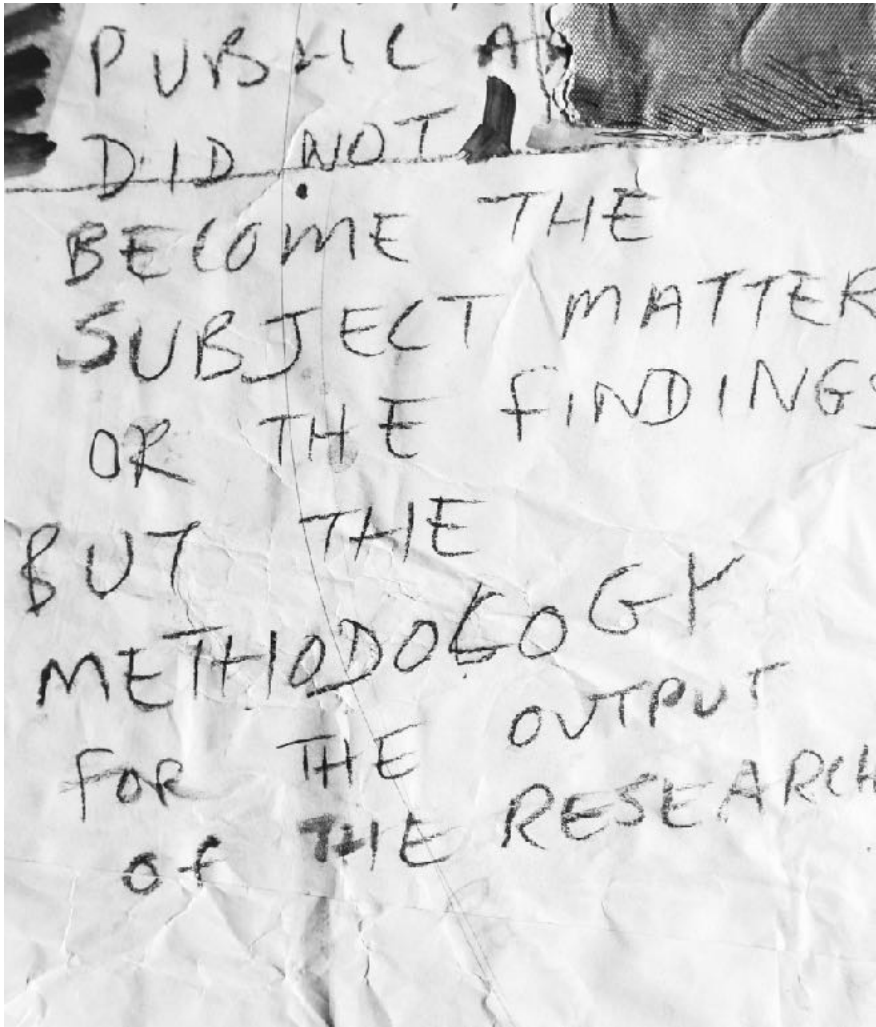
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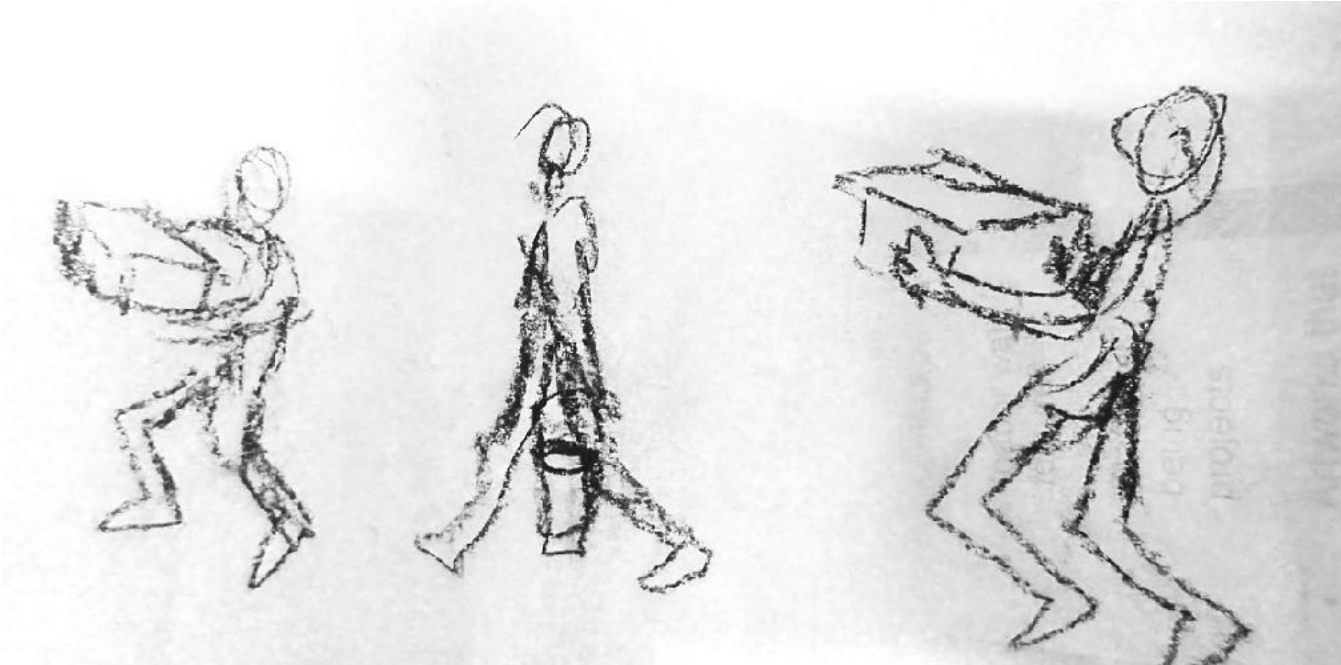
BUT

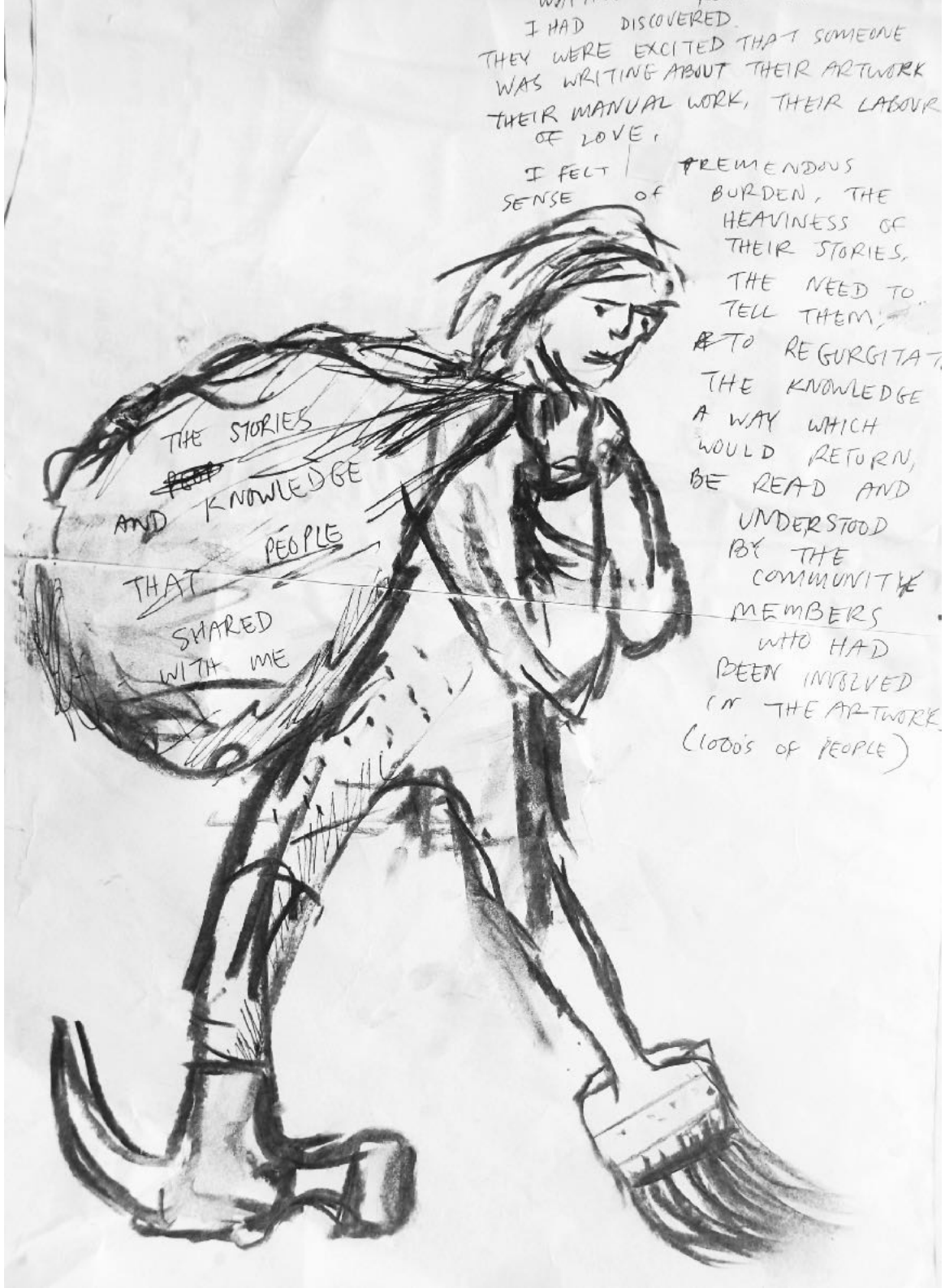
Carrying

In the process of making permanent artworks with communities, I literally carry the weight of the project many times. It is heavy - being clay and tiles and cement. The weight of the project is sometimes carried home so that I can dry the ceramic work, then carried to the car, then carried into the kiln room, then carried back to the car, then carried out of the car into the house where it is glazed, then carried back to the car, then carried from car to kiln room and into the kiln, then carried back out again to the car, then carried home again and so on, then eventually carried to the site of installation. The precious artwork may weigh between 15 and 600 kilos (with the addition of tiles for the background, glue and grout) and I will generally carry the full weight of the artwork at least twelve times.



I also carry it in my head (mentally) shifting the pieces around, inserting coloured backgrounds of broken tile. Thinking, how it will work? What will go where? How I will bring out the individual artworks into their best light? I also carry a burden. The artwork that each person made must be looked after very carefully. It must be transported and fired with care, then it must be placed into and become part of the final collaborative piece but also stand out as an artwork by an individual. These actions form part of my responsibility and role.

The thesis research, is, likewise, carried along by the practice of community members making public art. The PhD could be imagined as a parasite, being carried on the surface of my practice, the artworks that I research and the community of people involved with the artwork that I am researching. The research is also carried by the literature that other people have written. A network of information from various sources holds up and supports the narratives and arguments I write. As I involve people in my research, and participants tell me of their experiences, the research is propelled further along. They give it walking legs.


I HAD DISCOVERED
THEY WERE EXCITED THAT SOMEONE WAS WRITING ABOUT THEIR ARTWORK
THEIR MANUAL WORK, THEIR LABOUR OF LOVE.
I FELT TREMENDOUS SENSE OF BURDEN, THE HEAVINESS OF THEIR STORIES, THE NEED TO TELL THEM; TO REGURGITAT THE KNOWLEDGE A WAY WHICH WOULD RETURN, BE READ AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE ARTWORK (1000's OF PEOPLE)
THE STORIES
AND KNOWLEDGE
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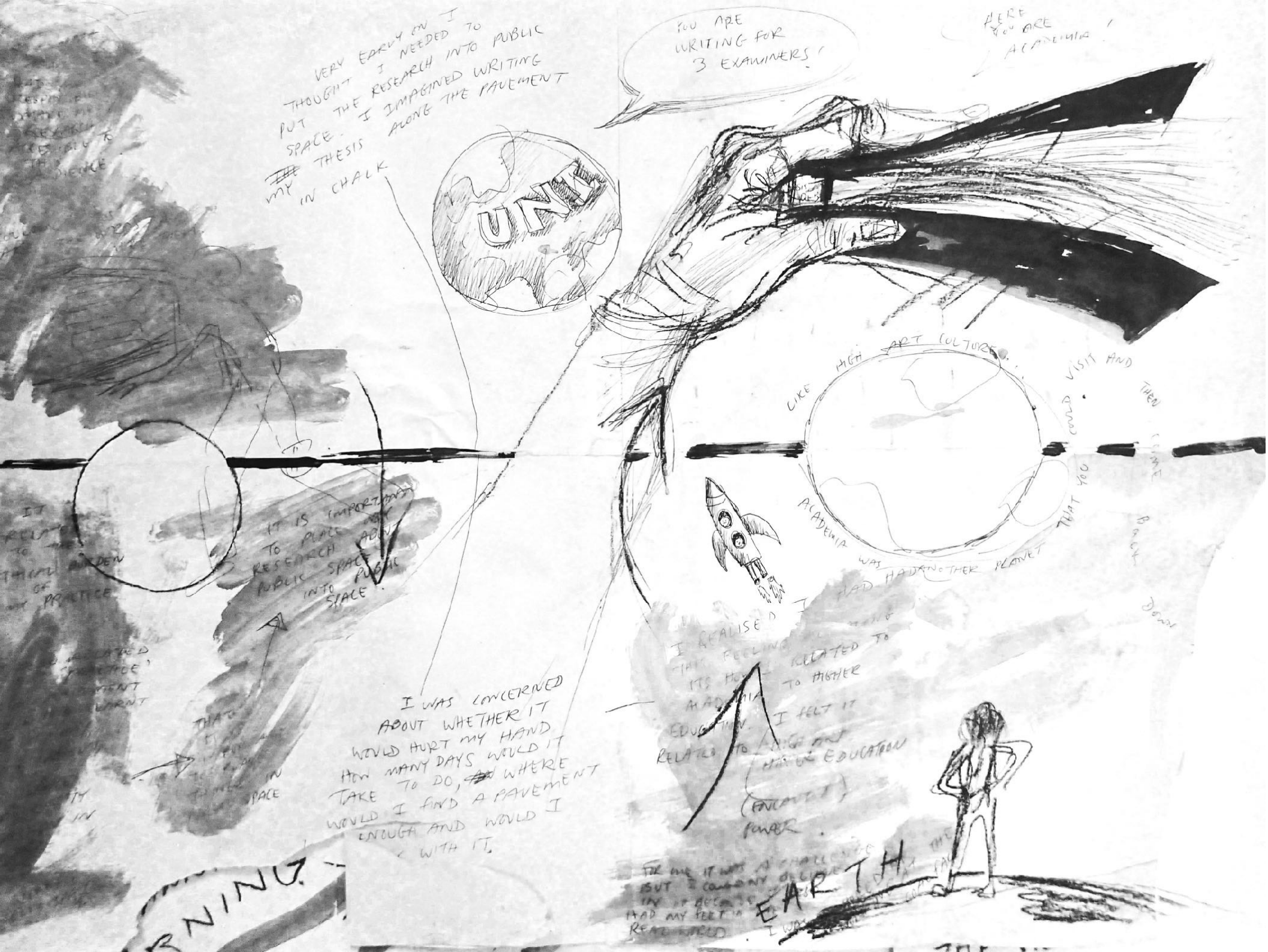
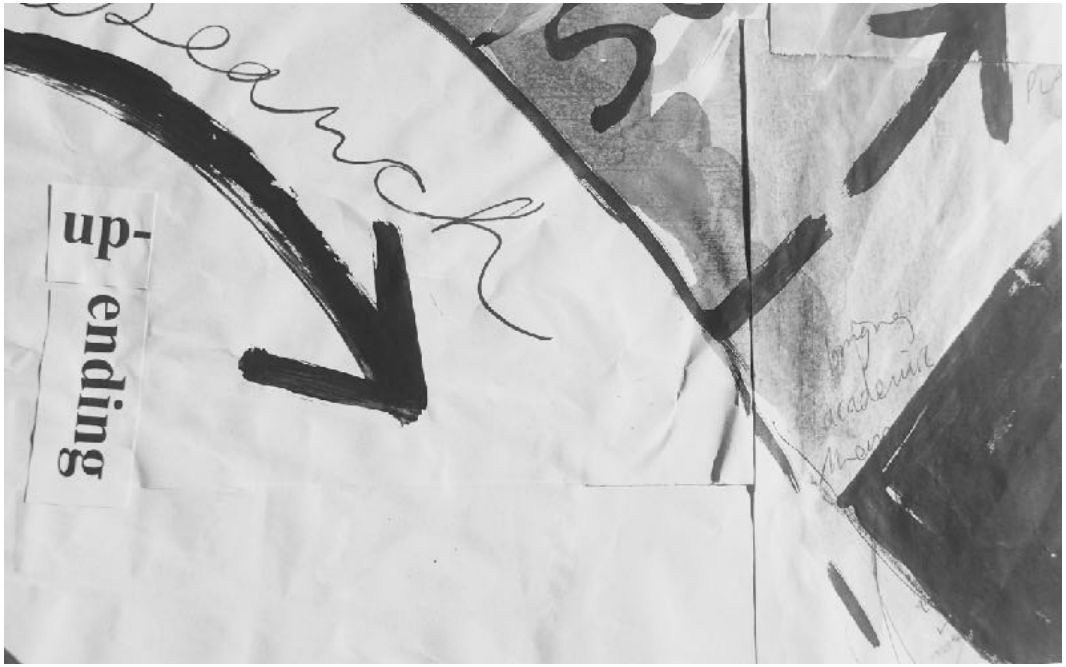

VERY EARLY ON I THOUGHT I NEEDED TO PUT THE RESEARCH INTO PUBLIC SPACE. I IMAGINED WRITING MY THESIS ALONG THE PAVEMENT IN CHALK
YOU ARE WRITING FOR 3 EXAMINERS!
HERE YOU ARE ACADEMIA!
UNI
LIKE HIGH ART CULTURE...
ACADEMIA WAS HAD ANOTHER PLANET
THAT YOU COULD VISIT AND THEN COME BACK DOWN
IT IS IMPORTANT TO PLACE MY RESEARCH ABOUT PUBLIC SPACE INTO PUBLIC SPACE
I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER IT WOULD HURT MY HAND HOW MANY DAYS WOULD IT TAKE TO DO, WHERE WOULD I FIND A PAVEMENT ENOUGH AND WOULD I WITH IT.
I REALISED I HAD
RELATED TO HIGHER EDUCATION
I FELT IT RELATED TO HIGH ART HIGHER EDUCATION
POWER
EARTH

The up-ending

My ethical dilemma provoked an exchange of the positions of research and the subject-matter. In an ‘up-ending’ movement, I moved my practice of working with communities and the subject matter of the research - ‘permanent public art made by community members’ - onto the top layer, as a priority, above the research outcomes.



The research is still supported and carried by the practice, but the focus has moved to how the research can become a vehicle for the practice. The PhD is a vehicle, that runs underneath (carrying) the subject matter. It drives it, holds it up, it runs around collecting the knowledge (the perspectives and experiences of those involved) and takes it somewhere.

Left: Presenting ‘The Scroll’ at the 2016 Institute of Public Pedagogies Conference, detail of the up-ending section in ‘The Scroll’.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) explains that ‘portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences’ (p. 3). I can see the word *conveying* not only in terms of communication but conveying as in carrying and giving it wheels to travel. Like Patricia Leavy's (2009) ‘representational vehicles’ (p. 18), in arts-based research, where the research outcomes are used as vehicles for social justice. I want the research to give the subject matter legs to stand on and wheels to travel.

SHARING

PERSPECTIVES
EXPERIENCE

KNOWLEDGE
STORIES

THE NATURE
OF RESEARCH
AND
WHAT IS
PERMISSABLE
CHANGING

BECAUSE THE LITERATURE
DID NOT TELL THE STORY OF
PERMANENT PUBLIC ART MADE
BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS
IT WAS LIKE HISTORY — SELECTIVE

IT WAS DISTRUSTED, NOT TRUTHFUL
ONLY TELLING THE 'SENSIBLE' STORY

IT NEEDED TO BE ~~RE~~WRITTEN,
INSERTED.

Using the power of research to carry the subject forward

Research can be used to shed light on the subject matter to tell the story of what is good about the subject matter (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997). It has the possibilities of carting the subject matter around and depositing it in places. Like a float in a parade it travels and celebrates the story of community made permanent public art. The up-ending is an *opposite* movement, in that the subject matter of the research was previously considered something that the research uses - now, in the up-turning, research is used to give the subject matter strength and to provide greater capacity for a reciprocity between research and the people of the communities involved in the research topic.

Up-ending hierarchies

Ranciere (1991) interrogates the division between those who possess knowledge (the teachers) and those who need to be taught (the ignorant) (Ross 1991; Ranciere 1991). In opposition, to these beliefs, Ranciere's work follows the 'implications of the idea that human beings are equal in all respects' (Deranty 2010, p. 3), 'not just in legal or moral terms, but also in terms of their intellectual and discursive capabilities' (Deranty 2010, p. 6). In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster,* Ranciere (1991) tells the story of Jacotot, who learnt by experience that his students did not need him to teach them, on the contrary, as Jacotot concludes; 'I must teach you that I have nothing to teach you' (p. 15).

In Ranciere's idea of the 'distribution of the sensible', there is an implicit set of rules and conventions which distribute the roles in society and the forms of exclusion that operate within it. It sets divisions between what is sayable and unsayable, audible and inaudible (Sayers 2016).

Ranciere identifies the separation between those who create knowledge and those who are the audience for it and uses his role as researcher, to work on closing this separation. Ranciere follows the implications that everyone has capacity for knowledge and learning. This is similar to my philosophy of making artworks with communities - I raise their creative work up to say, ‘Everyone can make art and their art is valuable’.

In much the same way that the theatre renders the audience passive (Ranciere 2009), an artwork creates an audience, and research creates participants and readers. This is similar to the process that takes place in the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the student, or in Ranciere’s terms, the ‘schoolmaster’ and the ‘ignorant’. This hierarchical structure needs to be upended by action. Action, like Ranciere’s idea of a theatre without spectators, ‘where those in attendance . . . become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs’ (ibid p. 4) - active in participating in the construction of art and the construction of knowledge. Ranciere (1991) claims that ‘equality is not given, nor is it claimed; it is practiced, it is verified’ (p.137), that it is not an ‘end’ but a ‘point of departure’ (p. 138).

Action	**process**	**towards**	**object**
before	making	action	after
context	action	dissemination	effect
need	action	displaying	the remains of the action
researcher	producer	presenter	presentation
question	research	write-up	
planning	process		artwork
why	expression	audience	thesis
Evidence	create	show	

on the contrary Ranier P.36 the ignorant schoolmaster
are not 2 levels of intelligence, that any human ~~being~~
work of art is the practice of the same intellectual potentials.

Creating more equitable access and broadening dialogues by using public space to publish research findings.

Keen and Todres (2007,) suggest using strategies such as; ‘Tailoring approaches to the audience in terms of the content, message and mediums, paying attention to the source of the message and enabling active discussion of research findings’ (p. 4). Leavy (2009) also suggests that ‘ascertaining information about audience response may . . . serve as another validity check (as well as a data source)’ and ‘postviewing dialogue with the audience can enable the researcher to gauge the emotional effect of their work, to ensure that no harm was done and how the audience experienced it’ (p. 18). Others who consider how ‘reciprocity’ might play out in research outcomes for non-academic audiences include Stevenson & Holloway 2016, Trainor & Bouchard 2013, Michel & Bassinder 2013.

In paying attention to the source of ‘the message’ or the knowledge, I also give attention to the research participants and the communities of the artworks. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) speaks about the portraitist and the subject, 'each one participating in the drawing of the image' as something 'crucial to success and authenticity’ (p. 3). I felt that the relationship with the community of the subject (the artwork) should be extended beyond the six interviews that I had planned, and feedback on drafts. Organising to meet again (informally or informally) with the research participants and the wider community to discuss the research outcomes, can contribute more data, increased validity of the research outcomes, greater reciprocity and also the conveyance to a broader community of the knowledge gained through the research (Keen & Todres 2007; Leavy 2009; Michel & Bassinder 2013). With this in mind, my plans changed to include presentations and discussions of the research findings, with both the research participants and also the community involved in the artwork that I was researching.

Voice

I also aim to give ‘voice’ to the research participants in order to value and acknowledge their individual contributions. Many acknowledge the feminist movement’s effect, in its focus on power dynamics in the research process and critical discourse about related issues such as voice, authority, reciprocity, representation and reflexivity (Leavy 2009; Harrison et al. 2001). Leavy (2009) also notes that the social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s have influenced the theoretical perspectives of many researchers across disciplines, many of whom ‘seek to give voice to those who have been marginalised as a result of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, disability or other factors’ (p. 13). Stevenson & Holloway (2016), suggest that ‘the challenge of amplifying participants’ voices can be addressed using alternative media and methods’ (p. 90).

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I do . . .

I SORT IT AND
TAKE WHAT I N
AND WANT FROM
IT

I DEVISE A PLAN
+ QUESTIONS FOR
INTERVIEWEES

AT THE SAME TIME
AS I AM RESEARCHING
AND WRITING I AM
WORKING.
SCURRYING HERE AND
THERE - WORKING PHYSICALLY,
CARRYING

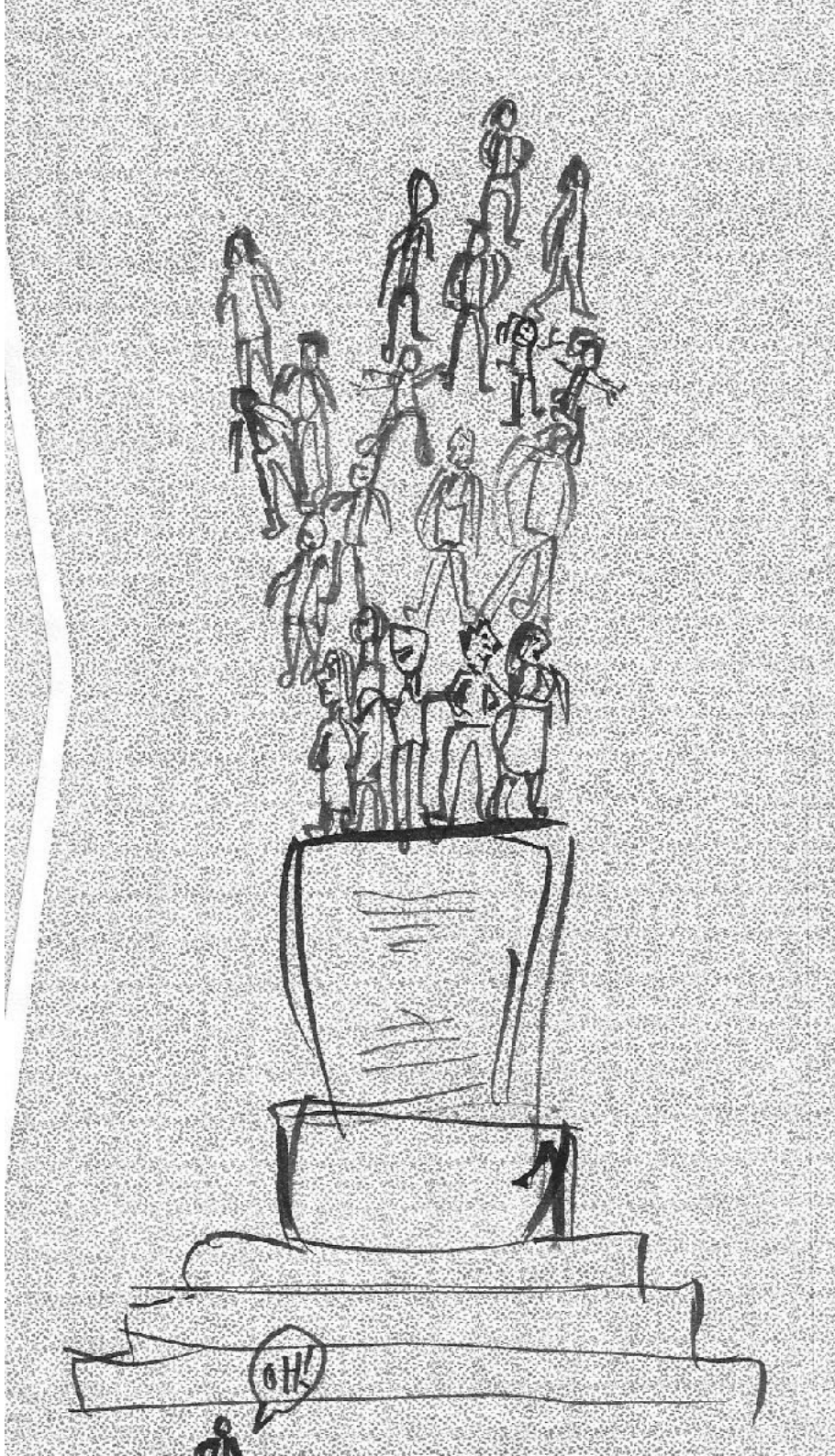
MON TUES

Public pedagogy

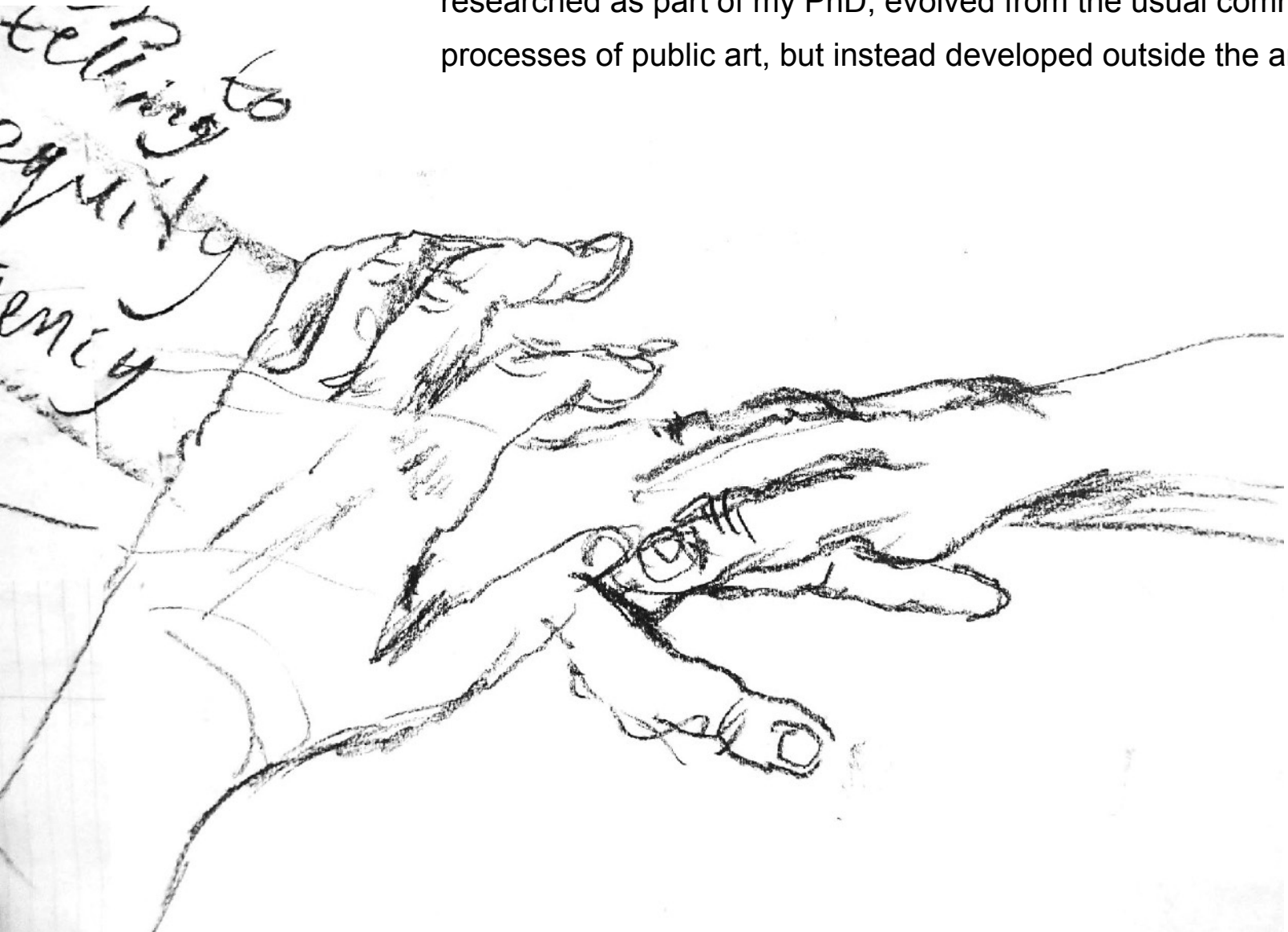
I utilise the idea of ‘public pedagogy’ as teaching and learning in public space, outside of formal educational settings. I see public pedagogy as a site of potential - a place in which to create more equitable access to research outcomes. I can place the research into public space, both physically and digitally. By placing the research into public space I make it more accessible, broaden the dialogue about the research subject and engage the public with research outcomes, by sharing my findings with them.

I am particularly interested in the parallels and relationships between art in public space and research in public space.

Public art plays a role in learning, teaching and sharing knowledge in public space (Qadri 2016). Public art (made by artists or community members) has a role to play in areas of democracy and equity (Phillips 1995; Mouffe 2008; Qadri 2016). As Rosalyn Deutsche (1998) argues, ‘supporting things that are public promotes the survival and extension of democratic culture’ (p. 269). Judith Baca’s (1995) vision is that public art, ‘could have a function for the community and even provide a venue for their voices’ (p. 135). Public pedagogy, as it forms in public spaces, cultural places and discourses (Burdick & Sandlin 2010), is a potential field of practice where research outcomes can be presented to the community.



Public art made by community also challenges how public art is imagined and the dominant discourse of public art (Qadri 2016). Neither of the artworks that I researched as part of my PhD, evolved from the usual commissioning processes of public art, but instead developed outside the art profession.



Debbie Qadri

I extend my vision of public pedagogy to include several things; the ideas that visual art in public space presents, community members making art in public space (a process involving, sharing and expressing knowledge) and creating and placing knowledge beyond formal educational spaces (digital and physical). Placing research into public space of a community could involve the whole process of research - analysis, process, write up and final product - thinking foremost about the community from whom the research was gathered and whom the research concerns. This would acknowledge the community as both pedagogues who give knowledge to the researcher and as public recipients of the researcher's work. A giving backwards and forwards, reciprocally.

Who is an artist? Who has knowledge? Who can speak?

I need to engage in academic writing because I know it has a role to play in discourse. It is a type of power, that can affect public art culture, policies and practice. Jake Burdick and Jennifer Sandlin (2010) raise the issue that; 'there has been little discussion of the problematic role of the researcher, who is likely closely affiliated with the institution - and the tools/means/languages she uses to query, analyse, and re/create these public spaces' (p. 117). In a similar vein Miwon Kwon (2002) reminds us that the artist, despite their intentions not to be part of the ideologies of the art world, is inevitably engaged in its process of cultural legitimation. I, like others, engage in these worlds of art and academia, but reserve skepticism of the discourses of value and hierarchical divisions that they are built on (Hawkins 1993; Foucault 1981; Toombs 2016).

Foucault (1970) says there is a rarefication of the speaking subjects, 'none shall enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so . . . not all the regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable' (p. 61- 62).

Sandlin and Burdick (2010) suggest that the academic discursive space is limited by what is ‘an already-known construct of how education looks and feels’, which may pose problems ‘for researchers interested in the pedagogies beyond and between institutional boundaries’ (p. 117). Research generally is ‘associated with schools and schooling and to the standards that produce the boundaries of acceptability within the field’ (such as the review process for scholarly publications and presentations) (ibid., p. 117). Foucault (1981) says that ‘the will to truth, like other systems of exclusion, rests on an institutional support: it is both reinforced and renewed . . . by the way knowledge is put to work, valorised, distributed and in a sense attributed in a society’ (p. 55).

> ‘What after all is an education system, other than a ritualisation of speech, a qualification, and a fixing of the roles for speaking subjects, the constitution of doctrinal groups, however diffuse, a distribution and an appropriation of discourse with all its powers and knowledges’ (Foucault 1981, p. 64).

I feel like more of a game player, in that we must work within the worlds and cultures we find ourselves in; participating but also challenging. The backbone of my art practice with communities is a belief that everyone can make good art, and that everyone has something valuable to say. This is echoed in Ranciere's basic premise that, 'everybody thinks, everybody speaks' (Hallward 2005, p. 26).

> *'. . . it is about recognising that there are not two levels of intelligence, that any human work of art is the practice of the same intellectual potential'* (Ranciere 1991, p. 36).

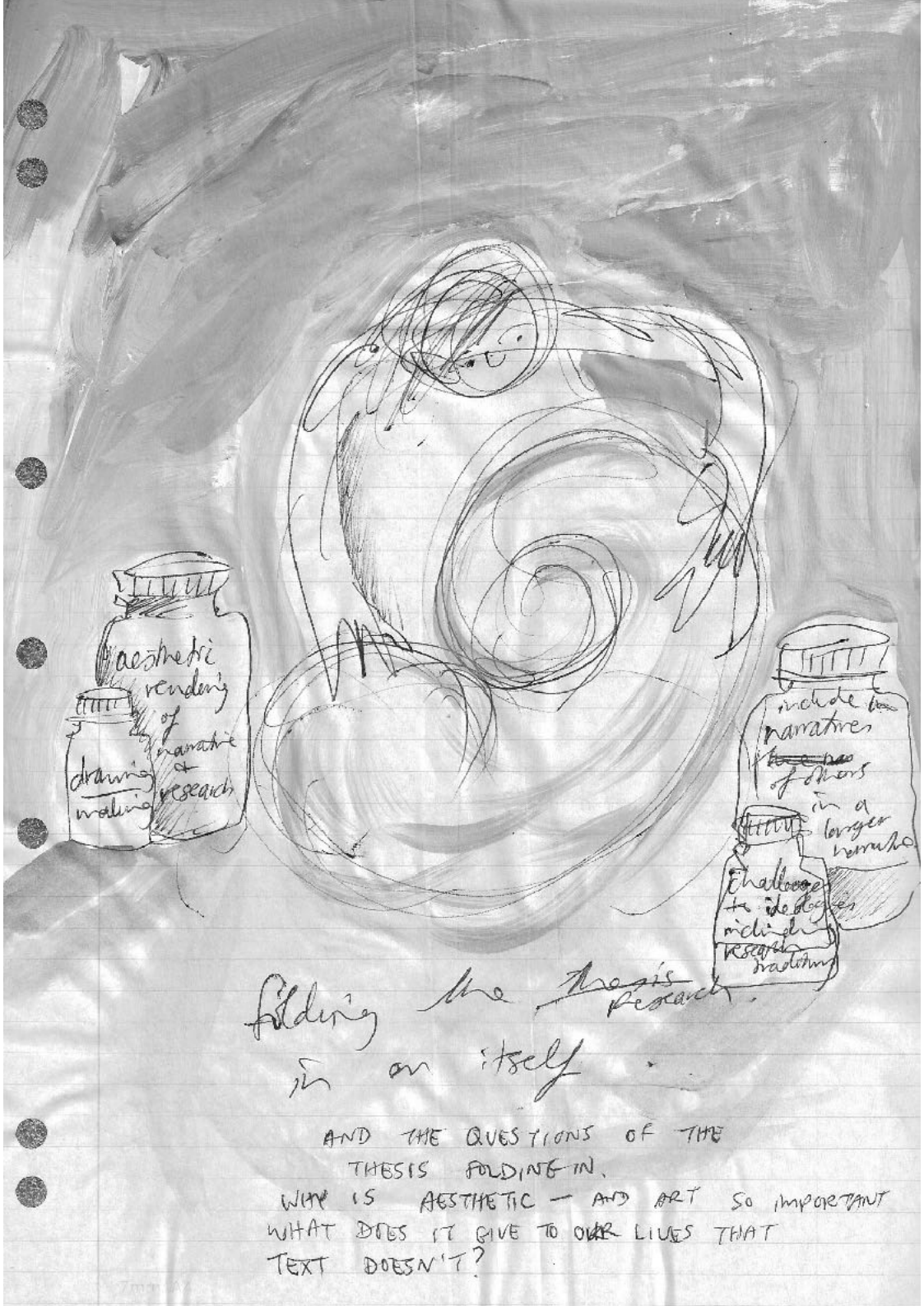
Contributing to discourse

I have a belief that the discourse of permanent public art (the way people talk about it, the way it is described and defined in policy and guidelines) has influence on the way in which it happens. But many instances of permanent public art made by community are produced but are outside of and hidden by this discourse. In this light I see my research as being important to give voice to and bring into the light these artworks made by community members.

The way in which the research contributes to the discourse about permanent public art made by community members needs to consider a broader audience if it is to create change. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) writes that if we want to involve more people in discussion and debate we need to write our research more accessibly in a language that is understandable. A language that encourages identification, provokes debate, invites reflection and action, inspires people and invites them to think more deeply about issues that concern them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997).

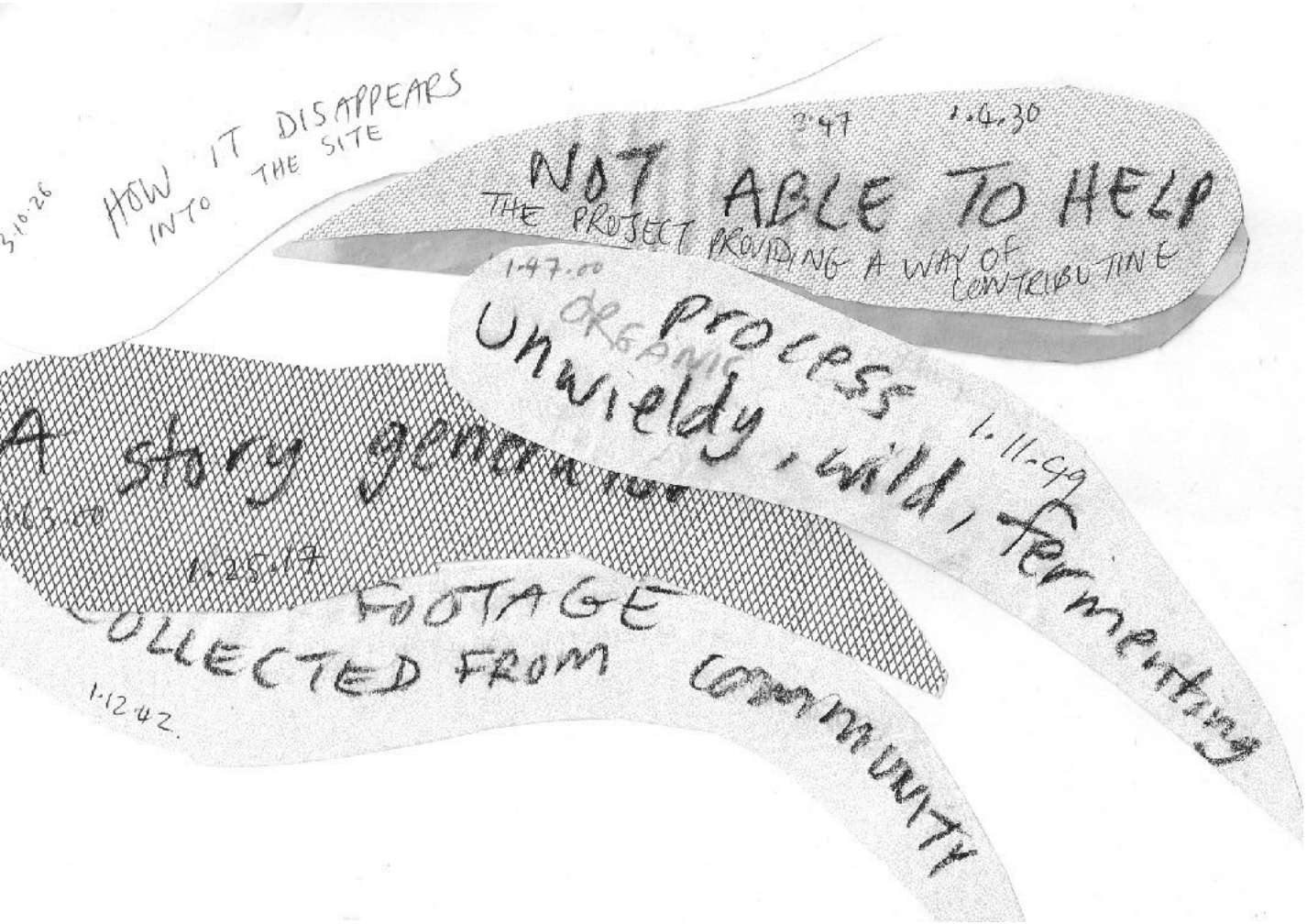
Summary

There was what I can only describe as a curling, a need to curl inwards with all things at the same time, curling parallel threads in together, so that they were not in conflict. So that the subject matter, the voices and stories that I heard and the methodology, remained compatible and held the same ethical stance - all the while thinking about it as two things, the process and the outcomes - both important in the subject matter and the research. The parallels, and inconsistencies that erupted in my research, necessitated considering an ethical method that focuses on reciprocal processes and outcomes. Towards a more inclusive public pedagogy, I needed to imagine and write for broader audiences than examiners and the academic world. The knowledge that feeds into research and then out again through research outcomes needed to take account of the communities who contribute to it.


aesthetic rendering of narrative & research
drawing
making
include narratives of others in a larger narrative
challenge to ideologies including research traditions
folding the thesis research in on itself.
AND THE QUESTIONS OF THE THESIS FOLDING IN.
WHY IS AESTHETIC — AND ART SO IMPORTANT
WHAT DOES IT GIVE TO OUR LIVES THAT TEXT DOESN'T?

6

After ‘The Scroll’



permanent
PUBLIC AR~~TWORK~~ IN ~~PUBLIC SPACE~~ MADE BY COMMUNITY

Research. PhD

OBJECT

CHAPTERS - DOCUMENTS - INTERNET - REMAINS of THE RESEARCH!

TRADITIONS + FORMATS REQUIREMENTS

ART OBJECT AS REMAINS of PROCESS, AS MEMORIAL + VOICE AS DISCOURSE.*

Challenge to traditional ideas + discourse of public art.

NEED TO BE CHALLENGED

DISCOURSE

ACCESS TO MAKING ART + MAKING KNOWLEDGE

PUBLIC ART AS ? ACCESSIBLE

RESEARCH AS "PUBLIC" + ACCESSIBLE

COMMUNITY VOICE IN PUBLIC SPACE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT PROTEST DESIGN-IN CONSULTATION @ workshops

THE KNOWLEDGE COMING FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE IN PUBLIC SPACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMMUNITY AS CULTURAL PRODUCERS

COMMUNITY members VS professionals.

THAT RESEARCH SHOULD BE CONVEYED AND UNDERSTOOD BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS (not professionals)

PROCESS

There was a journey
and a development of
methodology
and then it had to be
brought back into
method. How do we
do this physically with
materials, on the
ground?

Debbie Qadri

Coding, Patterns and Emergent themes

> ‘The development of emergent themes reflects the portraitist’s first efforts to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data . . . The themes emerge from the data and they give the data shape and form’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 185).

Initially I looked for themes in the interviews and coded them. Portraiture offers five modes of synthesis to construct the emergent themes:

- listening for repetitive refrains
- listening for resonant metaphors, poetic and symbolic expressions
- listening for themes expressed through cultural and institutional rituals
- using triangulation to weave together threads of data
- constructing themes and rival patterns among perspectives which are contrasting and dissonant (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis 1997)

The themes were recorded on pieces of paper and physically arranged into collages which explored ways in which they were related. A map of themes is visual and can show everything at once, but the narrative had to be drawn into linear text. I began to write the portraits by gathering the themes and repetitive refrains into paragraphs. I also began to imagine and create imagery which drew on metaphors emerging from interviews, and also developed my own metaphors for emerging themes. Triangulation of patterns was brought into the narrative by gathering and presenting multiple sources of themes and evidence together. Dissonant themes and rival patterns were purposely included to remind the reader of the subjectivity of the researcher and the portrait as presenting a range of 'perspectives', not necessarily truth statements.

I was very aware of the way that I (the researcher) developed the story according to my own understanding of themes emerging in the data and my experiences of conducting the research (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005). Through the act of writing, the themes pushed their way out, and re-iterated themselves in differing contexts. I also scrutinised additional data (websites, media articles, related journal articles and theses, films) for more evidence of these themes and of the story (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997). I wanted to ensure that the story presented was not

just that of the interviewees, but could be found within, and supported by other sources - this gave more strength and validity to the research findings.

The writing was an intrinsic way of processing the data and developing the analysis. Elaine Martin explains that ‘what you have to say actually grows and changes as you write it’ (cited in Adams 2015, p. 24). It was an iterative process of analysis of data, writing, imagining imagery and drawing as analytic processes, following leads to search for more data or literature about the emerging themes and repeating these processes again. Not linear, but instead circular and messy.

Context

> ‘The portraitist makes deliberate and specific use of context in several ways that reflect her focus on descriptive detail, narrative development and aesthetic expression, as well as her interest in recording the self and perspective of the researcher in the setting’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 44).

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) lists five ways in which the portraitist employs context:

1. A detailed description of the physical setting
2. The researcher’s perch and perspective
3. The history, culture and ideology of the place
4. Central metaphors and symbols that shape the narrative
5. The role of research participants in shaping and defining the context. (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 44)

The above ways of using context were adapted to suit the research. The detailed description of the ‘physical setting’ was used less literally and more laterally to explain the context of the works in great detail. This detail included the history, culture and ideology of the place. The researcher’s perch and perspective were contextualised within the portraits through references to my own experiences with the artwork, my own experiences as an artist working with communities, my interaction with the interviewees, and how they influenced my thinking. The central metaphors and symbols, gradually developed in the portraits, sometimes solely through the text or imagery, but other times resonating through both mediums.

Portraiture also uses dialogue to construct a narrative and during the process of research, patterns and findings emerge from the research context (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1997). I began to consider not only the interviews as dialogue but also the writing by others about the artworks and data about the surrounding contexts. The portraits became broader dialogues between the artwork, myself, the community who spoke to me (interviewees) and others who wrote about the artwork or its context. My concern with context led to following up divergent voices as instances of context and also creating other supportive documents for the thesis chapters which explained the context, such as the ‘Walking St Kilda - Public art and Memorial’ which surveyed the context of the artwork in St Kilda, and

the drawings I made of *The Tree Project* which emphasised how much work was involved in the project.

deviant/ divergent voices/ themes

The most memorable moments were when interviewees spoke of things that I hadn't thought of being related to the project or hadn't considered previously. For example, one interviewee spoke in detail about homelessness and rooming houses in St Kilda, alerting me to their importance; how they were markers of inclusion or exclusion and drawing my attention to how places such as the Gatwick Hotel were part of the story of the mural. In another interview, where we were discussing how acknowledgement was managed in *The Tree Project*, my attention was drawn to my own role as a researcher, and how I undertake and share my research as being integral to the issue of acknowledgement. Through following up on what interviewees spoke about as important (which may not at the time, have seemed wholly related to the artwork), I found that these 'divergent voices' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 192-3) revealed ways in which the projects were more deeply related to aspects of site and community, than I had first imagined.

This is highlighted in the words of Rose Banks and Yvette Kelly which they pasted up on the outside of the Gatwick after it was sold. Their words explored the idea of divergent views about the role of the Gatwick Hotel in St Kilda:

> ‘Unfortunately, not everyone felt the way we did, or understood how important it was for people to have somewhere they could go, a room to sleep in, somewhere they could be themselves. Instead, politicians, police and local traders saw it differently, and wanted a different outcome for those who had nowhere else to go’ (Rose Banks and Yvette Kelly 2017).

Rose felt that people saw things differently and ‘nobody wanted to see it our way’ (Lusted & Edwards 2017). Important outcomes of following divergent themes and deviant voices, is seeing the artworks and their contexts in different shoes, and from the perspectives and experiences of the people who were involved.

Framework

There is a framework in this thesis which focuses on the right to speak and have a voice through the forms of art, knowledge and public space. The right to speak is a topic of the subject matter but also examined as part of the research methodology and research outcomes.

Who has voice in art: The thesis holds the stance that permanent public art made by community members is not only community art but also public art, and needs to be written about and theorised as a permanent public art object. This perspective holds that everyone has the potential to be an art-maker and to speak through art.

Who has voice in knowledge: Similarly, the culture of knowledge has been explicated as ideologically and culturally driven, as something which excludes or includes based on a designation of who has the right to speak (Ranciere 1991; Foucault 1970). This research presents the knowledge from the research participants and purposely includes the direct words of interviewees, providing a space for voice (the direct telling of their experiences and perspectives). I felt this celebration and honouring of the voice was important and part of reciprocity between myself as researcher and those

interviewed. Through using quotations of interviewees, the directness of meaning and particularity of their voices is retained[1].

Who has voice in public space: On a third level, what runs throughout the subject matter of public art made by community members are the themes of equity and democracy. Who has the right to be in public space? To speak in public space? To place their knowledge and art into public space?

Above we have three areas of speaking or voice: voice in permanent public art, voice in knowledge and voice in public space. The writing of the portraits of the two artworks has focused on presenting the voices and experiences of the people involved with the artworks - their authority, knowledge and wisdom (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997).

The Particular and the General

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2016, 1997) suggests that by looking closely at the particular, we see the general or the universal. She says, the portraitist, ‘wants to capture the specifics, the nuance, the detailed description of a thing, a gesture, a voice, and attitude as a way of illustrating more universal patterns’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 14) and that ‘as one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a place, one discovers the universal’ (ibid.). Robert Stake (1995) likewise says that readers can be drawn to the uniqueness of the account, but that research is a search for patterns and consistencies: events are seen as unique as well as common. Along these lines, I found that in telling the details, small stories, and the particular contexts of the artworks, the larger story and meaning became more readily understood.

Each interview opened up new perspectives and understandings of the artworks, confirming that there is ‘never a single story - many could be told’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 12). One of the goals for the qualitative researcher is, ‘to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening’ (Stake 1995, p. 12). The inclusion of many voices

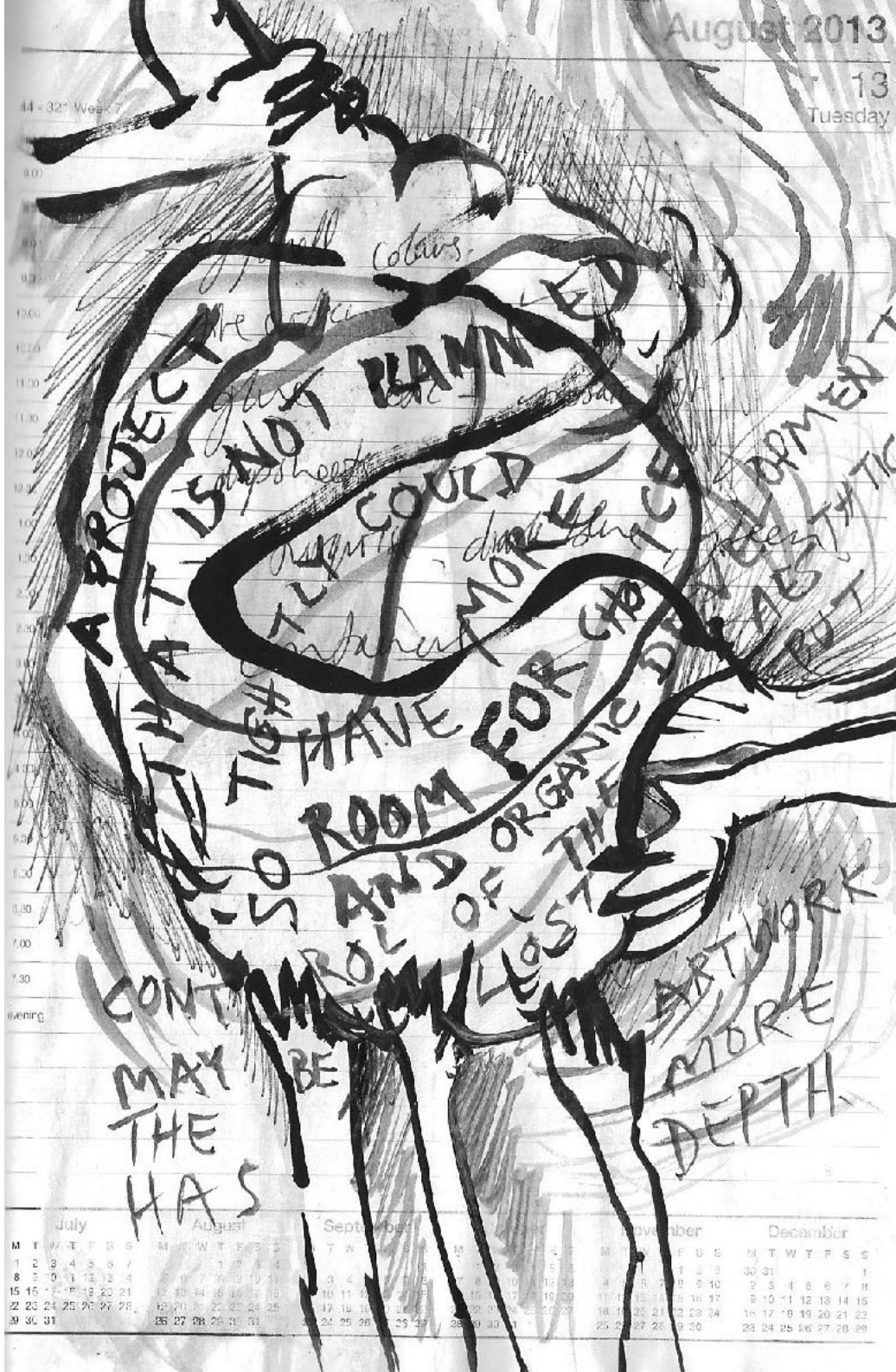
and perspectives in this research leads to a multiplicity of meanings which are not always resolved, or which fit neatly into themes and theory.

(These ideas are discussed further in the Chapter 9: Curling the Gallimaufry).

The Gallimaufry and the Aesthetic

I wanted a word which would describe the aesthetic of difference, which would accommodate the many individual artworks, which were also a part of a bigger collaborative artwork. In the same way that many individuals make a community, gallimaufry is a mix of disparate things brought together. Sometimes artwork made by many different people is thought of as not aesthetic because it doesn't have a uniform style. When many disparate and different things are placed together it is not always harmonious.

Aesthetic often refers to, 'a concern with the appreciation of beauty', or 'a set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist or artistic movement' (Oxford Dictionary). I attempt to make the

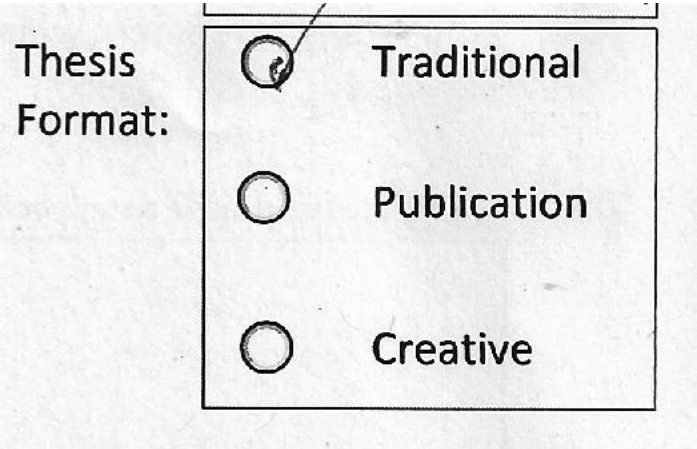


thesis aesthetic, but in portraiture this is described as, ‘attitudes, feelings, colours, pace and ambience’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 28). I have spent time and effort attempting to curl everything together, to ensure the research ethically aligns with the practice of making art with communities, and that the layers of theory, method, outcomes and the format used to share them, all curl in the same shape and work together. But there is a danger in curling, smoothing, making aesthetic, and moulding things to look as if they belong because it excludes the dissonant, the divergent sharp and rough edges of truth and reality. We must also appreciate the incongruous details; the un-matching and jarring realities that many voices and perspectives bring. In this context, sometimes I work to accommodate the incongruous and the gallimaufry, without trying to curl it into the traditional form of the thesis, with coherent arguments and clear findings.

Format and Layout

I had to consider how drawing could be physically incorporated into the traditional thesis format which I had decided to use.

At my university there are three main thesis formats - *standard thesis* (a single monograph between 60-100,000 words), *thesis by creative project* (a creative work and an accompanying critical reflective written work) and *thesis by publication* (a number of papers with framing, linking and concluding materials) (Victoria University, Thesis Submission (website) 2017). Each type of thesis is cordoned off in a manner that does not include the other. For example, you can do a thesis by publication but the traditional thesis does not usually include pre-published works. You can make a standard thesis but traditionally it would not have included drawing as data and analysis.



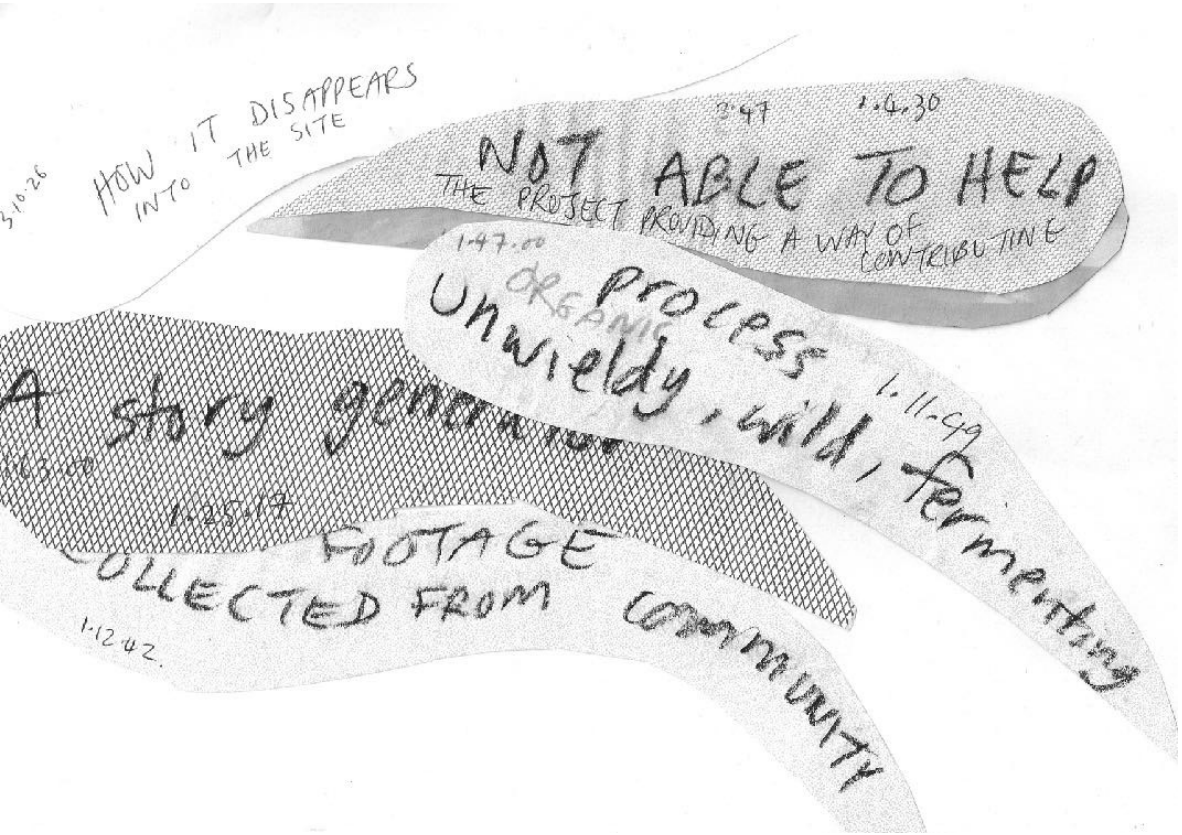
Above: Detail of' Release of Thesis Submission form

As I was beginning my research Nic Sousanis (2015) published his ‘traditional’ thesis which was made (except for one page) entirely of cartoons. Using a form of text and imagery, he had removed the border between the traditional thesis and research through art. The research method a/r/tography, in its focuses on the researcher as artist, researcher and teacher, also creates a space for re-considering the traditional structures of thesis. A/r/tographers often juxtapose image and text to produce a more complex creation of meaning that resists transparent readings and at times creates paradoxes, especially in its rendering across the areas of art, pedagogy and research (Madrid 2018).

Drawing, diagrams, and photographs have been used widely in the thesis as enquiry, data collection, analysis and representation (Leavy 2009). Although I claim the thesis is a *standard thesis*, it is prepared with the intention of creating a place *between*, one which accommodates all three thesis formats through its research methods and outcomes.

The drawings are not labelled as I consider them part of the text of the thesis, not diagrams which need to be explained. The words that I want people to read are written into the diagrams and drawings. Titles and labels may interrupt the flow of the work and the aesthetic of the text (words and

imagery). This text is imagined as a more open tool for the possibilities of language to produce meaning through the process of writing (Martin cited in Adams 2015), to convey the research, but also to evoke aesthetic outcomes of, ‘attitudes, feelings, colours, pace and ambience’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 28), paradoxes (Madrid 2018), and ‘what otherwise might remain hidden and inexpressible’ (Kalin 2009, p. 17).



Debbie Qadri

Process of drawing and text together

There have been difficulties created by using drawing and text in this thesis. Generally, they were not made ‘together’. Drawings and sketches were made intermittently, but often the text was typed and ideas for drawings noted between the paragraphs. These drawings were often made later and inserted. The text was usually digitally produced and the drawings hand-made on paper. The digital form became prioritised as drawings were scanned in order to incorporate them into the digitally arranged layout amongst the words. On two occasions, on the original drafts of ‘Prelude’ and ‘The Scroll’, I prioritised the drawings: the text was handwritten, or as a digital text - it was de-prioritised by being printed out, then physically cut and collaged in between the drawings. This was a slower process, and more difficult to order and edit, but these two chapters [‘Prelude’ and ‘The Scroll’] have a visceral depth and emotional immediacy that I was unable to produce when digital typing took precedence.

The immediacy and freshness of the thoughts and ideas that come to land on the paper or clay are very important to me in both my personal practice and also my practice with communities. The way in which I write text is the opposite. I write excessively and then edit, cut, and re-write over and over.

The process is completely different from my art practice, where I value the strength of the immediate gestural marks on the clay and paper. How these two almost opposite processes of recording came together in the thesis had to be managed so that the work was accessible, and also easy to share through digital layouts online.

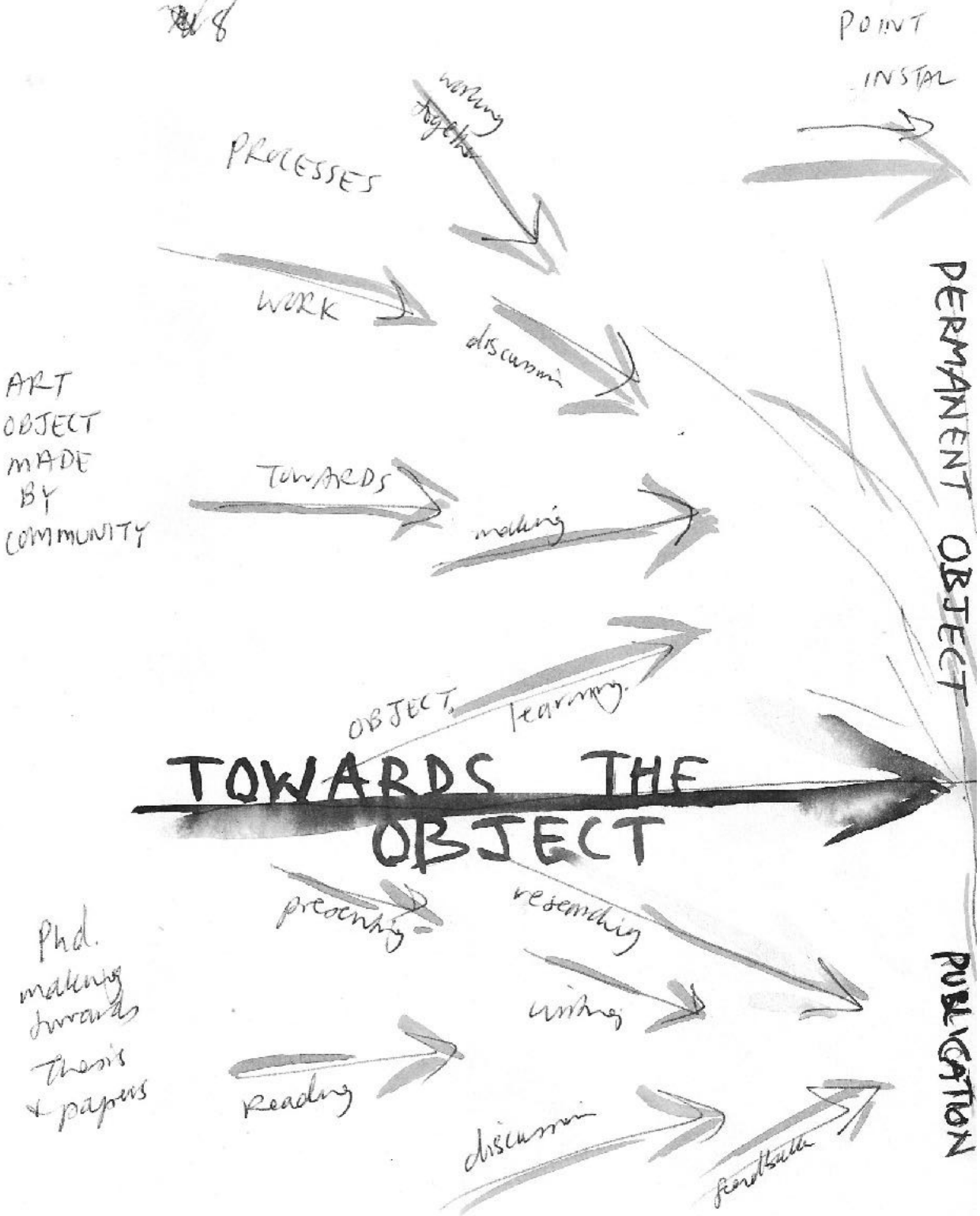
The work presented here tends to swing between what I feel is very traditional academic writing (clear, concise and authoritative) and the aesthetic, intuitive, narrative, anecdotal, metaphoric, symbolic, abstract and emotional - in both text and drawing. It reflects these perceived differences that Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) refers to as artistic resonance and scientific rigour. In this work, the scientific rigour and artistic resonance are shared across both writing and drawing.

The scroll was an attempt to work on drawings and writing together by using collage. The scroll format allowed the narrative to develop through text and imagery at the same time as it was physically drawn, cut, arranged and pasted together. There is a clash when writing and drawing argue as to which gets to chronologically organise the other. Sadly, often the writing wins and I think this is because writing on the computer is easier, faster, and by nature chronological, A4 and digital and able to be (physically and digitally) put into a book. Writing is unlikely to spread out beyond the

A4 flat page as drawing does so readily. Control has been exerted, so that the thesis can be presented as an A4 landscape digital document. Most of the work has been made in black and white so that the digital size is minimised, making it easier to share online.

Incorporating drawing into the work raises issues about format and presentation. The spatial constraints and the format of the work had to be carefully considered (Stowe & Sousanis 2016). The scroll reads from left to right, which is useful for the printed page, but increasingly on computers and tablets and phones, documents are read from top to bottom with pages falling below each other. Most digital reading devices show you one page at a time and so the relationship between drawings from one page to the next is difficult to view. Throughout the research, I played with presenting the documents across and downwards, adapting them for reading on websites and on the printed page. Finally the landscape format was chosen because it worked better for online versions and digitally read documents and I believed that this is how most of my audience would encounter and read the work. It could also be retained in the hard copy of the thesis (bound so the pages ran underneath each other, instead of side by side).

The documents have taken on multiple forms (wall displays, printed books, digital documents, websites) in an effort to make them accessible to the public. *The Tree Project* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda* were also in different forms at times during the process. Leaves and branches of *The Tree* were on display in festivals and exhibitions and *The Tree* was laid on its side at Whittlesea Showgrounds so that people could see the leaves up close. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* was seen as raw tiles in the mobile workshop taken to places all over St Kilda, as a drawn design, as a pile of fired tiles, or laid out on the ground as fired tiles and photographed with a cherry picker. The artwork that I make with community is photographed and loaded onto a blog during the making process. The kiln door opens, and as we pull. Each shelf out, we exclaim about the beauty of the fired artwork. The final artwork is celebrated, doused with champagne, and with cheers and applause from the community. The research is published as papers, presented at conferences, published online as a website, displayed in community places, made into bound books for libraries, and presented in a thesis.



Debbie Qadri

Validity and Sharing outcomes

Validity and Sharing outcomes

The validity of the research has been enhanced through processes of feedback and discussion between myself and interviewees about each portrait. Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) suggest showing the work ‘to people who are implicated in it or by their texts, allowing these others to respond and/or acknowledging how these others feel about what is being written about them and allowing them to talk back to how they have been represented in the text’ (p. 7). Drafts were sent to the interviewees with the opportunity for them to provide feedback, make corrections and to ‘have a say’ (Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton 2001, p. 324). Some interviewees gave detailed responses requesting changes and drafts were adjusted in response to these comments and returned to interviewees after editing to ensure that the changes reflected their concerns.

Research participants were offered opportunities to meet with me. This allowed participants to ‘confirm, refute, qualify and elaborate on my interpretations’ (Kalin 2009, p. 9) and assisted in making sure the portrait did not cause harm to others or misrepresent the artwork.

As a consequence of the reciprocal ethos of this research, most of the thesis has been previously published as journal articles, on websites, as a book or displayed in public space. This was done in order to prioritise the communities of the artworks as the audience of the research and to make the research accessible to a broader audience. These processes could also be viewed as opportunities for peer-review by the community. The portraits were placed in public space as displays and on a website, with opportunities for feedback provided. Making the research public and sharing it with the community before the thesis was complete, prioritised the community as the audience for the research but also allowed time to ensure that each portrait was validated by members of the community before being placed in the thesis.

The portraits of artworks, *The Blacksmiths' Tree*, and *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, were created as documents that can exist autonomously outside the context of the thesis. They were written purposely for the communities who were involved in making the artworks and the community around the artwork (locals). I imagined this audience as I wrote, which made me more careful in asserting my findings, and more cognisant of the many perspectives and readings of the artwork. I was also careful to support the knowledge expressed by interviewees with other data and evidence. For the broader community who witness the artwork, I was careful to explain the detailed context of the artwork so that they understood the intentions of the makers.

‘*The Blacksmiths’ Tree'* (Chapter 7) was published online and physically shown at Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre November 15 - December 6, 2017. I also sat the exhibition one day and invited the community to come and meet with me. Only one person attended but the conversation was revealing, in that the exhibition doesn’t allow time to read the document, and if the community member has little access to the internet, it makes it difficult to access the document. Placing the document into the local libraries where it could be borrowed would assist with the community having access, so this was included as an outcome of the research.

‘*The Great Wall of St Kilda’* (Chapter 8) has been made into a website, pdf documents and books for the local libraries and it is hoped it will be displayed physically in the place of St Kilda later in 2018.

The entire thesis was also shown at VU Metrowest (an exhibition space run in partnership by Victoria University and the City of Maribyrnong) in July 2018, with the aim of reaching the student community of Victoria University, the local community of Footscray and the Western Suburbs, and of increasing the accessibility of PhD studies and research outcomes.

Notes

[1] Inspiring examples were research papers of Zara & Parkinson 2013b, and Parkinson & Zara 2011, which include the original voices of research participants telling their stories and perspectives.

7

The Blacksmiths' Tree

A Portrait

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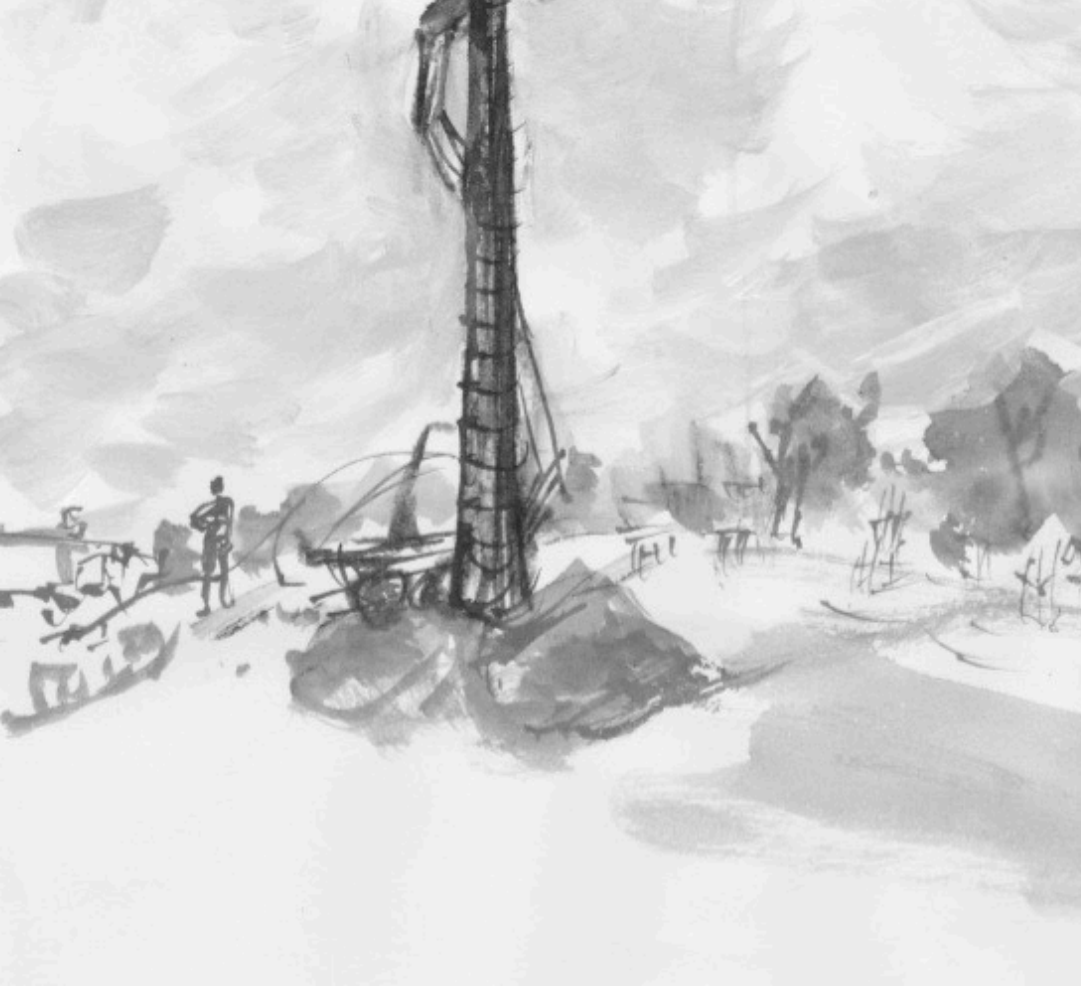
Text for *Branching Out and Branching In* 1029

This document also exists on the following websites:

http://theblacksmithstree.blogspot.com.au

http://inclusionemotionandvoice.blogspot.com.au



The Blacksmiths' Tree

Part A:
CALL

1 Black Saturday

> ‘On Saturday 7th February 2009 the state of Victoria experienced the most devastating bushfires in its history, resulting in a catastrophic loss of life and public and private property’ (2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report, p. 38).

The state was on alert as Victoria had endured one of its most severe and prolonged heat-waves during the final week of January with the temperature in Melbourne reaching above 43°C for three consecutive days, for the first time since records had been kept. The Country Fire authority [CFA] and the Department of Sustainability and Environment [DSE] (the State’s primary bush fire agencies), warned that forests and

grasslands were the driest they had been since the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983, due to recent years of drought (2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report).

On Saturday 7th February the temperature had reached 40°C by 11a.m. and later climbed to 45°C or above in many parts of the State (in Melbourne it was recorded as 46.4°C). The first fire broke out at Kilmore East at 11.47 am, and a total of 316 grass, scrub or forest fires were attended to on the day by CFA, DSE and the Melbourne Fire Brigade (MFB) (CFA website, 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal commission Final Report Summary, 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report). Strong winds exacerbated the Fires.

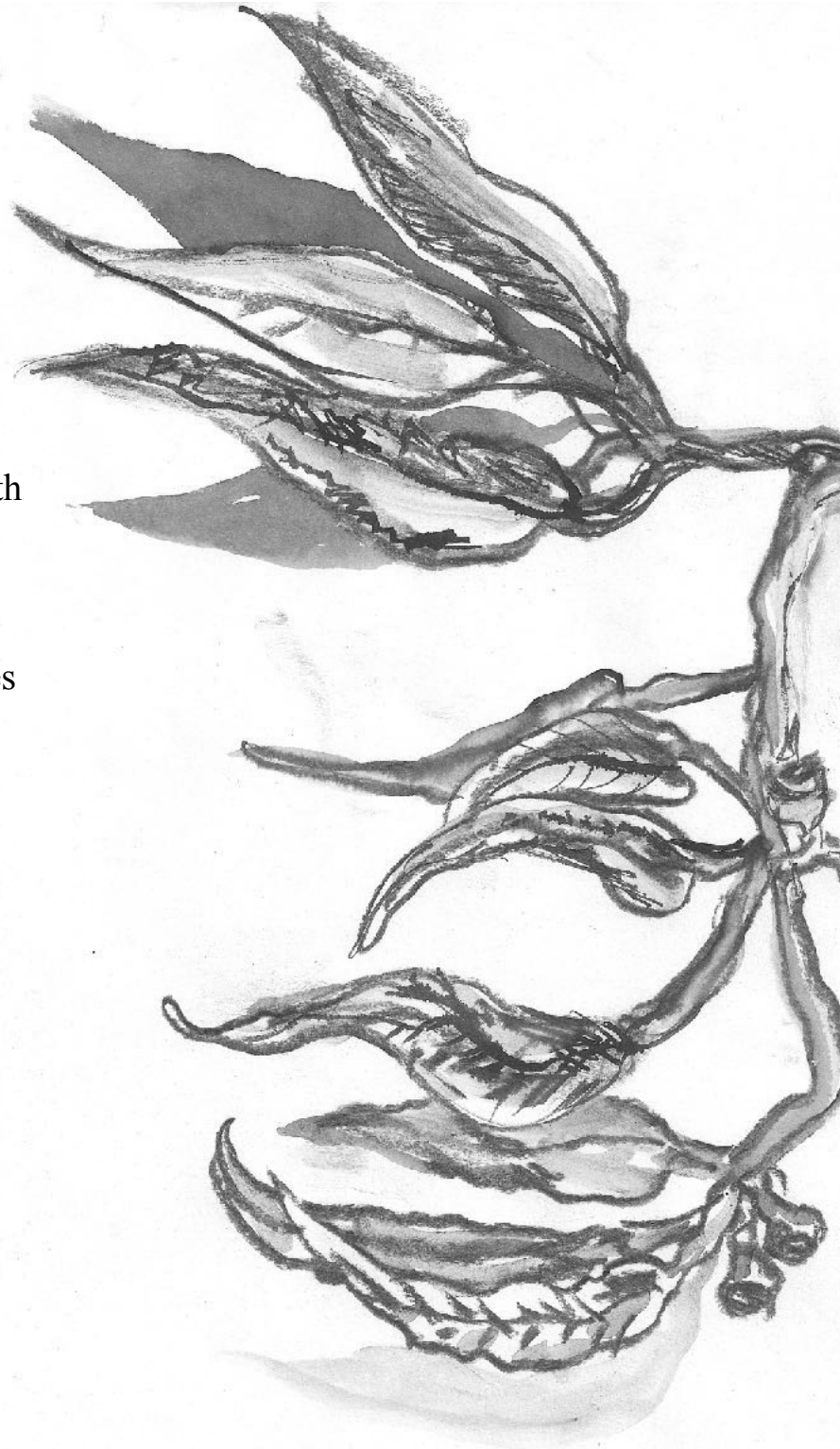
> ‘Winds travelled at 120 km (75 mph), later growing to 200 kmphr (124 mph) ahead of the fire front’.
> ‘Flames were seen to reach up to 50 metres, creating a life-threatening zone of searing heat up to 200 metres ahead of the fire front’
> (http://www.treeproject.abavic.org/auabout-the-fires.html).

The fires affected 78 communities including Marysville, Kinglake, Kinglake West, Narebethong, Flowerdale and Strathewen which were devastated. One hundred and seventy three people died. It was estimated that 414 people were injured and 7,562 people were displaced. The loss also included the destruction of 2,133 houses, the loss or injury of 11,000 farm animals, and the destruction of 430,000 hectares of bushland, along with native animals and

birds (2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report; Borrell & Boulet 2009, Lancaster 2009; Hall 2011; Zara and Parkinson 2013).

> ‘Over 4,000 fire service volunteers and career staff immediately responded to combat more than 300 fires across Victoria on the 7th February and over 10,000 personnel were subsequently involved in the largest coordinated emergency response and community recovery operation in the state’s history’ (2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report p.38).

> ‘It was a particularly eerie day . . the sky was black, literally black. There was just a bright band of light that you could hardly drive into because the sun was still shining behind the smoke . . . (after dark) ‘you could see the red tendrils going down the gullies over the hills’ (Bruce Beamish (blacksmith) quoted by Larry Swartz, Feb 6, 2013).



In Beating the Flames: Women escaping and surviving Black Saturday (Parkinson & Zara 2011), and Men on Black Saturday (Zara & Parkinson 2013) first-hand experiences are voiced by those who experienced the fires, which reveal the isolation of families, groups and individuals during the fire storm. ‘It was difficult to help others during the fires because everything was pitch black, you could hear screams of other people, but you couldn’t help’ (Parkinson & Zara 2011, p. 37). These stories reveal the chaos of the fires, caused by the loss of communication, and consequently the inability to make informed decisions (Zara & Parkinson 2013). The fires would suddenly appear - huge, terrifying and devastating. In many situations families were caught at their houses and unable to assist nearby neighbours. They often felt helpless to affect the fires or to help others (Parkinson & Zara 2011).

2 Aftermath

The 7th February as ‘Black Saturday’, was the beginning of an event, but there was no end point. There is an aftermath, and it continues and is ongoing. The Fires burnt for a long time afterwards and continued to be a threat to property and life (Parkinson & Zara 2011). Stories tell how fires continued to burn for over the following month, and how some people stayed on their properties working to put out the fires, till it rained on the 5th March (Parkinson & Zara 2011). Sometimes the fires backtracked over areas which had already burnt once. There was an aftermath of physical and emotional damage to individual people in the affected communities which was not fully recognised immediately or in the weeks and months following the disaster (Zara, Weiss and Parkinson 2013). Research on men’s and women’s experiences of the fires gives insight into this long aftermath, revealing broken relationships, increased family violence, and increasing anger

as for many, their situations of homelessness and unemployment as subsequent outcomes of the fires were not resolved (Parkinson 2012; Zara & Parkinson 2013). Grief was also part of this.

There were also repercussions in the lives of the 10,000 personnel involved in the fires, including the volunteer firefighters of the CFA - many of whom received public blame for events (they were both local community members and a person with home and family, who had been torn between defending their own property and family, helping others and following orders) (Zara et al. 2013).

Immediately after the fires there was a momentum of community pulling together, but for many this soon gave way to despair as things worked against people getting their lives

back together. Zara and Parkinson's research uncovers an 'other' side to the recovery processes, where:

> 'The initiative and drive of the locals in the early days was smothered by a recovery process described as overlooking local knowledge and expertise in community leadership. The effect was one of disempowering local people and marginalising them from real decision-making processes. Their sense of being disenfranchised runs counter to the appearance of deep community consultation' (Zara & Parkinson 2013, p. 23-4).

Many local men found their practical skills were not wanted, as mostly outsiders were brought in for the clean-up and rebuilding (Zara & Parkinson 2013). The experiences of the men whose voices Zara and Parkinson record, shed light on what was for many an ongoing trauma (which some describe as worse than the fires), which continued for years afterwards. Many experienced an

inequality between those who received financial help to rebuild homes and businesses and undemocratic decision making about things which affected whole communities. They faced overwhelming odds, in firstly coping with the grief over the lost lives of many people that they knew, but then the practical aspects of re-building, working for a living and getting on with life. It is important to understand the situation - this aftermath - to see how *The Tree* provided something to do and something to hold onto, for those who felt a connection with it.

3 Calling all Blacksmiths

'Calling all Blacksmiths from all over.

We can Help'

Debbie Qadri

An online Blacksmith forum, *I Forge Iron* was the birthplace of *The Tree*. In a new thread posted on 15th February 2009, just eight days after the fire, Salty wrote this post:

‘Calling all Blacksmiths from all over. We can Help, Let’s grow a tree from our Fires in honour of all the volunteer Fire Fighters. You can make one or as many leaves as you can, send with your own mark, the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria) could co-ordinate the lot, make the trunk and branches and fix the leaves. *The Tree* could then be placed in one of the burnt out towns in country Victoria as a sign of our sincere thanks.

Regards
Salty’

(Salty, 15th February 2009, *I Forge Iron*).

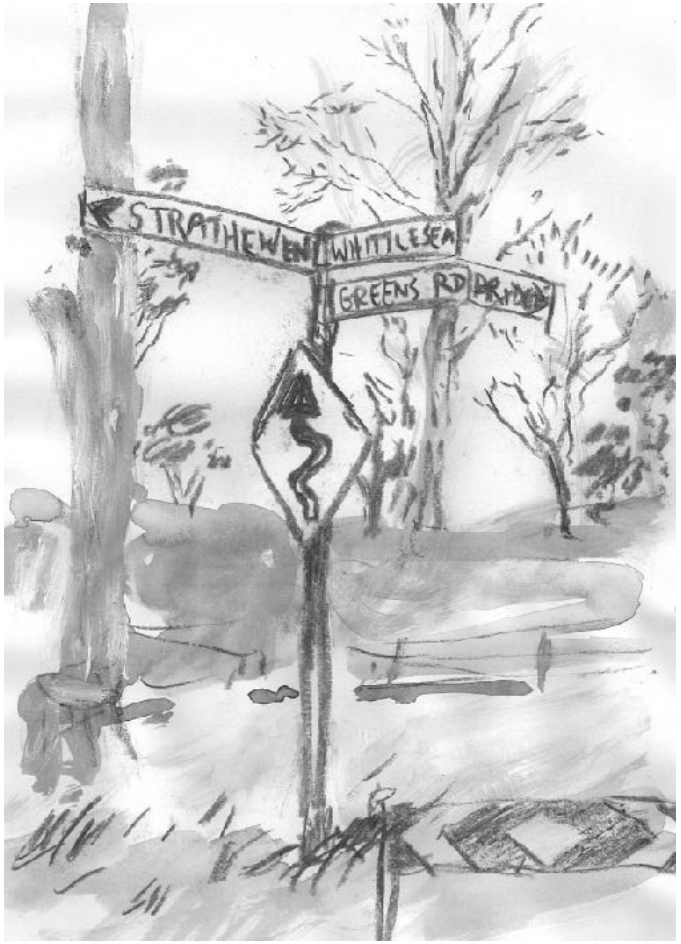
Salty was a member of The Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria) Incorporated (ABA(Vic)Inc.), and in his vision they would be the coordinators of *The Tree*. After Salty's call to action on the *I Forge Iron* forum the responses began pouring in. His idea was the beginning of a thread that went for years and racked up 1,182 posts. The call was followed by replies of, 'count me in', 'I would be willing', 'I would like to take part', 'leaves on their way'.

Many of the blacksmiths from ABA(Vic) Inc. lived in the area of the fires or were connected in some way to the communities who were affected. They wanted to make themselves useful, but many realised that the needs of the community affected by the fires couldn't be met at that stage by a blacksmith and welder (Garton 2016 Interview).

But the blacksmiths wanted, and needed to find something to do (Garton 2016 Interview; Tarrant 2016 Interview; Kenny 2016 Interview). The question was, given their craft and their skills, ‘What could blacksmiths do?’(Overton 2016 Interview). Like many others in the community their efforts of physically helping were stalled by the circumstances of the aftermath of the tragedy. *The Tree Project* provided a way of doing something, ‘I can do something for that tree and I’d be helping’ (Tarrant 2016 Interview).

Salty’s call met a need, and it was responded to in an incredible way that moved his vision of making a small tree, into a five year journey and a complex inclusive community process, which resulted in *The Tree* which now stands at Strathewen.

4 Journey to *The Tree*



'If you want to see *The Tree*, you embark on your journey to see *The Tree*. You're not on your way to anywhere. . . . You've got to want to go there'
(Tarrant 2016 Interview).

2016

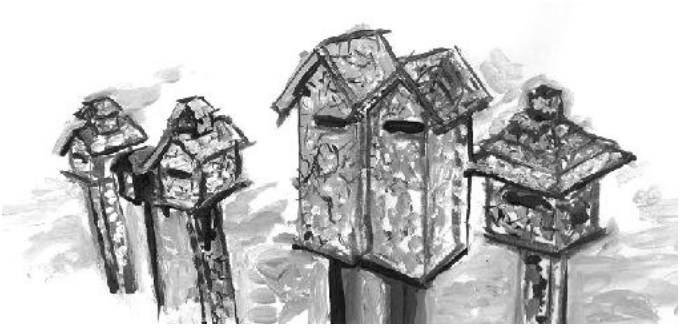
As part of my research I needed to visit *The Tree*, and decided to take a friend with me. I had forgotten to check the map or work out where it was, so we followed our noses and wound our way up into the country roads in the direction we thought it was. We ended up in Kinglake but there was no sign to Strathewen which I felt should be nearby. So we asked for directions and one fellow said, 'Well there is a back way on the dirt roads which I wouldn't recommend, so perhaps this way down towards Hurstbridge and turn right at Cottles Bridge'. Perhaps there was a sign, but I never saw it, but I noticed the bridge and turned. We then followed that road and at the 'Y' intersection we finally found a sign that read 'Strathewen'.

The road seemed to wind deeper inwards. Strathewen is a valley, and on this singular paved road into its heart you come across bushland, paddocks, orchards, houses, people, signs of industry and life. But you also take a journey back into memory of what you know about the bushfires, because that is the context of going to *The Tree*. You are also a stranger, not a member of the community.

Right from the start I felt I was an interloper, as if I was trespassing. I felt the heaviness of the past and the need to be respectful.

Amongst the bursting landscape of new growth and people going about their daily work, we could clearly see evidence of the fire (it was seven years later) - burnt stumps, blackened trunks, large areas of new bush with the pale silhouettes of dead trees laced into the sky above them.

‘Oh!’, We exclaimed, it was another beautiful mosaic letterbox, then as we drove in further we found more and more of them, but not *The Tree*. We ended up on a tiny road and thought ‘No! We must have missed it.’ I got out to photograph the letterboxes and again I felt uncomfortable, as if I was a tourist photographing the images and surface of the place and leaving my dirty paw prints and tyre tracks to show where I had been. But the letterboxes demanded our attention and it was delight and joy to come across them [1]. We drove back to the Strathewen Recreation Reserve, and there were paths leading off into the bush. I felt then, we must be in the right place?



So we followed one path which led into bush and ended up in a quiet sheltered place, landscaped with a series of concentric sandstone circles set into the ground with bench seats echoing their shapes. Paths led between the circle shapes and silver domes nested in the centre of each. We had come across the *Strathewen Community Memorial* which was brought about by the local community (Strathewen Community Renewal Association) with architects (Arterial Design). The memorial is laden with the words of community members engraved in sandstone circles. It expresses grief tangibly, addressing themes of history, the experiences of the fires, the hurt, the losses, and the positive things that happened to the community (*Steve Pascoe, Memorial Working Group*, film) 2.

The sandstone circles are set into the ground. They are low, so you are forced to stop still, to bend your body and bow your head to read. It is such a beautiful moment to find this conversation amongst the trees, and you feel compelled to listen, to honour the people who created the work by reading every word and staying still for a time to consider them. In that quietness surrounded by bush, (and reminded that you are surrounded by the continually growing fuel of fire), you become overwhelmed with the

largeness of this story. The voices in the texts on the memorial are obviously from many people, and it conveys how a great many people's lives were affected by the fires in many different ways and through different experiences.

We followed the path back outwards and as we emerged from the bush, I noticed to the left, *The Tree*. We had walked straight past it. We had looked at it, but not seen it. Standing there as clear as day but also melting into the trees behind it. It had been elusive and still. Although it was large, it had also become small - all around it, the new growth had grown taller. We had to walk back to the beginning of the path and take another path to reach *The Tree*.

I couldn't read the messages on the leaves (which I knew were there) *3. They had become private and inaccessible, so that you had to look at it as simply a tree. I couldn't find any reference to the project at the site. No signage or plaque. I brought what I knew with me, but its simplicity defied interpretation. The object had no fanfare, no method of saying it was something else, it had become simply a tree, set a little in front of the new growth in a garden of its own, but nevertheless a tree amongst many.

When you do find it, all you find is *The Tree*.

5 *The Tree*

Nine point eight metres high

Three tonne, Australian Gum Tree

A welded construction of predominantly stainless steel

Forged by blacksmiths and welded

A canopy of 3,500 individually hand beaten, crafted leaves

Stainless steel, copper, silver, titanium and glass leaves

Leaves from our blacksmithing friends from 23 countries

Very realistic, is not an artistic interpretation of a Gum Tree

It's bolted to the ground and has a big rock around it and

Sits in a landscaped garden

It looks like a tree

It really brought people together
Many hands make light work
Irons in the fire
The ringing of the anvil
Crafted and lovingly put together
Working toward a common goal
From the intricate to the industrial
It was like a giant jewel, they were handling that,
    these bushy guys
Two hours and two cranes
A ballet of machinery
A huge cheer went up

The Tree is an amazing feat of forging

We won the day!

You just feel all the grief of all the people is just here in this object

A couple standing on the rock, hugging *The Tree*

When you look up, how beautiful it is against the blue sky

All those little details

The sum of all those parts

Drawn to touch the trunk

Love, empathy, respect

Honouring those lost

Inviting,

It reeled us in

A magnet

Positive energy

It takes a stand of strength and newness

Peaceful but powerful

*All words and phrases taken from interviews, The Drift (the ABA(Vic) Inc. Quarterly publication), *The Tree Project* Facebook and website, media articles and I Forge Iron 4.

notes:

1 Strathewen has many mosaicked letterboxes, which were made as a community project after the fires. The story of the letterboxes unfolds in the film *Alison Pascoe, The Letterbox Project*, on the Big Stories, Little Towns Website, http://www.bigstories.com.au/story/recovery/film/alison-pascoe

2 Information about the development of the Strathewen Community Memorial is on the Strathewen website: http://www.strathewen.vic.au/we-remember/memorials/the-memorial-development-process-in-strathewen/ and a summary and photographs of the completed memorial are shown on the Monument Australia website, http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/disaster/fire/display/101089-strathewen-bushfire-memorial-

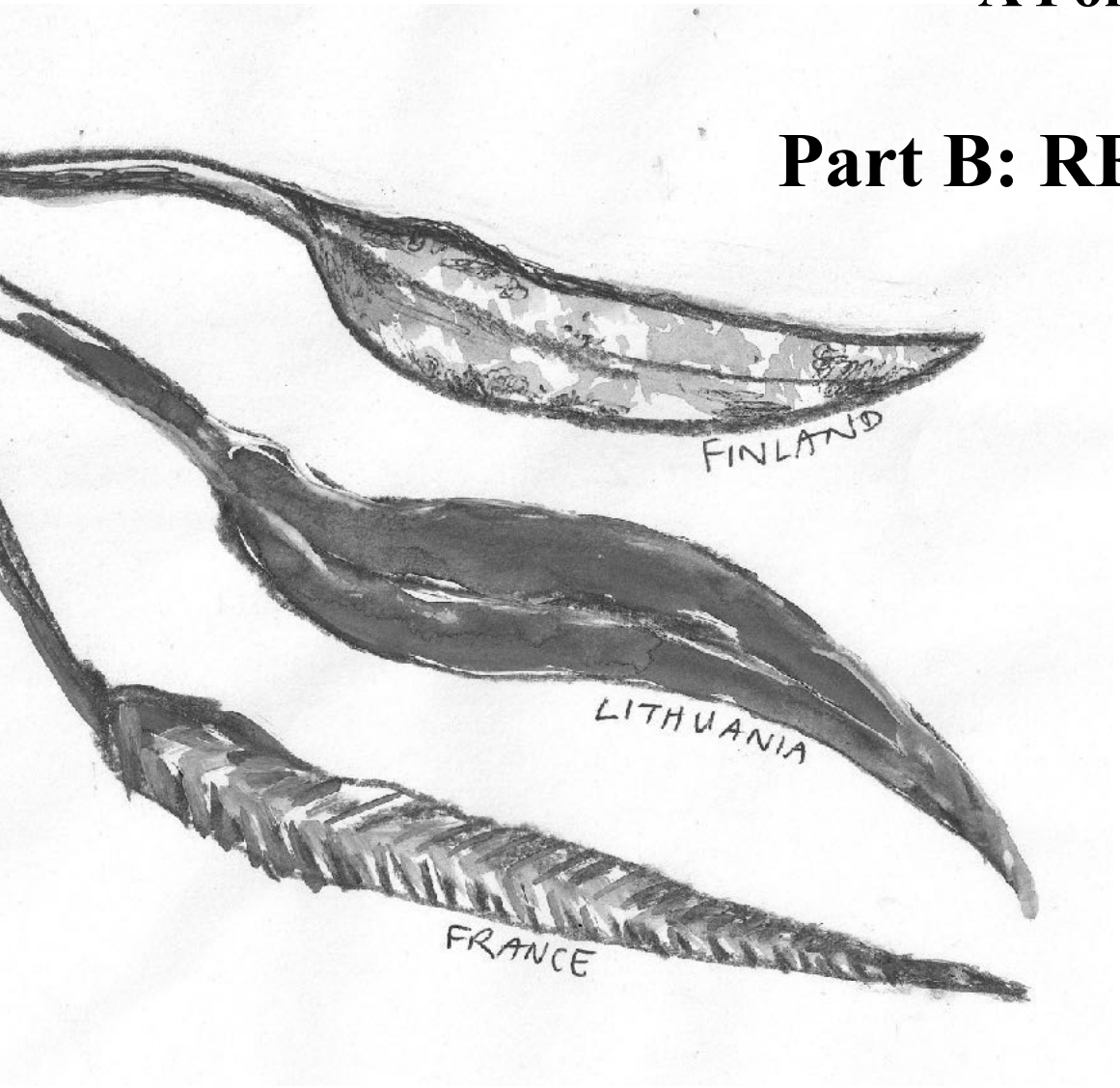
3 A photograph of every leaf is available for viewing on *The Tree Project Website,* http://www.treeproject.abavic.org.au/leaf-gallery_EU.html

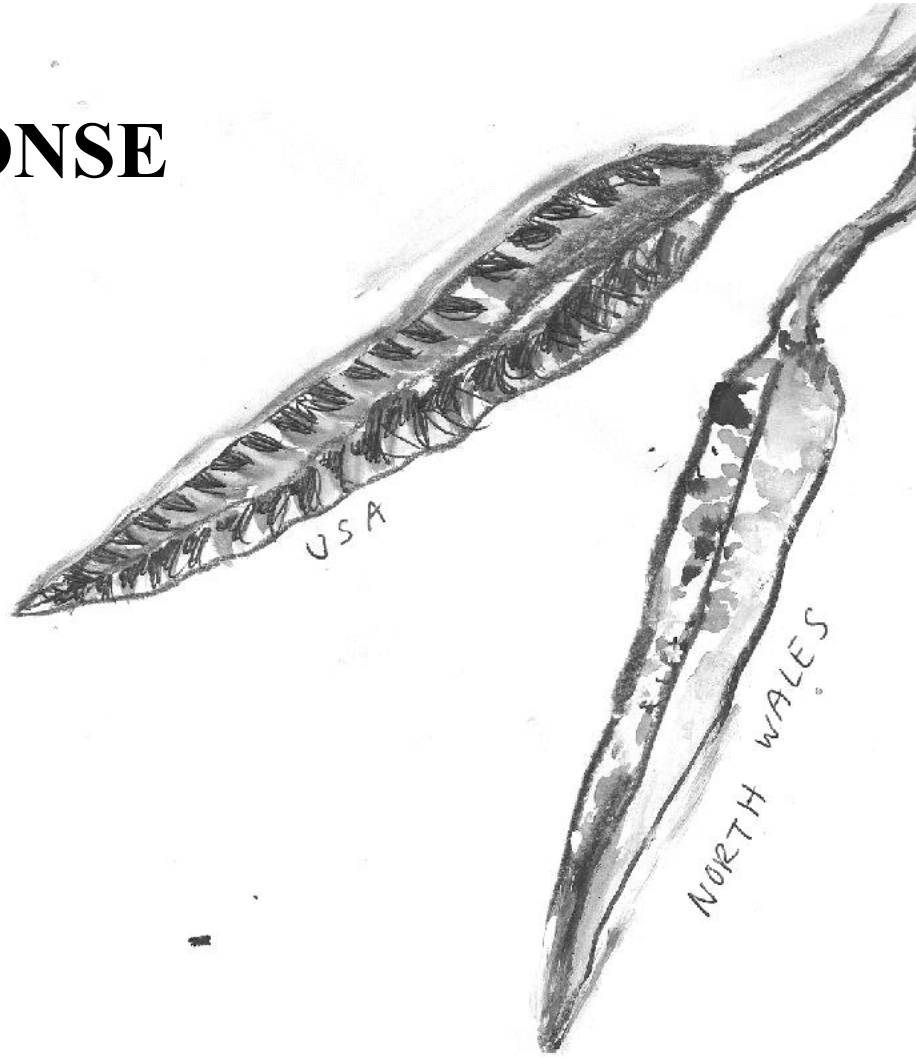
4 The small number of mild steel leaves which were made for *The Tree* were given to, and are on display at the Black Saturday Museum.

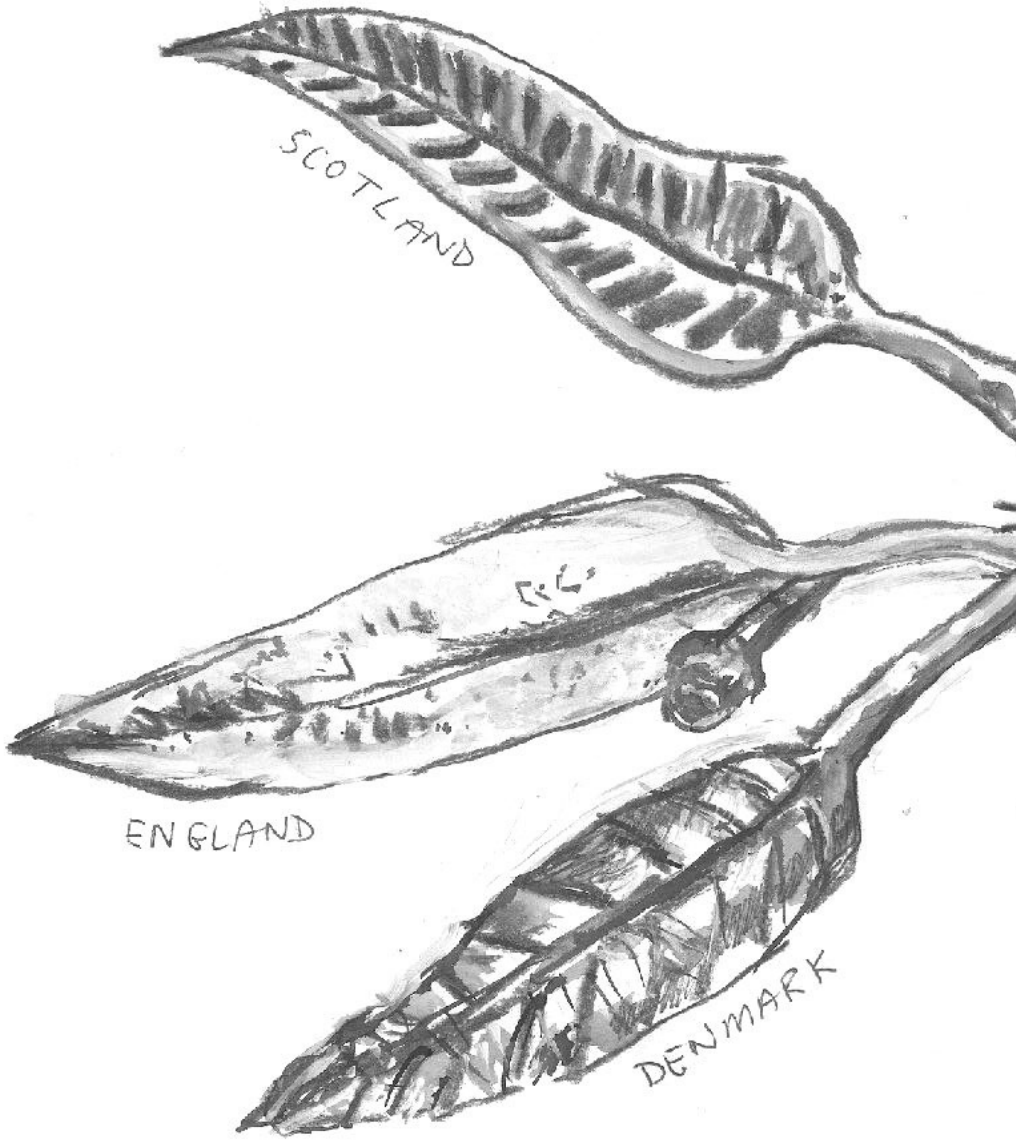
The Blacksmiths' Tree

A Portrait

Part B: RESPONSE



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DENMARK

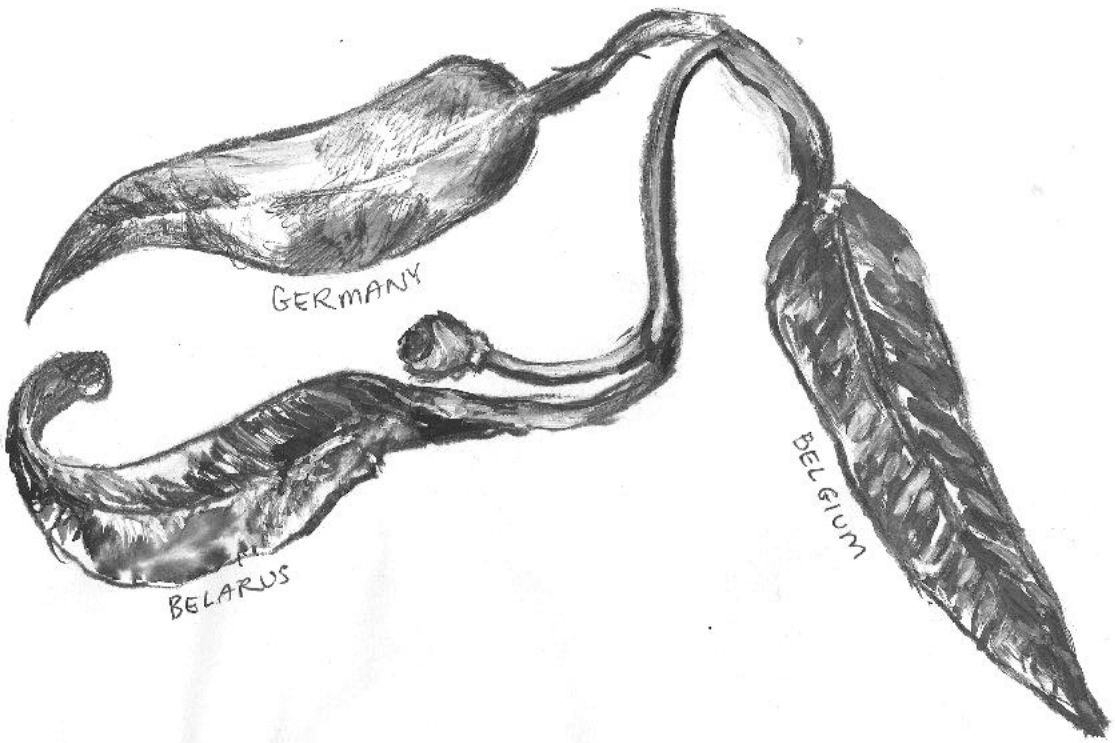
6 Community Involvement - *The Tree* Grows

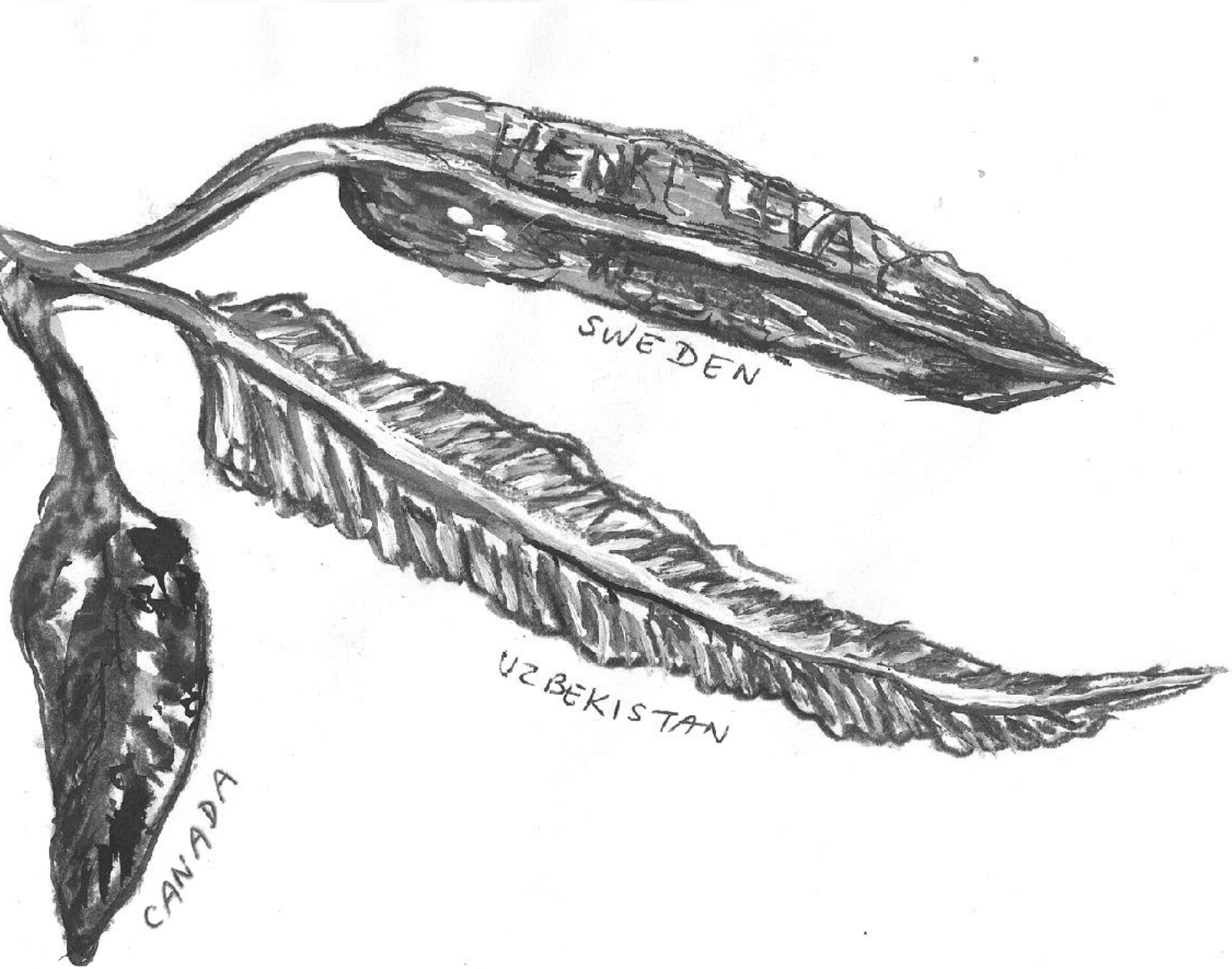
The Tree began with a community of blacksmiths. Salty's idea had resonated with the local as well as the global fraternity of blacksmiths, who responded with speed and enthusiasm. There had been a ferment of discussion on *I Forge Iron*, about how to make the leaves, what materials to use, and what a gum leaf looks like. The response showed that people outside of Australia were affected emotionally by the fires; they cared and wanted to contribute something. Pretty soon leaves were being made by blacksmiths all over the world, (craftsmen and novices) and mailed off in packages to Australia. The first package arrived just two weeks after Salty's call, on March 2nd.

Along with leaves by the Australian blacksmiths, by June 7th (less than 3 months later) there were 600 leaves.

What was initially envisaged as a small tree with 200 leaves or so, quickly grew into something else, and the blacksmiths became committed to something larger than what was first planned:

> 'If we have to make two trees to fit them all on we will! Maybe even a whole forest if we need to, so get out there and start hammering!' (Quango 18.2.2009, I Forge Iron).

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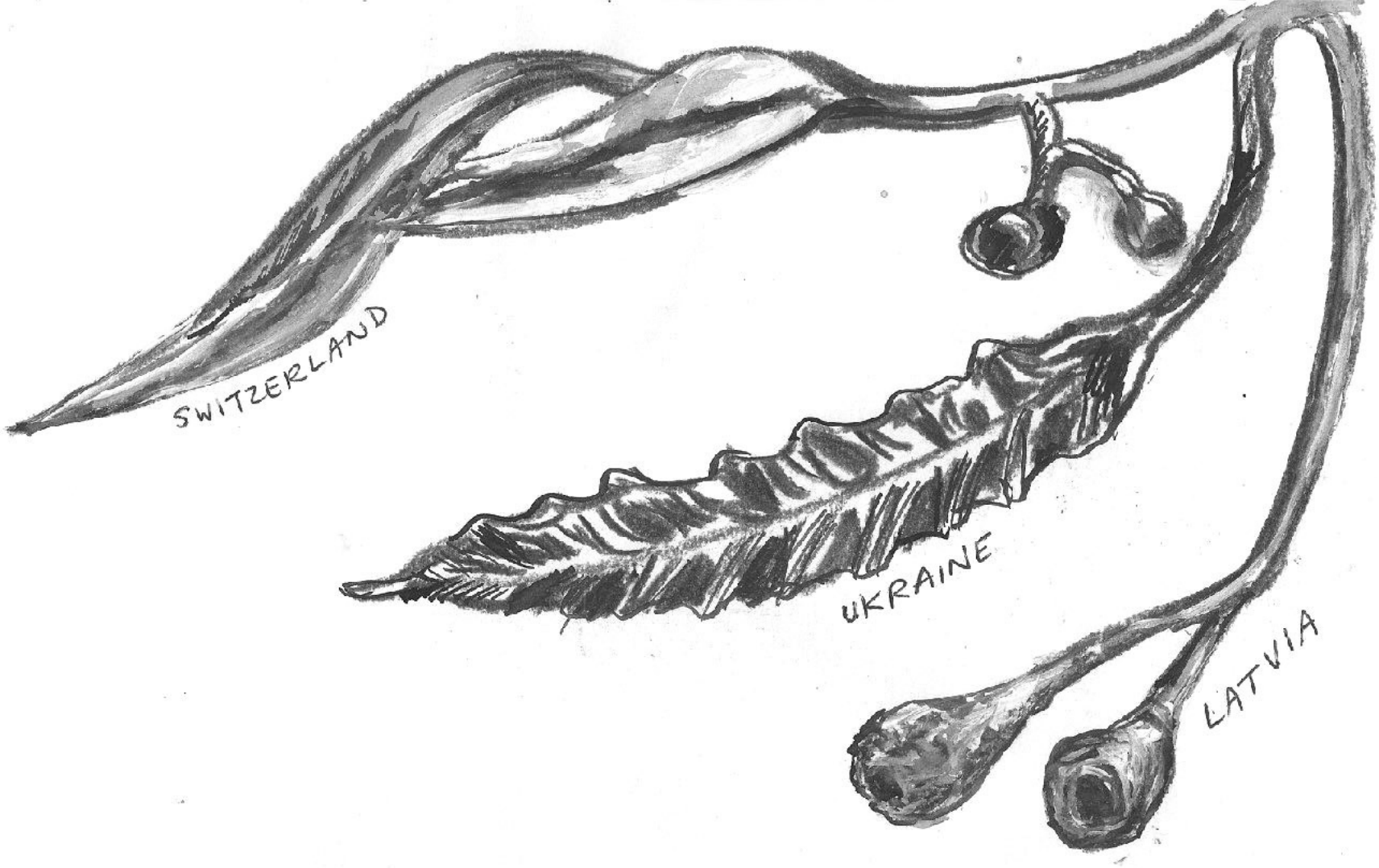
CANADA

Conversation grew about how more people could contribute and how to fund the project as it became larger (Overton 2016, Interview). Just a month after *The Tree Project* began (March 17, 2009), the opportunity for community members to sponsor a leaf, became incorporated into the project. Initially advertised on *The Tree Project* website and then also on *I Forge Iron* (Strine 21.3.2009), it became a part of the leaf forging demonstrations by blacksmiths at local community events. These events both shared with the community the idea of *The Tree*, how it was being made and its progress, but also sponsoring a leaf gave the community a chance to be a part of *The Tree* by having a message stamped on a leaf for themselves or others (Overton 2016, Interview). The money raised by sponsorship went to purchase the steel and welding materials to create the leaves and twigs (*The Tree Project website*).


SWITZERLAND
UKRAINE
LATVIA

TO THE
TREE
PROJECT
WITH LOVE
AND RESPECT
FROM U.K.
EUROPE &
NORTHERN
HEMISPHERE
X

7 Leaf Forging Demonstrations and Sponsorship

The leaf forging demonstrations enabled many connections as they brought the project to the affected communities to let people see first-hand the creation of *The Tree* (Paul, 24.4.2009, *I Forge Iron*; Overton 2016, Interview).

The demonstrations provided an entry point for many to get involved in the blacksmithing, and to see and understand the labour involved with making a leaf. Each leaf was hammered out over time with the assistance of several heatings in the fire between hammering. Often someone could sponsor a leaf and then watch it being made and stamped, and sometimes there were too many sponsored leaves to complete in the day. Demonstrations which at face value are showing and sharing skills, became spaces that also facilitated the creation of both emotional and physical connections between the community and *The Tree*.

> ‘The show and tell provided people [with] a lot of opportunity to connect, to grieve and remember’ (Overton 2016, Interview).

The forging demonstrations were mobile (through the lifting and carting of heavy equipment) and went to places where the community had been affected by the fires; Warrandyte, Cottles Bridge, Hurstbridge, Kinglake, Marysville, Alexandra, St Andrews, Whittlesea, Mt Martha, Eltham and Arthurs Creek. Initially, it was intended that only blacksmiths would make the

leaves but in the end all sorts of people made them.

Amanda Gibson (who later became the project-manager), offered her perception of the situation in the community and how the community felt about *The Tree* in its early stages.

> ‘Many local people have approached me with tears in their eyes to thank the blacksmiths for this incredible project. The leaves you are all forging and sending to us are making a huge impact here. Thank you so much for giving your time and skills to this project’ (Amanda 30.3.2009, *I Forge Iron*).

Postings on *I Forge Iron* also attested to the blacksmiths' experiences of the public’s ‘heartfelt appreciation’, (jringling, 17.4.2009, *I Forge Iron*).

Sponsorship of a leaf enabled people to choose their own words to be placed on a leaf. Texts were personal, but also shared publicly through the process of contributing them to http://theblacksmithstree.blogspot.com/p/the-blacksmiths-tree-part-1.html. These messages contributed to the many different meanings that *The Tree* held. It enabled everyone a permanent public voice, at the price of sponsorship ($20 for a stainless steel leaf, $40 for a copper leaf).

There was also the opportunity to sponsor leaves for others, enabling someone else's message to be stamped into a leaf. There are about 1,500 messages on the leaves, which are addressed to victims, communities and volunteer firefighters (MacBean 2013). Messages of strength, support and hope are also inscribed on the branches (Hillard 2013).

Debbie Qadri

Cliff Overton, who fought the fires and then became a blacksmith through becoming involved in *The Tree Project* suggested that the mechanism of sponsoring a leaf changed *The Tree* dramatically because:

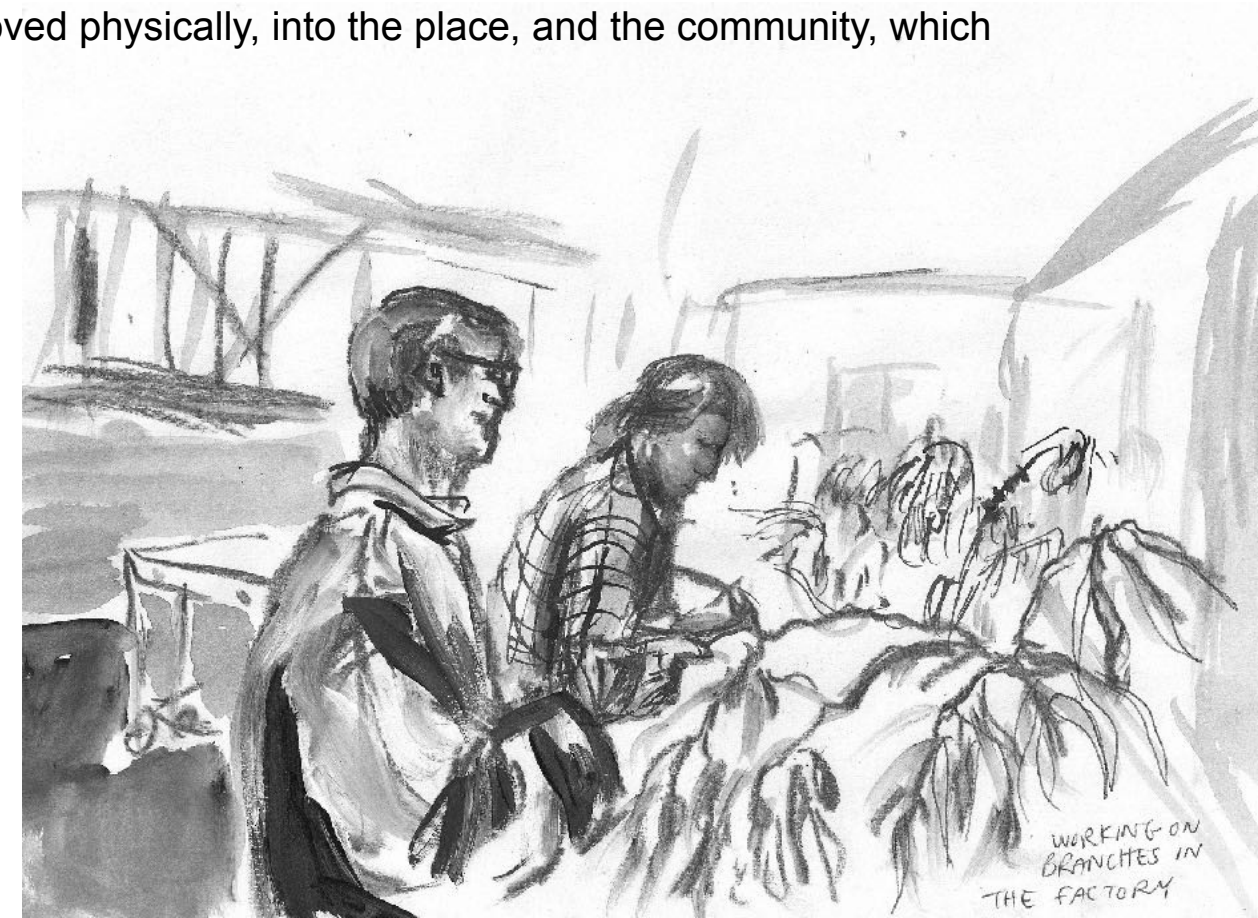
> ‘It went from being a piece of art built to look like a tree to becoming a vehicle that carried in print a whole lot of emotion and sentiment . . . *The Tree* actually carries the thoughts and feelings of the people that contributed’ (Overton 2016, Interview).

8 Community - Many Roles, New skills, Learning

Through the leaf sponsorship, the project moved from being a small ABA(Vic) Inc. project of making a tree to thank Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, into a broader community project which included a whole range of people who weren't blacksmiths. The project's timeframe also extended because it now needed a larger tree on which to place the increasing number of leaves; this would take more time, materials and money to produce. This was unforeseen and unplanned but it provided the opportunity for more people to become involved in the project.

The extension also compelled a changing of the guard, as some people had ‘done their bit’, and other skill-sets were needed (such as welding). New people encountered the project and were drawn in. In the film, *Our Tree Forged From Fire (micro-doc)*, Patrick Vaughan explains that everyone could contribute a little bit to the totality of *The Tree*, and that it represents these people who have a part in it. Pat Reynolds, standing beside him joins in with, ‘We’ll own it, it’ll be *Our Tree*’.

The project was given the space in a factory in Whittlesea, and so *The Tree* (in the form of pieces: leaves, buds, twigs and branches) was moved physically, into the place, and the community, which had been affected by the fires.



Showgrounds
Expo at Whittlesea
Rebuilding
Display of the Tree Project and micro documentary of 'Our Tree -
The documentary film
Blacksmith Association.
California by the Californian
Association and in
Artist Blacksmith
forged by
Fire, shown at
London by the British
points are set up in
Leaf collection
the Wish Box collected wishes.
OUR TREE - Forged from Fire, shown on the Big screen at Federation Square, as part of the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, Melbourne.
the exhibition 'Five Years On', South Morang.
management studies.
Tree benches on disp

Shane Kenny (one of the blacksmiths), felt that:

> ‘. . . through the local community everyone knew what was going on. So the word went around about what was going on in the shed . . . it was a nice handy simple location and hidden away and people took it under their wing as being part of Whittlesea, which it was . . . and because this area was so badly affected with it all they realised it was just slowly going on in the background, slowly puttering away’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

> ‘This project re-enforced the beauty of the people round in the area. There’s some really nice people out there, give them a shot to do something, to help out and they’ll bend over backwards’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

As the project evolved over time it changed size, it added more sites of making and the site of installation changed.

Because the project expanded as *The Tree* grew, Doug Tarrant (blacksmith) explains that a broader range of people were needed, ‘all sorts . . . lawyers, bankers, ditch-diggers, toilet cleaners, the whole box and dice . . .’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview). Skills and contributions needed for *The Tree* ranged from blacksmithing to: advocating, back-hoeing, baking, carting, cleaning, drawing, documenting, engineering, event management, fundraising, finding sponsors, landscaping, making work-benches, making branch stands, planting, polishing, procuring, public relations, providing working and event

spaces, provision of equipment, silver-smithing, security, digging, reading and writing, teaching, problem solving, planning, meeting, polishing, sponsorship, contributing financially, networking, leaf-sorting, concreting, weeding and welding amongst others.

Needing a particular skill precipitated a decision of whether to figure it out and learn the skill themselves or ask someone else to join in and help. It was not so much outsourcing, as insourcing; people saw a need or were asked to assist and were brought into the project (welders and engineers, and people with heavy equipment - cranes, augur drills, earth movers and a huge Davy Press). If it was out- sourced, then *Tree*-makers went *out* with it.

When the trunk was being forged at Ettamogah, a contingent of *Tree*-makers were there to watch the progress, document it, give a hand where they could, to support these specialised contributors, to thank them and to pose with them in front of the camera (‘The Trunk is Forged’, *The Drift*, August 2012).

> ‘There were many other ways of making besides forging and welding. We needed musicians, teachers, security guards and cake bakers. It was a delight to be able to include everyone’ (Gibson 2016, Interview).

Each small role in the process was very important and needed. For example there were some people who baked food each week to help facilitate the progress of *The Tree.* The interview participants, blogs and the *Drift* articles often refer to the food. Scones are dropped in, catering is provided, barbecues cooked, fruit cakes arrive at events, and cakes and brownies are brought to the Whittlesea Factory (Gibson 2016 c). Food is part of communal ritual which facilitated resting, talking and discussion, a form of fuel for *The Tree* and ‘an honouring of the time that these incredible craftsmen were spending on the project’ (Gibson 2016, Interview).

The Tree Project drew people into demonstrating, sharing and teaching their skills, and learning new skills where needed. There was a need to take on new roles, each person discovering skills, abilities and capacities that they never knew they had. These were some of the benefits of being involved (Kenny 2016, Interview). Sharing how to do things became an important part of

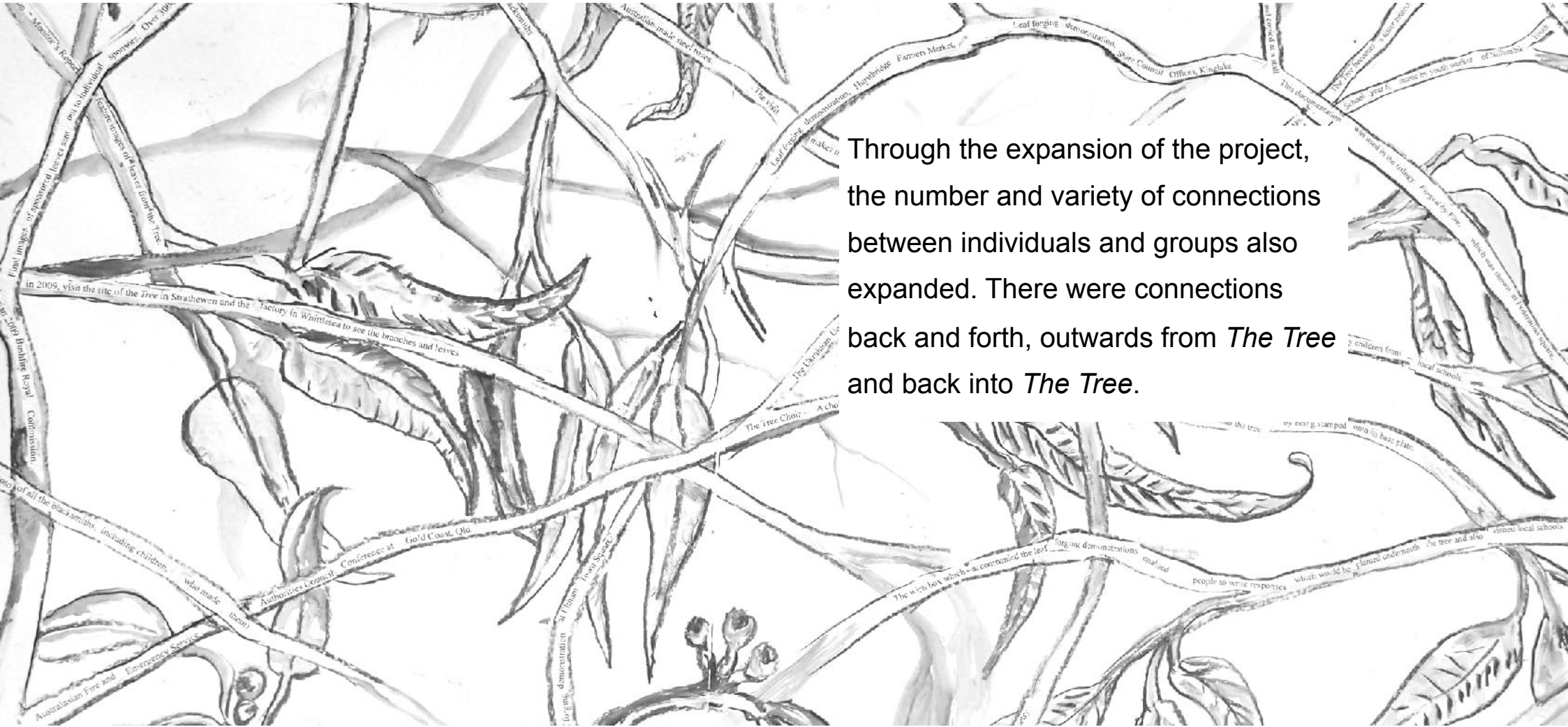
the process and the means of involving people.

> ‘Tip, make em outta flat bar (19 - 25 mm x 3 mm), cut both ends on an angle. Knock down the point, the(n) fuller the centre to form the stem, hey presto, 2 leaves outta 1 piece :) (this is ow Strine showed us how ta do em)’ (Dale, 21.8.2012, *I Forge Iron*).

The first image of *The Tree* that came to Salty’s mind was certainly able to be done by a team of blacksmiths. But eventually the blacksmiths had 3,500 leaves that had to be supported by a great tree of commensurate size, with the same quality of making and

materials. They had to experiment and research many parts of the process (such as the polish treatment, and the engineering) because a tree of this size and type had not been made before (Kenny 2016, Interview). It seems there was no doubt that they could make *The Tree*. One of Doug Tarrant's comments in the *Drift* after 200 limbs were forged was that they had 'won the day' (Tarrant, August 2010, p.8) and it is with this attitude that they set out to complete the project.

9 Branching out and Branching into *The Tree*



Through the expansion of the project, the number and variety of connections between individuals and groups also expanded. There were connections back and forth, outwards from *The Tree* and back into *The Tree*.

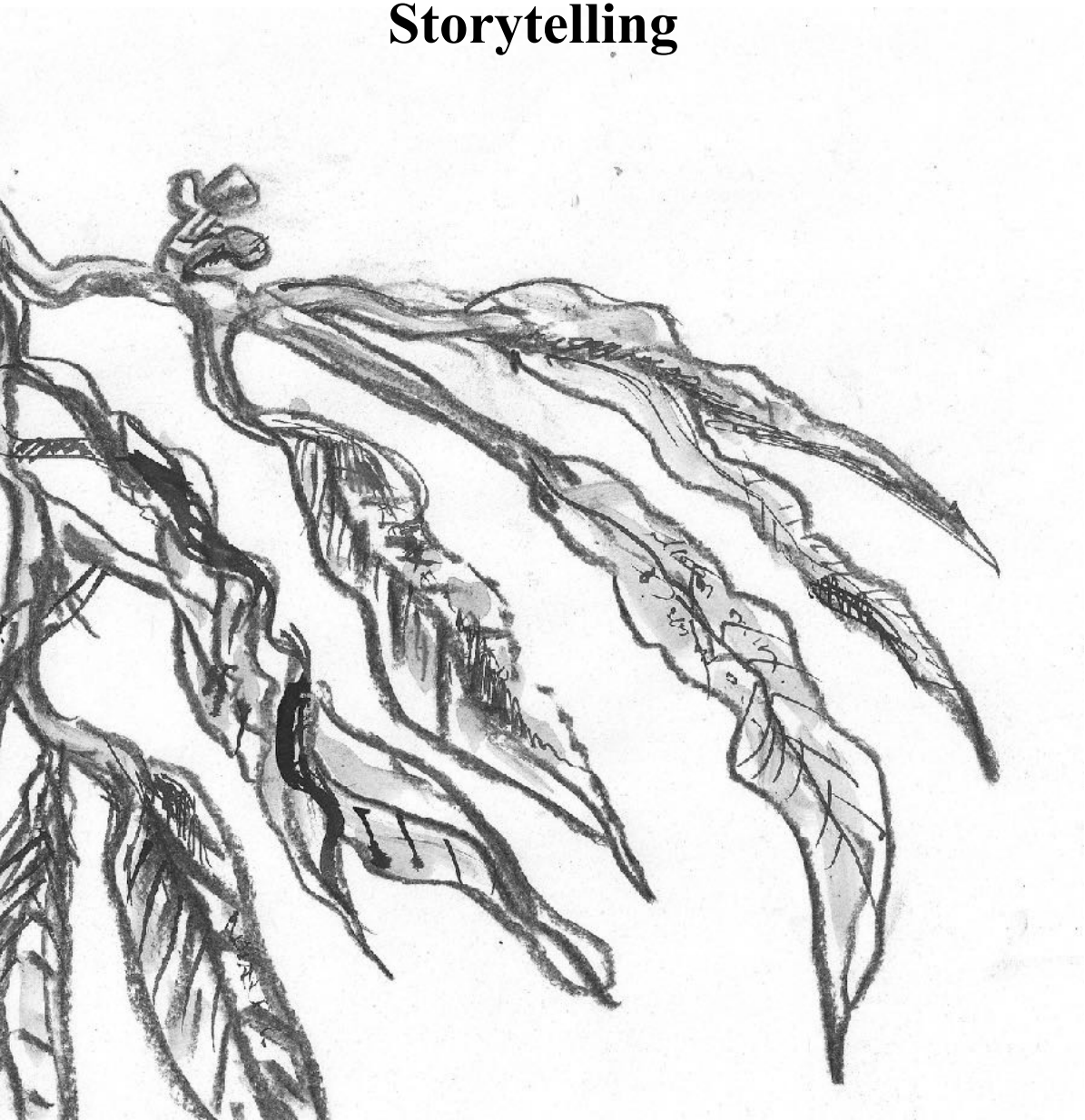
The online forum of *I Forge Iron* continued to discuss making the leaves, and *The Tree Project* Website and Facebook were also developed, providing a place for people to see and understand the project, but also to contribute in turn with photographs, links and comments. There was a great reciprocity developing through interaction through the internet and on the ground. There were a variety of collaborations with *The Tree*, as groups came together to support each other. *The Tree* went out to local community events as the blacksmiths demonstrated making leaves and then *The Tree Project* initiated its own community events where people, groups and organisations came into *The Tree Project*.

I visualise this great tree spreading in multiple directions as it grows and branches out to reach people. The community also branches inwards, by linking events and projects with *The Tree* - they were drawn into *The Tree* project, caught in its branches and woven inwards.

Peter Ryan (Deputy Premier and Minister for Bushfire Response), in his reflections on the community recovery from the Black Saturday fires said, ‘We know that physical rebuilding is just one component of the recovery process. The rebuilding of, or in some cases new connections between communities, is also critically important’ (Victorian Bushfire Recovery Four Year Update, 2013, p. 3). These connections were made through *The Tree Project*, as it branched out into the community and the community branched in.

*(The full text for the imagery of ‘Branching out and into *The Tree*’, is listed in Appendix 2).

10 Stories and Storytelling

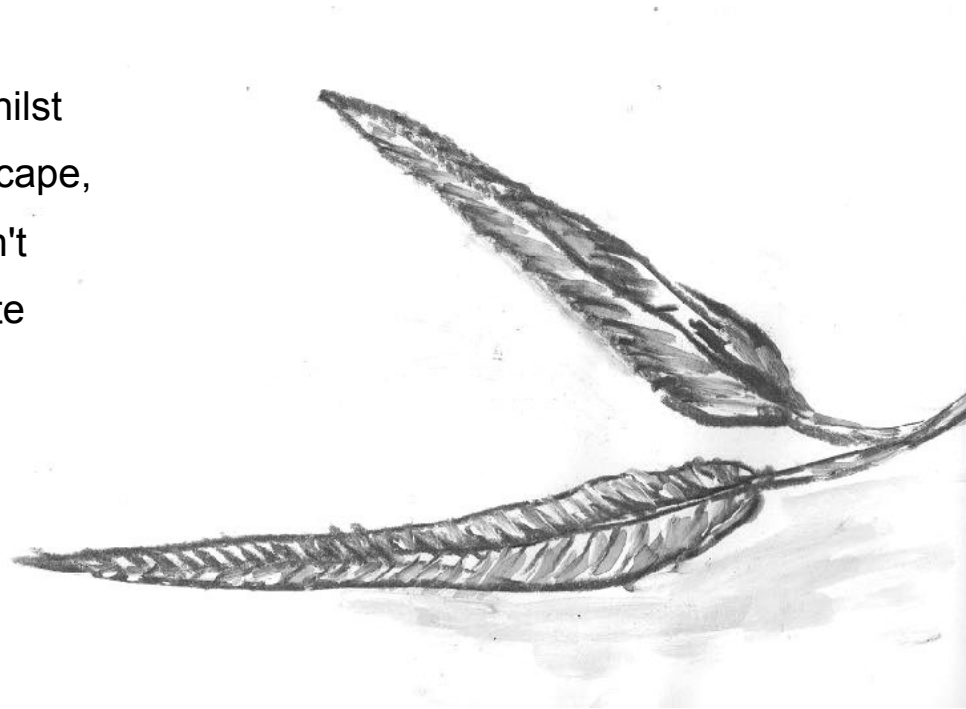


The Tree provides a place to tell stories and it is a carrier of stories

One of the things that emerged through the research into *The Tree* is the importance of telling stories. Storytelling was an integral part of making *The Tree*; stories are told during the process of making, to describe the process and meaning of making, and the object of *The Tree* is like a carrier of stories.

Debbie Qadri

Each of the many demonstrations created a place and time for talking about the fires (Mad Uncle Cliff 15.7.2009, *I Forge Iron*). Many blacksmiths have shared, that stories were told to them whilst they worked at the demonstrations (*I Forge Iron* and interviews). Andrew Garton (who followed *The Tree Project* as a film-maker) referred to the role that those involved with the project played as being the hearers and carriers of stories. Whilst collecting film footage and photographs from community members at the *Tree Launch*, he met many people who whilst sharing their photos also told their ‘harrowing stories of escape, loss and grieving’ (Garton 2015, Interview). He said, ‘I didn't realise that I would become the recipient of so many private stories of personal grief. I felt trusted’ (ibid.).



Another generator of stories was the process of making *The Tree* itself; the battles, problem solving, strange coincidences, stories of people who helped in times of need, and how *The Tree* was completed. These stories are documented in many places, on *I Forge Iron*, *The Tree Facebook* and website, in *The Drift*, in media articles, radio interviews and in films. In particular, *The Drift* articles offer insights into the motives and experiences of *The Tree* makers, focusing on how people worked together and the achievement of the labour that they needed to do. Camaraderie is described through incidents and descriptions of how hard people worked and what they achieved. The makers experienced moments together which were retold as stories - ‘There are little bits of *The Tree* that have stories and you had to have been there when that bit happened ’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

* (Some of these stories are shared in section 13: Stories of Solving Problems, Winning Battles)

The stories scaffold *The Tree,* embedded in the making process, they provide the reasoning for its making and sharing its making with those who have contributed. Andrew Garton describes the stories as the ‘intangible outcomes of a project . . . as a ripple effect, of things going in directions that you will never fully comprehend . . . and it will always surprise you’ (Garton 2016, Interview). The inclusion of text in the project through sponsoring a leaf, or branch and also making a message for *The Wishbox* facilitated a greater capacity for the project to carry people’s stories, memories, hopes for the future and individual meanings. It was inclusive of everyone who wanted to be involved, by sponsoring a leaf and having written on it, what you wanted.

The Wishbox, carried throughout the fire affected communities since 2009, provided the opportunity for people to write down wishes and hopes for the future (‘Landscaping the Tree Site’, April 2014, *Tree Project website*, News). The box accompanied the blacksmiths to demonstrations and also went to schools. These messages will remain private, and were eventually buried underneath *The Tree* before its installation. Andrew Garton says that ‘*The Wishbox* has an ‘ephemeral quality’ and also sees it as, ‘a story generator’ , something which creates more stories as people recall and tell, that someone they know has a story buried underneath *The Tree* (Garton 2016, Interview).

Debbie Qadri

Stories are not tangible or physical, but instead fluid (Garton 2016, Interview) and are told and retold as a process of explaining meaning. Recounting stories was integral in *The Tree Project* because they contained threads of the meaning of *The Tree*. In my role as the researcher, I often heard the same story, recounted to me by several people, but in different ways. It signified that there was something important to tell and that the story was necessary in explaining the meaning.

One of the stories repeatedly told was about the copper leaves.

The Copper Leaves

The story of the copper leaves has been retold many times (Garton 2016, Interview; *The Tree Project Launch Event* (film), *Our Tree: Forged from fire - micro doc* 2014; Tarrant 2016, Interview; Gibson 2016, Interview). It has taken on significance as a moment, a turning point, an explanation, and a realisation - as to why and how the blacksmiths continued on their huge task of making *The Tree*.

An individual came to a forging demonstration at Eltham with some fairly rough looking copper leaves that she'd banged out with a hammer. They were made from pieces of copper that she found in the ruins of her friend's house:

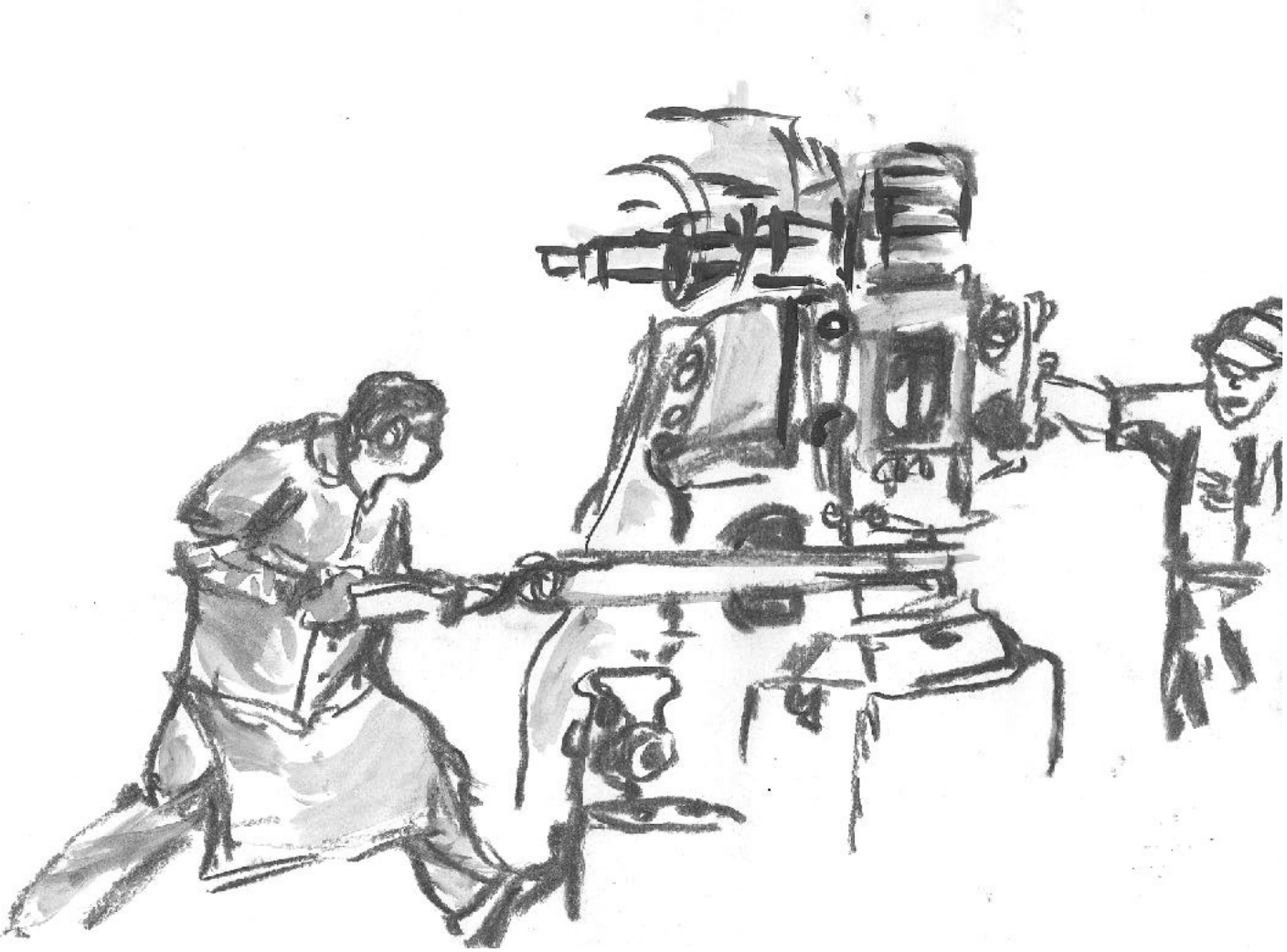
> ' . . . and she said do you think we can put this on *The Tree* . . tears started to flow . . . . of course we can put this on *The Tree*. And at that very moment, it was an epiphany, righto we've got to finish this thing, right to the very end. It was a turning point. It had to be finished after that.' (Tarrant 2016, Interview)

Andrew Garton recalls blacksmiths saying that, people sharing with them the meaning that *The Tree* held for them, 'kept them going'. 'The blacksmiths realised that it was something bigger and more valuable to the community than they had originally anticipated' (Garton 2016, Interview).

The copper leaves from this story were extremely delicate. Initially, they were joined together with copper stems into a beautiful spray of leaves by one volunteer, then joined onto a specially made copper twig, and then onto the stainless steel branch by another volunteer. Both volunteers had specialist jeweller skills and experience working with copper (Gibson 2013c; Gibson 2016, Interview). The copper leaves were fragile and special care needed to be taken whenever the branches and the completed tree were moved. This care given to each and every leaf is borne from the commitment of not turning back or giving up on the huge project that *The Tree* had become. Furthermore, the blacksmiths had witnessed how *The Tree* held significance for the community and had to be completed for them with care. The story of the copper leaves symbolised the meaning of *The Tree* for the blacksmiths. Through having these types of experiences with people, the blacksmiths were compelled collectively to pursue this project whatever the cost, till its end (Garton 2016, Interview; Tarrant 2016, Interview; Gibson 2016, Interview).

The community handed the makers of *The Tree*, their memories, stories and personal grief and asked them to place these into *The Tree*. On *The Tree Project Website* is the promise: ‘We undertake to receive your hand-forged gum leaves and faithfully produce a beautiful and lasting memorial’ (‘About the fires’, *The Tree Project Website*, 2016).

11 Labour - Statistics and Technical Details



‘As a ‘non-blacksmithy’ I am overwhelmed by the complexity, detail and just plain handwork that has gone into this amazing project . . . I am humbled by your efforts . . .’

(Stephen Mead quoted in ‘Branch forging at the Barn’, *The Drift* , August 2012).

Debbie Qadri

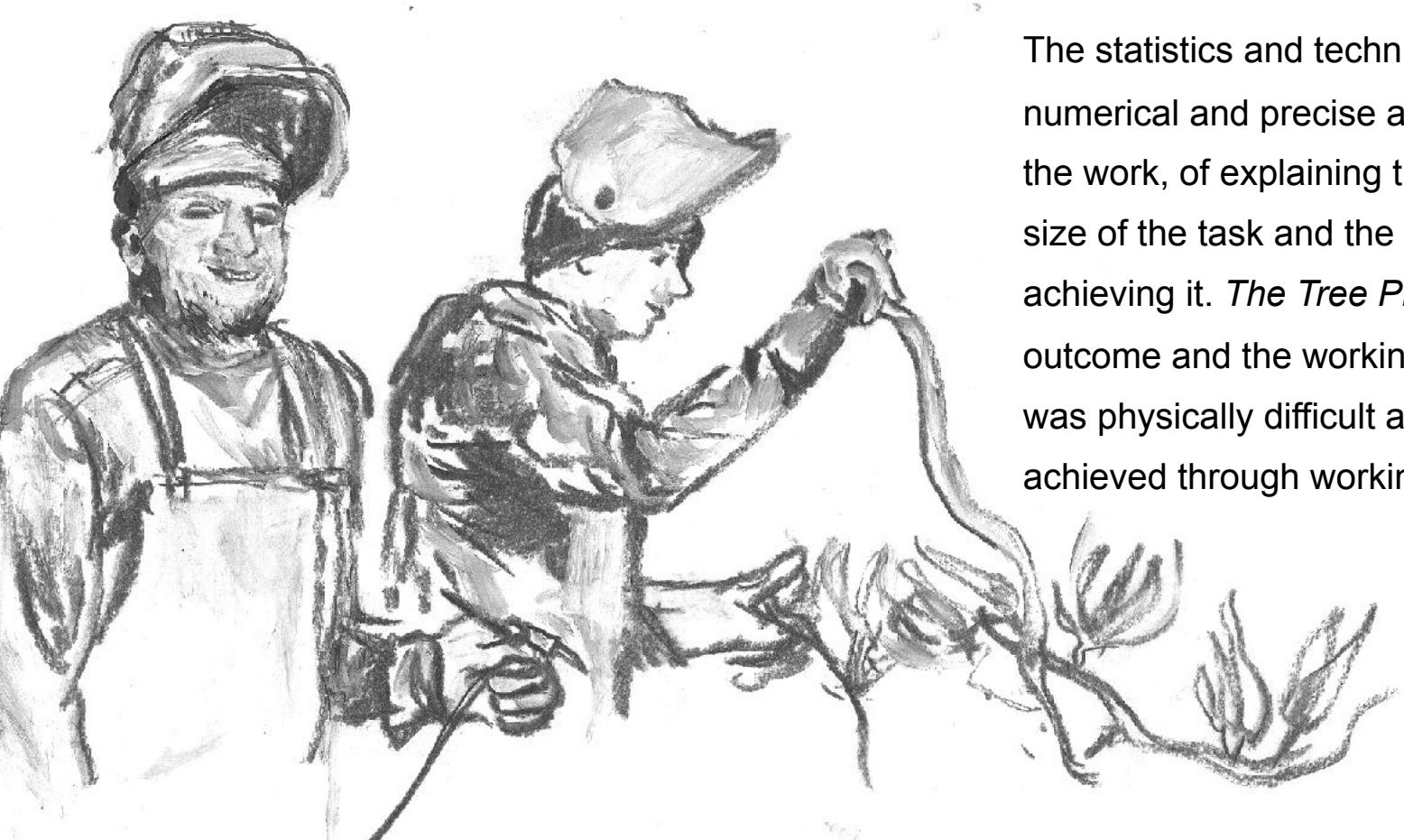
> ‘You knew each week that someone had battled away on it, because you had done the same the week earlier’
> (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Often the blacksmiths described the technical details and procedures. This was very important to them because they are craftsmen and also because they had to learn, improvise and create the process as the project progressed. No-one had hand-made such a big tree out of stainless steel before. It was a task, a puzzle, a thing they had to work out and physically struggle to do. The unknown and the challenge were integral parts of *The Tree*. It was a physical endeavour, which needed a community of

‘11 January 2012 - leaf count - 3170 leaves, 1092 stainless steel leaves, 342 copper leaves, 27 bronze leaves and 6 titanium leaves’

people to work together over a long period of time, in order to succeed. Often the blacksmiths described how they worked together to accomplish something and included an explanation of how many pieces were made and what materials were used.

The statistics and technical details although numerical and precise are a way of measuring the work, of explaining the labour involved, the size of the task and the success and thrill in achieving it. *The Tree Project* had a physical outcome and the working towards this outcome was physically difficult and arduous but achieved through working together.



Debbie Qadri

‘There was a lot of work to be done, 3000 leaves onto branches. It was a huge task, and then stamping and things like that, there’s thousands of letters of stamping on that thing’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Telling about the making is important because it explains the challenge and effort which is part of the meaning of the labour and a declaration of rising to the challenge; of success against the odds.

Twigs

‘The task for the day was to forge 200, 150mm lengths of 10mm stainless steel rods into long tapers then forge these pieces into lifelike twigs for the *Tree* . . .

The [Massey power] hammer operated non-stop all day. What about the stats; 250 beats a minute, five hours was it? Wow that’s 75000 blows. Any wonder we nearly ran out of earplugs . . . .

Suddenly there was no more stock for the Massey, no more straight tapered rods piled up on forges, just 204 beautiful representations of a gum tree twig. A mighty effort.

. . . everyone in attendance working toward a common goal. It was a team effort and our team won hands down’ (Tarrant, August 2010, p. 7).

In this narrative, I re-tell the statistics and the story of *The Tree* in detail, in order to express the enormity of the project, so that the reader can comprehend what the making of *The Tree* entailed. Similarly, I have tried to convey the enormity of the task by *drawing* the 'process of making'. To explain the labour that encompassed years and which was undertaken with such care and detail.

Because it is this struggle of problem-solving and physical labour, which is the gift that all of those who assisted in making *The Tree* (thousands of people) offered to the community affected by the fires in 2009.

Branches

> ‘Over two days, most of the major branches for *The Tree* have been forged at the Barn. Nine branches of 304 stainless 50mm round bar have been tapered and shaped and two of the three main branches of 75mm round bar have been tapered. The Bradley hammer performed brilliantly working the very heavy stock and one of the Massey hammers has worked hard on the 50mm stock (‘Branch forging at the Barn’, *The Drift*, August 2012, p. 34, 35).

A gift both symbolic and real - of sympathy, empathy and community engaged in working together. As well as a material object which was physically difficult and arduous to make.

The Trunk

> ‘How do you turn 3 metres of stainless steel 300mm in diameter, into a tree trunk?
> How do you make a tree trunk, especially when its got to be six metres long?
> Where do you get the steel from? (Tarrant 2016, Interview)

The trunk was forged at Overall Forge, Ettamogah, after the $25,000 for the stainless steel was donated and the two tonne billet was brought from Taiwan. This solid piece of stainless steel, was forged over two days using a 1915 Davy Press which originally ran on steam. Starting at three metres in length, the steel was drawn out to a taper measuring just under 7 metres. The forging started at 10 am on Thursday 19 July [2012] and continued after midnight. It resumed at 7am on Friday 20th July and the trunk was finally air quenched [allowing it to cool in still air] at 3pm ('The Trunk is forged', *The Drift*, August 2012). As with much of the work on *The Tree*, the labour was donated.

> 'That was all done for nothing, that was two shifts . . . two or three blokes at each shift, that was a phenomenal donation and again they just did it graciously' (Tarrant 2016, Interview).

Welding

The process of welding and polishing took a year and Shane Kenny recalls the commitment needed to get it done:

> ‘We realised how big this was . . . Welding two nights a week and two days on the weekend . . . There at the crack of dawn and going for it’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Stems had to be welded to many leaves and then onto twigs and branches.

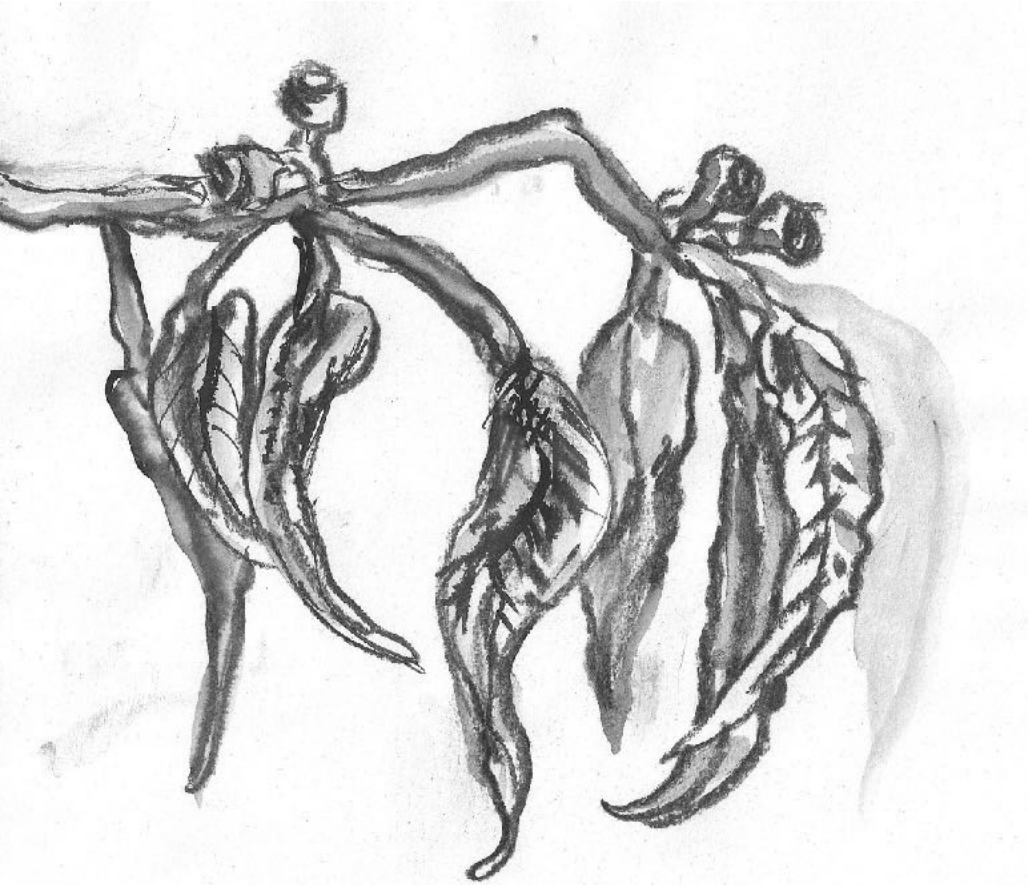
> ‘The main welding includes welding 31 branches with foliage onto nine large branches. Each of these branches are 50mm in diameter at the base. These are welded to three main branches 75mm at the base. Then the three complete branches are welded onto the trunk, one becomes the top of *The Tree*, the other two are side branches’ (*The Tree Project* website, News 30.11. 2013).

WELDING

I also focus on this physical struggle of making because my work as an artist in making permanent artworks with communities also involves physical labour and struggle. Every project presents its own new challenges. The ‘community’, is sometimes imagined as people without the ability and expertise to make permanent artworks. Most of *The Tree* is also ‘hand-made’. For the makers of *The Tree*, it is a triumph of making, but also a triumph of ordinary people with no experience of making a ten metre high steel tree, who find a way to do it.

Debbie Qadri

12 Stories of Solving Problems, Winning Battles

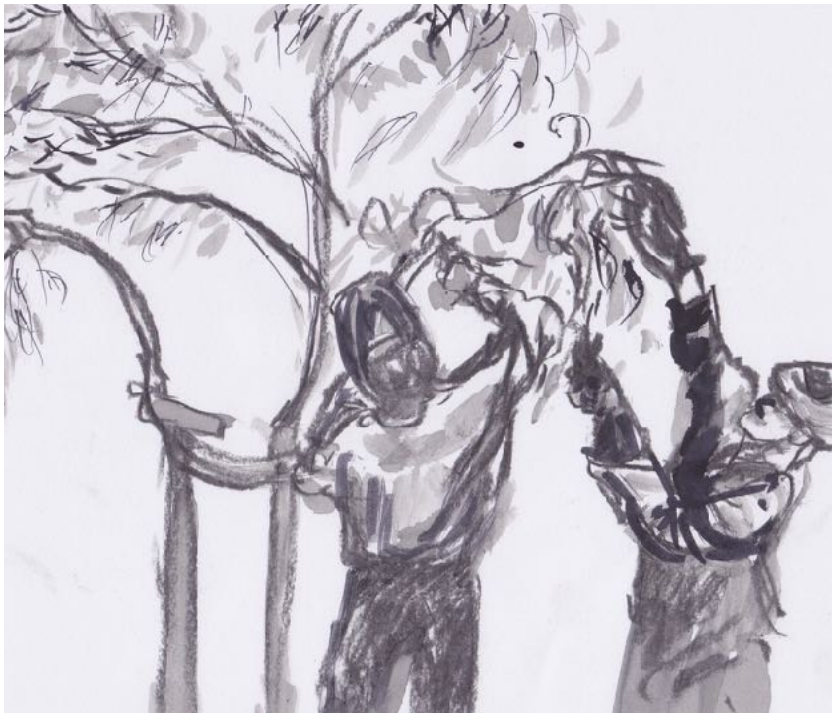


Shane Kenny says, ‘I sometimes think gee how did we do it. I’ll be quite honest. I’m quite gobsmacked’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Shane Kenny goes on to describe how he often thinks about the years of effort, the training of people, their knowledge built up over years, and the design in every single object that we use (we look around the room we are in and think about the window sills, the tables, the chairs, their designs developed over centuries with many craftsmen taking a hand in the design and originally hand-making each object). The large project of *The Tree* is expanded when you think of the skills needed to produce each small part of it. Many ways of doing things had to be worked out and invented. Complex problems needed to be solved resourcefully.

Whilst *The Tree* was being assembled in the Whittlesea factory, it had to be lying on its side as there was not enough height to stand it up. All of the branches had to be on different angles coming out from the trunk and main limbs, and then the leaves had to be attached as if they were hanging downwards, in a particular angle for every single leaf.

They had to translate the engineering drawings to the actual physical building of *The Tree* without being able to stand it upright in the factory. How could *The Tree* be visualised and assembled in a lifelike way with these restrictions? An idea evolved of making stands which would hold each branch at its correct angle. The branch stands were made from old bent and broken road signs, sourced from a council depot. Calculations were made based on the engineering drawings of *The Tree* and 36 individual branch stands were created.



'The big branch holders [are] manoeuvrable so that we could swing them around . . . swing around a bit more . . . lift it up a bit higher . . . weld . . .' (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Getting it Out of the shed for the Whittlesea Launch

The Tree was assembled inside the factory in Whittlesea, and needed to be brought outside, down a driveway and across the road into the Showgrounds for its launch (21st September, 2013). But as Shane Kenny explains, not without a rather large problem.

> ‘We’d built the damn thing that big, we couldn't get it out the door . . . We had a 20 foot doorway and the Tree was 25 feet wide. So what we decided to do, after one big session of brainstorming, was to . . . chain the Tree branches together and winch them back in, and try it, which we did and managed to slide it out of the door. It did have a bit of flex there but no engineers or artists knew how much flex it was going to have. . .
> That was another exciting day!’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

The Crane Collapses

The evening before the day of transporting *The Tree* to Strathewen the makers began to load *The Tree* onto the same truck that they had used when it was previously moved across the road for the Whittlesea Launch.

> ‘So we put it on the truck that night and well it was now summer and a really hot night and we tried to lift it on (it was a crane truck) and as we tried to lift it onto the truck the crane collapsed. And I think Amanda collapsed and the rest of us because this beautiful thing slowly sank into the ground crushing itself. We put props and things underneath it, but what had happened was it was that warm . . . we think the hydraulic oil had got that thin, which it does when it gets hot, that it couldn't support it. So what we’d done once, didn’t work again. So we had to frantically . . . we had a big ‘A’ frame and a block and tackle. [With] that, and the other part with the crane we got it onto the truck. It was a huge drama’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

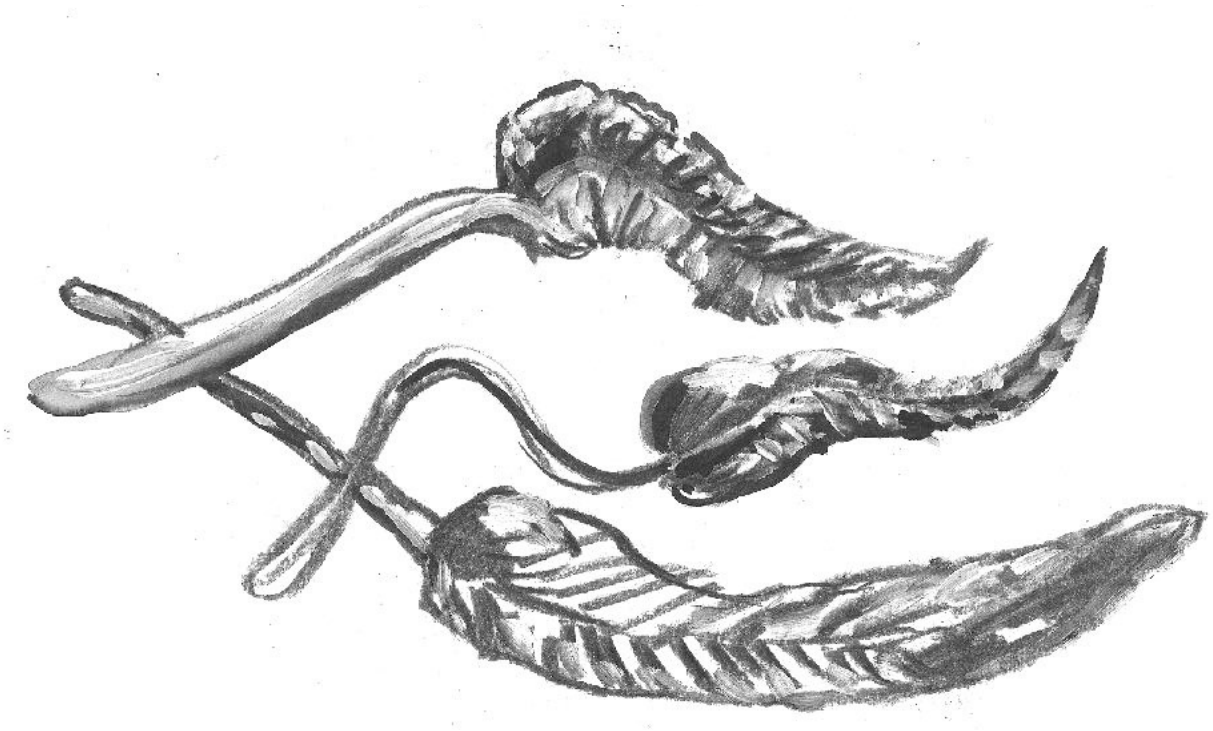
The project team also had to consider more than just physical problems. Shane Kenny explains:

> ‘I’ve spoken to strangers and when you start to talk . . . you can see they're getting interested and they say . . . how’d you do that? Then you say well how do you stand up a ten metre high Tree in a six metre high factory? . . . I throw them a few little questions out there and they realise the complexity of *The Tree* and . . . what looks like a simple task could involve. It wasn’t just artists, or engineers welders, or anything like that, it was every possible problem you could think of, from personal, whether we open up to bus tours, towards whether you're writing the right things on leaves, to make sure we cover what the sentiments of those people are, to making sure that everyone knows where their leaf is . . .’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

The Tree Project had to also continually consider the psychological, social and cultural aspects of the process. Its process had to embody respect and care for the people involved. What was good about the process was that it wasn't easy to do and that the project needed many people to discuss things and work together. The physical difficulty of making and the community engagement this entailed created a community.

13 Aesthetic and Control

There was an openness and acceptance of everyone and what people contributed to the project. ‘It was a community effort, whatever the people put in, we had to put on *The Tree*’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview).



Debbie Qadri

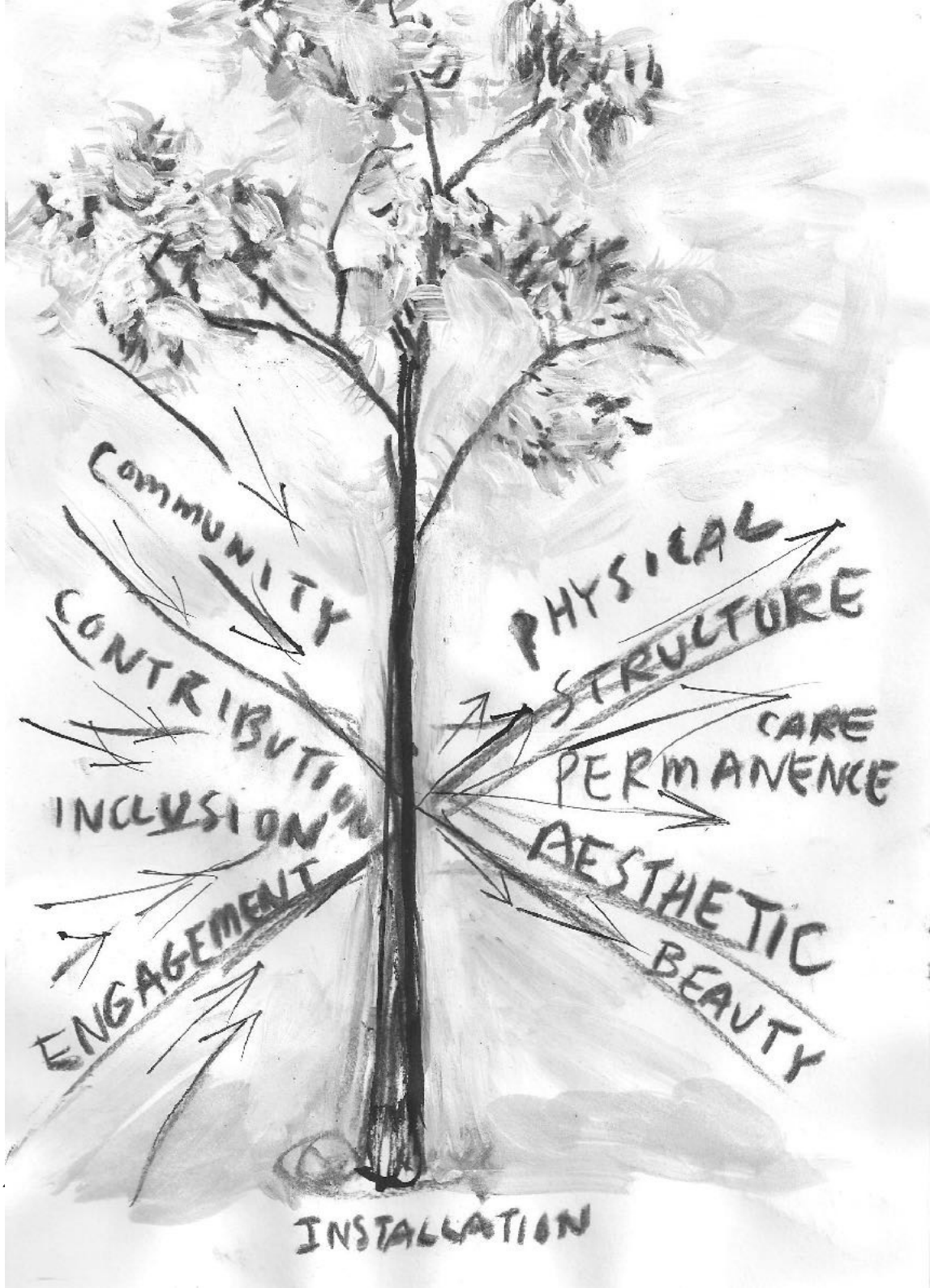
But control needed to be exerted through the putting together of all the disparate parts of *The Tree*, and it was for two differing reasons - the physical and the aesthetic. These two very separate considerations, go hand in hand and needed to be considered at each stage of the process. Some efforts were made to suggest uniformity, such as Paul's comment on *I Forge Iron*, 'We have tried to keep all of the leaves either SS [stainless steel] or Cu [copper] for ease of fabrication and aesthetics' (Paul, 18.5.2009, *I Forge Iron*). Diagrams in the *Drift* and on the Website illustrated how to make a realistic gum-leaf, but all sorts of leaves arrived. All of them (except the mild steel leaves) were incorporated into *The Tree* with thanks:

> 'Whatever size leaf you made is fine' (Dale, 11.7.2009, *I Forge Iron*).

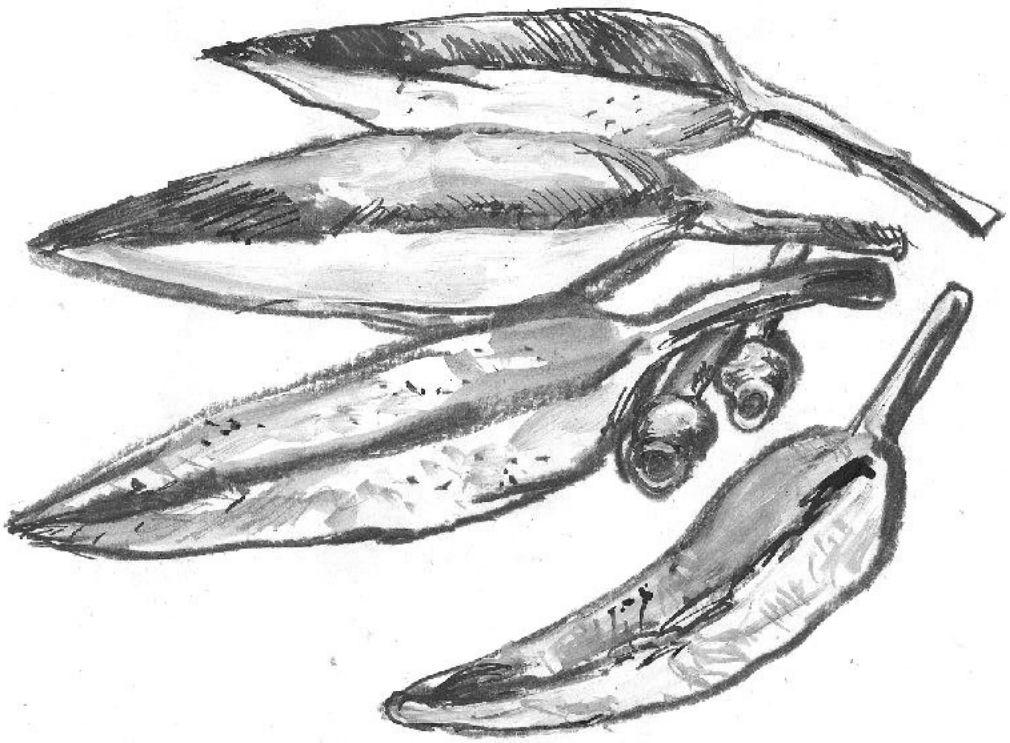
Accompanying each instance of practical problem solving in making *The Tree*, the aesthetic of how to make it look like a *Tree* also came into play. Shane Kenny, who was involved in making *The Tree*, explains that there was this 'leap from an engineering background' (useful for the structural development of *The Tree)*, across to a different world of aesthetics - the need for it to look like a tree (Kenny 2016, Interview). There needed to be a balance between the utilitarian and aesthetic.

* (The small number of mild steel leaves which were made for the *Tree* were given to, and are on display at the Black Saturday Museum.)

The makers realised that the leaves would have to be purposely arranged on *The Tree*. A small model was made, and engineering drawings developed (Tarrant 2016, Interview; Gibson 2016, Interview). The collection of contributed leaves, made with emotional intent, now had to be joined together very carefully. With structural competence, planning for an aesthetic outcome and agreement on how this was to be done, they worked together towards an agreed vision of *The Tree*.



If you look at the leaves individually (the Leaf Gallery on *The Tree Project Website* or in *The Drift* (2009, p. 16-17) you can see the incredible range of styles in the leaves, with each leaf or set of leaves made by a different person and bearing this individuality.



Later in the project some contributions were altered to make them look more like gum leaves (Tarrant 2016, Interview). One of the blacksmiths, began reshaping many of the leaves - giving them a twist or curl - after carefully observing real gum leaves. Control was exerted to make sure that the way the leaves went onto the branches was organic and life-like (Garton 2016, Interview), and that each leaf hung the right way and in the right breeze (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Debbie Qadri

The Women Welders

The story of the women welders is a much repeated story and its retelling, by many, emphasises the unforeseen outcomes of *The Tree Project*, and the value of the involvement of community members, and non-professionals in the work.

The Tree Project needed some dedicated TIG (Tungsten Inert Gas) welders, so they put out a call for people who wanted to learn, to fill two groups - a women's group and a men's group. The women learnt to weld, but also proved themselves to be more adept at the aesthetic placement of the leaves onto the branches. Shane Kenny recalls that the women, 'were better at the arrangement and the finer details of welding on the leaves,' they 'brought that level of organic aesthetic to the project. It was a big moment for the blacksmiths' (Kenny 2016, Interview).

This humble story told by blacksmiths, shows the strength of *The Tree Project.* It developed the potential of volunteers and gave them an

WOMEN WELDERS.

opportunity to learn new skills and demonstrate their capacity.

If they wanted it to be a *Tree*, it also had to look like one. The aesthetic quality of *The Tree* is also attributed to an ongoing insistence by Amanda (the project-manager) on things being made to visually resemble a Gum Tree (Kenny 2016, Interview; Tarrant 2016, Interview).

The project began with a call out and everybody lending a helping hand, but over time, there eventuated a Committee, a Project Manager, and a Steering Committee for the legal process of getting *The Tree* installed in public space. There usually was consensus but at other times consensus would never have been reached unless someone called it.

Many of the people that I interviewed explained that particular people became instrumental in getting *The Tree* to its installation stage and were present throughout the whole process of the project. Doug Tarrant explains that leadership within the group assisted in getting the project done, commenting that otherwise, ‘It wouldn’t have happened. We’d have all got sick of it and gone our separate ways’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview). Conversely, a wonderful comment acknowledges the role of people who were

consistently supportive, ‘He’s been with *The Tree Project* right from the beginning . . . without him there wouldn’t be a *Tree*’ (*Tree Project Facebook*, 16.4.2014).

It was one of the unforeseen consequences of the spontaneous community response, that things would need to be altered, that control would have to be exerted, and decisions made which were not consensual. At a certain point the open acceptance of community contributions, had to change into a process of control and of working together towards one end.
The many heterogenous pieces came together into one work, ***The Tree***, which aesthetically expressed this achievement of the different, the everyone, the many; one consolidated object which holds/contains everyone’s emotional and physical effort.

> ‘We were astounded when the branches were welded on . . . it looks like a tree. Which is fortunate because from day one we were making a tree’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview).

14 Everyone Responding to the Material Needs

> ‘And everyone chipped in.
> “Let’s get the crane in!"
> “I’ll get some mates!”
> It was extraordinary, the level of support.
> Everyone wanted to do something’
> (Garton 2016, Interview).

As the size of *The Tree* grew, in order to support an increasing number of leaves, there was a need for more expensive things such as engineers, earth moving equipment and an costly lump of steel. Because *The Tree* resonated with the community, the funding, materials, equipment and energy came together through everyone chipping in.

Many stories have been shared about how the community (local and broader) provided what was needed, much of it gratis, despite the cost to the provider.

> ‘Somebody demanded that we cost it . . . and I think something like one and a half million dollars, if you had to pay everybody for all of their time and all of the materials’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview).

Staff at workplaces had wanted to assist in the aftermath of the Black Saturday Fires, and *The Tree Project* provided them with a way of contributing to the affected community. For many individuals it was as if they had been waiting for something to do and the opportunity to help was taken up with enthusiasm. They could also see directly where that money was going to be used (Kenny 2016, Interview). Shane Kenny (nicknamed the Procurement Officer), said, ‘Whenever I went and saw people about *The Tree Project* . . . eventually I would talk to management . . . I don’t think I ever got a negative reply . . . we had people absolutely bend over backwards to try and sort things out for us’ (Kenny 2016, Interview).

A story I heard from more than one source, was about security guards who happened to be working at an event at the Whittlesea Showgrounds on Black Saturday. The event was closed down as the Showgrounds became a staging ground for assistance to victims of the fires. The security guards stayed around to help, but at one stage were caught in a difficult situation where their role of security prevented them from acting as they would have wished. Instead they were obliged to act in opposition to their emotions on that day. They felt in some ways like the blacksmiths had felt - helpless to assist.

When *The Tree* was on display at the Whittlesea Showgrounds, the *Tree Project* team realised that it was too late to return it to the factory, and were concerned about its safety if left on the oval overnight. One of the team remembered the security guards from the Showgrounds on Black Saturday, and gave them a ring. Sure enough it was as if the security guards had been waiting for the phone call. They were very proud to be able to guard *The Tree* overnight at the grounds (Overton 2016, Interview).

15 TIME - Long, Permanence

The Tree was an ongoing project, that people knew was happening (Kenny 2016, Interview), and the ‘longer it dragged out, the more people knew about it and got involved’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview).

An unveiling ceremony for *The Tree* was initially planned for September 2009, to coincide with the Blacksmith Association's 20th Anniversary (Glug, 25.4.2009, *I Forge Iron*). It came to be the first of many estimated completion dates. *The Tree* took five years to be installed. This time-frame became important in the recovery process that it provided for the community. The length of time broadened the inclusivity of roles and opportunity for people to be involved in the project.

Andrew Garton speaks about the value of going slowly and of doing things by hand, which gives us a more physical connection with the object and time to reflect on the process, 'so there's this whole process of

slowing down which comes through the hands on approach and was undertaken in the making of *The Blacksmiths' Tree*. You had to slow down' (Garton 2016, Interview).

The length of the project also reflected the fact that the aftermath of the fires was lengthy. In Zara and Parkinson's (2013) '*Men on Black Saturday: risks and opportunities for change'* gives first-hand insights into men's experiences of the fire and its aftermath. These accounts paint a picture of an undercurrent that rarely surfaces in stories told of the disaster. They tell of the apocalyptic and surreal experiences of being in the fire storm, how it feels to witness the destruction, and of despair in the years of aftermath. This aftermath is long, and includes family and relationship break-ups, violence, unemployment, loss of business and ongoing homelessness or lack of suitable housing (p.13 - 56). The long process was good and *The Tree Project's* continuation with making benches and sculptures, landscaping, gardening and polishing is more fitting with the idea of recovery as a process rather than an 'end-point' (Urbis p. 36). The continuing existence of *The Tree* as a permanent object also acknowledges that, 'many will grieve for their entire lives, that one never truly *gets over it'* (Garton, in 'We are Moving Stories').

The Tree took five years to make, and I expected to encounter some weariness in the interviewees. I was surprised to find them still excited and telling me that they still had not finished the project. Some may have been exasperated with the length of the project, but *The Tree* drew many back in.

‘It became a vocation. One fellow said, “This is the end for me, I don’t know why it goes on and on”. Then when they installed the benches, he was there. We all kind of formed a bond in some way, because we were all there at the moments’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

16 Site/Place
Mobile and Disparate

There are many sites which play a role in the journey of *The Tree*. It was geographically mobile, and then after installation at Strathewen, physically still. There were two main sites of making, the Blacksmiths Barn at Coopers Settlement (Bundoora, Victoria - home of ABA(Vic) Inc. and the factory at Whittlesea. *The Tree* was also made in many places in the fire affected communities of the Nillumbik and Murrindindi Shires and beyond, during mobile demonstrations, as well as on blacksmith forges around the world. Materials for *The Tree* arrived from distant places around the globe, but also locally from the remains of the fire. Parts of *The Tree* were included in exhibitions, displays, conferences, and events, including the Royal Commission into the 2009 bushfires. Leaves forged by a founding member of the ABA(Vic) Inc., blacksmith Bill Bunting accompanied him at his funeral, and were then returned to *The Tree* (*The Tree Project* website, 7.3.2010). Other sites of making were Blueprint Sculpture, where 310 gum-nuts were cast and Overall Forge at Ettamogah where the trunk was made. More sites were used for storage of *The Tree*, including personal spaces such as sheds, vehicles, and dwellings owned by blacksmiths.

From the Blacksmiths' Barn Outwards

The Tree was also mobile in that it moved physically from the ABA(Vic) Inc. Blacksmiths Barn in Bundoora, to a factory in Whittlesea: from a place where blacksmiths meet and work, into a community affected by the fire. Many of the blacksmiths had done their part in making leaves and branches and *The Tree* needed to be housed in a larger place for the welding and assemblage process.

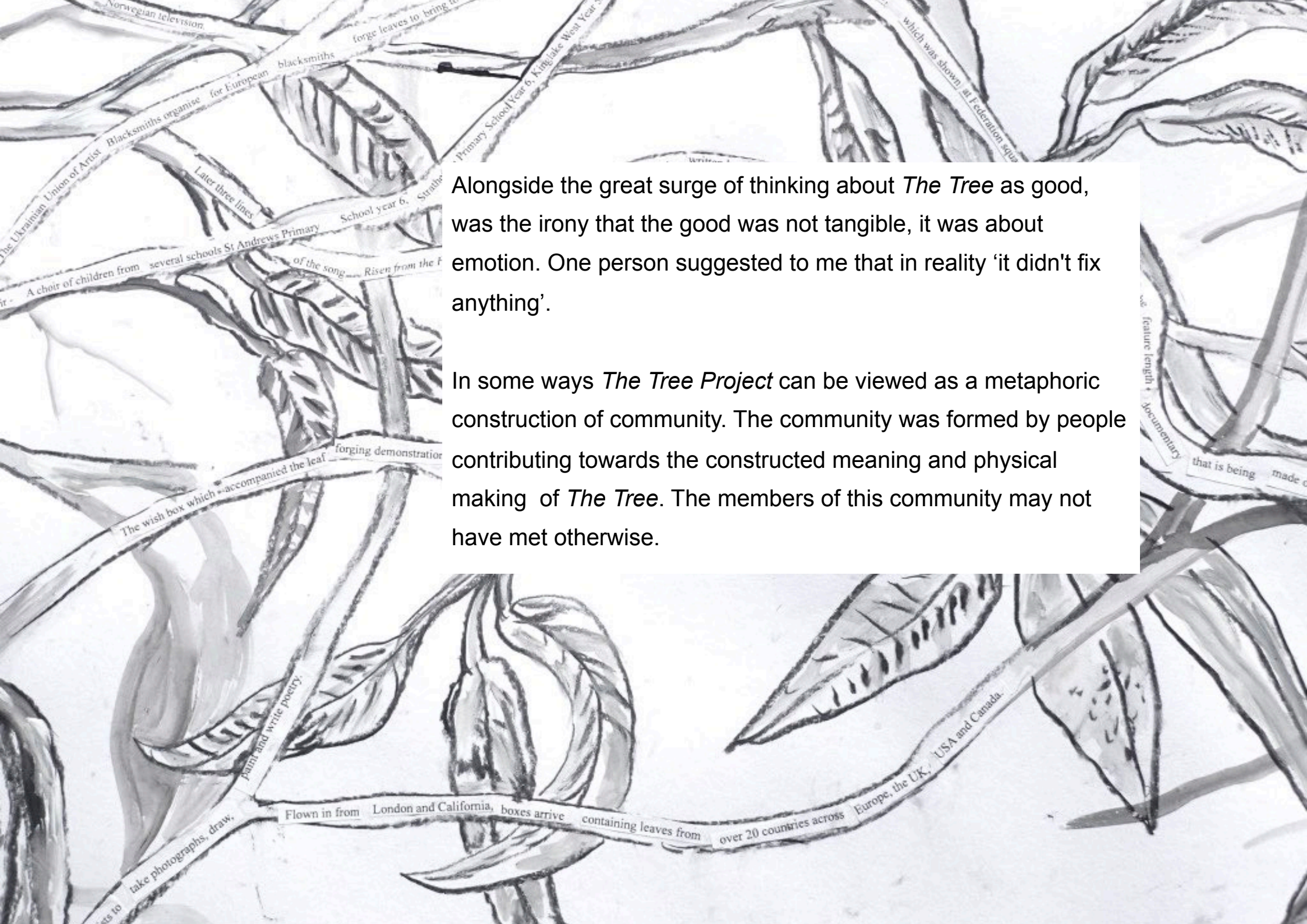
The growing of *The Tree* into something else, a broader community, a physically bigger and longer project - was not without disharmony, regret, breaks in friendships and relationships. These are events which in some ways mar (or blacken) the experience of *The Tree* for some people.

The initial plan was to unveil *The Tree* at the ABA(Vic) Inc. 20th Anniversary in September 2009, which would have celebrated the solidarity of blacksmiths before *The Tree* was handed on to the community. But the length and size of the project was unforeseen and subsequently *The Tree* was unveiled four years later at Whittlesea in a much larger community event. By then it had become not only *The Blacksmiths' Tree* (which it is still fondly called), but also *Everyone's Tree*.

There may have been a loss of connection with *The Tree* for many when it became a larger community project, when it extended five-fold beyond, the time initially planned.

However blacksmiths remained involved to the end and as Strine reminds the *I Forge Iron* fraternity, ‘Us blacksmiths are “stakeholders” . . . In fact we’re the major stakeholder so our wishes and desires are very much in the forefront of any meeting agenda as they should be (Strine 2.5.2011).

The project in some way returned full circle to the Blacksmiths' Barn when the benches and sculptures were made, but I felt a great sense of loss for the Blacksmiths. In some way the loss is also a gift, as when Doug says of *The Tree*, ‘I’ve given it to the people that needed it’ (Tarrant 2016, Interview).



Alongside the great surge of thinking about *The Tree* as good, was the irony that the good was not tangible, it was about emotion. One person suggested to me that in reality ‘it didn't fix anything’.

In some ways *The Tree Project* can be viewed as a metaphoric construction of community. The community was formed by people contributing towards the constructed meaning and physical making of *The Tree*. The members of this community may not have met otherwise.

As I researched I became aware of the tremendous physical effort that had gone into *The Tree Project*, which I felt writing would not aptly express. I began making drawings based on photographs of *The Tree* to show the physically hard work involved, and how many hands worked together. Hundreds of photographs of *The Tree* (many of which, can be found online) confirmed the comments I had heard about camaraderie. They showed people posing together with serious or smiling faces. There was a gravity in these photographs which revealed the attitudes and purpose of the makers - there was work to do and it was a serious thing, but also there was joy of people coming together, working together. Real community was made through these encounters and events.

Doug Tarrant commented on the irony, of *The Tree* being impractical.

> ‘Quite often I’ve thought, this does nothing to rebuild a house or replant a garden or re-instate somebody’s livelihood or anything like that, it’s just a great hunk of steel. It does nothing tangible but emotionally for people it was just incredible. We never realised it would be like that’ (Doug Tarrant in *Forged from Fire* (teaser, film).

The photographs of people smiling and working together counter this doubt, and are evidence of the overwhelming good that *The Tree* did and of how it created community.

Sited/Sighted - Whittlesea

The Tree Project moved physically to a donated factory space in Whittlesea in March 2013.

Across the road from the factory (where *The Tree* was being slowly assembled), were the Whittlesea Showgrounds. During the fires, they were used as a place of refuge and staging ground, for the Black Saturday fires. The grounds were used again to celebrate *The Tree's* launch.

The Tree was transported across by crane truck and laid on its side, supported by a prop, accessible to people to see and touch it. People could look for their leaves, their handiwork or simply touch *The Tree*. An estimated three thousand people attended this event. It provided a means to share *The Tree* with people before it was installed and to reserve its installation in Strathewen as a quiet event without publicity (Overton 2016, Interview).

THE TREE LAUNCH EVENT

17 Site Strathewen Part 1

‘Securing the land . . . we had to think about where it was going to go, I mean this is project management backwards’
(Overton 2016, Interview).

There was a lot to consider, in choosing a site and then asking the community did they want *The Tree*. There was division about where it should go, but Strathewen was chosen. Steve Pascoe (Chairperson of the Memorial Committee and member of the Strathewen Community Recovery Association), explains the perspective of having it elsewhere:

> 'One of the perspectives is that it's such a wonderful thing it should be more publicly available and therefore why stick it in Strathewen . . . And this became stronger as it became bigger, why not put it up on the main road in Kinglake, where everyone could access it, you know have a big park, where it was available to everyone' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

One of the arguments for *The Tree* being placed in Strathewen, was that it was a small and out of the way place and so less likely to become commercialised, and used as a tourist attraction. Instead it would be a quiet and respectful place where people would come to contemplate and remember (Lemon 2009, p. 15; Gibson quoted in McBean 2013). The placement of *The Tree* in Strathewen, made it less accessible to the general public, but because it was 'out of the way', it also meant that the visitors would be less plentiful and likely to be more purposeful - visiting *The* Tree within the context that it was made. Its placement, made it part of the Strathewen community, but also retained its ownership and identity for the community of people who had connected with it, and had

placed their own meaning onto *The Tree*. Because it was a quiet place, most people would experience *The Tree* alone and experience their personal connection and meaning with it.

Strathewen was a special place; for its size and population it had been one of the most devastated by the fires. At the time when they were deciding where *The Tree* would go, the Strathewen Community had no funding or concrete plans for a memorial.

Steve Pascoe describes the initial approach and offer from the Blacksmiths:

> ‘Amanda came to us and said, ‘We’ve got this thing that’s happening. We imagine it will be about two metres high . . . and has about 173 leaves’ (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

This initial small version of *The Tree* was accepted by the Stathewen Community Renewal Association on behalf of the Strathewen Community in March 2009 (*The Tree Project* website). Because it was only two months into its making, it was imagined as being able to fit into the foyer or forecourt of Strathewen’s new community hall.

Placement of *The Tree* in Strathewen had implications for the residents, which were not foreseen when *The Tree* was first offered to the community (a couple of months after the fires).

When I spoke to Steve Pascoe about my experience of visiting the Strathewen Community Memorial first, and then *The Tree*, the path that I trod was telling of the dilemma. Near the end of 2009, the Strathewen residents began the long journey to design and build their own memorial. They wanted it to be a very private place, and completely separate from *The Tree*, so that the memorials were not visited together (The Strathewen Community website, Pascoe 2016, Interview).

Steve described the need for the Strathewen Community Memorial, and the democratic process undertaken to ensure it was created *as a community*. The Strathewen Community Renewal Association was an incorporated body, formed after the fires, with elected leaders, with the purpose of determining their own decisions about the recovery management of their town (*David Brown,* The *Strathewen Community Renewal Association*, (Documentary), 'Big Stories, Little Towns'). Very early they realised there would be a need for a permanent community memorial and that it would be better if they undertook the process slowly and inclusively, from within the community. A 'Memorial Working Group' was organised to manage this process (Pascoe 2016, Interview). Pascoe explains the brief for their own memorial:

> 'It had to contain the stories of the community. It had to be a story place, that . . . reflected our current thoughts and impressions but it also provided an educative opportunity for future generations' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

The designers came up with the idea of putting the community's words into the sandstone. They collected words, 'thousands of words, hundreds of pages of words' and then they had to 'tease out the key words without losing the intent or the flavour . . .'

> 'There are some words and phrases where you know who the person is who wrote it . . . and lots of the others are everyone's words, so everyone can find something in that memorial and we've had visitors . . . [and] some people come out and read it and say, "this is my story too", so it has something for everyone' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

The Strathewen Community Memorial was installed in 2012. It is a beautiful memorial and it is, *of the community:* it contains the words of the individuals, which placed together, 'build a collective commemorative voice' (urban initiatives.com). The texts are written in such a way that others find their own stories in them (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

At the same time, *The Tree* was also evolving, and when Amanda returned she came with some news - it's now going to be nine metres high and six metres wide and will weigh a lot more. Steve Pascoe said, 'that kind of changed the whole discussion because where's it going now?' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

The community realised they were getting something more substantial, and thought and care would need to be given as to exactly where *The Tree* would go. This process was undertaken and managed very carefully by the Strathewen Community Renewal Association. They had already worked closely with the whole community to plan their own memorial for the fires, so they repeated this consultation process with their community for *The Tree*. It first involved asking the community if they would accept the larger *Tree* in Strathewen, and then finding out where the community members would like to see it placed (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

A number of locations were offered for the community to consider. The Recreation Reserve was preferred by most. Again the community were canvassed as to where on the grounds they would like it to be (Pascoe 2016, Interview). Surveys were distributed to over 400 people, including blacksmiths and members of the Strathewen Community to decide which location at the Strathewen Recreation Reserve was the preferred site for *The Tree* (*Tree Project Website*, News August 2011). The majority chose the grounds behind the tennis court, where *The Tree* stands today.

Steve Pascoe relates his emotional response when the decision was made to place *The Tree* in the Recreation reserve, close to the *Strathewen Community Memorial*:

> 'That started to be a bit of a race of emotions because at that stage our memorial was very precious and we were very protective of it and it was our place . . . It was our place for us to remember. It was our special place and we didn't want anyone else in the space. It was a very strong emotional response. Once I thought about that, I knew that it was going to change over time and that in ten years we would want everyone to come and share our story, and to share our space. In thirty years, it wouldn't be our space, it would be everyone's space in future years' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

There was still a great fear that *The Tree* would become a major tourist destination: busloads of visitors coming into the town having a negative impact on the roads and infrastructure. Could it also set back the emotional recovery of the local community? Arts Victoria undertook to investigate three case studies of bushfire memorials to look at visitation rates, amenities, infrastructure, environmental impacts, and, the operational and governance structures involved (*The Tree Project* website*,* August 2011).

*The Tree Project w*ebsite (August 2011) also refers to the further investigation needed in regards to the site, as it sat on a boundary between Nillumbik Council and The Department of Sustainability and the Environment. Information also needed to be gathered on 'the soil conditions, engineering requirements, safety, access and planning requirements'. There was a need to approach Nillumbik Council and work out first of all if zoning allowed a public artwork/memorial/ giant metal tree on that land. They also needed to consider the long-term maintenance of *The Tree* and the surrounding landscape. It was something new for the

council. Permit requirements and how the land use was zoned, had to be navigated (Overton 2016, Interview).

A steering committee was formed, to undertake the new roles including the feasibility studies for siting *The Tree* at Strathewen. This included: surveying the community, meetings, running the unveiling event at Whittlesea Showgrounds, and organising what needed to be done to approve *The Tree's* siting at Strathewen (Gibson 2016, Interview). This committee worked together for a couple of years.

The blacksmiths surveyed the site and a peg was driven into the ground. Steve Pascoe recalls it was about twenty feet from the path into the Strathewen Community Memorial. If it represented the position of *The Tree*, then it would pose a problem as the local community had expressed their concerns about having *The Tree* close to their own memorial.

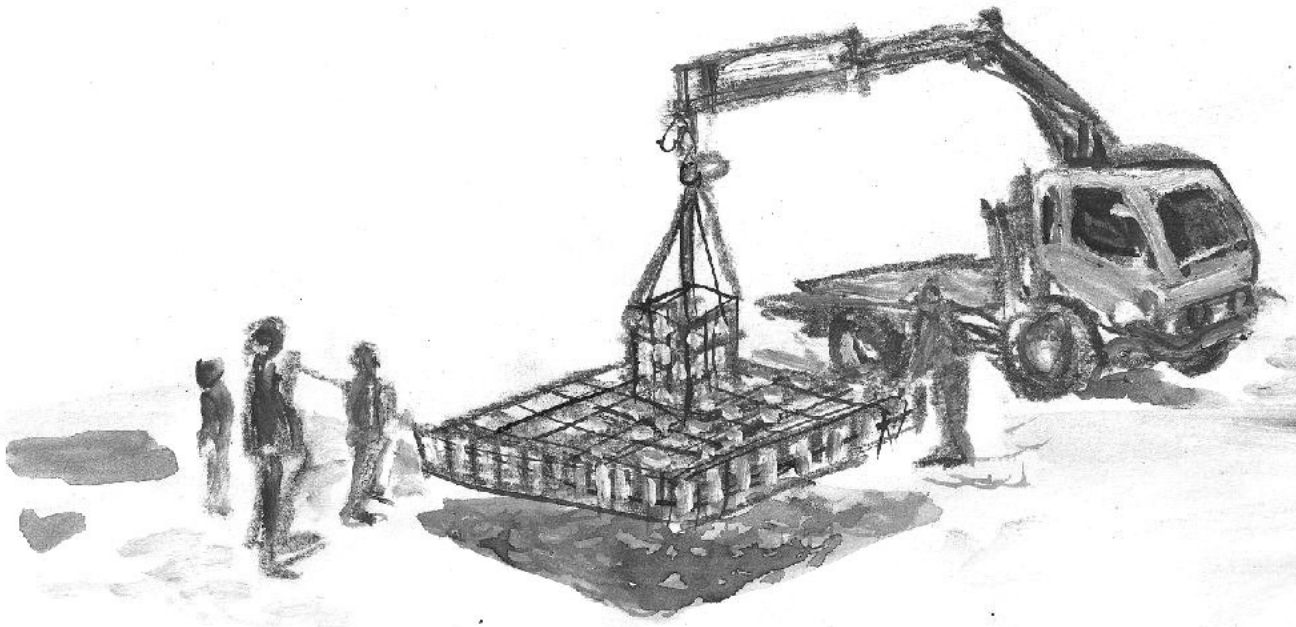
At a later date the Strathewen Memorial group, blacksmiths and Nillumbik Council representatives were together, at the site. Steve thought it best to ask if the peg represented the place designated for *The Tree*. When told yes, he said it was too close.

Steve explained to me the need to be careful about permanent works because they are there forever, ‘It is either a symbol of wonderfulness or . . . for some people it’s a blight on someone’s life, and never goes away. It festers’ (Pascoe 2016, Interview). Amanda asked him if he could move the peg to a more suitable position, and he physically moved the peg to the place where *The Tree* stands today.

The Tree was not placed arbitrarily, but neither was it a consensus. The site of *The Tree* was argued, debated, surveyed, discussed, researched, and physically sited by a local resident with a peg. This whole, (for the most-part democratic) and timely process of siting *The Tree* was important because *The Tree* was likely to be in Strathewen for over 100 years and would influence the identity of the Town. In turn, *The Tree’s* identity would now be affected by its placement in Strathewen.

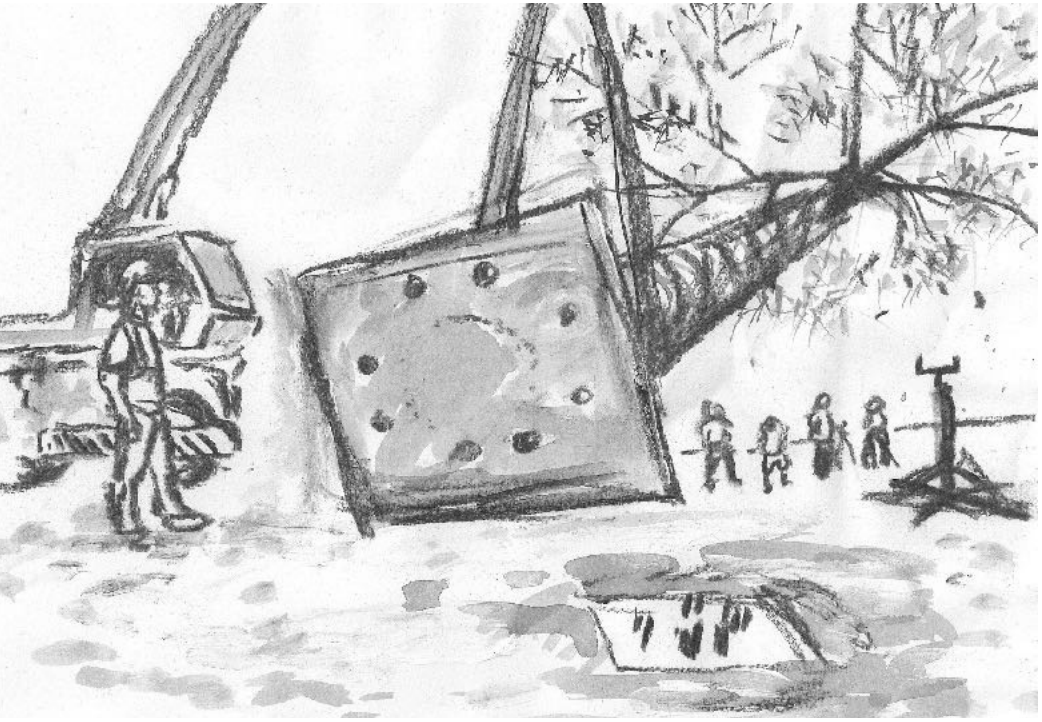
> ‘There are some words and phrases where you know who the person is who wrote it . . . and lots of the others are everyone’s words, so everyone can find something in that memorial and we've had visitors . . . [and] some people come out and read it and say, “this is my story too”, so it has something for everyone’ (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

18 Installation



Before the installation day, the substructure (foundation) for *The Tree* was installed:

’The substructure consists of a large steel cage, 2.8m X 2.8m x 5m buried over a metre deep and filled with concrete. On top of this is a stainless steel bolt cage with eight half metre long bolts, also concreted into the ground. Welded to the base of *The Tree* is a thick stainless steel plate with eight holes’
(Gibson 2014, p. 10).

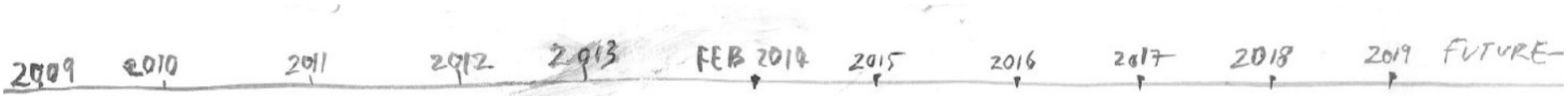


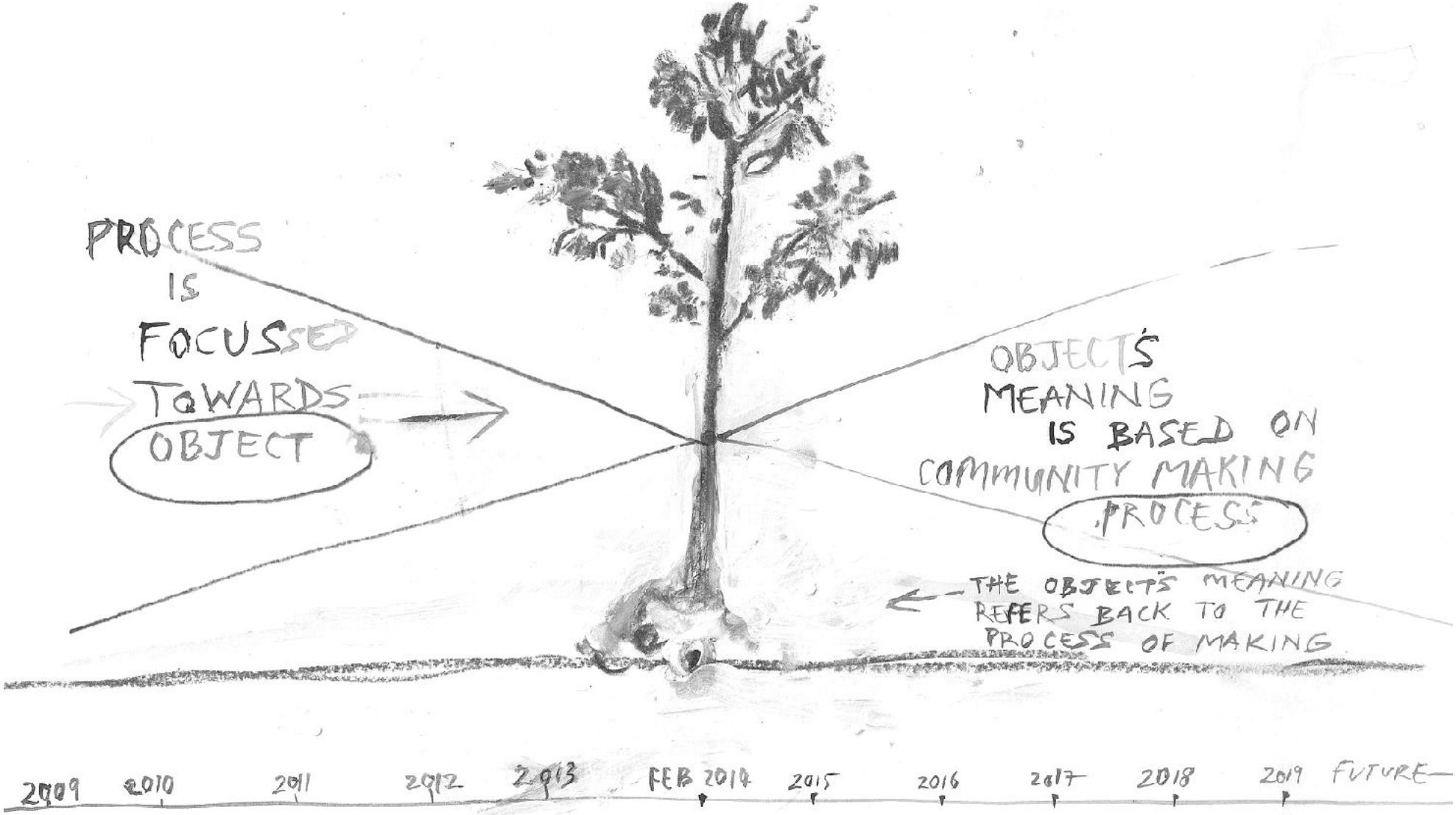
A convoy of vehicles, taking *The Tree* along the back-roads from Whittlesea to its new home in Strathewen, left at 4 am in the morning. It took two hours and two cranes to manoeuvre *The Tree* into position requiring 'a ballet of machinery and expert crane manipulation' and the crane operators were praised for managing the exercise 'without damaging a single leaf' (Gibson 2014, p. 10).

> 'As the operation progressed, a small crowd of local residents, welders, blacksmiths and representatives from supporting organisations and companies gathered on a nearby hillside. A huge cheer went up from them as the nuts were threaded onto the bolts and *The Tree* stood for the first time' (Gibson 2014, p. 10).

There is this moment, when *The Tree* stands on its own and when the cheers go up, where *The Tree* becomes something else. The process is complete. Although process is continued through other means, the focus of the process towards the object has been completed. *The Tree* begins at the moment of installation, to become a place. This moment also makes this process of community engagement and community art-making something different from community art. There is an object standing in public space. It is also different from the usual definition of public art and memorial, because it had a community making process which allows the object to hold many complex meanings.

Installation was this huge moment and intersection between these two roles that *The Tree* played (even though they are traversed), was between being a process and being an object. Or what Nicholas Bourriaud (2002) describes as a, ‘dot on a line’ (p. 21) - it is this small mark in an enormous timeline, that stretches either side, ‘spreading out from its material form’ (ibid., p. 21). Installation is a material moment that has implications for our non-material understandings of it.

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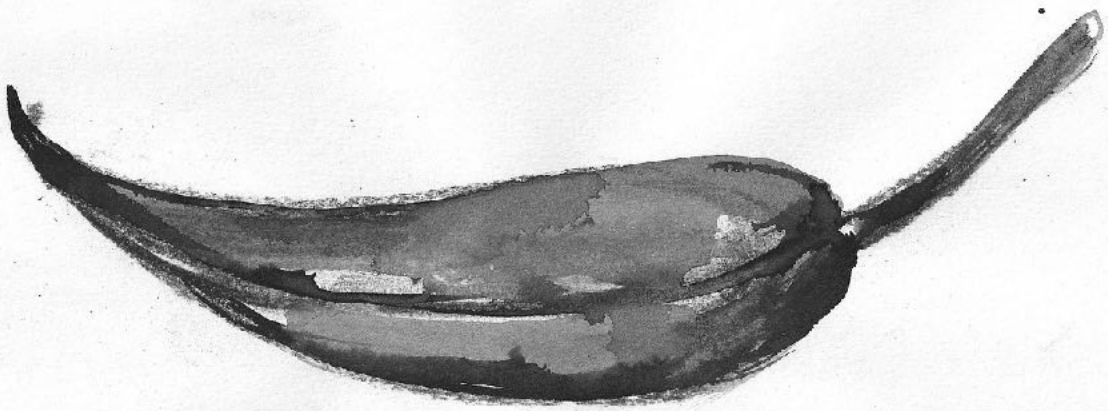
SUPERVISING

The Blacksmiths' Tree

A Portrait

Part C: RELEASE



19 Place Strathewen

As *The Tree* was installed its makers in some sense watched it disappear, melting into the bush behind it. Garton says that it, ‘resembles a tree in Strathewen, it’s effectively a *tree*. You can’t see it’ (Garton 2016, Interview). At that moment of installation, the site also begins to become *place*. John Kelley (1995) describes *site* as ‘properties’ such as light, location, space and material processes, but *place* representing things such as the psychological, social, cultural, historical, that are also ‘the reservoirs of human content, like memory’ (p. 142). *The Tree* also became something else after installation, again mostly unknown, but its meaning and use, shaped and altered by its place in Strathewen.

If *The Tree* had been installed earlier, closer to the time when *The Strathewen Community Memorial* was installed, then it would have been emotionally difficult for The Strathewen community. Steve Pascoe explained that the length of the project, 'allowed time for that emotion to settle, for us to get used to other people visiting our memorial, into actually starting to enjoy other people visiting our memorial' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

Steve Pascoe said that it was important that *The Tree* and *The Strathewen Community Memorial* be two very separate experiences. A pile of leftover dirt assisted in separating *The Tree* precinct from the path to *The Strathewen Community Memorial.* The two different paths create individual journeys. Both *The Tree* and *The Strathewen Community Memorial* are two separate places which have different stories. But they are also linked and they come together to create a beautiful memorial precinct.

Because *The Tree* is now installed at its site, it becomes a place and it has a relationship with the town of Strathewen and *The Strathewen Community Memorial*. The memorial and *The Tree* were not ever meant to be linked, but visitors to one, will most likely come across the other. To find *The Tree*, you must first find Strathewen, then enter the place and feel it. You will most likely find traces of its history, including the community memorial, and through that experience you will learn more about Strathewen. Although *The Tree* is about a broader event than Strathewen's history it is also Strathewen's history. And by being in Strathewen it speaks of that history.

What *The Tree* means to the Strathewen community will be different for each individual and change over time. Steve Pascoe felt that,

> 'It was a very wonderful recognition that Strathewen was a special place.'
>
> 'That other people thought that our loss was of such a magnitude that it deserved some sort of recognition or support, or that a group of people thought we were special.'
>
> (Pascoe 2016, Interview)

There is evidence that many people in Strathewen have embraced *The Tree*. Members of the community regularly attend working bees to maintain the landscape at *The Tree* and some community members have responded with messages of encouragement and thanks (Gibson 2016a, p.14).

I asked Steve how he feels when he looks at *The Tree.*

> '*The Tree* is beautiful, it's a beautiful piece of art to start with . . .
> It still holds that symbolism of, 'the world cares about us.
> It's a bunch of people, a great many people who don't know about Strathewen, not associated with Strathewen, that have supported Strathewen, so there's a positive emotional thing out of that. It's just beautiful, (I've said that twice) . . . we've got a leaf up there somewhere, so it's a bit of personal ownership. There's some wonder about the skills of the people who put the thing together. We look up and go, "this is stunning", and go, "How did you do that?"' (Pascoe 2016, Interview).

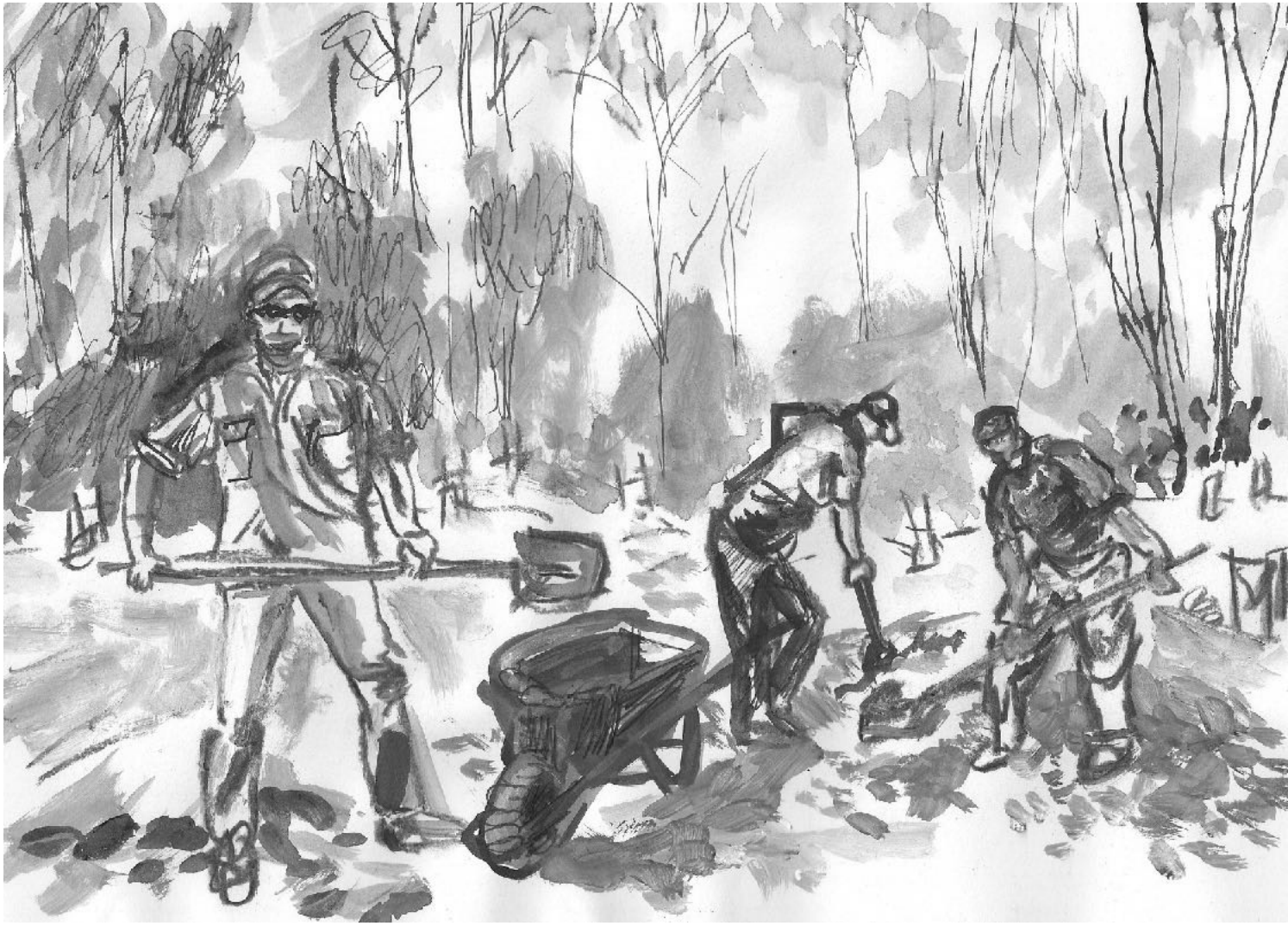
20 Time - Ongoing

The Tree was installed but *The Tree Project* continued. *The Tree* just keeps going. I imagined that when *The Tree* was finished and ready to install, the blacksmiths would heave a huge sigh of relief and have a well-earned rest, but they were instead adding to the project by making sculptural works which were added in amongst the leaves for children to find: grubs, an emperor moth, dragon flies and an owl.

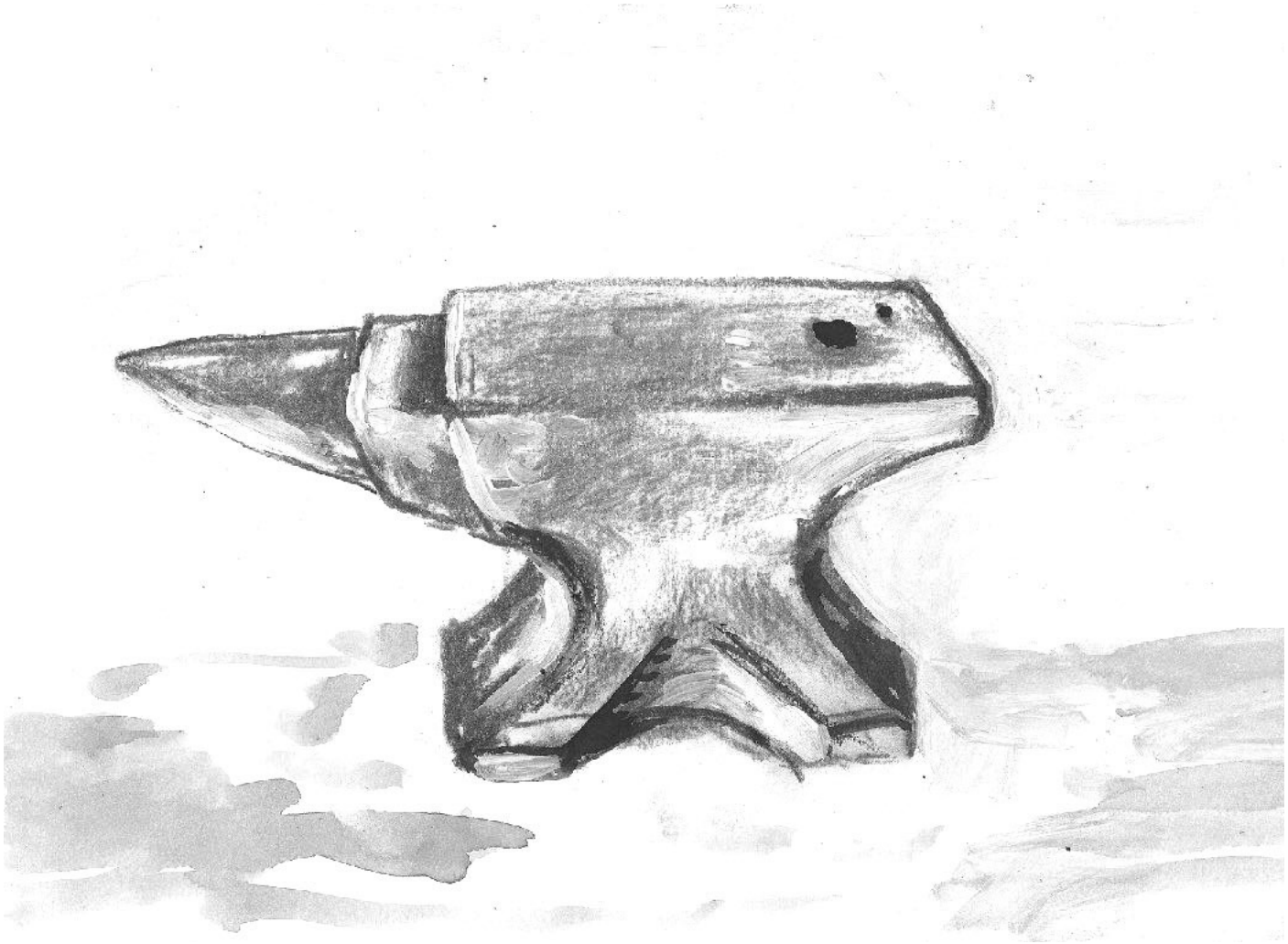
Then there was the forging of the benches and landscape sculptures for *The Tree*, which was done at the ABA(Vic) Blacksmiths' Barn at Bundoora.

It was installed but still ongoing and open. One family arrived at *The Tree* whilst they were installing the benches in December 2015 (almost two years after *The Tree* installation), and it turned out that they had missed out on a leaf. One of the blacksmiths organised a leaf, a cherry-picker, a generator and on went the leaf whilst the family sat below on one of the benches (Garton 2016, Interview).

Cliff Overton refers to the work on *The Tree* as ongoing, ‘The maintenance provides that opportunity for connection. You don’t want to complete it and walk away from it’ (Overton 2016, Interview). Ongoing posts on *The Tree Project* Facebook page show well-attended weeding days and fund-raising for the feature film.



21 Returns and Rewards



Recognition and Acknowledgement

Acknowledgment is always interesting in projects where many people participate, as individuals, as well as members of the community making the work.

Self-interest was discouraged and people who wanted to gain attention by being involved were given short shrift (Tarrant 2016, Interview). If you sponsored a leaf or contributed financially there was no exchange of advertising or public relations. *The Tree Project* provided a way for people to contribute, but encouraged this to be done quietly. People are acknowledged, not advertised. What individuals gained by contributing, but not having it broadcast ,was a private and personal reward.

The Tree carries many messages and names, but they cannot be read with the naked eye. So when you are there, it is difficult to focus on the work of individuals; what you see is the community effort.

Although *The Tree* and its surrounding landscape is mostly silent about recognition, hearty expressions of acknowledgement and thanks are spread all through *The Tree Project Facebook* page and website, on the *I Forge Iron* forum, in *The Drift* and newspaper articles. In *The Drift* article ‘The Tree: Almost Done’, Amanda Gibson includes recognition

and thanks for twenty one different organisations who were contributing to that stage of *The Tree* (Gibson 2013c).

The recognition process encourages ‘corporate community responsibility’ (Overton 2016, Interview). Acknowledgement is informal and conversational, as it is ‘voiced’ and it is also shown through the multiple photographs of groups of people who have contributed to *The Tree* (often alongside the blacksmiths) posing for the camera and smiling. The photographs provide remembrance of the meeting and working together and are evidence of contribution. Acknowledgement is informally voiced and documented with photos at the moment of exchange, sharing and solidarity between *The Tree* makers and the people who helped them (using bodies standing side by side or linked together). When organisations or companies were involved, these photographs witness and remember the contribution.

Camaraderie

I discovered another side to the story of making *The Tree* - that of a group of makers working together and enjoying the challenge. There was laughter and pleasure.

Shane Kenny shared that one of the rewards of being involved in *The Tree* was comradeship:

> 'We had breaks . . . you need to have structured breaks so that you sit around and talk chew the fat a bit, throw a few ideas around and we learnt a bit about each other and what our backgrounds were and we'd end up having an absolute riot as far as storytelling went. So it was actually something to look forward to . . .We were absolutely having a ball. Really good comradeship' (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Camaraderie is evident in many aspects of the project. It created an international fraternity of blacksmiths who made leaves and spent much time discussing making methods and materials (evidenced, on the *I Forge Iron* thread, and in the Drift articles). There was a camaraderie of people working together at the public demonstrations, and making *The Tree*. Often tasks needed people to work in teams, and when one person took on a task, they had many people to call on for help. *The Tree* could not have been made by one person. It had to be made by many.

Andrew Lemon narrates an example:

> ‘Cliff Overton draws a slender bar of steel from the coals where its heart is red hot, lays it flat on the anvil, takes a chisel to make two sharp cuts, and creates a leaf. He reheats the bar. It will be for other Blacksmiths to take this shape he has made, to make it curl at the edges, to hammer lines into it to signify the veins. It will be for others to take letter punches, to hammer names and memories into this leaf’ (Lemon 2009, p. 13).

Stories of how blacksmiths and others worked together are found throughout the documentation of the project. In *The Drift* (Feb 2015, p.17) Shane Kenny describes working at the forge as a dance; ‘blacksmiths would alternate between the forge, Massey and anvil . . . each one working around his fellow blacksmith, in the steps of a well-rehearsed dance, with the click or pounding of the Massey to keep them in time.’ Lemon describes the sounds of the repeating clank on metal in making *The Tree*, as ‘an old familiar sound of human industry and co-operation’ (Lemon 2009, p. 13).

Documenting *The Tree* through the lens of the camera, Andrew Garton observed many of the processes, the relationships between the blacksmiths, and suggested that the camaraderie drew people back to the project despite themselves:

‘One chap who’d been involved in the project from the beginning said, as soon as we install it, it’s finished for me. I don't know why they come back and keep on doing things . . . But when the benches came to be installed, he was there helping. Because they all liked to hang out with each other, so that’s the thing - ‘What can we do next?’ We all kind of formed this kind bond in some way, because we were all there at the moments. We were all there when people cried, when people shared . . . [and] the important leaves were put on’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

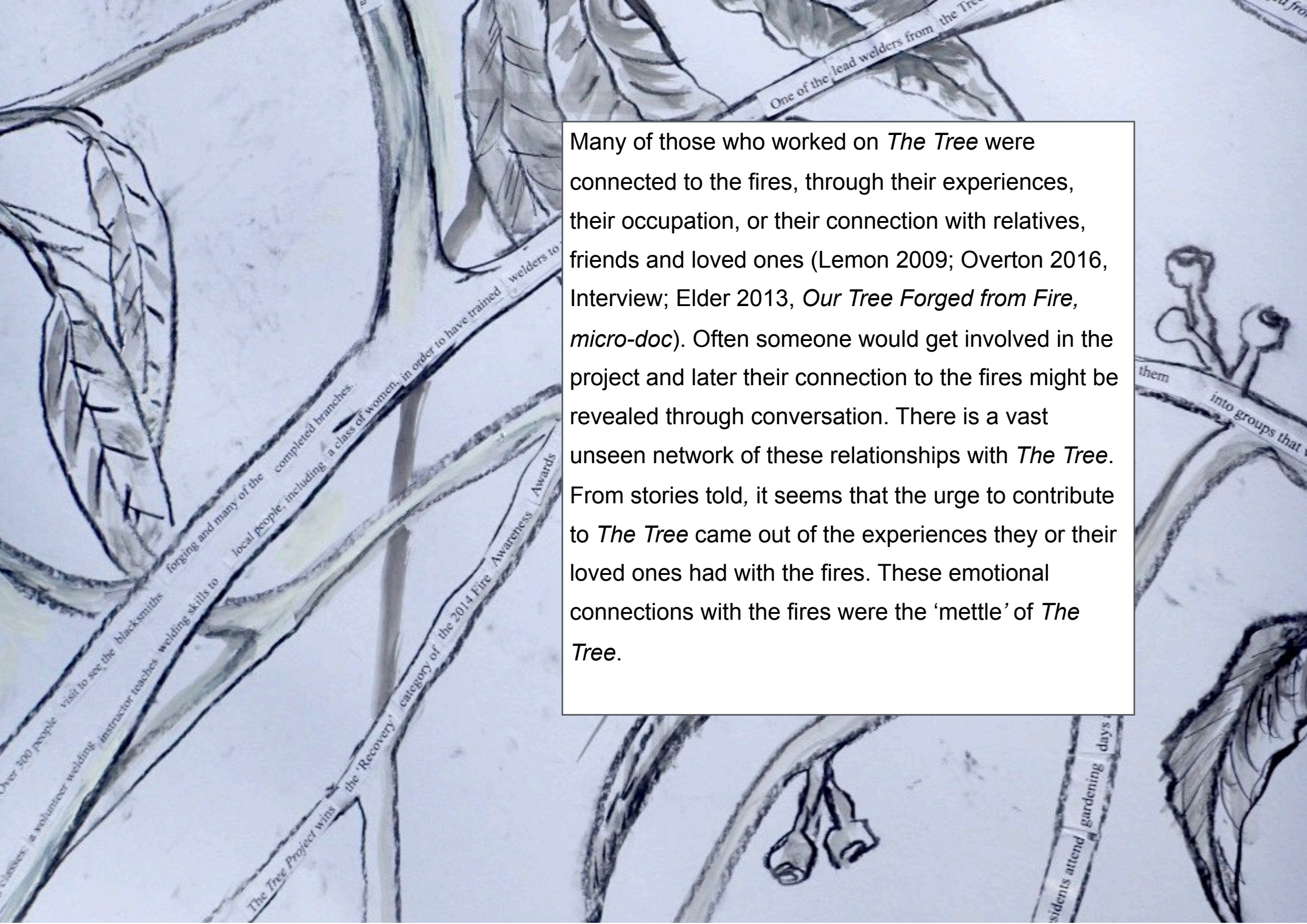
Emotional Connection - Personal and Community Recovery

Susan Nicholls, in her research about disaster memorials (2006), found that disaster recovery is often defined as the processes to rehabilitate communities, but insists it ‘is the duality of the “intensely personal", alongside the wider affected community’, that needs to be considered in the recovery role of memorials (p. 3, 4). Many claim that *The Tree* assisted with the recovery process of the community, but many also identified it as being part of their own individual recovery.

Cliff Overton’s comments reveal that *The Tree* offered psychological and emotional rewards:

> ‘That was the journey, that was the whole point of five years of finding people, meeting people, working with people, building relationships. That was the recovery journey that people went on by creating *The Tree*’ (Overton 2016 Interview).

The *I Forge Iron* thread, and stories in *The Drift* often reveal the project as an emotional conduit for discussion, conversation and stories which interweave between technical details of making *The Tree*, emotional stories about the response from the community, and expressions of how the blacksmiths feel about what they are doing. People who became involved with *The Tree Project* often had a personal experience or relationship with the event of the fires.



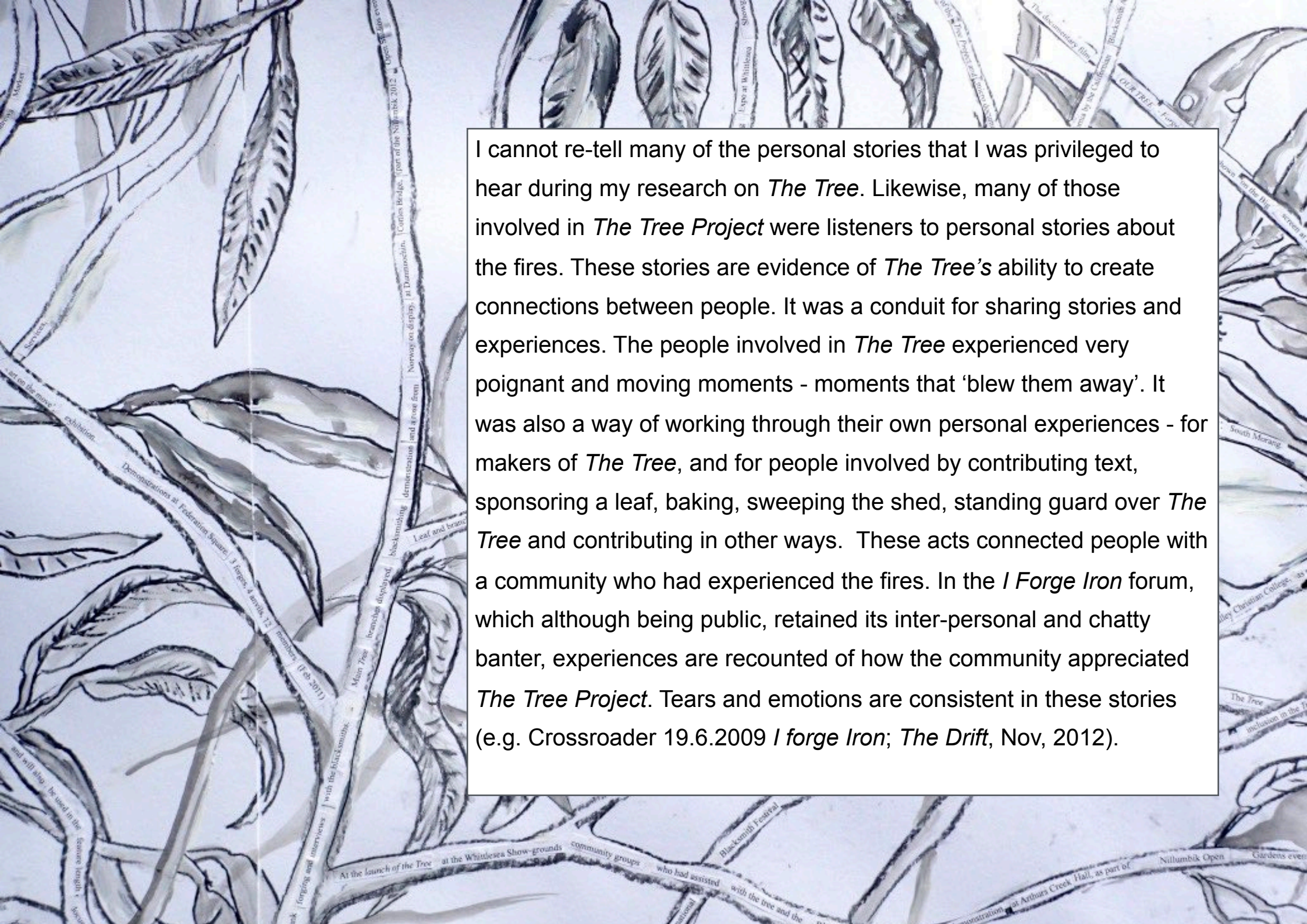
Many of those who worked on *The Tree* were connected to the fires, through their experiences, their occupation, or their connection with relatives, friends and loved ones (Lemon 2009; Overton 2016, Interview; Elder 2013, *Our Tree Forged from Fire, micro-doc*). Often someone would get involved in the project and later their connection to the fires might be revealed through conversation. There is a vast unseen network of these relationships with *The Tree*. From stories told, it seems that the urge to contribute to *The Tree* came out of the experiences they or their loved ones had with the fires. These emotional connections with the fires were the 'mettle' of *The Tree*.

Mick shared on *I Forge Iron* his own experience of the fire which stopped a few metres from his place and what *The Tree* meant within this context. He said:

> ‘I started reading this thread [about *The Tree* on I Forge Iron] and by page two I was starting to choke up, by the end of page eight I was crying, had tears running . . . I haven't done that in fifty years! It’s not just the concept which is fabulous, but it’s the response which has really touched my heart . . . Your response has really touched my heart. Thank you’ (Mick 28.2.2009, *I Forge Iron*).

There are many references made to tears, particularly from men, and shared positively, to emphasise the emotional meaning that *The Tree* held for people. Salty tells:

> ‘I was making some leaves at the Berwick show on the weekend and telling some blokes in the CFA about *The Tree Project*, when I looked up they all had tears in their eyes. They couldn't believe what the blacksmithing community from all over the world were doing. They all said thanks’ (Salty, quoted in ‘The Tree Project’, *The Drift,* Edition 76, March 2012, p. 7).



I cannot re-tell many of the personal stories that I was privileged to hear during my research on *The Tree*. Likewise, many of those involved in *The Tree Project* were listeners to personal stories about the fires. These stories are evidence of *The Tree's* ability to create connections between people. It was a conduit for sharing stories and experiences. The people involved in *The Tree* experienced very poignant and moving moments - moments that 'blew them away'. It was also a way of working through their own personal experiences - for makers of *The Tree*, and for people involved by contributing text, sponsoring a leaf, baking, sweeping the shed, standing guard over *The Tree* and contributing in other ways. These acts connected people with a community who had experienced the fires. In the *I Forge Iron* forum, which although being public, retained its inter-personal and chatty banter, experiences are recounted of how the community appreciated *The Tree Project*. Tears and emotions are consistent in these stories (e.g. Crossroader 19.6.2009 *I forge Iron*; *The Drift*, Nov, 2012).

Marina Anderson, who made a leaf for *The Tree*, thanked the blacksmiths for the project, saying, ‘It gives us an artistic healing focus which is wonderful, and I also love the aspect of turning the element of fire into creativity and beauty, it’s not just about destruction.’

Mary Avola who sponsored many leaves for her family explains, ‘A lot of the bereaved community were attracted to this project because it is such a healing process’ (Mary Avola, quoted in Whitelaw 2012).

Andrew Garton explains that he heard directly from one couple that, ‘If it wasn’t for *The Tree* they wouldn’t have been able to go back to the area. *The Tree* gave them hope. *The Tree* gave them courage’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

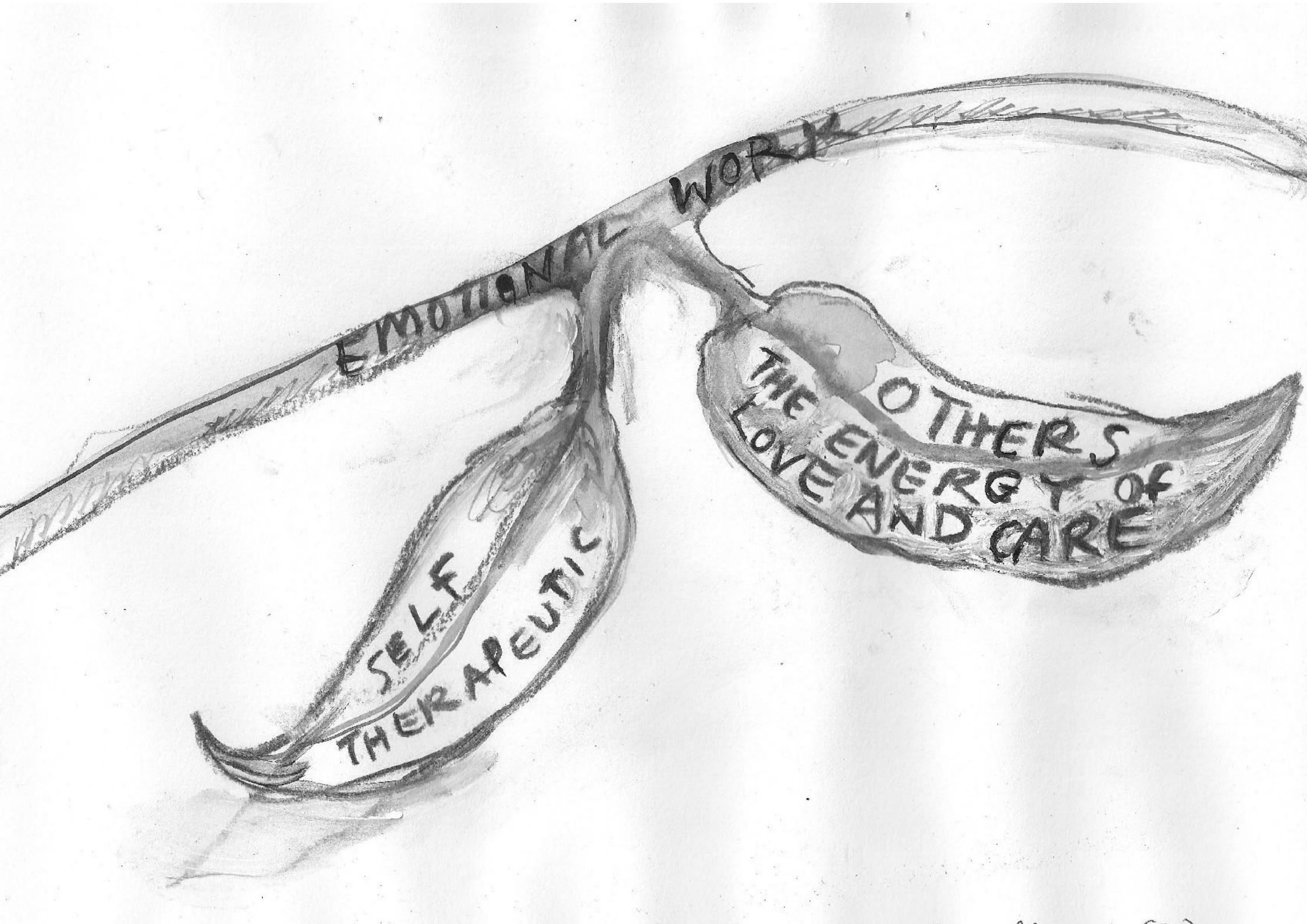
‘It means so much that after more than four years people still remember and there are reminders of what happened’
(H. Petkovski, quoted by McBean).

Doing as Reward

It seems like an oppositional thing, effort is something that you do, and reward is something you receive. It harks back to that need to do something, to want to do something in the wake of the fires. The actual doing - the process - was what was needed. The biggest reward was not the object of *The Tree*, it was the process of doing something.

> 'The ongoing struggle, the constant connection to the community . . . the point of sale where we are demonstrating the techniques to build, all the activities that went on . . . demonstrations, the ongoing negotiation with sponsors . . . the effort that took, was the reward for those who participated' (Overton 2016, Interview).

In Zara and Parkinson's (2013) research into men's experiences and responses to Black Saturday, they found that for many reasons men found counselling inaccessible and said that, 'talking while "doing something" seemed easier, especially when men worked alongside other men' (p. 4).


EMOTIONAL WORK
SELF THERAPEUTIC
OTHERS THE ENERGY OF LOVE AND CARE

Estella Conwill Májozo says, ‘the artist tends the private garden of the soul and gives evidence of this process publicly through the art that, in turn, inspires others to tend their own gardens’ (1995, p. 89). Given my own grounds that everyone who creatively makes, is an artist, and everyone can be one, Conwill Májozo’s comments provide a wonderful metaphor for how *The Tree* enacted emotional work for the self and for others. The emotional work was two-fold - for the makers the project tended their own emotional needs and it also assisted the emotional needs of others. It was both ’therapeutic', and ‘the energy of love and care’ (Gibson 2014, p. 10).

When the blacksmiths needed to make something, it was an emotional need, and *The Tree* in part replaced the physical work that they wanted to do for those affected by the fires. To make something was a manner of tending to their own needs, to be able to do something, and to get over emotional trauma (Heasley 2010): a way of expressing outwardly and publicly their grief, compassion, and empathy (Gibson, in Heasley 2010).

Cliff Overton in recalling the process of making says:

> ‘We soon caught on that, the end product is just a lump of steel shaped like a tree, but its the process that the community went through to create that lump of steel which did all the work . . . Having a shared goal, having a joint outcome to jointly aspire to, having a shared challenge. Thankfully the project wasn’t easy. It wouldn't have been successful if the government had said, “Here’s a million dollars, go and build it”. That would have been too easy. What contributed to the success of it, was the challenges that the community overcame in seeing it through’ (Overton 2016, Interview).

22 Metaphors and Symbolism

‘Fighting fire with fire’ (Lemon, 2009).

‘It is a lasting reminder that fire holds immense power to create as well as destroy’ (McBean 2013).

> ‘Of course the Tree is laden with symbolism: something beautiful has been created – not destroyed – by fire’ (Hillard 2013).

‘As the fire had razed the landscape, they would raise a tree, a man-made metal testament to the enduring spirit of humanity’ (Whitelaw 2012).

The Tree begins as a metaphor, from Salty's words, 'let's grow a tree from our fires'. It refers to the power of fire to destroy and its opposite - fire that rebuilds. Making was not just part of a making good, and metaphor for repair but also one of defiance in the face of destruction - an emotion that many people felt.

> 'As for the leaves, that's the sort of defiance against the powers that be that we Aussies are renowned for isn't it? What a great idea to use the very thing that has caused this tragedy to fashion a memorial. I rather think though that I'll collect a bit of charcoal and scrap iron from say Kinglake first as a personal act of defiance' (Strine 16.1.2009, *I Forge Iron*).

Fighting fire with fire conveys defiance.

> ‘There is a certain irony here. From a simple plea from Salty, made on this forum off his own bat. The *Tree project* is beginning to gain in strength just as the fires began with one little spark or flame which turned into an inferno. It was said to sound like a squadron of approaching FA18 Hornets. I’m feeling goose bumpy thinking about it. If we amalgamated the sound of all the hammers pounding on stainless steel gum leaves around the world the Hornets by comparison would sound more like a couple of mozzies annoying you in your sleep. The difference though is that the outcome of this venture will have nothing but a positive effect rather than total devastation and for some it will be profound’ (Strine 18.3.2009, *I Forge Iron*).

> ‘If we could amalgamate the sound of hammers pounding for the *Tree Project* it certainly would be a deafening roar!’ (Paul, 21.3.09, *I forge Iron*)

There is strong evidence that *The Tree* was a metaphor for ‘man against nature’, although the form of the object was of nature, it was also man-made. ‘Putting back a tree to replace those lost’ (Overton 2016, Interview) was a symbolic of repair and replacement.

> ‘We’ll put a tree back and you won’t be burning this one down!’ (Overton 2016, Interview)

The Tree’s permanence and resilience against fire is used as a metaphor by many, it carries the meaning of the community’s ability to rebuild and withstand fire both physically and emotionally. *The Tree* is not only physically resilient. It symbolically ‘represents the resilience of the community that withstood or endured the breath of that tragedy’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

> ‘They wanted to make something which was resilient’ (Garton, 2016, Interview).

Resilience includes *The Tree* being permanent in its physical context - the materials it is made from and the 8 tonne of concrete underneath (Kenny 2016, Interview). The

blacksmiths take great pleasure in claiming that *The Tree* is fireproof, unable to be damaged, indestructible (Kenny 2016, Interview; Overton 2016, Interview; Dofenik in *Our Tree Forged with Fire, micro-doc*).
On February 7th 2009 the temperature in Victoria reached 47c (117 F) and the hottest heat of the Black Saturday fires has been estimated at 1,200 c (2,190 F) (Buxton 2009). The heat in a forge used to heat the stainless steel is usually 1150 celsius (2102 fahrenheit), so it is certainly very unlikely that *The Tree* will be destroyed by fire. Its material of stainless steel, is difficult to burn (Tarrant 2016, Interview). Perhaps the glass and copper will melt, but apart from that it will withstand fire. It also has a very strong foundation, and was structurally designed by an engineer to withstand the weather and events for 100 years.

There was an irony in how *The Tree* conceded to nature. An acknowledgement of nature's role in our lives as beautiful, nurturing and able to renew the spirit. As *The Tree* was installed, people found it remarkable that it was surrounded by new growth which had reached the same height. All of the trees, both natural and man-made, were the height of five years old. Now the growth is beyond the height of *The Tree* and are potential fuel for the next fire. The next fire is referred to whenever *The Tree's*

resilience to fire is brought up. *The Tree* is a reminder that fires are an integral part of the enigma of the beauty and dangers of the Australian Bush. The metaphor is cyclical, it concedes that nature is a symbol for renewal as well as destruction.

The idea of making is the opposite of loss. Making is not always towards permanence, but we often hope that the object of our efforts has longevity. One person declared, 'this is going to outlive all of us' - an expression of triumph in having made a resilient and permanent object. The permanence of *The Tree* is also a final product. Is the reward of those who contributed with text and laid their memories and grief into *The Tree, with* hope that it would be completed. These metaphors assist in creating the rationale for making the object (Becker 1982).

The process of making objects, and placing personal symbolism into them is evident in other community projects that took place in the aftermath of the fires. The documentary films of 'Big Stories, Small Towns' tell the stories of two more projects in Strathewen - the Mosaic Letterboxes and the Knitted Chooks. Both of these projects involved community members incorporating individual designs, but were also communal and collaborative.

The letterboxes that I encountered when first coming into Strathewen were made by locals and the wider community to replace letterboxes lost in the fires. Made together at a weekly gathering which went for a year, then displayed together at their launch and finally installed together in Strathewen. Many letterboxes were decorated with imagery symbolic of losses and recovery. The process of meeting together regularly to work on the letterboxes, and talking was an important part of the *making*. Allison Pascoe recalls the process, ‘You tell each other stories about what you’re doing with your boxes, and we talk about our pain and our loss and also a great deal of hope’ (*Alison Pascoe, the Letterbox project*, (film)' Big Stories,Small Towns’).

The Blacksmiths' Tree, Part C: Release

The Knitted Chook project began symbolically. Barbara Joyce was given some alpaca wool by two friends in Strathewen and she knitted a chook from the wool. These two friends passed away in the fires and Barbara said, ‘When I found my sooty chook it sort of became linked to them’ (*Barbara Joyce, The Chooks Project*, (film) Big Stories, Small Towns). Barbara began making chooks for children who had suffered loss through the fires. She approached the local school to see if she could make chooks for all the children. The children designed their own chooks so that their own personal symbolism was knitted into the design. In each of these chooks, both the child’s, as well as Barbara’s personal symbolism were enacted through the making of the knitted object. Eventually a knitting group was formed, ‘which became a place for sharing grief, laughter and hope for the future’ (Davison, n.d.).

The Blacksmiths' Tree, Part C: Release

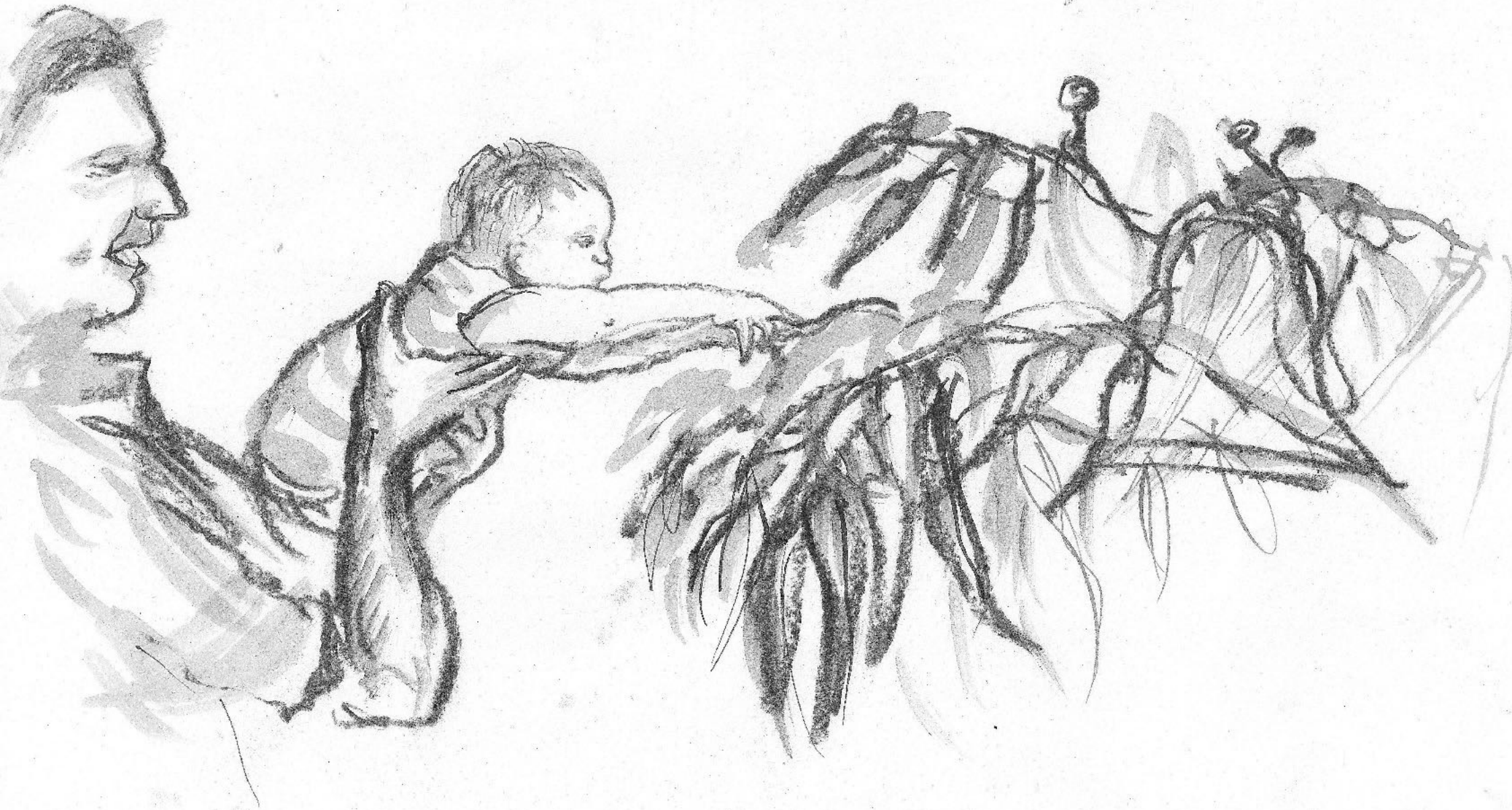
Creating symbolism, both personal and communal and making collaboratively, is a common theme in recovery projects and can also be seen in many of the other creative projects that emerged in the affected communities after the Fires.

The Blacksmiths' Tree, Part C: Release

23 Touching *The Tree*

‘Make as many leaves as you like,
send with your own mark’

(Salty 15.2.2009, *I Forge Iron*)



The connection between the hand and the artwork is very important in hand-made and hand-wrought artworks. I work with clay which retains the fingerprints of the maker on its surface. When I went to see *The Tree* I was compelled to touch it. Touching the artwork is very important. Many people noted their own need to touch *The Tree* and observed that need in others (Garton 2016, Interview; Fox 2017, Interview; Bishop 2017 Interview; R Lowe speaking in Forged from Fire - Micro doc).

Three thousand people attended the public unveiling of *The Tree* at Whittlesea Showgrounds. People were observed, reaching over the safety fence to place their hands onto *The Tree* (Garton 2015). Andrew Garton explains this was, ‘the first and only time that people would be able to mingle with the foliage (so to speak) . . . people were looking for their names or the names of loved ones who had perished in the fire’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

Rachel Lowe (speaking in Forged from Fire - Micro doc) is not alone in explaining the urge to touch *The Tree* as magnetism, and suggests this relates to how it was made with consideration and grace, and that through touching it ‘means it exists’ and that ‘life exists on the other side of the fires’.

24 What is it? A Tree? An Artwork? A Memorial?

gift, tribute, artwork, monument, sculpture, symbol, expression

commemorates	the lives lost,
represents	humanity at its best
to honour	the fallen, never to forget
a symbol of	life beyond the fires
something positive	something resilient

A tree

* All words above taken from people's descriptions of *The Tree*

There were thousands of people directly involved in making *The Tree,* who feel a connection, so it is many things to many people. Evidence of this can be seen in comments that the committee received about *The Tree*. Varyingly described as: a project, work of art, memorial, monument, sculpture, masterpiece, tribute, symbol of regeneration, remembrance project, (‘Unveiling of the Tree’, *The Drift,* Feb. 2014). What is good about *The Tree* is, it is able to be different things for different people and able to be co-opted into their individual sense of what it means (and what was most useful for it to be). Perhaps this is because its makers persist in designating it as ‘a tree’. This description made it more open to take on differing roles for the community. The focus of this research has been to look at it as an artwork. But it is also a sculpture, a memorial, and a monument to many people because *The Tree* ‘appears’ like these cultural objects. Rosalyn Deutsche (1998) points out that the designation of an object, as ‘art’ depends on its ‘framing conditions’, and this includes its viewers (p. 295). Each person brings their own frame to *The Tree*.

Estella Conwill Májozo (1995) describes artworks as having three stages which she likens to the blues structure (in music) of; the call, the response and the release.

In blues the first line is the call which is ‘incited by the experiences we have with the world’ (ibid., p. 90-91). It calls to mind the experiences that formented towards *The Tree*, in the days after the fires when the blacksmiths, (and many people besides) experienced an inner call, the call to do something. Then there was Salty’s call, which articulated an idea of what they *could* do. Salty’s call *voiced* that need to make something, which was felt by the blacksmiths and many others and this call was answered by the thousands of people who became involved in *The Tree*.

The second part is the response - ‘the artist’s creation - the attempt to name, recognise, and instigate change through his or her creative expression’ (Májozo 1995, p. 90-91). Here the making of *The Tree* is a metaphoric and physical response to the loss - a response of resilience, rebuilding and working together, contributing to and forming community.

The third part is a release where, ‘The process continues as members of the community experience the release’ (Conwill Májozo 1995, p. 90-91). This release can be envisaged from the point of the object’s installation when it enters into a different life and its makers begin to let go of it. It was a gift to those who were impacted by the 2009 fires (Tarrant 2016, Interview; Levick 2014), and in order to give, one must let go. *The Tree* becomes part of Strathewen. It is released to its audience, each individual person who goes to see it or happens to come across it - who then are able to hold it, and attribute to it, their own meaning. In this sense the community receives *The Tree* and the makers let go of it, to allow it to become.

It remains an experience and symbol in memories and ongoing thoughts.

Memorial and Commemoration

Within a couple of days of *The Tree Project* beginning, it was being referred to as a memorial by the media and by many of those involved (Mills 16.2.2009, *I Forge Iron*; Lemon 2009; Strine 16.2.2009, *I Forge Iron*). There are mixed perspectives from the blacksmiths about whether *The Tree* is or isn't a memorial, perhaps because the original intention was to make something to *honour* the CFA firefighters. Very quickly the meaning of *The Tree* expanded to include other meanings besides being 'a thank you to the volunteer firefighters.' It was also the early decision to incorporate sponsoring a leaf, which ultimately changed the scope and nature of *The Tree*.

It is the 'community' who provide the messages and the memorial side to it (Kenny 2016, Interview; Gibson 2016, Interview; Tarrant 2016, Interview).

Joji Mori (2015), who researched many of the memorials arising from Black Saturday, offers a broad definition of memorials:

> 'Memorials help to facilitate commemoration. A memorial can be physical, such as a monument in a public space, a statue, a garden or public seating. A memorial can also be an event such as a church service, a public holiday or a gathering of people pausing for a minute of silence' (Mori 2015, p. 2).

Mori's work (2015) on spontaneous memorials also gives insight into *The Tree* as a memorial, in the process and as a permanent structure. This idea is brought into play because it demonstrates how the process of making *The Tree* provided spontaneous, open, easily accessible opportunities for commemoration. Whilst *The Tree* was being made, it was imagined as a permanent object, the process of community participation took on many of the characteristics of spontaneous memorials. It was a grassroots project which was begun by an individual, and which grew into a community, instead of being offered and managed by a government or institution. It was vernacular (involving everyday speech) and performative - in that the makers demonstrated and made *The Tree* in front of a wider viewing public (ibid.). *The Tree* was a process which was used for memorialisation, at a time when permanent memorials to the fires had not yet been made (ibid.). It was both process and object - it facilitated acts of memorialisation, as well as offering the promise of a memorial object when it was complete.

Spontaneous memorialisation was part of the process of creating *The Tree*, through the expression of personal and often private grief in public spaces (Mori 2015); as people wrote messages for leaves and watched them being made and stamped, as they shared their stories with the makers and others, as they wrote how they felt about the project on *I Forge Iron*, and *The Tree Facebook page*. *The Tree* was a response to both 'deeply personal and communal grieving' (Garton, We are Moving Stories, n.d.).

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The makers commemorated through each process of making *The Tree*: with every hammer blow, they sounded out the losses and grief of the community. According to Haney, Leimer and Lowery (1997) a characteristic of spontaneous memorials is that no one is automatically excluded or included. In this light *The Tree Project* offered the opportunity to commemorate in a variety of ways (both personal and communal), over many years. Anybody could be involved - but it was a choice to be involved, and there were numerous opportunities for community interaction with the project through its travelling workshops and open days.

Haney et al. (1997) also characterise spontaneous memorialisation as 'not constrained by culturally-based norms which prescribe the amount of time allotted for ritual action nor the appropriate amount of time for bereavement' (pp. 161–162, cited in Mori 2015, p. 15).

We can see the importance of this in the way that the extended duration of the process, though not planned, turned out to be beneficial for those involved. If it had been a commissioned work there would have been an earlier deadline which would have curtailed the beneficial outcomes of the years

spent in making *The Tree.* Through being a process, and a permanent object, it provided an ongoing focus for those involved.

In relation to the community involvement in *The Tree*, Haney et al. (1997), suggest that although spontaneous memorials commemorate the deceased, they also ‘extend the focus beyond the victim and the private mourning of friends and family to social and cultural implications’ (pp. 161–162, cited in Mori 2015, p. 15). This is evident in the types of messages inscribed on the leaves which often addressed the broader community and also the community making process. Many of the leaves were dedicated to those who lost their lives, but others bore messages that addressed recovery and the future.

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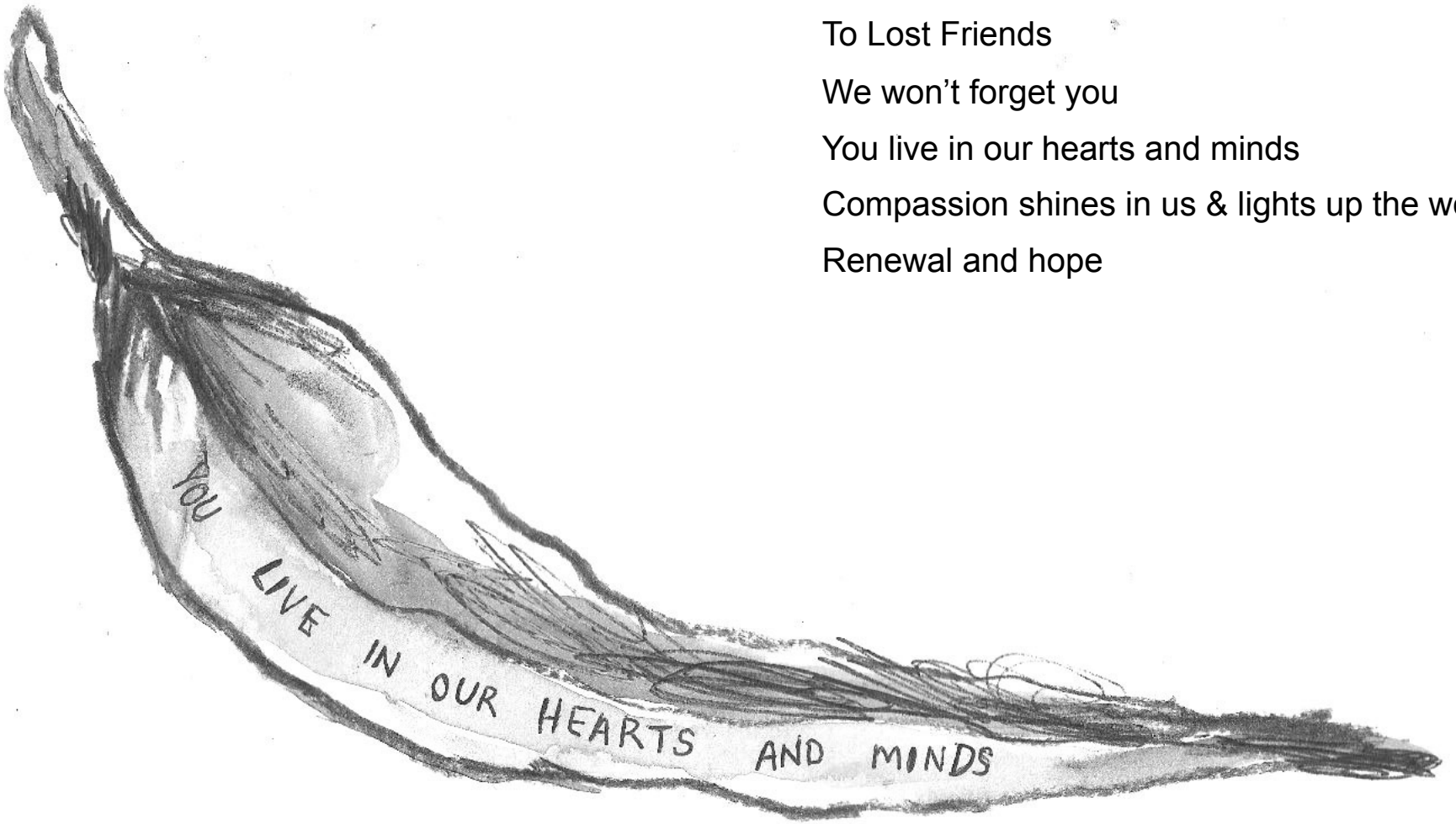


Hope

To Lost Friends

We won’t forget you

You live in our hearts and minds

Compassion shines in us & lights up the world

Renewal and hope

The Tree also has social and cultural implications in the way it propelled a broad community effort to get it made and installed. In some sense the making of *The Tree* and assistance by the community demonstrates a shared acknowledgement that the whole community of the area were affected by the fires and the loss of life. The community bore this loss and their actions in assisting *The Tree* to be made, were expressions of this relationship with each other and acknowledgement, empathy and solidarity with those who were personally affected.

An Artwork

Some people call *The Tree* an artwork (Overton 2016, Interview; Bishop 2017, Interview; Fox 2017, Interview) and this is the focus of the research. I had always looked at *The Tree Project* in this light, because it reflected much of my own practice of making artworks with communities. Cliff Overton says: 'It's a memorial but I consider it a piece of artwork. It's hard to find a memorial that isn't a piece of artwork' (Overton 2016, Interview). Overton sees *The Tree,* within his experiences of art, in aiding recovery:

> 'I believe art has a huge role to play in disaster recovery. I have seen painting, poetry and song come out of adversity and assist communities to recover and rebuild. Through my work, I have come across a project that aims to recognise the loss, bravery and recovery of bushfire affected communities in Victoria. I have also been very fortunate to be able to participate. It is called *The* Tree Project' (Cliff Overton quoted in, Lemon, 2009).

The difference between *The Tree* and other artworks or memorials is that it was not made or designed by one person, but by thousands of people (Tarrant 2016, Interview; Garton 2016, Interview). The fact that it was made by community along this long timeline and with many opportunities for locals to become involved, made it very different from a commissioned artwork or memorial. Shane Kenny (2016, Interview) suggests, ‘It would have been put up in record time and money thrown at it, be plopped out there and just disappear’.

It is the focus on community making, not originating from a business or government organisation which gives *The Tree* its leverage to remain un-advertised and continue to be simply a tree. It retains its identity as something that the community made and is able to be a place of quietness and respect that comes with not needing to trumpet itself as a product of an organisation, funding or program. Within the idea of it being a public artwork, it adheres to Lucy Lippard's definition (1995) of public art 'as accessible work of any kind that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for whom or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment' (p. 121).

The organic process is seemingly what made *The Tree* so powerful and it was also an idea that most likely wouldn't have been taken up if it had been proposed by a council, or organisation. Garton says:

> 'Professionals that came into the area realised that it was something that they wouldn't have even considered, not only was it so ambitious - "What's a big piece of metal and a few bits of copper going to do to solve the gulf, that's just emerged in the community?" - but it meant so much because it was made, crafted and lovingly put together, in and around where the tragedy had taken place' (Garton 2016, Interview).

He also makes it clear that: ‘It wouldn’t have happened if it was directed from outside. You’d have tender processes, you’d have people coming in that would be removed from the process’ (Garton, 2016, Interview).

> ‘What makes it significantly different to most other public artworks because those public artworks remain static to a degree, unless you've had personal involvement. But this had so many people involved, it’s going to remain fluid for a long time’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

It's a Tree

> 'Is it a sculpture? No it's a tree.
> Is it an artwork? No it's a tree.'
> (Garton 2016, Interview)

It is more often described as '*The Tree*', and from day one the blacksmiths called it a tree (Tarrant 2016, Interview). Most blacksmiths intended it not to be viewed as an artwork or a memorial (Kenny 2016, Interview; Garton 2016, Interview). Salty's words were, 'Let's grow a tree from our Fires in Honour of all the volunteer Fire Fighters . . . as a sign of our sincere thanks' (Salty 15.2.09, *Iforgeiron*). Here we see the idea of it as a tree, and that *The Tree* will be a *sign,* which signifies thanks, to the firefighters.

Andrew Mathers, speaking in the film, *Our Tree Forged from Fire - Micro Doc*, sheds light:

> 'Yes, there were certain points where we said, We're not making a sculpture of a tree, we're making a tree, . . . realistically, you can't say its a sculpture of a tree because its real. Looks like it's just made of metal but the leaves look like real, once it's all together it takes on that . . . it has a life of its own. And it wasn't until that completion that we realised that it just became alive' (*Our Tree Forged from Fire, Micro-Doc*, 2014).

(public space)

PUBLIC PROCESS

(community)

PUBLIC

MAKING MEANING

PROCESS

PUBLIC

PLACE

PLACE

(IN PUBLIC SPACE)

PUBLIC OBJECT

(MADE BY THE PUBLIC)

PUBLIC

ATTRIBUTING MEANING

OBJECT

PUBLIC

AUDIENCE

It can be categorised however you like. It is your *Tree*.

In terms of it being something creatively made by local community (the public) and now sited in public space *The Tree* also signifies the meaning of this public process. Patricia Phillips' idea that, 'meaning . . . is made through the constructive collaborative process called "the public"' (Phillips 1995, p. 70), perhaps relates to both before and after the installation of *The Tree*. Meaning which was made by the public (makers/community/participants/observers) whilst they were making *The Tree* and, how the meaning is constructed afterwards by its public (makers/audience).

Phillips (1995) argues that artwork produced through the involvement of the public in construction and collaboration becomes, 'a sign of life'. *The Tree* is a 'sign of life' (p. 70). Categories of 'art' and 'memorial' seem fairly empty in comparison to its power to be many different things to its makers and audience. Amanda Gibson sums up its meaning in a way which avoids categorisation.

> '*The Tree* has become an expression of empathy and solidarity among those in the fire-affected communities, across Australia and from around the world. It is a symbol of admiration and hope for the spirited people who are recovering and rebuilding to stand for generations to come' (A Gibson quoted in Making Art with Communities - A work Guide).

25 Unintended, Animate, Organic and Fluid

The range of ways that people describe what *The Tree* 'does' is revealing of the broad roles that it plays in people's lives.

'Honouring those lost', 'a tribute', 'a way to commemorate',
('The Tree: Launch Event' Page, *The Tree Project* Facebook page)

'It represents people's feelings about the fire' (*The Tree Project Website*).

'Its purpose was in providing the community an opportunity to express how they felt, a shared vision, a shared outcome' (Overton 2016, Interview)

'It's a symbol of regeneration and growth.' (Mills 2016, ABA(Vic) website video about the fires)

'You just feel all the grief of all the people is just here in this object' (unknown, quoted in Garton 2016, Interview).

'I think of all the demos we did, the camaraderie' (Tarrant 2016, Interview)

'*The Tree Project* also represents humanity at its best' (Lemon 2009, p.15)

'A gift to the fire-affected communities and what we want is to provide a space where people can go and reflect and just find peace,' (A Gibson, quoted in McBean 2013)

Hence conversation can be about the multiple meanings of *The Tree*, but not pinned down to a most important or predominant one. Evidence shows that it means many different things to many different people, that ‘everyone has their unique story and approach to it’ (Garton 2016, Interview). These multiple meanings attest to the ability of communally made creations, to hold individual meaning for participants, as well as also representing the collaborative voice and intentions of a community.

‘These are all unintended consequences . . . all these other people . . . they might have completely different takes on it, they all have their own kind of narrative, and they'll take that out into the world and they'll share that with their kids . . . they'll blog about it, or they'll do whatever and it will have a life of its own and that’s really important, so when say [in] three or four years time, we may all gather round *The Tree* and talk to each other about what life has been like in the intervening periods we’ll have our own slightly abridged or flavoured versions of the story’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

‘What makes it important and valuable as a project that grew from the community is that it’s . . . an entirely unique response to grieving. It’s not an external party coming in to curate or workshop a response. It was a response that grew from here, from a bunch of people who lived in the area, and who experienced life in the area, lost people they knew in the area, were directly involved’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

Andrew Garton observed the process of *The Tree* as fermenting in an unwieldy and wild way (2016, Interview) and that it seemed to take on a life of its own. Some people refer to it as an animate object and a ‘she’ and ‘alive’ (Gibson in *Forged from Fire- Teaser*, film). Shane Kenny explains, that the hand-making is, ‘where it completely becomes a living thing. Where it’s got personality, you know, we used to call it a “she”, it was never an “it”’ (Kenny 2016, Interview). Garton also refers to the ability of *The Tree* to pull people towards it, and for individuals to give *The Tree* particular meaning which related to their own experiences, so that, ‘the story, the undertow of *The Tree* was spreading beyond . . . and its own means, so to speak’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

He confirms this idea of the unintended and unknown results of artworks, in his recounting what inevitably happens each time he shows one of the films about the making of *The Tree*.

> ‘I like to encourage people to talk and inevitably there will be someone in the audience who has a fire story, and they may never have told it, but they feel now it’s safe, that they can because they're in the company of people who have just been touched by this story and other people’s stories . . . and it’s appropriate and it’s a huge responsibility to be able to listen and hold that space. And then that becomes part of your own story or everyone else’s stories within that screening environment and they take that out to the world. So these then are the unintended consequences, and also the unknown results, or the end results, the intangible outcomes of a project . . . as a ripple effect, of things going in directions that you will never fully comprehend. And it will always surprise you’ (Garton 2016, Interview).

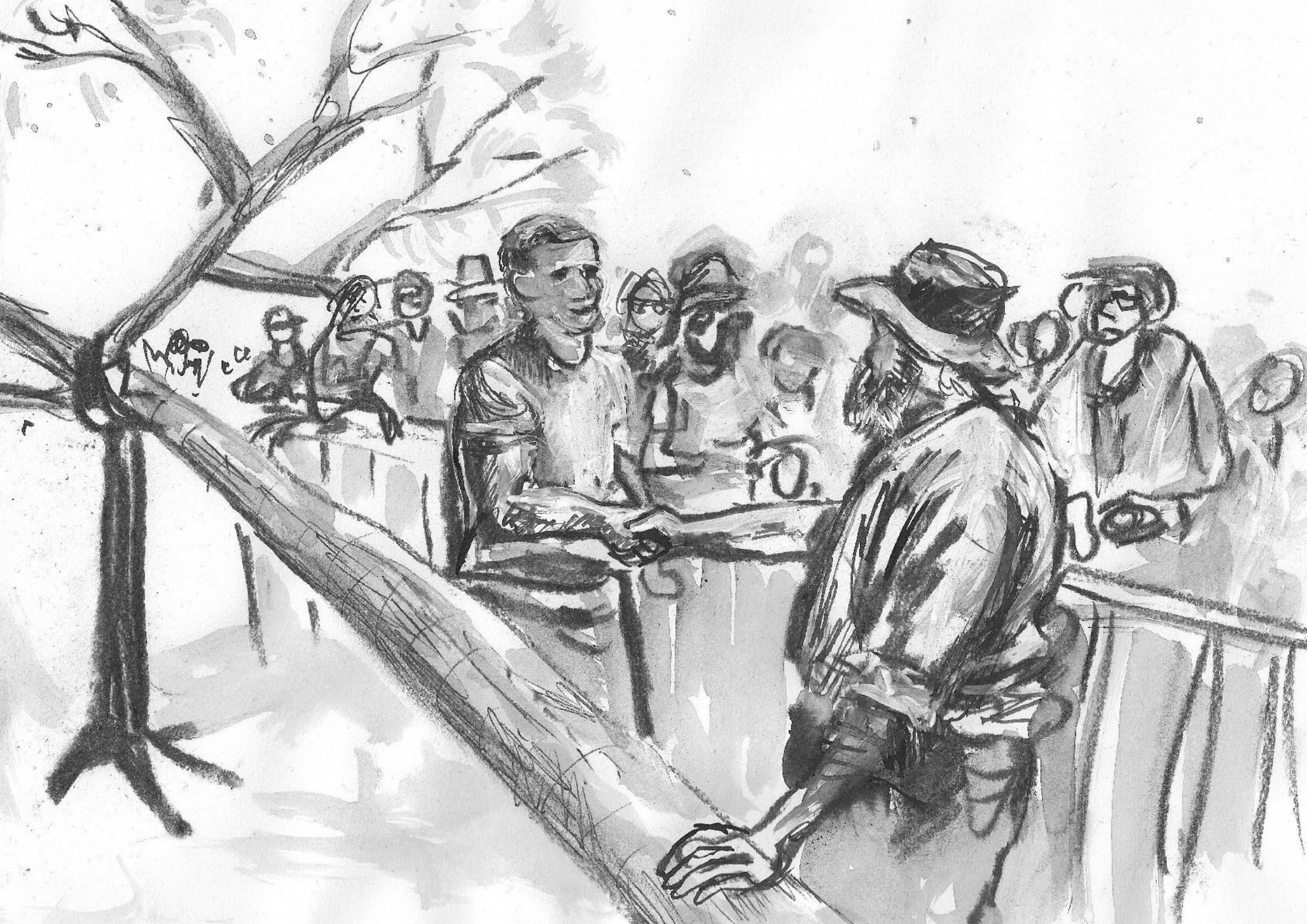
> ‘I feel so honoured to have watched this project grow and succeed. My leaf is a little treasure and I was left speechless seeing *The Tree* in person yesterday. It talked to me like it was a living breathing thing’ (The Daveys, quoted in Garton 2015).

Andrew Garton (2016, Interview) uses an anecdote to exemplify how *The Tree* continued to reveal itself as animate and speaking. He retells the story, that at the public unveiling of *The Tree* at Whittlesea Showgrounds in November 2011.

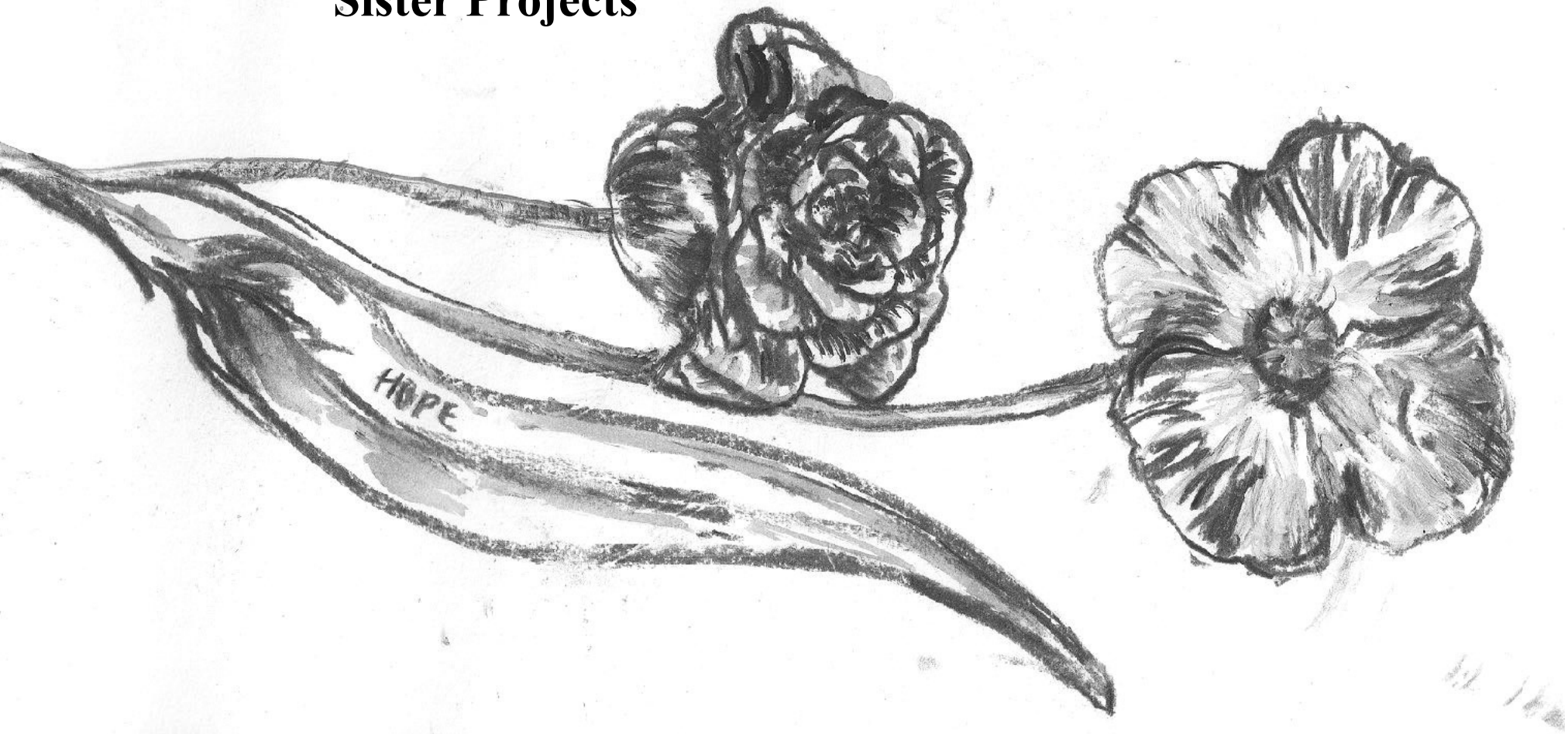
It was decided that Roland and Doug, would stamp out the words: 'We will never forget'. They had begun the words and so it was Doug's turn to put the last letter on and it was the 'T' in forget. This scene is recorded in the film, *Our Tree: Forged from Fire, Micro-Doc*, 2014. Roland and Doug are with *The Tree* and a crowd has gathered around the protective fencing, with people leaning in for a view and intent on watching.

In the footage you can see Doug pause and say to Roland, 'Do you know what that says, before I put the last letter on?'
Roland has a look and says 'Forge'
(he laughs).
Doug then says, 'Who thought of that?
(Doug stamps the last letter, then hands the stamps to Roland and shakes his hand).

Andrew recalls, 'No-one had thought of that. They put the 't' on and 'forge' became 'forget'. I spoke to them afterwards and they said both of us nearly burst out in tears . . . "Right up until this moment", he said, "This thing is talking to us"' (Garton 2016, Interview).



26 Fraternity -
a Leaf,
a Rose,
a Poppy -
Sister Projects



> ‘Along the way we became involved with a sister project - *The Iron Roses for Norway* another fine endeavour where our worldwide blacksmithing community has put in to help others.’ (Bruce Beamish 25.11.2012, *I Forge Iron*)

The Tree Project has also been described as ‘a monument to . . . the spirit of fraternity that springs from skilled blacksmiths across Australia and around the world’, and as something that brought out the ‘solidarity of blacksmiths worldwide’ (About the fires, *The Tree Project Website* 2016).

During the making of *The Tree* and just afterwards, two other blacksmithing memorial projects asked for contributions from around the world; *The Iron Rose of Norway* and *The Ypres Poppy Project*. These were described by those involved with *The Tree Project* as ‘sister projects’, and are of interest as they offer contrasts and comparisons with *The Tree Project*. They also utilise the idea of a global blacksmithing community.

The projects were networked via blacksmith communities and organisations offering further opportunities for reciprocity and exchange. For the *Tree* makers it was an opportunity to express their thanks to those who had supported them by making leaves, to reciprocate to this broader community.

Iron Rose for Norway

Iron Rose for Norway was a response to terrorist attacks in Oslo and Utoya on July 22nd 2011, when 77 people were killed - the majority of them teenagers. It was created by Tobbe Malm and Tone Mörk Karlsrud as an international blacksmith project and was inspired by the masses of red and white roses placed into the streets after the events. Since August 2011 roses, have been created by 850 blacksmiths from 25 countries and more than 100 of the relatives of victims and survivors have visited Tobbe's workshop and forged roses in memory of their loved ones (tobbemalm.com).

Iron Rose for Norway is referred to as a sister project to *The Tree Project* (Beamish, 25.11.2012; *I Forge Iron;* Gibson 2013a; *Timeline, The Tree Project* Website). The involvement of *The Tree* makers, in making roses for Norway, is evident in

the documentation of the roses, advertising, call outs, demonstrations of how to make roses and photos of the outcomes which appeared in *The Drift*, *The Tree Project* Facebook page, and on *I Forge Iron*. Several roses were taken to Norway by a representative of the ABA(Vic) blacksmiths and this was reciprocated when Oslo blacksmiths presented the Australian visitor with an iron rose and two copper leaves for *The Tree* (Swartz, 2013).

Line Gjermshusengen's research on memorialisation of the Oslo Terror attacks, suggests that *Iron Rose for Norway* is purposely described by its initiators as not commissioned. By doing this they clearly mark a distance from the official memorial process, and link their project to spontaneous memorials, indicating that the project has a more genuine and "authentic" origin, like an extension of the spontaneous memorials (Gjermshusengen, p. 5).

Poppies

After *The Tree* was installed, *The Ypres Poppy Project* called out to 'the global blacksmithing community' (Gibson 2016b, p. 17). *The Ypres Poppies Project* in Belgium was a week-long 'International Blacksmithing Event' where poppies were made for *The World War 1 Peace Monument* (yprespeacemonument.com). Poppies were also made by Blacksmiths and Farriers worldwide, to contribute to the set number of 2016 poppies. The monument is a cenotaph with the image of a single Flanders poppy, surrounded by a field of 2016 steel poppies, and a protective decorative black-smithed fence.

This project, like the roses for Norway, again offered the possibility of reciprocity between the blacksmiths on a global scale. Kenny explained that, '*The Poppy Project* is a different thing, but sort of the same thing. I felt obliged and so did the group of us . . . as soon as I heard about that. They helped us out, so we're gonna do something for them for sure' (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Many of *The Tree Project* and ABA(Vic) Inc. blacksmiths got involved. Shane Kenny said that he experienced the same generosity (as with *The Tree Project*) when he went to organise the laser cutting for the poppies. He needed a quote for the metal and laser cutting the shapes of the poppies, and then received a generous donation - 'Shane, I had a talk to my laser cutter . . . we think it's a good cause, and you've got 200 poppies arriving next Friday' (Kenny 2016, Interview).

Reciprocity and known ways of Community Engagement

Throughout, there is a strong reciprocal connection between *The Tree Project*, *Iron Rose for Norway* and *Poppies for Ypres.* All three quickly became global projects through the incredible emotional response from blacksmiths across the world. Similar processes of inclusion and methods of working with people and organisations were used, to transform an idea into a material object whilst engaging a world-wide community.

The relationship between the projects was documented through *The Tree Project* Facebook page and website posts. Global communication was enhanced by the internet, particularly social platforms such as Facebook, and *I Forge Iron*. This ease in communication enabled a ‘fraternity of blacksmiths’. Roses and poppies were forged in the same places as *The Tree*: at the Blacksmiths' Barn in Bundoora and the Whittlesea factory (with hot scones dropped in again!).

What emerges from the sister projects is the awareness of the power of artworks made by communities and the instant flow of

reciprocity and collaboration between them. Tobbe Malm (quoted in *The Iron Rose*), explains that the strong engagement of international blacksmiths, ‘is reflected not only in the thoughts we have shared, but also in letters, emails, warm meetings between people and of course through the fantastic roses that have been forged’. The international blacksmith community contributed to all three projects, but also, the projects assisted in creating a global community.

27 Summary

Part of the aim of this research was to find out the meaning of *The Tree* as a 'permanent public artwork made by community members'. *The Tree Project*'s openness for people to contribute personal meaning, has created an object which holds many meanings. In this regard, thousands of people would need to be interviewed, in order to understand the full extent of its meaning.

> 'I go back to the ripple effect and . . . unknown, unintended, intangible outcomes, [in] a project like this, that isn't directed from outside but emerges from within' (Garton 2016, Interview).

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There are many perspectives about what *The Tree* is, what it does, and what it means. Each time I asked someone what *The Tree* meant to them, I would get a different response. Whether people regarded *The Tree* as art, memorial or simply a tree was to do with how *The Tree* related to them and their situation and perhaps their past experiences and ideas about art and memorial. Its ability to be many things resided in its power to carry meaning even though it was materially a lump of steel.

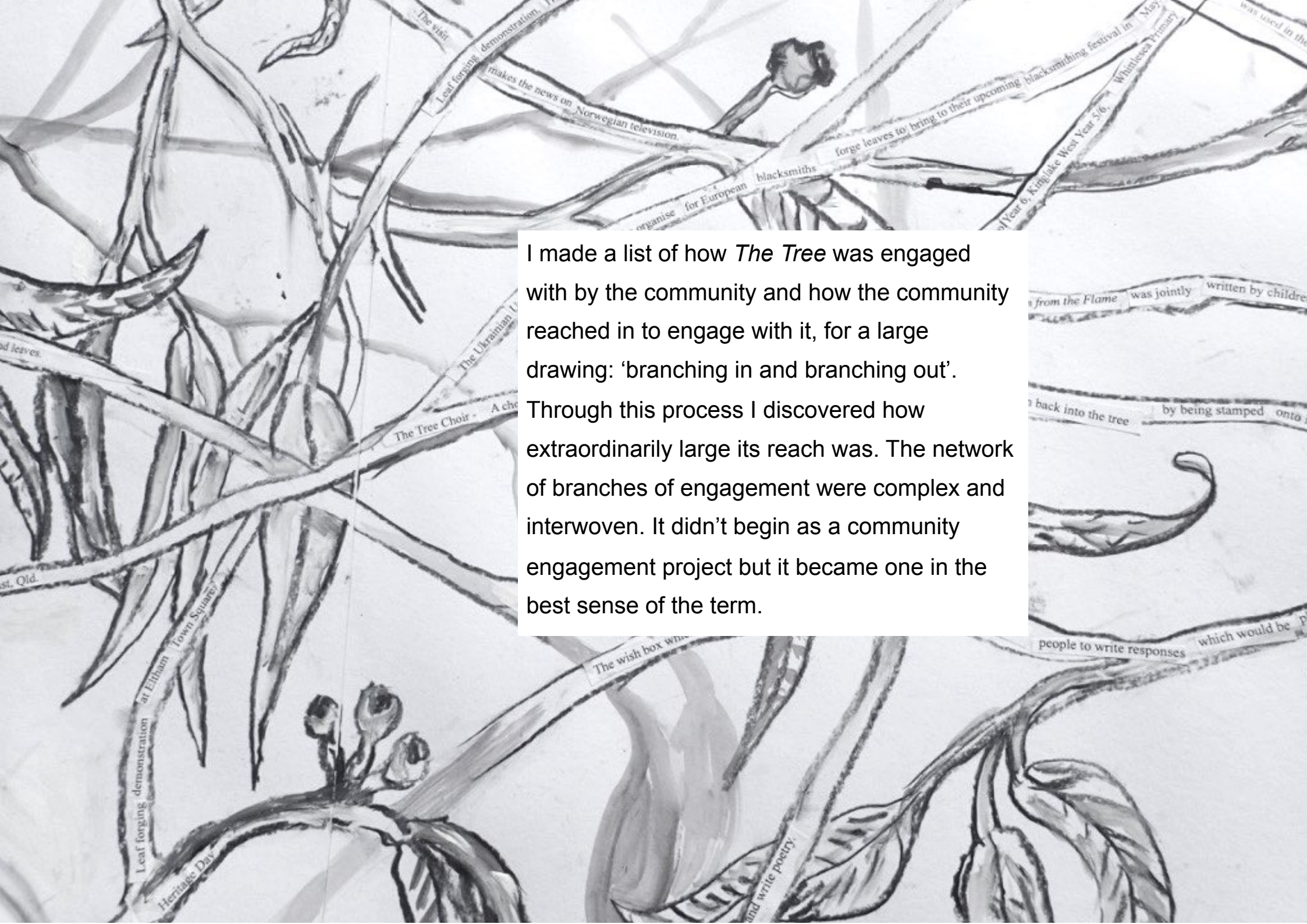
Mulligan and Smith (2010) argue that the social impacts of community art, ‘are like the tip of an iceberg,’ - they are unpredictable, indirect, and ‘very hard to detect, let alone measure’ (p. 108). It is in this spirit of the unmeasurable, and unknowable that I offer what I discovered as a small part of the immense value of the project.

What it certainly didn’t fit into was any argument that valued public art as urban revitalisation, or something that attracts tourists or investors (Schuermans et al. 2012). Its benefits were not economic or material. It was, instead, focussed on the social and emotional: towards grief, support and healing.

Community Engagement and Inclusion

One of the most valuable attributes of *The Tree Project* was that anybody could be involved. Along the way opportunities for people to be involved, were taken up with enthusiasm. There were occasions when people with specialist skills or equipment, happened to be nearby, took a detour to assist, and were honoured and overjoyed to be involved. Many people had been wanting to help the community after the fires and *The Tree* provided them with a method. *The Tree Project* acknowledged the loss and trauma of the fires, and offered the opportunity to participate in a process of

commemoration. The object of *The Tree* and its process of being made, fulfilled a range of emotional needs. The organic, unregulated and unstructured nature of the project, allowed participation by everyone who wanted to take up the opportunity to be involved.



I made a list of how *The Tree* was engaged with by the community and how the community reached in to engage with it, for a large drawing: ‘branching in and branching out’. Through this process I discovered how extraordinarily large its reach was. The network of branches of engagement were complex and interwoven. It didn’t begin as a community engagement project but it became one in the best sense of the term.

Voice

The Tree through both process and object, has a role carrying/bearing voices, stories and *The Tree* through both process and object, had/has an ongoing role carrying/bearing voices, stories and memories. This is not only through the written text but also through the conversations and dialogue that happened during the process of making. *The Tree*, *The Wishbox*, *The Strathewen Community Memorial*, all demonstrate the attribution of value and importance to people's personal voices. Suzi Gablik (1995) says, 'giving each person a voice is what builds community and makes art socially responsive. Interaction becomes the medium of expression, an empathetic way of seeing through another's eyes' (p. 82). This interaction was also

part of *The Tree's* method of giving 'voice', through providing a space for people to tell their stories, a place on which to lay their words (into leaves and branches or in *The Wish-box*) and five years of conversations, about the loss, recovery and healing. These voices are individual, but also gathered together to create a collaborative communal voice. When people contribute text to these projects they create both personal and communal meaning.

Process Toward Object

This was also community engagement towards an object. This object, which was perceived as being permanent, was the focus. For five years, it was an imagined object which was glimpsed in parts (leaves, twigs and branches).

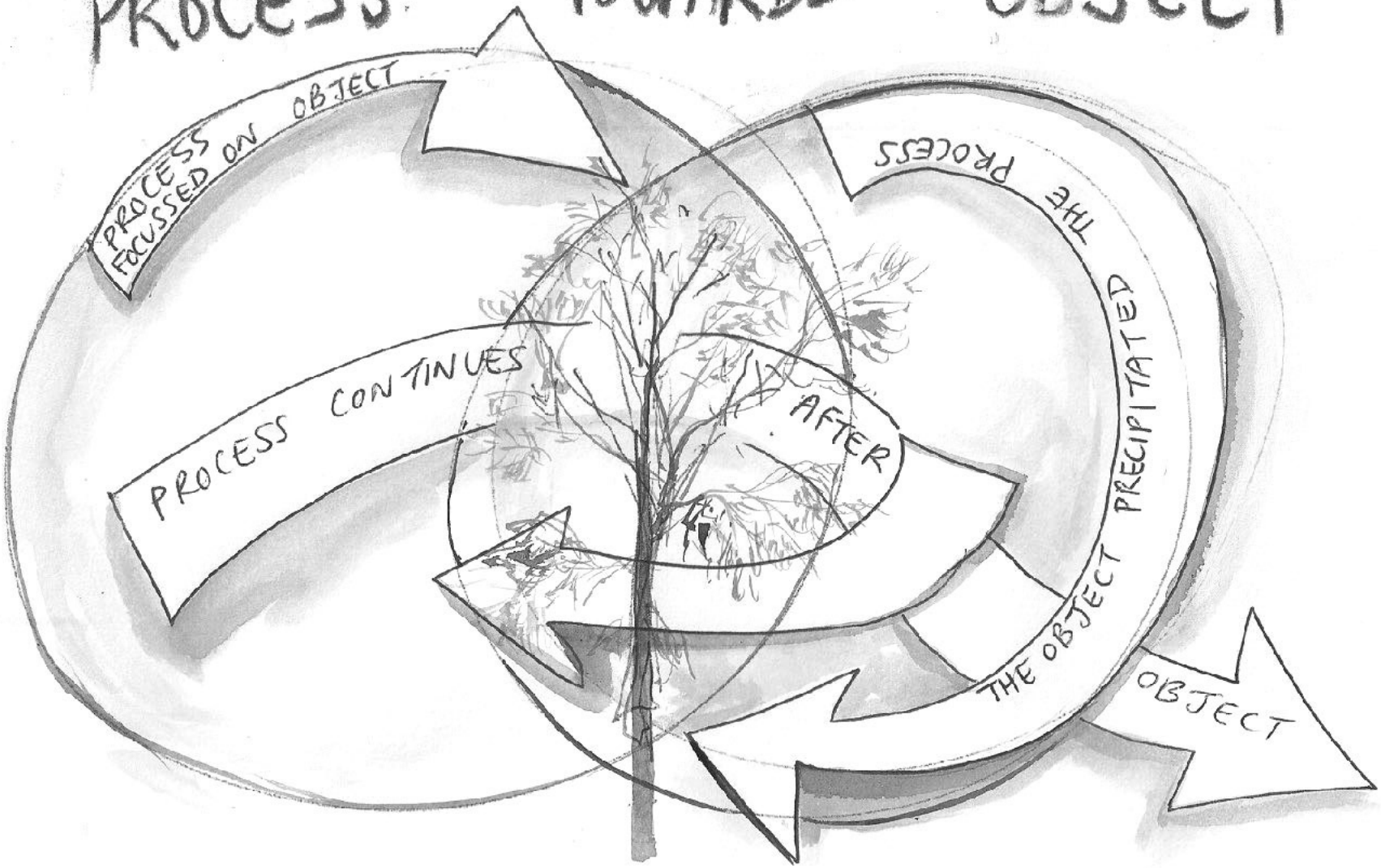
The project differed from other community art projects, because there was a permanent public object as the outcome. It could be argued that the process was the most important aspect of *The Tree,* but the outcome of the completed *Tree* was integral to the project and this end product drove the process. There is difference between process and object, but the two are inextricably linked - because the process creates the object. Process and object overlap - a) the object was present during the process, (as material and parts and focus), and, b) after the object was made the process continues in the form of making benches and sculptures, landscaping, planting, maintenance and meeting together.

THE TREE LAUNCH EVENT

The object (*The Tree*) sitting in Strathewen, continues to grow, to acquire more meanings: a symbol and memorial of the process, and of the reason it was undertaken. Amanda Gibson said that the object, ‘had to be good enough for the bereaved community and be beautiful for people who didn’t participate in the process’ (Gibson 2016, Interview). She felt that this project differed from community art in that the object needed to relate to others who weren’t involved in making the project. It was also a symbol of the love and care that was put into it (ibid.).

Perhaps we can envisage it as circular. The object was imagined by Salty and the blacksmiths, then it precipitated the process. The imaginary object caused it, demanded it, procured it. The process worked towards the object, but the object drew the process towards it.

PROCESS TOWARDS OBJECT



Excess

The Tree was also an excess. An excess of leaves to begin with, which created something huge, time consuming and physical, carrying the weight of emotional purpose. It was not restrained or functional. It was held in the imagination and was allowed to grow organically, become unwieldy, and follow its own course. The makers were dragged into it, and along with it. The excess of *The Tree* was accommodated - put together, engineered and installed in a way that catered for what it had become. Doug Tarrant indicated that at first the engineers said it couldn't be done, but *The Tree* demanded that the impossible and impractical - be done.

This narrative of *The Tree* became large because I felt that telling the story in detail conveyed its size and complexity. Part of the reciprocal direction that this research took, was that it was written for the community of *The Tree* in mind, and with the idea of honouring *The Tree Project*. This portrait of *The Tree* has not been limited by the conventions of PhD research, and so it was allowed to become excessive in an effort to explain the excess of *The Tree Project* itself.

Towards the Meaning of Community Making Permanent Public Artworks

The Tree Project was powerful because it was a grassroots project. It began with the idea of one person and then other people became joined in, in a process of inclusion which didn't restrict who was involved, or what was contributed. Its makers were mostly non-professionals and non-artists flying the face of the usual ‘need’ for professionals to be involved. That people cared, seemed to be the real meaning behind the project.

What it teaches us, in terms of public art and memorial, is that grassroots needs to be supported, in every possible way, if it takes care to be inclusive and does not cause harm to the community. It was a huge physical and emotional undertaking over a long time, which was achieved because the makers saw that it was fulfilling a particular need in the community, and the community responded back, acknowledging that it was good.

28 The Walkers

I wanted to hear about *The Tree* from people who had not participated in the project. One day when I was working with Michelle Bishop on a school project, she told me that she had walked to *The Tree* with her friend Wendy Fox. Both Wendy and Michelle had each come across the blacksmiths' demonstrations of making the leaves at different times. They had watched the leaves being made and heard the explanation of the project from the blacksmiths. This connection with *The Tree* continued, through hearing and reading about its progress.

Wendy said that although she could understand the concept, *The Tree* was difficult to visualise:

> ‘The guys were there and the girls were there and you could stamp whatever you wanted to . . . it was a kind of moving thing at that level. It was still just pieces of metal but you could see people really quite moved about it, there on the day. There wasn't a tree to really look at, just all these scattered fragments which were going to become . . . [the] sum of all these parts. *The Tree* was going to become the sum of all these parts which were like little ideas and little memories . . . they were very personal I believe . . . So from there, I was very curious and felt I was engaged with it too’ (Fox 2017, Interview).

Michelle said that seeing the blacksmiths working on the leaves sparked her interest, ‘I want to see this thing finished. I’ve seen little bits of it and I’ve heard how much is involved in making this and now for me personally I want to see it erected’ (Bishop 2017, Interview).

The two women often went on walks together, so they decided to park at Kinglake and walk into Strathewen from there. They assumed it was at the Strathewen Primary school so they went there first. I found it interesting, that like me, they didn’t know where it was and they hadn’t researched the location before they went - they hadn't expected that they would have to look for *The Tree*. They also met several people on their search, who didn’t know where it was, and then they met a fellow in a car who was also looking for it. By then they had been walking for four hours.

Wendy continues the story of the journey:

‘And someone thought it was up near the footy oval which is up Chads Creek Road so we chugged along down Chads Creek Road to the oval and we really didn't know what we were looking for. I mean I was expecting it to be kind of imposing and easy to spot. And we walked around further and by this time we’d walked a few extra kilometres, and then . . .
and it was really quite . . .
I mean I was really moved by it because when we saw it, it was just all of a sudden there.
It was just suddenly there.
We had walked close to it, because it was in this back drop of all these other trees . . .
It wasn't like: here’s the tree!
You almost felt it, when you got there’ (Fox 2017, Interview).

‘It really blended in with its environment, it was like it was always there’ (Bishop 2017, Interview).

‘Peaceful but powerful is how you would describe it’ (Fox 2017, Interview).

The women felt that the journey of searching through Strathewen was important as it prepared them for *The Tree*. Walking through the township, gave them a better understanding of the community. Their understanding of *The Tree* as an animate and living thing also echoed the way the makers felt about it as an entity.

Michelle: ‘It had its own presence when you saw it. It had its own presence’.

Wendy: ‘It reeled us in - these people will find me’.

Michelle: ‘When they see me they will have to come close to me to discover what I’m about’.

Wendy: ‘Very profound - whoever placed it there - there were a lot of places they could have put it, and I don't know why they placed it there. It just appeared’.

(Bishop and Fox 2017, Interview)

Wendy and Michelle had come across *The Strathewen Community Memorial* first, and they described how visual it was, and how they read the words. Afterwards they came across *The Tree*, and they knew that there were words on the leaves, but they were inaccessible. They could imagine the words and who participated in writing them, but felt that it was very private.

I asked them if they touched *The Tree.*
'Oh yeah, it's like a magnet!'
Wendy felt it had a lot of energy, 'coming from within but it's also got everyone else's energy, from the visitors, the people engaging with it from the outside too' (Fox 2017, Interview). She pointed out to me that each one of the 3,000 leaves may represent not just one person, but a whole family. Michelle said, that thinking about how it was physically created gave it, the force of needing to touch it (Bishop 2017, Interview).

Debbie Qadri 2018

‘But to see the sum of all those parts meant . . . emotionally and all those leaves put together - Beauty’ (Fox 2017, Interview).

Wendy said, ‘I really get why we couldn't just find it that day. It’s for you to find, it’s for you to discover, it’s for everyone to discover, when it’s the right time for them . . .
If you've got the inclination to go there, it’s worth not being able to put it in your GPS’ (Fox 2017, Interview).

‘It’s like a hidden gem. Go and find out for yourself’ (Fox 2017, Interview).

Timeline

This timeline has been constructed from a variety of documents and attempts to give a comprehensive record of the work that went into making *The Tree*. In keeping with my policy in this text of avoiding references to who did what and donations, [1] I have removed any references to businesses and companies unless they denote the place in which something happened. Places have been included but do not reflect whether the place has provided work towards the tree for payment or voluntarily.

2009

February 7: Black Saturday fires

February 15: First callout on *I Forge Iron* by Salty.

March 2: First leaves received in the post

March 3**:** The first leaves arrive in Australia from Traverse City, Michigan USA.

[1] With the policy of either all or none, I have tended to leave out references to who did what in t *The Tree* project. The Tree Project pages of the ABA(Vic) Inc. website and *The Tree Project* Facebook page provide this information. However in saying that, my philosophy for writing up my research (this text) has been to carefully acknowledge the contributions of knowledge and experience which I gathered from interview participants and through sourcing written text about the tree project in *I Forge Iron*, the tree project website and Facebook and other documents and articles.

March 3: *The Tree Project* website was established online with photos of gumleaves and forging instructions for Blacksmiths.

March 17: Sponsorship for a leaf is advertised on ABA(Vic) Inc. *Tree Project W*ebsite.

March 23: Decision announced to give tree to the Strathewen Community (*Tree Project* Website).

March 21: Leaf forging day and stamping people names into leaves, Warrandyte Festival.

March 22: Leaf forging demonstration at the Hildebrand Festival, Cottles Bridge.

March: Leaf collection points are set up in London by the British Artist Blacksmith Association and in California by the Californian Blacksmith Association. The Ukrainian Union of Artist Blacksmiths organise for European Blacksmiths to forge leaves to bring to their upcoming blacksmithing festival in May.

April 5: Leaf forging and name stamping at the first Hurstbridge Farmers Market.

April 8: Four boxes of leaves arrive from NSW, Kyabram, New York, and Maryland.

April 27: Leaf forging demonstration, Shire Council Offices, Kinglake

April 28: Four parcels of leaves and gumnuts arrive from the USA and Canada.

May 2: Leaf forging demonstration at Lake Mountain (Marysville to Lake Mountain Fire Relief Ride)

May 3: Leaf forging demonstration, Hurstbridge Farmers Market

May 9:	Leaf forging demonstration at the Alexandra Market, Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum
May 8-11:	At the 7th International Blacksmith Festival in Ivano-Frankivsk an Australian representative is presented with leaves forged across Europe for inclusion in *The Tree.*
May16:	Leaf Forging demonstration at St Andrews Market, Wishbox present.
May 23:	Leaf forging demonstration at the Bushfire Rebuilding Expo at Whittlesea Showgrounds
June 7:	First branch of *The Tree* was forged and 75 leaves added to it (600 leaves received so far)
June 13:	Leaf forging demonstration at Eltham Town Square The first major branch made and 75 leaves were added to it
June 21:	Leaf and branch forging demonstration at the Upper Yarra Historical Society, (13 blacksmiths and over 90 leaves made) at Yarra Junction, The Wish Box collected wishes
July 4:	Forging leaves at St Andrews Market
July12:	Leaf forging demonstration at Marysville Market
July 13:	Leaf forging demonstration at CFA headquarters, Burwood
August 1-2,	The Festival of Leaf-making, Blacksmiths forging weekend
August 11:	*The tree* is officially offered to the Community of Strathewen. The Community Renewal Association formally accept *The Tree* to be placed in Strathewen.

September 18: ABA(Vic) Inc. 20th anniversary event at Briars Park, Mt Martha, with forging demonstrations and branch with 400 leaves on display

September 22-25: Forging Demonstrations by Blacksmiths from Victoria and Queensland (working together), at the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Conference at Gold Coast, Queensland.

August 25: From the blacksmithing group *Lou Foc*, France, a box of 75 leaves arrives (accompanied by a photo of all the blacksmiths, including children, who made them)

November 8: Forging demonstration at the Eltham Town Fair

Nov 15: Forging demonstration at Arthurs Creek Hall, as part of Nillumbik Open Gardens event

December 10: Flown in from London and California, boxes arrive containing leaves from over 20 countries across Europe, the UK, USA and Canada.

2010

February	All the leaves are photographed and catalogued.
April 17:	Forging of sponsored leaves at Gulf Station Heritage Day (Yarra Glen)
April 21:	Twigs for *The Tree* go on display to the public in the Black Saturday Gallery outside the hearing rooms of the Victorian 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission.
May 17:	Two bluestones weighing 3 and 5 tonne are moved into Strathewen One will sit at the base of *The Tree*, the other intended for a bronze plaque to bear the names of sponsors and the story of *The Tree*.
June 20:	Twig Forging Day **-** Twigs are forged from stainless steel under the Massey power-hammer and sledge hammers at the ABA(Vic) Inc. Blacksmiths' Workshop in Bundoora (Story in *The Drift*, August 2010, Edition 79 by Doug Tarrant).
August 6:	A comprehensive gallery of all the international leaves goes online. http://www.treeproject.abavic.org.au/leaf-gallery_EU.html
October 30:	A small group of volunteers sort leaves into family and community groups so they can be together on the same branch - by the end of the day, over 500 leaves have been sorted and checked.

November: Jeremy from Michigan, USA, one of the first blacksmiths to send leaves to Australia, visits and takes part in welding leaves to branches with the Australian blacksmiths.

2011

February: The engineering is completed. The final structural diagrams of *the Tree* and substructure have been made.

February 6: 'Art of the Ashes: The 2009 Emergence - Art on the Move', exhibition. Demonstrations at Federation Square - 3 forges, 4 anvils, 12 members.

April 8: Meeting held with stakeholders and organisations who would potentially assist the siting of *The Tree* at Strathewen to discuss all requirements for the installation (Nillumbik Council, Arts Victoria, The Strathewen Community, ABA(Vic) Inc. and AECOM landscapers). Work begins on feasibility study brief as part of the work towards a planning permit.

June 11: Final images of sponsored leaves sent out to individual sponsors. Over 3000 images of leaves have been photographed, processed and emailed out to supporters of the project.

July 5: $25,000 is donated to purchase the steel needed for the solid steel trunk .

July 22:	The events in Norway occur which precipitate the *Iron Rose for Norway* project.
August:	*The Tree* site (behind the Tennis Courts) at Strathewen is chosen.
September:	*The Tree Project* Facebook site is started.
November 9:	A Social Impact Statement is presented by Arts Victoria to Nillumbik Council and representatives from the Strathewen Community.
December:	The site at Strathewen is surveyed and a meeting is held with the landscapers.
December:	January 2012: Every leaf is counted and sorted into groups in preparation for welding. The count is 3033 with around 120 more yet to be made.

2012

January 18:	Four branches sent for electro-polishing
February:	The stainless steel for the trunk leaves Taiwan and arrives in Australia some weeks later.
March:	Ratio of leaves to twigs and twigs to branches is determined, with boxes of twigs and instructions for the welders prepared.
April 20:	Designs are submitted for the landscaping around the site of *The Tree* .

April: The Tree becomes a sister project to the Roses for Norway Project: answering a call to the world's blacksmiths to forge steel roses for a memorial for the people killed in the massacre on island of Utøya and in Oslo.

May 7: *The Tree Project* is given $75,000 to cover the costs of landscaping the site where *The Tree* will stand.

June 25: Final location of *The Tree* is determined by the Strathewen Community and the final surveying is carried out.

July 19-20: Over two days the trunk is forged at Overall Forge, Ettamogah, NSW. In a landmark feat of blacksmithing, the trunk is forged from a 2 tonne stainless steel ingot under an industrial press at Overall Forge. Taking two days to forge, this is the longest and finest taper ever forged under this press. Over 3000 people worldwide follow the event online.

July 31: The Bushfires Royal Commission Implementation Monitor's Report is tabled in the Victorian Parliament - the front and back covers feature images of leaves from *The Tree.*

August 14, 16, 27: Twelve large stainless steel branches are forged by a team of three blacksmiths under vintage power hammers at the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Vic) workshop in Bundoora.

September 4: One of the Head Blacksmiths for *The Tree Project* arrives in Norway to meet the Project Manager of *Iron Rose for Norway* and present a gift of Australian-made steel roses. The visit makes the news on Norwegian television .

October 17: 'Eucalyptus Rose', a gift of a rose with eucalyptus leaves arrives from the *Iron Rose of Norway Project.*

November 8: YouTube channel launched which shows footage of the trunk and branch forging, including a time lapse of the trunk forging and interviews with the blacksmiths, https://www.youtube.com/user/AusBlacksmiths.

November 17, 18, and 24, 25: Main *Tree* branches are displayed, blacksmithing demonstration and a rose from Norway on display, at Dunmoochin, Cottles Bridge, (part of the Nillumbik Open Studios event) .

December: 200 bronze gumnuts are cast for *The Tree* at Blueprint Sculpture Foundry in Footscray.

2013

March 15: The trunk arrives from Albury to be stored at Brunton Engineering in Somerton until the branches are ready to be attached.

March 21: Steel welding benches are constructed by the St. Andrews Men's Shed which will be used for the assembling of branches. The assembly factory in Whittlesea is provided and is cleaned by volunteers.

March 26: Three blacksmiths from Belgium who forged leaves for *The Tree* during the Ukrainian Festival in 2009, visit the site of *The Tree* in Strathewen and the factory in Whittlesea to see the branches and leaves.

March 26: Three local artists spend a day sorting through over 3000 leaves, putting them into groups of 24 that will sit well together on a branch.

April: The long process of photographing and cataloging each leaf begins with the aim of recording where each of these leaves will be on the final installed *Tree*

June: Local welders start piecing together the 3,500 leaves and hundreds of branch segments.

July 22: *The Tree* is visited by young men of Roma State College, Queensland, (participating in an exchange project with Eltham College), which included online communication

and then travelling to each school and area. The focus of the program was rebuilding community after natural disaster, as Eltham students had been affected by fires and Roma students by floods .

The Roma State College students had raised money for *The Tree.* They worked on *The Tree Project* for a day, welding and forging, with some of them making leaves.

August: TIG Welding classes: a volunteer welding instructor teaches welding skills to local people, including a class of women.

September 7: *Spirit of the Tree* - Factory open day for local artists to take photographs, draw, paint and write poetry

September 15: Forging demonstration at the *Into the Light Festival*, at Whittlesea. Six finished branches on display for the public.

September 21: Whittlesea factory Open Day. Over 300 people visit to see the blacksmiths forging and many of the completed branches. The event was managed by three year 12 students from Plenty valley Christian College, as part of their event management studies.

October 9: The first of three main branches is welded and delivered to the Whittlesea factory.

October 19:	A support structure to carry the three main branches is built. This allows the entire canopy to be assembled upright before being welded to the trunk.
October 24:	The trunk is taken out of storage and bought to the Whittlesea factory. This is the first time all the components of *the Tree* are in the one place.
November 16:	The last of the 31 small branches are tack welded in place. For the first time the canopy can be seen in place.
November 21:	Main branches are welded onto the trunk over three nights - *The Tree* is finally complete ready for its first public display at the Whittlesea Showgrounds on November 30.
November 30:	*The Tree* Launch at Whittlesea Showgrounds

2014

February 14:	*The Tree* is installed
February 20 -	Installation and micro documentary of, *Our Tree - Forged by Fire*, shown at the exhibition, 'Five Years On', at South Morang
March 26:	Preparation of the rock for base of *The Tree - a* metre deep hole is drilled through the rock for the trunk to sit in and then the rock is split into half.
April 6:	Rock halves moved to sit around *The Tree*
April 15:	Working Day at *The Tree* site, carting and spreading rocks and mulch, and planting.
May 10:	The documentary film *OUR TREE - Forged from Fire*, shown on the Big screen at Federation Square, as part of the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, Melbourne (10 May, 13 May, 15 May, 19 May)
May 17:	Excavation and planting of 500 plants at *The Tree* site
31 August:	Forging demonstrations, and enamelled gum leaf pendant-making and the screenings of film of *Our Tree - Forged by Fire* at the *Wattle Festival* in Hurstbridge
September 25:	100 plants planted at *the tree* site
September:	Work begins on making the benches (which took 14 months to make, with two blacksmiths regularly working twice a week over 2015)

November 17: Mulching day at *The Tree* site

December 4: *The Tree* project wins the 'Recovery' category of the 2014 Fire Awareness Awards

December 11: Welding of branches that were knocked off the tree on its journey to Strathewen. Holes dug for the bench foundations and concrete poured.

2015

February 14 Installation Anniversary was celebrated

May 9: Day at *The Tree* site - planting, weeding, moving rocks, mulching and polishing and oiling the trunk

July 17: Mulching Day at *The Tree*

5 September: Work on the timber for the benches begins (Grey Gum from a storm felled tree at Kinglake)

25 October - December 6: *Tree* benches on display at the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition.

December 7: Benches removed from Yering Station.

December 18: Benches and sculptures based on local grass blades, installed at *The Tree* site.

2016

Jan 29:	Weeding day, plant guards are taken off the plants in the landscaping around *The Tree.*
February 6:	Polishing and oiling the branches at *The Tree* site, garden and bench maintenance.
April 23:	Ypres poppy forging, at Whittlesea factory.
May 2:	Short film, *Forged from Fire*, featured on ABC Open.

The above information was gathered from documents such as *The Drift*, *The Tree Project* Website, a timeline *Creating the Blacksmiths Tree* (Gibson 2013), and other research.

8 *The Great Wall of St Kilda*

A Portrait

Debbie Qadri

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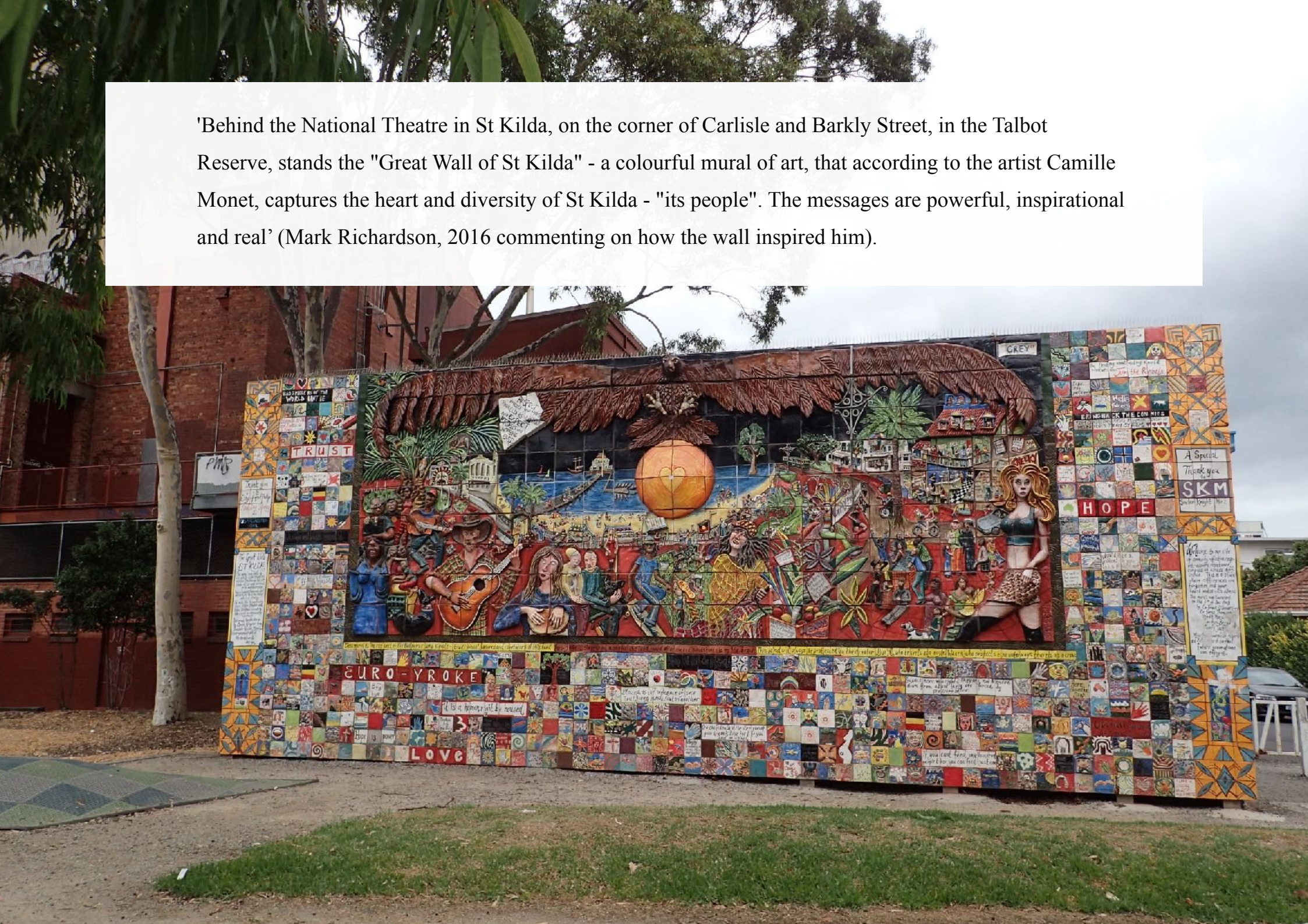
Notes:

References to interviewees, include ‘Interview’, to draw attention to them as primary sources of this research. For further information on the sources of quotes, please see the reference list included.

Spelling of Indigenous words often vary and in this document I have retained the spelling of the author I quote and otherwise I use the spelling in the mural. An exception is the clan name Yulukit Weelam, which had its spelling officially revised in 2017, by the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (https://heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Aboriginal_heritage/Yalukit_WillamThe_River_People_of_Port_Phillip).

'Behind the National Theatre in St Kilda, on the corner of Carlisle and Barkly Street, in the Talbot Reserve, stands the "Great Wall of St Kilda" - a colourful mural of art, that according to the artist Camille Monet, captures the heart and diversity of St Kilda - "its people". The messages are powerful, inspirational and real' (Mark Richardson, 2016 commenting on how the wall inspired him).



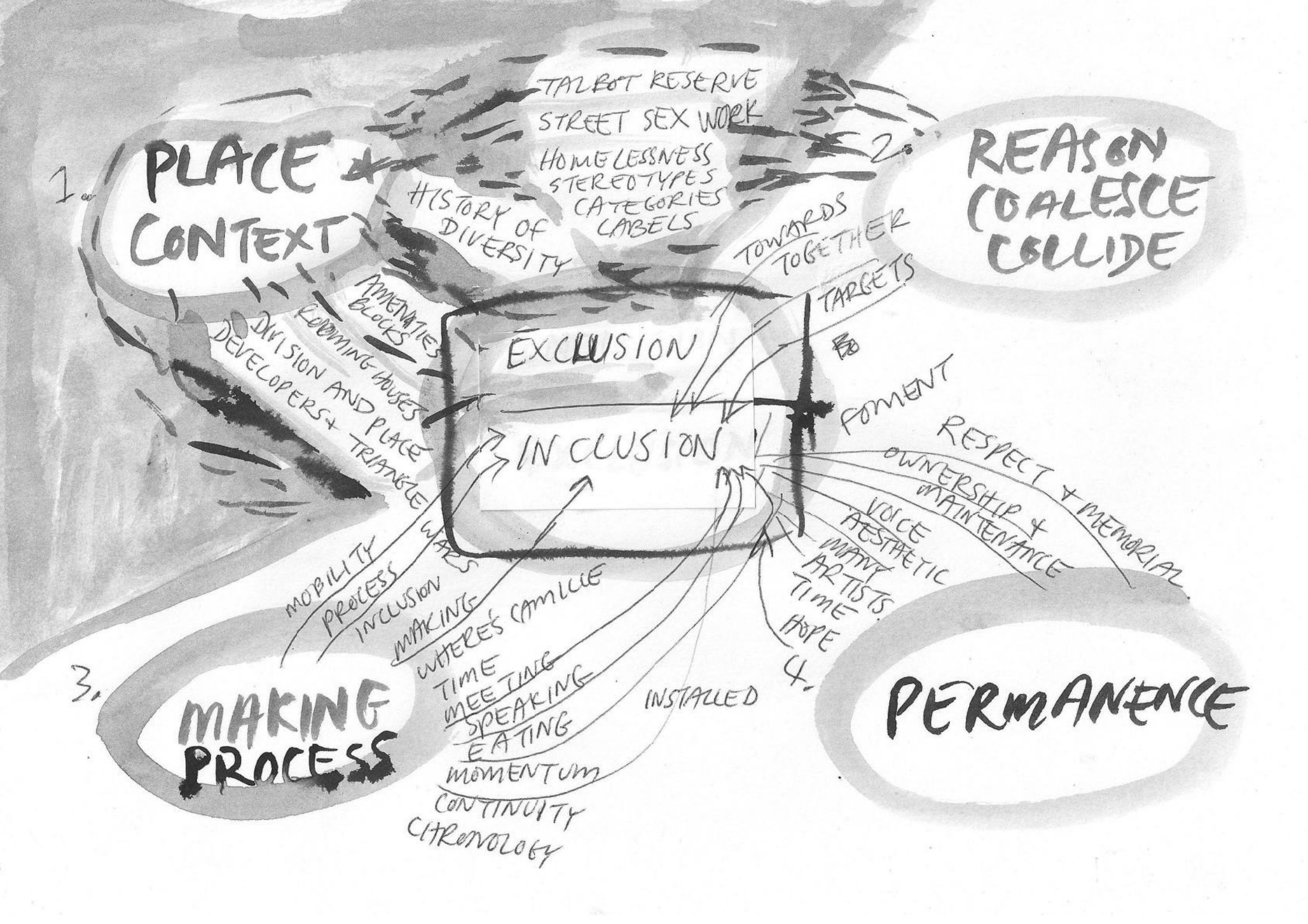
Introduction

The *Great Wall of St Kilda* is an artwork about inclusion and exclusion which are both inherently part of St Kilda's character and can be traced deep into the history of the place. It is an important artwork because it acknowledges this history of St Kilda and makes an argument for inclusion through both the process in which it was made and its role as an artwork in the public space of Talbot Reserve, in St Kilda. The subject matter of the artwork is 'the real St Kilda', not only representing what St Kilda looks like visually, but also exploring differing perspectives about the place - these rendered by the many people who were involved in making the mural.

Four areas (listed below), emerged in the research, which provide the framework for telling the story of the mural, but ideas of inclusion and exclusion are the most prominent themes in the narrative.

- *The context of the place* - the history of inclusion and exclusion in Talbot Reserve, as well as in the broader place of St Kilda
- *Reason, coalescence and collision* - how many things came together which led to the mural being imagined and then being made
- The *process* of making the mural
- *Permanence* - the meaning of the installed permanent artwork in Talbot Reserve

These four aspects are not separated neatly into sections in this portrait. They are tied to each other and also linked to the contexts of inclusion and exclusion in St Kilda. It has been difficult to draw this intermesh of the context of the mural, and the story of its making, into a single narrative.


1.
PLACE
CONTEXT
TALBOT RESERVE
STREET SEX WORK
HOMELESSNESS
STEREOTYPES
CATEGORIES
LABELS
HISTORY OF DIVERSITY
AMENITIES BLOCKS
ROOMING HOUSES
DIVISION AND PLACE
DEVELOPERS + TRIANGLE WARS
2.
REASON
COALESCE
COLLIDE
TOWARDS TOGETHER
TARGETS
EXCLUSION
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OWNERSHIP + MAINTENANCE
VOICE
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MANY ARTISTS
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4.
PERMANENCE
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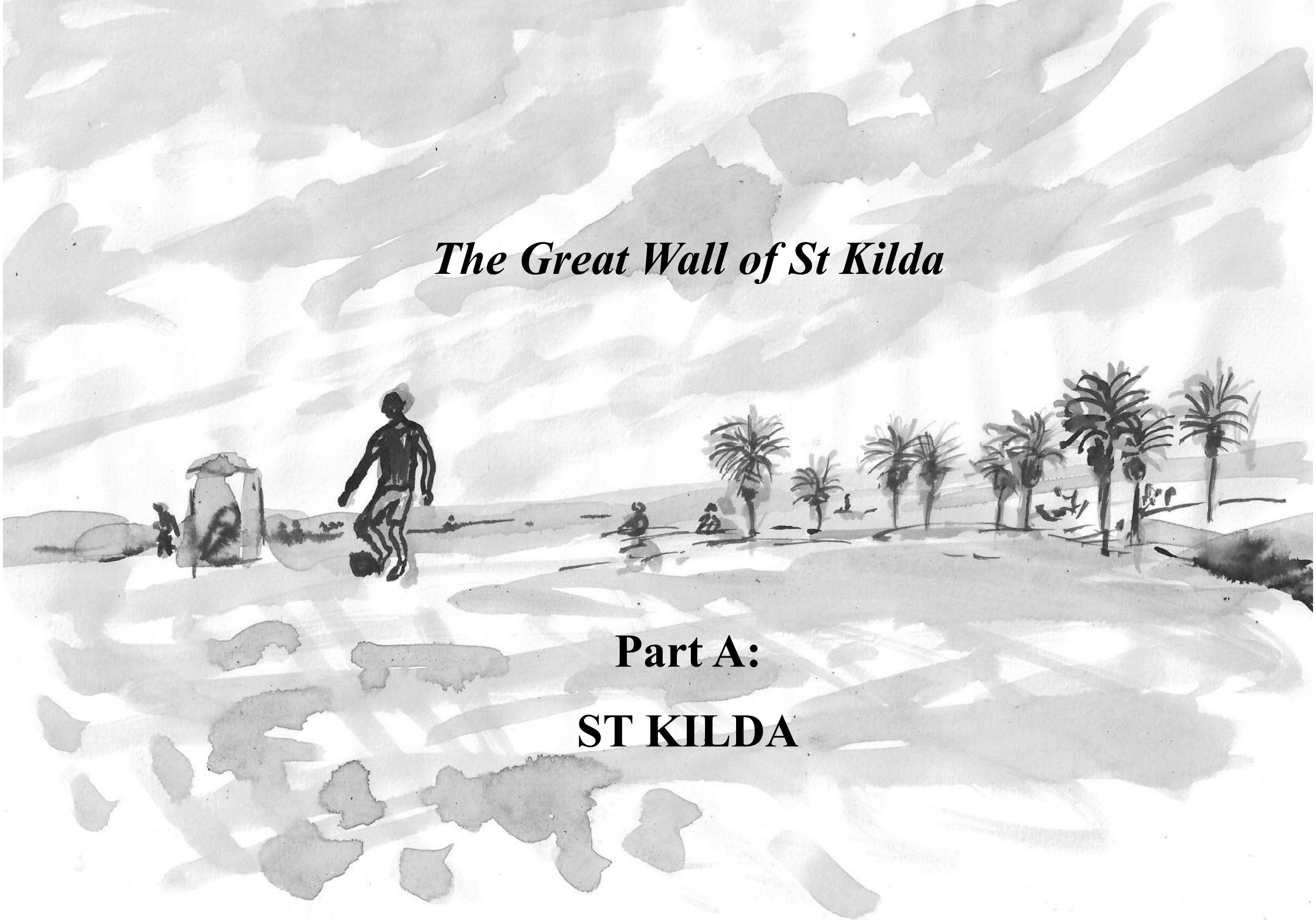
INCLUSION
MAKING
WHERE'S CAMILLE
TIME
MEETING
SPEAKING
EATING
MOMENTUM
CONTINUITY
CHRONOLOGY
INSTALLED
3.
MAKING
PROCESS

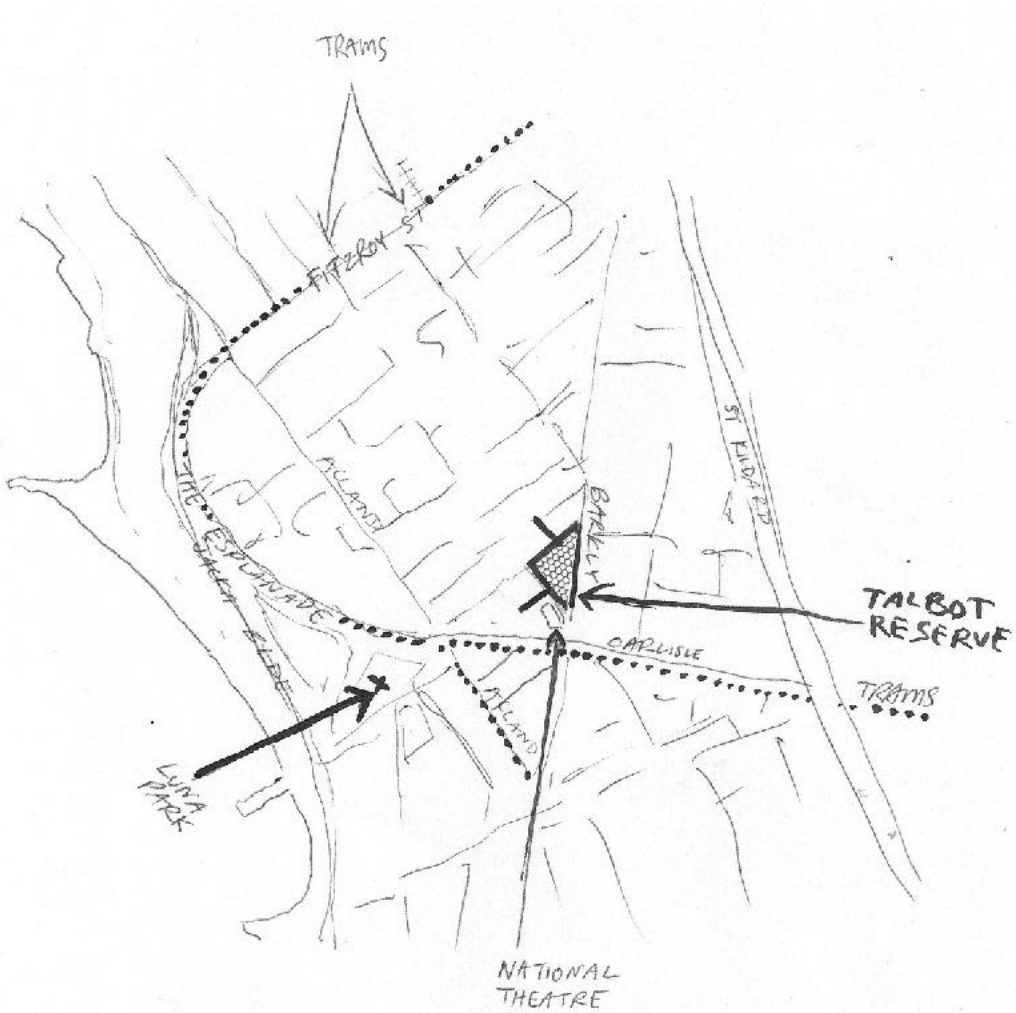


The Great Wall of St Kilda

Part A:

ST KILDA

1 We begin with the place of the mural



The *Great Wall of St Kilda* is in Talbot Reserve, near the corner of Barkly and Carlisle Streets and beside the National Theatre. It is a pleasant shady park, where people come to meet, rest or enjoy the play equipment. It is also used as a short-cut to Acland Street and the Esplanade. It is on Barkly St which cuts across the suburb and close to Carlisle Street, one of the main arteries of St Kilda, which along with Fitzroy Street and The Esplanade draw a steady flow of people in, through and out of St Kilda by tram, bus, car, bike and foot.

Many years ago, I worked in Acland Street as a waitress. I rode my motorbike to work along Carlisle Street, past the National Theatre, then out again in the early hours of the morning, back this same way.

Long before I worked in St Kilda, I visited many times as an interstate tourist, on tram or train and then by foot. Like millions of others, I have been drawn to St Kilda as a *place.* I have explored Fitzroy Street, Acland Street, Luna Park and the beaches. I walked out to the end of the long St Kilda pier and explored the wandering paths of the foreshore rock gardens. Later in my early twenties St Kilda held fame in my social circles for its marvellous dark aquarium where giant cichlids trawled tanks.

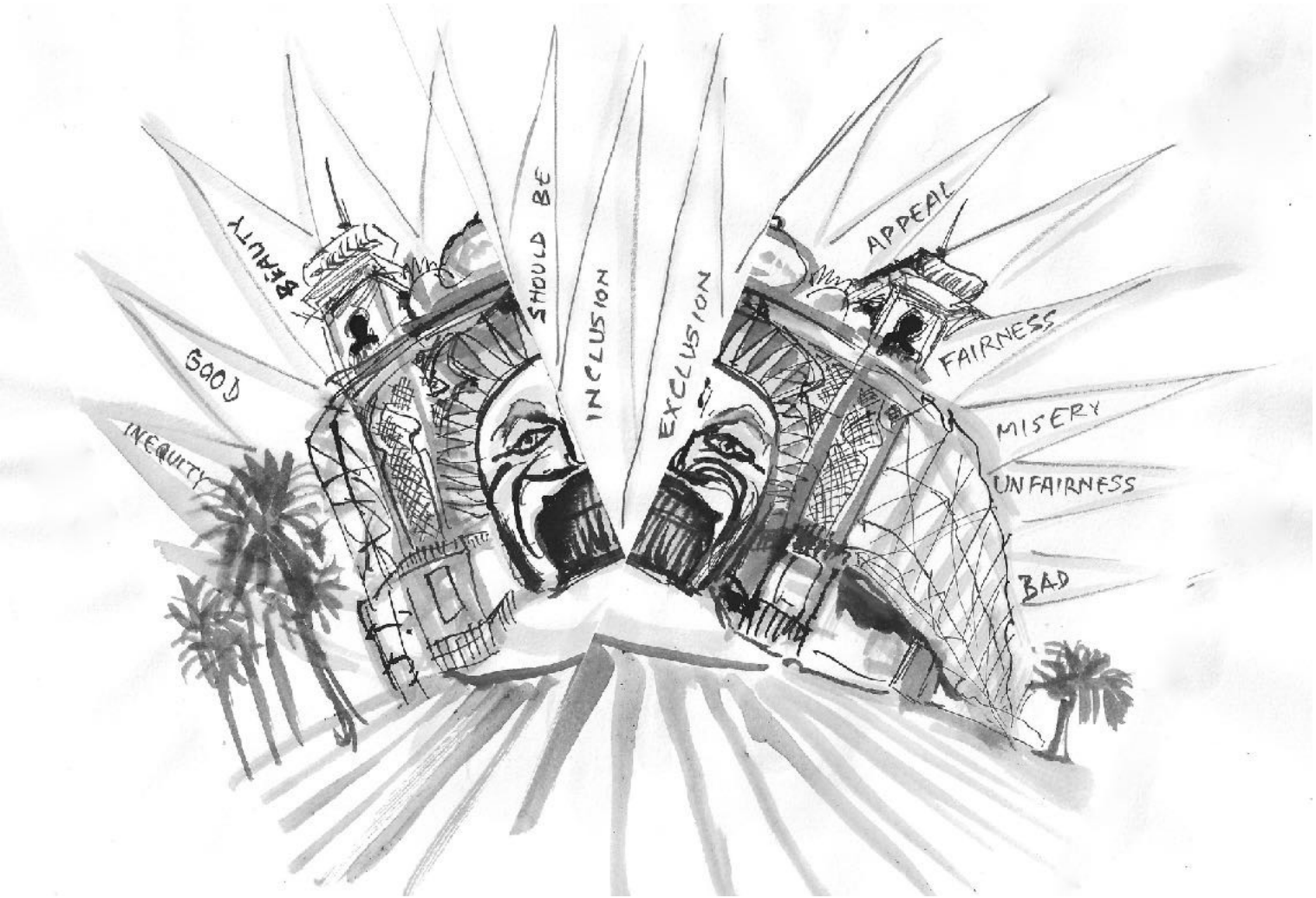
Debbie Qadri

I saw my first live comedy at the ‘Espy’, and watched concerts at the Prince of Wales and the Palais. St Kilda was a place we went to see and explore as children, as teenagers, and then as adults - a place to return to. Its entertainment is quaintly coloured with the past - nostalgia permeates its buildings and lifestyle, often drawing on the visitor’s own memories of the place.

St Kilda draws people from everywhere, to its beaches, gardens, entertainment venues, markets, festivals and gatherings, which include and celebrate many different communities.

What a wonderful place!

2 Faces of St Kilda - division and inclusion



'No single group could claim the city as its own for St. Kilda had as many faces as a hall of mirrors. A fused vision of who the city was for, and what type of city it should be, still seemed impossible. This was both good and bad, for both its fairness, or its beauty and appeal, and its unfairness, or its misery and inequity, lay in its split images'

(Longmire 1989, p. 298).

Debbie Qadri

St Kilda has the face of a sea-side resort, tourist and entertainment destination, but it has long been associated with vice, public drug use, sex work and illegal pleasure-seeking (Press & Szechtman 2004). I've accompanied someone into the seedy adult shop in Acland Street, because they felt it was part of the St Kilda experience, and I have been gregariously told by others of adventures in its brothels.

I had directed a friend to go and look at the mural whilst she was in St Kilda, and she felt a surprising contrast between being in Acland Street enjoying the shops and then walking one block inwards to visit the mural. Suddenly homelessness and poverty became more visible.

There is a strange dichotomy in St Kilda, an existence of beauty and enjoyment, a beautiful landscape of beach, palms, gardens and stately houses, and birds resounding in the sea air, alongside a clarity of homelessness, poverty, and misery, that you cannot avoid witnessing when walking through the streets.

> ‘It’s a place where suffering is in full bloom, always’ (Delaney 2014).

St Kilda is also a place which welcomes the poor. When John Silvester (2016) suggests that when the Sacred Heart Mission provides breakfast and lunch for the homeless and volunteer food trucks pull up at night, it acts as a drawcard, deterring people from moving on, he disingenuously describes the heart of St Kilda, of provision, inclusion and support. Many supportive services and organisations reside in St Kilda. They have a local history of being formed to help those in need (Longmire 1989).

They include places and organisations like; Sacred Heart Mission, Rhed (Resourcing Health and Education in the Sex Industry), 101 (an engagement hub providing programmes, support and meals), Our Rainbow Place, The Gatehouse, The Women's house, Galiamble, St Kilda Community Housing, Christ Church Community Centre and The Salvation Army Crisis Centre. The place of St Kilda has also traditionally offered plentiful cheap accommodation - rooming houses, as well as public places to sleep in or camp such as Catani Gardens and Cleve Gardens (Victorian Heritage Council 2017).

Debbie Qadri

CONSTRUCTED SHELTER IN
CATANI GARDENS
OLD TENTS AND A
CAMPING BED FEB 2017

Debbie Qadri

Divercity is the name of the City of Port Phillip's official newsletter, and Richard Peterson claims, 'There has been, in St Kilda, acceptance and openness to sensual bohemian behaviour from homosexuals, prostitutes, artists, the armed forces, rock 'n' rollers, Aborigines and other minorities, and from refugees, from which its street culture remains enriched' (Peterson 2009). Historical accounts of St Kilda shed light on the origins of the diversity in St Kilda, and how it came to be a place where all walks of life live cheek by jowl.

Debbie Qadri

JAMES COOK.

3 History of Diversity

> ‘It tells the real story of St Kilda and captures its diversity’ (Camille Monet, describing the mural *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, quoted in Melbourne Places, 2010)

The place of St Kilda has a history of diversity. It also has a history of inclusion and exclusion. These histories provided the reason and impetus for *The Great Wall of St Kilda* to be made. The mural draws our attention to the history of the Indigenous people of the place now called St Kilda and the diversity of its residents, their voices and their knowledge of the ‘real story’ and the ‘true essence’ of St Kilda.

Before I began to research the mural and interview people, I looked at the surface of the mural and saw it as community members involved in making the artwork. I did not *see* the deeper history of the mural until I began to *hear* its story as I interviewed people who had been involved with it. Underlying the surface of the mural is a matrix of histories of exclusion and inclusion, some of which I now take time and space to explain.

For a ‘true’ consideration of the history of St Kilda we need to begin with the history of First People.

Evidence suggests Aboriginal people have had land ownership of Melbourne for up to 60,000 years (Eidelson 2001, p. 27). The place of St Kilda was called Euro-Yroke meaning ‘grinding stone place’, after the red sandstone in the area, which was used for making tools. It was inhabited by the Yalukit Weelam clan (part of the Boon Wurrung people) (Eidelson 2014, p. 51; McConville 2016). Weelam means ‘house, home or place’ (Eidelson 2014, p. 9).

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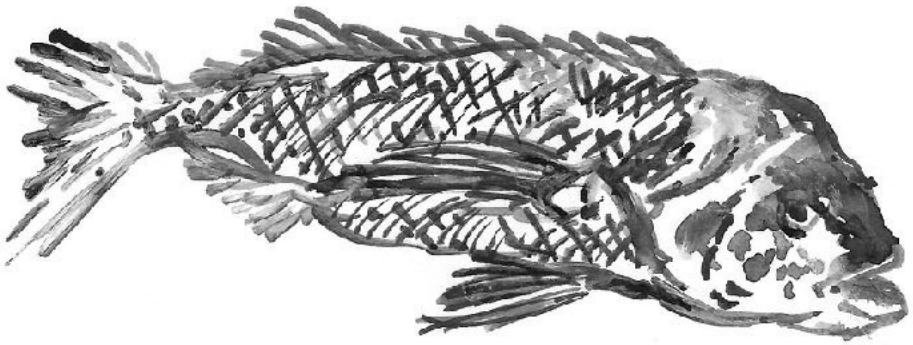
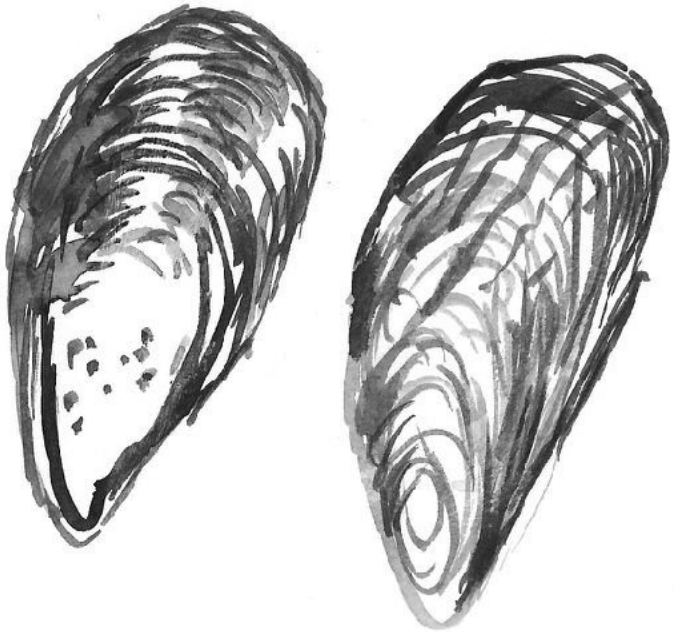
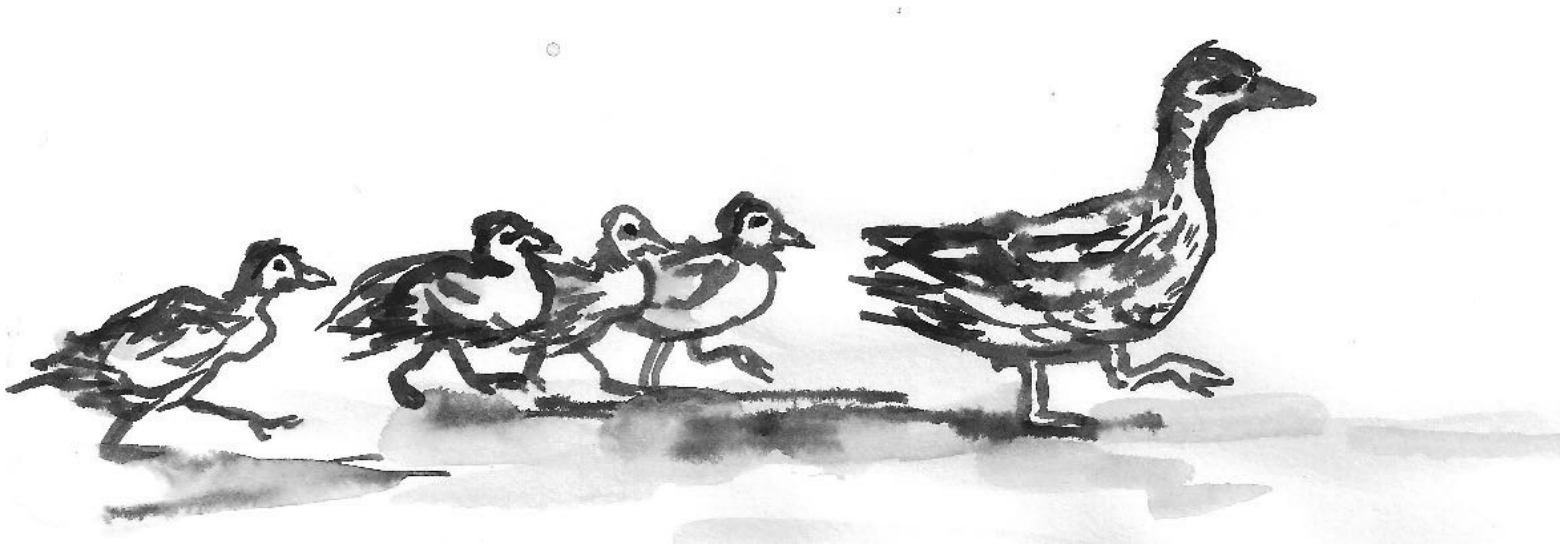
What is now the City of Port Phillip was once park-like and provident in bush tucker (McConville 2016). Charles Grimes (an early surveyor) described it as ‘wetlands surrounded by dunes, heath woodlands, salt marsh and beach, that teemed with wildfowl’ and other birds such as swans, pelicans, ducks (Grimes (1803) cited in Eidelson 2014, p. 9) and emus.





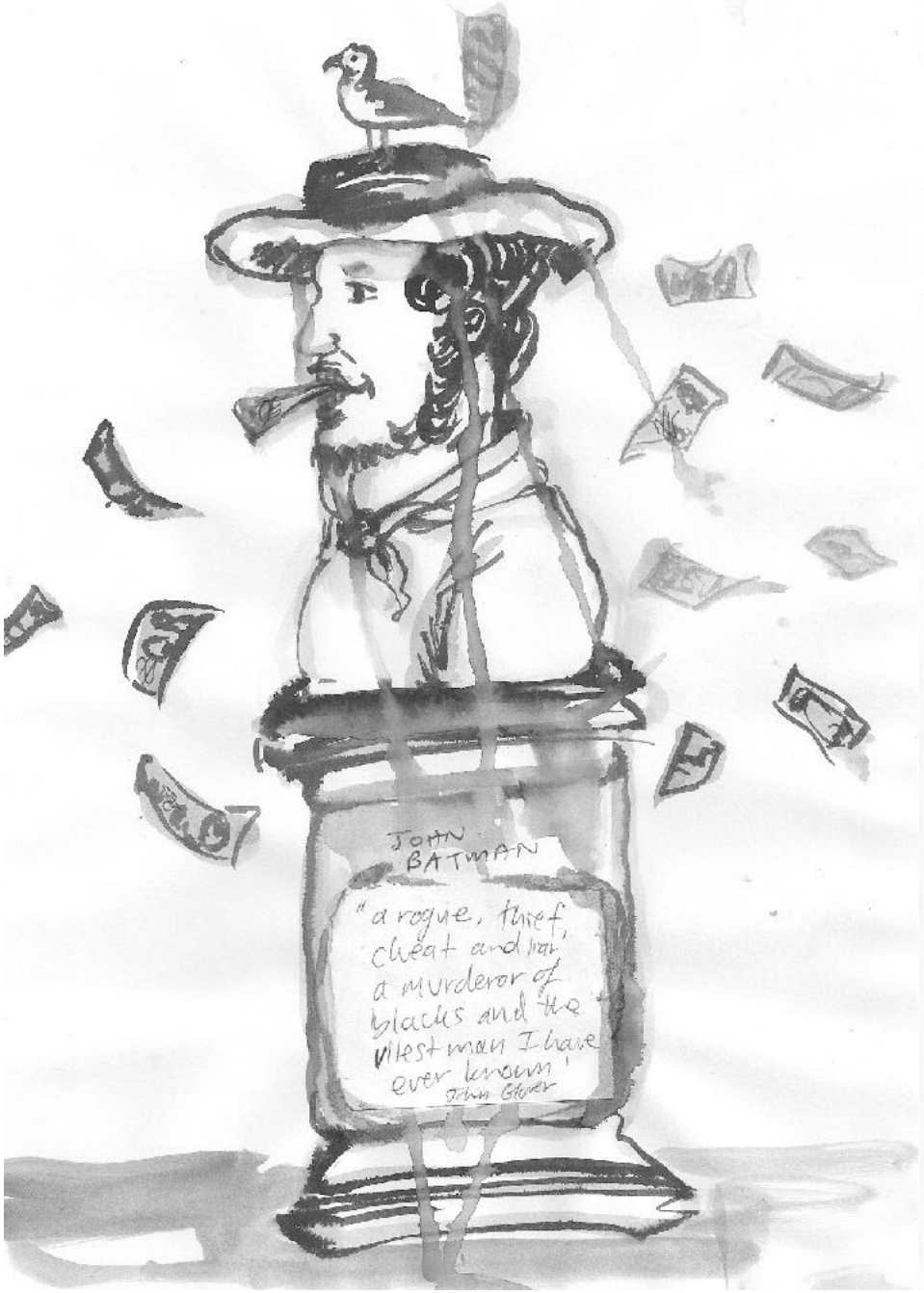
Debbie Qadri

There were also, ‘lovely knolls around the lagoons and on the flats or swamps and the flocks almost innumerable of teal, ducks, geese and swans and minor fowl’ (John Fawkner 1835, cited in Eidelson 2014, p. 9). It was, ‘a water-rich environment, with its sea, rivers and wetlands’ and there was ample food, including fish, shellfish, eels, frogs, turtles and plants such as myrnong (McConville 2016). Areas, now known as The Esplanade Bluff and St Kilda Hill provided higher and drier locations for ceremonies, tool manufacture, ochre collection and lookouts (Eidelson 2014).



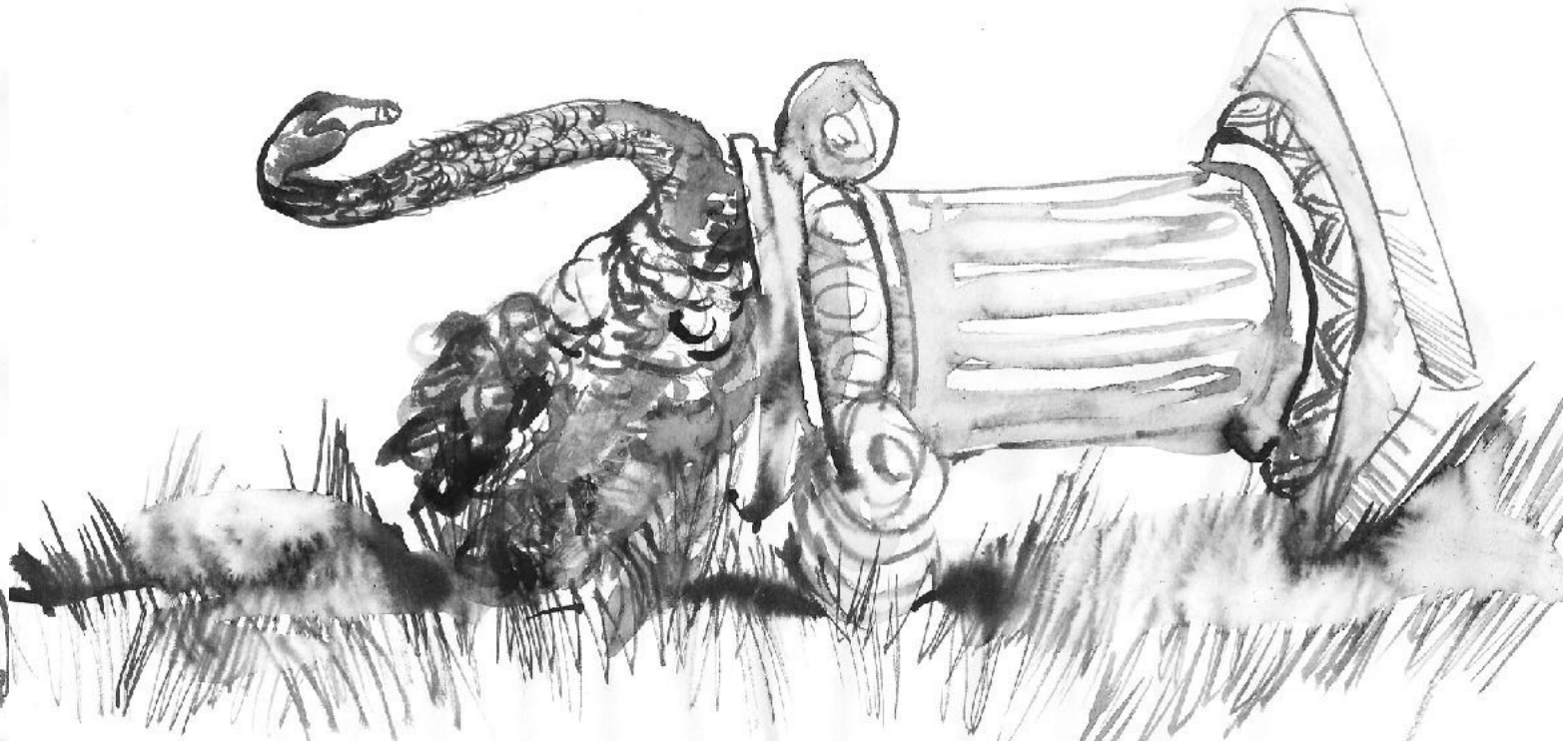
In 1833, (before colonial settlement began), eight Boon Wurrung women and a child were abducted from Port Phillip Bay by sealers, who removed them to islands in Bass Strait for slave labour on sealing stations (Eidelson 2014; Clark 2011): an event which warned of the destruction that colonials would bring.

In 1835 two rival Tasmanian syndicates led by Fawkner and Batman claimed ownership (Eidelson 2001). Only a year later, George Robinson, upon visiting Melbourne, records in his diary that he was appalled by the living conditions of the Indigenous people, and, that many were in a 'wretched condition' (Clark, 2011, p. 10).



This illustrates the dramatic negative impact that the colonial settlers had on the Aboriginal community within a short time

> ‘As the population of European settlers and their grazing animals increased, the survival of the Aboriginal people became more and more difficult. The grasslands for hunting were fenced off for grazing and pastoral use, their camps were broken up and a variety of wildlife dwindled’ (Clark 2011, p. 11).



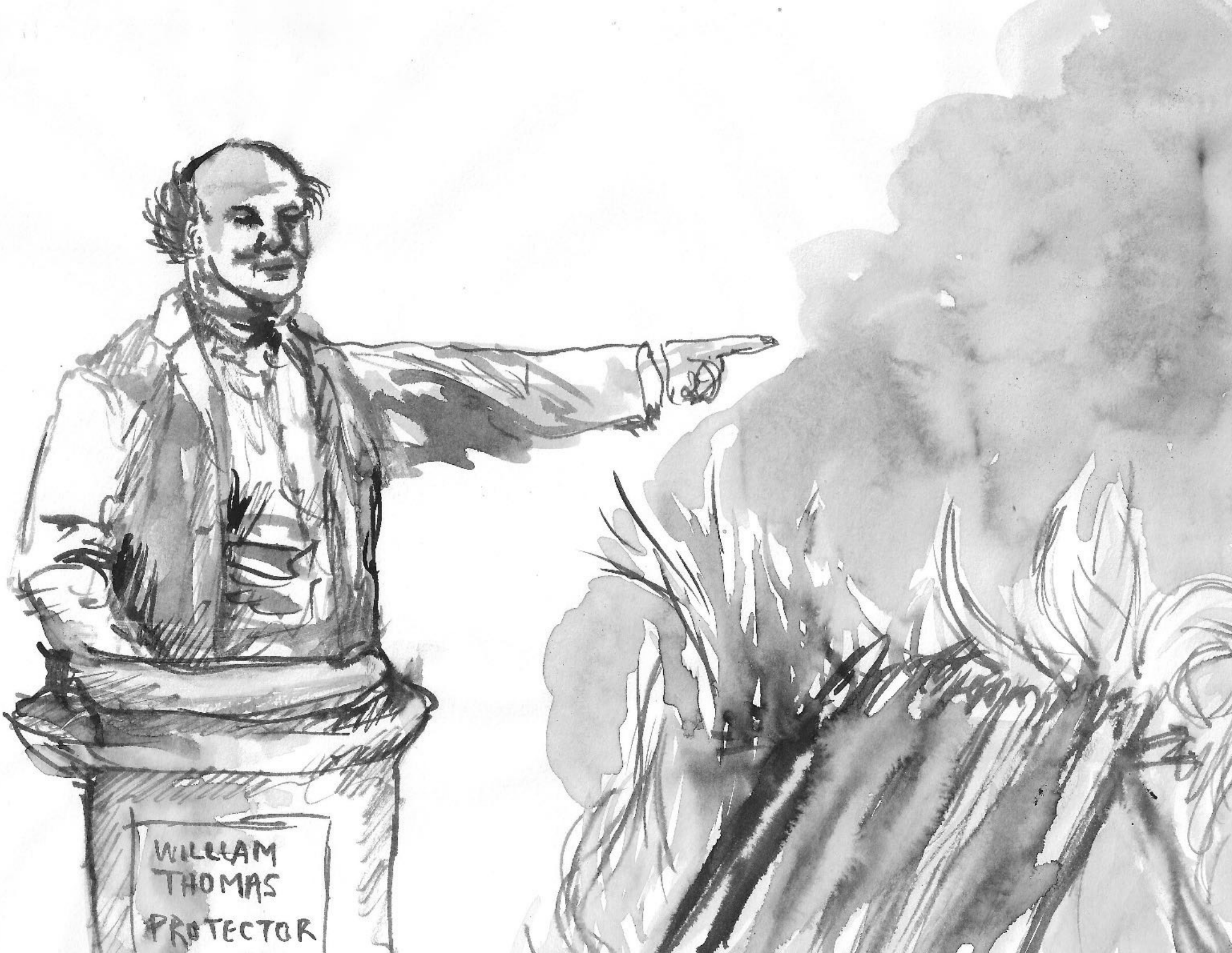
In Melbourne just ‘four years after settlement, there were 6000 settlers and there were 700,000 sheep competing with kangaroos for pasture’ (Eidelson 2014, p. 53).

The Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung people increasingly had trouble obtaining food in the vicinity of Melbourne, and they were suffering from introduced diseases. Europeans objected when Aboriginal people entered fenced paddocks to hunt and, consequently, they were forced to subsist by begging and cutting firewood for the intruders (Clark 2011).

Ian Clark (2011) tells the story of William Thomas (Assistant Aboriginal Protector for Melbourne and Gippsland) and how he carried out Government orders in June 1846 (eleven years into colonial settlement of the area).

> ‘Thomas removed the valuables from the weelams (bark huts) of the Boon Wurrung camp then wrecked and burnt them. He ordered the 51 residents to disperse . . . Thomas lamented that he had to order them to move every time a European objected. ‘Poor fellows, they are now compelled to shift almost at the will and caprice of the whites’. Their hardship was intensified because there was no bark left in the district and they were now compelled to build ‘mud huts’ (Clark 2011, p. 12).

Within twenty years of colonial settlement at Port Phillip Bay, the ‘number of Boon Wurrung had fallen ninety per cent due to starvation, violence, spiritual despair and disease (Eidelson 2014, p. 17), ‘Their sacred lands usurped, their waterholes seized, their food sources destroyed by stock and their freedom of movement and culture disrupted’ (Eidelson 2014, p. 53).


WILLIAM
THOMAS
PROTECTOR

Many Yalukit Weelum eventually retreated to the Aboriginal Reserve at Mordy Yallock (Mordialloc)(Eidelson 2014). By 1857 there were only an estimated eleven Boon Wurrung people residing there (Eidelson 2014). With the sale and subdivision of the Mordiallic Reserve in 1863, the Boon Wurrung had lost the last of their territory (Clark 2011).

In a short time of 28 years (1835 - 1863), colonials had completely removed the Boon Wurrung people from their home, territory and land.

Some of the Boon Wurrung families who had left the Boon Wurrung territory survived and 'their descendants actively represent traditional owners today' (Eidelson 2014, p. 54).

St Kilda is a meeting place for Aboriginal people from all parts of Australia and the home of community organisations such as Ngwala Willumbong and Galiamble (Eidelson 2001). There is the weekly Wominjeka Barbeque on Mondays at Veg Out Gardens, and other gatherings are held at Aruba place at Mitford Street and O'Donnell gardens which host the annual Yalukit Weelam Ngargee Indigenous Arts and Cultural Festival. There are also markers, sites and artworks which record and signify Indigenous history in St Kilda - The Ngargee Tree, artwork, memorials and plaques at Mangrook Reserve, Cleve Gardens, Catani Gardens, O'Donnell Gardens and Talbot Reserve.

8 The Great Wall of St Kilda, Part A: St Kilda

From the outset colonials regarded St Kilda as the place for a resort (Longmire 1989). Public transport including a horse-drawn omnibus, coaches, trams and eventually trains assisted in bringing day-trippers to sea-bathe, attend the race-course, and be entertained by water-front funfairs, bandstands, dancing halls, cinemas, ice-skating and travelling performers in open-air theatres. Entertainment has been a focus in St Kilda for generations and there has been an ongoing development and replacement of entertainment facilities.

Diversity of cultural groups were present in the Jewish Community which in 1871 consisted of fifty families in St Kilda (Longmire 1989).

> 'The advent of cable cars in 1888 made St Kilda a destination of day trippers, the lowly classes and larrikins from the north of the Yarra' (Longmire 1989, p. xi).

The 1890s' depression changed the nature of St Kilda as many large mansions had to be sold and were turned into boarding houses. In the early 1930s a clean-up of the brothels in the Melbourne CBD forced the prostitution to other suburbs and St Kilda was favoured because it already had the pleasure seeking and entertainment venues, with many parks and small laneways useful for assignations (Rowe 2006; City of Port Phillip - Street Sex Information Sheet).

During World War II there was an influx of servicemen to St Kilda - an Australian Army camp was based at Albert Park and the American G.I.s at the Peanut Farm. James Rowe (2006) alludes to the relationship between the military presence and the street sex work in St Kilda during this time, when thousands of Australian and US servicemen were in the area and sought prostitutes. Thousands of visitors and soldiers went on leave to St Kilda, because it was ‘the hottest spot in town . . . a place to let off steam and . . . normal inhibitions were cast aside’ (Longmire 1989, p. 115). The US military established a prophylactic station in the vicinity of Luna Park, which was later taken over by the Australian military (Rowe 2006).

George Johnston describes the atmosphere during these years in his novel, *My brother Jack;*

> ‘There seemed to be an unraveling of morals in St Kilda . . . ‘Along St Kilda Esplanade and in the open parks, policemen and Peeping Toms prowled with torches at the ready to catch flaming youth in the very act of burning’ (Johnston 1964, p. 55, cited in Peterson 2009).

Anne Longmire (1989) explains the loosening of morals in the war years due to the sense of abnormality at the time, the nearness of death and the need to live each day as if it were the last.

> ‘St Kilda had been the place where rules had been broken during the war . . . by the time the war ended . . . its reputation had well and truly slipped’ (Longmire 1989, p. 126).

In the 1950’s St Kilda ‘accommodated more and more poorer people in cheaper accommodation and fewer home owners’ (Longmire 1989, p. 190). Often home to outcasts, alcoholics, refugees from war, those discharged from psychiatric hospitals, victims of domestic violence - St Kilda was less judgmental, ‘a more generous city. Not as mean as the others,’ (Longmire 1989, p. 248), a ‘sensuous, bohemian, risqué resort, where blind eyes were turned and difference

tolerated, if not celebrated' (Peterson 2009). Sex workers, transvestites, drug users, the queer community, artists and performers, are included in this influx of people (Valentish 2014; C Bird 2004 cited in Szechtman and Press 2009). Perhaps it is this raw mix of seaside sweetness and old fashioned nostalgic pleasures, layered with the gritty darker shades of reality which is the secret to the success of St Kilda. It has both escapism and grit.

Debbie Qadri

4 Rediscovering the artwork

As part of my research I was looking for artworks which had been made by community members and I knew about the mural in Talbot Reserve. I had seen it when taking my daughter to rehearsals at the National Theatre.

I went to visit it again.
From the corner of Barkly and Carlisle streets, you walk past the National Theatre and head into the heart of the reserve to reach the mural.

Debbie Qadri

All kinds of birds, crows, seagulls and others are making a great noise in the large trees as you pass under them. As you near the playground to arrive at the artwork. Nearby, the path providing a shortcut to Acland Street, cuts through and beyond it is an open grassed area with a short hedge running along the fence line. There is a bench seat near this hedge, where people often withdraw and rest. A little entrance leads to a back lane which takes you deeper into residential streets.

Above: detail of tiles on the Great Wall of St Kilda

I have returned to the mural with my research eyes and I sigh with pleasure this time around. Yes. It contains aspects of what I have been writing about in my own practice as an artist. I am looking for artworks where community members are involved directly in the making. There are 600 tiles made by community members. They are hand sculpted (each 24 cm square) and made with intent, differing in style and content. Some abstract and some figurative, they often bear names or initials, statements about life or community, messages to friends or loved ones, such as; 'auntie most beautiful myrtle' and ‘I love you Craigy and my tigers’.

There are also large statements across the mural:

Trust - Great lives never go out, they go on

This mural is in respect of the Boonerwrung people - traditional owners and caretakers of this land.

Respect yourself, your mates, your elders, nature and expect respect and nothing else.

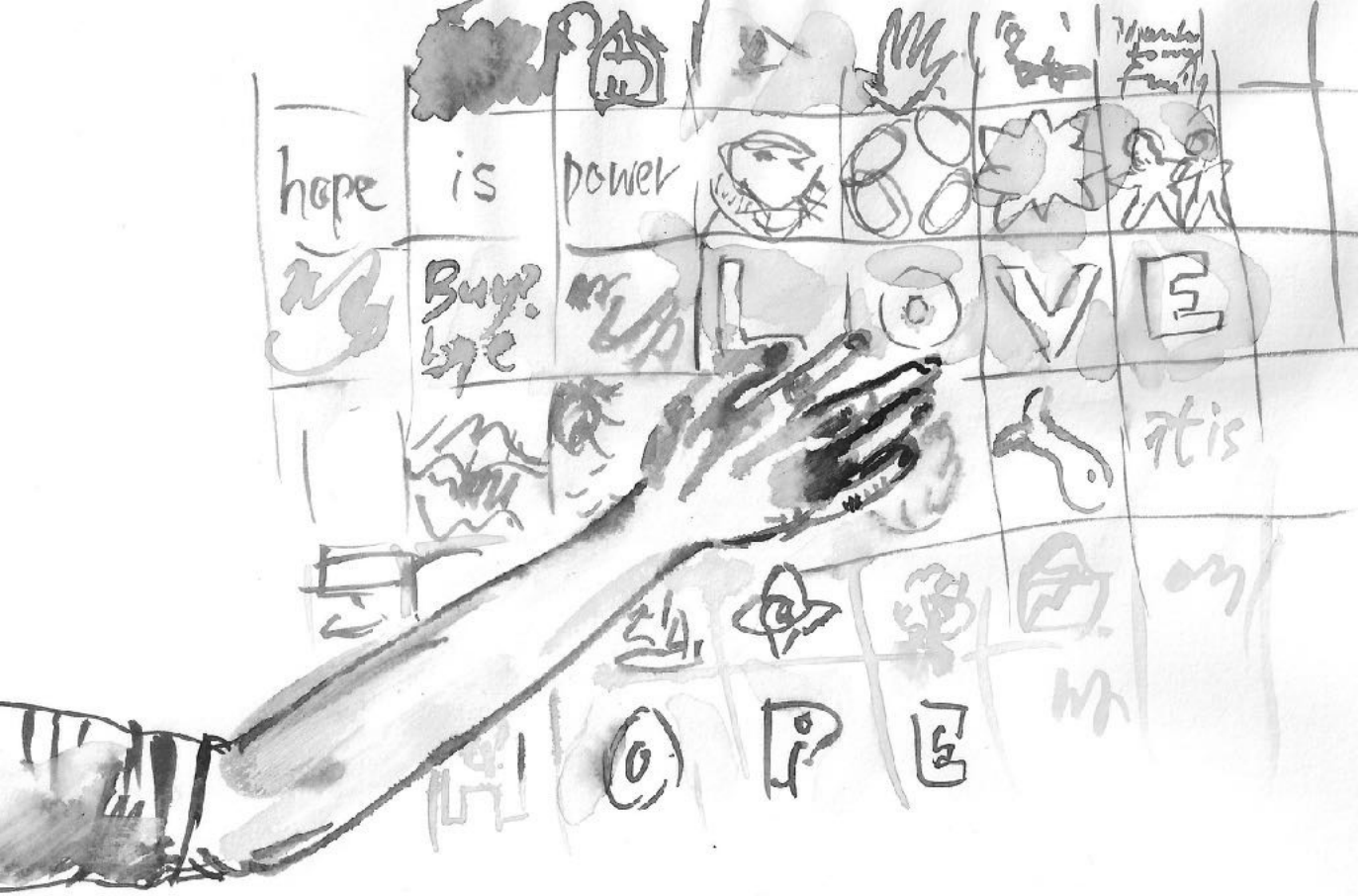
Wisdom outweighs wealth

Hope is power

Love

Keep St Kilda real!

Above: detail of tiles on the Great Wall of St Kilda



The mural is thick with messages and symbolism. It is large, detailed and dense. In order to read it you have to crane your neck upwards, bend your body downwards and physically walk along beside it. You might speak to someone beside you, pointing out parts of the mural you find interesting, read the text out loud, and touch the wall to feel its sculpted surface.

Above: The scene depicting St Kilda, made by Camille Monet, in The Great Wall of St Kilda

In the centre of the mural, 207 low relief, hand-sculpted tiles fit together to make a scene which includes well-known street characters and places. It was hand-made by Camille Monet (the artist of the project). At some places the tiles are quite deep relief, up to 20cm.

Above: Bunjil, depicted in The Great Wall of St Kilda

Perspective is created by making some characters loom large at the front and others smaller in the background as the scene stretches back to include the beach and Port Phillip Bay. To develop the design Camille consulted with the local community about what to include in this depiction of St Kilda and showed drawings to people for their ideas and feedback. She also had a good relationship with local Aboriginal Elders and was given permission to place Aboriginal symbolism centrally in the picture. The colours of the Aboriginal Flag are woven into the design by placing a yellow sun at the centre of the work, making the ground of the St Kilda scene red and the sky black. At the top and centre of the mural is Bunjil, the spiritual head of the Kulin Nations, which places the local Aboriginal spirituality at the forefront of the scene. Bunjil has spread his wings over St Kilda.

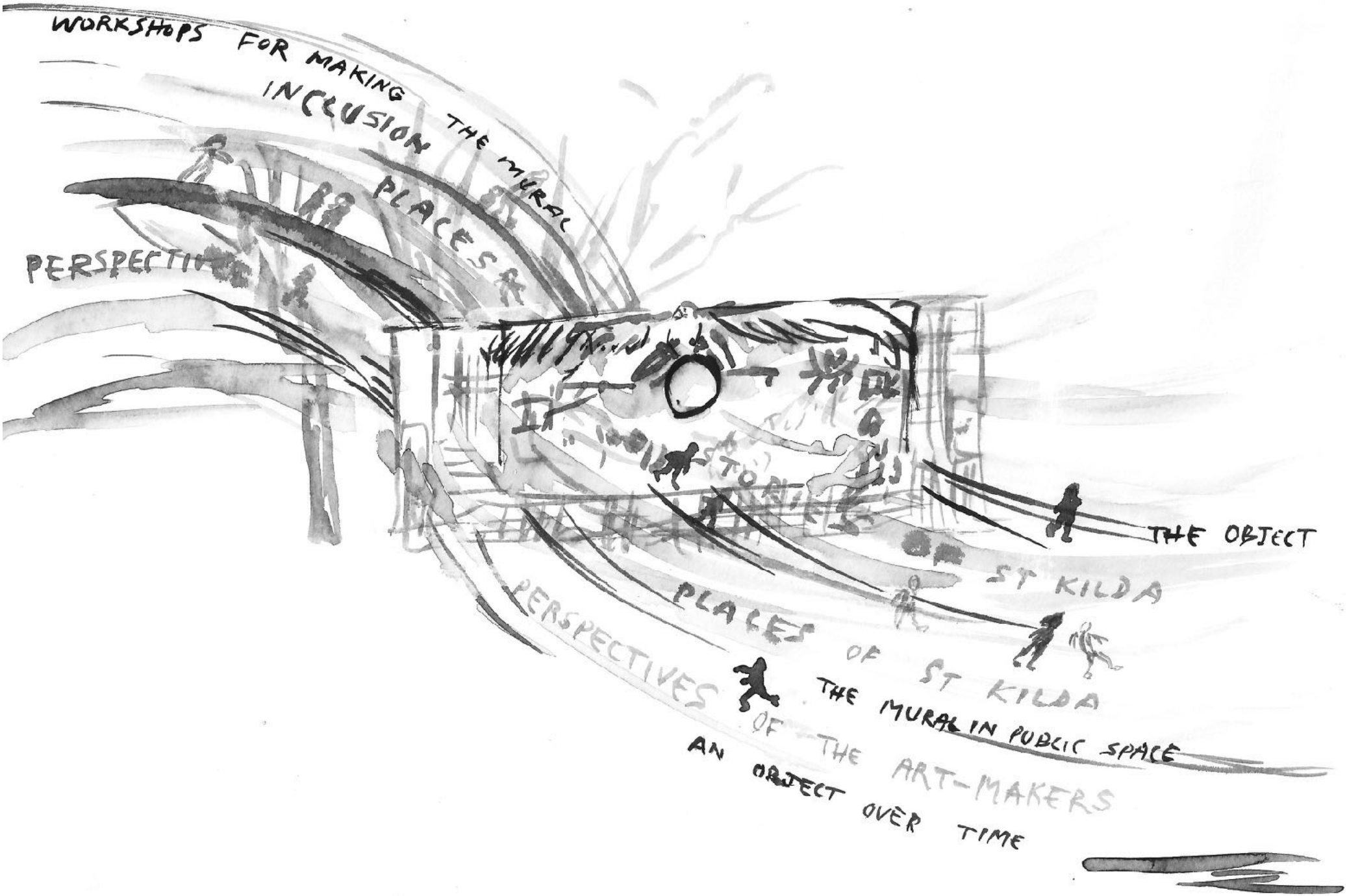
While I sit on the park bench facing the mural, making notes and photographing it, a woman accompanied by others (relatives or friends), points to a tile, and tells them her parents have made it. In the far right corner of the reserve another woman sits outside a tent. A trolley lurks nearby.

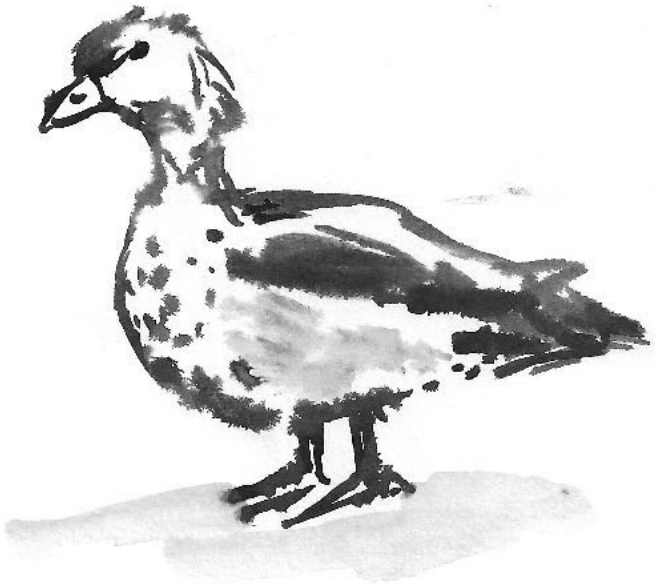
The mural was a large undertaking - five metres high by eleven metres long, making it 55 square metres in area. The entire mural is made in buff raku clay. The tiles have been hand sculpted then decorated with underglaze colours and fired. A second firing with glaze, brings out the colour and assists with the permanence of the artwork by making the tiles more resistant to weather and easy to clean.

Above: detail of tiles on the Great Wall of St Kilda

Even though I brought my own experiences and ideas to the research I was influenced by the perspectives of the five people that I interviewed about the mural. It is their perspectives that this narrative springs from. I discovered through these interviews that the mural is deeply set within the context of the history of St Kilda and especially the history of the reserve in which it sits.

I began with the art object, the mural that can be found by walking into Talbot Reserve - with seeing it and thinking about it. But as I dug deeper, beyond the surface of the mural, I was taken to places before the artwork was installed. It has also had a life of being in a public place, at least ten years of affecting an audience. The making of the mural was a brief moment within the much longer history of its context before being made, and its history after being made. Before and after stretch out either side of its making.


WORKSHOPS FOR MAKING THE MURAL
INCLUSION
PLACES
PERSPECTIVES
THE OBJECT
ST KILDA
PLACES OF ST KILDA
PERSPECTIVES OF THE ART-MAKERS
THE MURAL IN PUBLIC SPACE
AN OBJECT OVER TIME



The Great Wall of St Kilda

Part B:

DIVISION AND PLACE

5 Focus VS stereotypes categories and labels

When I interviewed people about the mural, they wanted to speak about the people who were involved in making the tiles. All of the interviewees spoke about the circumstances of homelessness, of being marginalised and excluded, and I came to realise that people experiencing these situations were *central* to the mural. They came *before* the mural, and they were the reason for the mural. The greater context of the mural is exclusion and inclusion of people in particular circumstances and their right to be in public space.

Categories used in this document are not intended to describe individual people, but instead the circumstances that people may find themselves in. During the interviews I was introduced to a more respectful language to use which refers to the circumstances people, or ways in which groups have chosen to describe themselves. For example: *parkies, street sex workers, working girls, disenfranchised, sleeping rough, drug use*.

There is a need for caution, when describing groups of people as targeted inclusions in a particular project (Brackertz et al 2008, p. 14) because identifying groups of people by their circumstances is often used negatively for stereotyping, labelling and judging. The word used to group people may

imply a homogeneity - for example, amongst homeless people the homogeneity is the circumstance of being ‘homeless’. We can never assume that any other factor is the same for all homeless people. Whenever we group people, we very easily contribute to the stereotyping of individuals whose history and circumstances we know nothing of. Each one of these people is a complex person with a life story and experiences. They have families, they are someone’s daughter or son, perhaps someone’s father or mother. However, in telling the story of the mural, some group terms have been used because the project purposely included people in particular circumstances. Mauricio Alejandro Arias, who participated in making the mural, and was later employed as Camille’s assistant in the workshops, identifies this difficulty in describing the focus on involving people, by opening up his description.

> ‘I wouldn’t like to label or stereotype . . . obviously there was a set of characters in the landscape, they were dominant and predominant in the presence in the stories in the pain, they were rich in their own way. Some very clever, some of them were very intelligent people’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

Julie Szego (2016) uses the phrase, ‘flattened into the category “disadvantaged”’, which summed up for me the paradox in using terms to describe groups or categories of people. In gathering them into a group, we lose the focus on the individual person and the complexities of human character. It is within this context of wariness about grouping people by circumstance, that I embark on exploring more deeply the embedded history of inclusion and exclusion in St Kilda. The greater context of the mural is an argument about the right to be in public space and this has been presented through the process of making and in the final artwork itself.

6 Street Sex Work and St Kilda

Research suggests that St Kilda has been the place at the heart of the prostitution industry in Melbourne since prostitution was forced out of the city centre in the 1930's (City of Port Phillip, 'Street Sex Work information Sheet'; Rowe 2011).

> ‘It was not till the outbreak of World War Two and the establishment of army barracks in nearby Albert Park that street prostitution became visibly widespread throughout St Kilda’ (Rowe 2006, p. 4, referencing Bennet 1991).

Historically there have been many efforts to remove street sex work from St Kilda, but with little effect (Longmire1989; City of Port Phillip, ‘Street Sex Work information Sheet’).

The blame has traditionally been placed on the women, who have been cast as immoral, and a health risk (Rowe 2006). Double standards are complicit in ignoring the fact that prostitution is generally an agreement between two consenting adults and ‘demand is the driving force behind commercial sex activity’ (Rowe 2006, p. 5).

There is a historical connection and strong links between street sex work and illicit drug use in St Kilda (Szechtman 2008; Press and Szechtman 2009; Longmire 1989) in the 1920’s with cocaine (Press and Szechtman 2009, p. 83) and in the 1970s with heroin (Rowe 2011; Longmire 1989). In the 1970s prostitution increased due to high youth unemployment, the lack of welfare for under 18 year olds, and drug dependency (Rowe 2011; Longmire 1989).

James Rowe explains that, ‘meeting the needs of a drug dependency creates a corresponding need for a regular and substantial income. It was perhaps inevitable that drug dependent young people in St Kilda would turn to the most visible and flexible and one of the few accessible means of income earning activity in the area’ (Rowe 2011, p. 8).

In the 1970s, police blitzes also had the unintended effect of moving street prostitution into the residential streets of St Kilda (Rowe 2011). The rise in the cost of accommodation and hotels in St Kilda has meant that more street sex workers also service clients on these streets (AGSPAG 2002). In 1978 community groups clashed over the issues of prostitution in St Kilda (Longmire 1989).

Debbie Qadri 2018

Around the same time of the Talbot Reserve *Design-In* (early 2000s), there were ongoing protests by groups expressing differing opinions about street sex work in St Kilda. In 2001 the Port Phillip Action Group (PPAG) marched to demand that something be done to solve the issues caused by street sex work in St Kilda. A group of 50 residents supporting street sex workers' rights held a counter rally. The group called themselves QUEER - Queers United to Eradicate Economic Rationalism (City of Port Phillip, *STREET SEX WORK Information Sheet*).

The State Government set up 'The Attorney General's Street Prostitution Advisory Group

(AGSPAG) in early 2002 which published a Final Report in June the same year, outlining, ‘a package of measures designed to address the serious social harm addressed by street sex work’(AGSPAG 2002, p. 3).

The AGSPAG executive summary described the situation in St Kilda at the time:

> ‘In peak times, street sex workers on the footpaths of St Kilda are commonplace, while the roads are crowded with clients looking to pick up. With few viable alternatives, workers and clients often have sex in the parks, lanes and streets of St Kilda and Elwood. Often homeless and/or regular drug users, street sex workers are frequently the victims of abuse, assault or rape . . . The current situation is unacceptable to residents, traders and street sex workers alike’ (AGSPAG 2002, p. 4).

Residents often feel that street sex work brings drug use and danger to the public space in which they live. Clients cruising the streets, lurking pimps, and the risk of being confused for a sex worker, contribute to this situation (Delaney 2016).

The AGSPAG advocated setting up tolerance zones, which were drawn up by Council. It became contentious as residents opposed them in residential areas and traders opposed them in commercial areas (Dick Gross, in Tomazin 2002). The whole thing fell to pieces as the state election drew closer, and when the State Government changed hands the funding was withdrawn (City of Port Phillip, 'Street Sex Work information Sheet').

Before the *Design-In* and renovation, Talbot Reserve was used by street sex workers as a shelter, a place to sleep, to cook food (on the barbeque facilities) a place for sex work, drug use (Szectman 2016, Interview), and a site of collective protest in support of street sex workers.

> ‘In 1994 the Prostitutes Collective of Victoria held a rally in response to the murder of two street sex workers in St Kilda in that year. Over 150 sex workers, Councillors and residents marched, held candles, blew whistles and assembled at Talbot Reserve’ (City of Port Phillip, ‘Street Sex Work information sheet’).

The paradox is that ‘some St Kilda residents are also clients of the sex industry and many sex workers are also St Kilda residents’ (Press and Szechtman 2004, p. 87 referencing C. Bird 2004).

Notes:

- The words used in the protester imagery on previous pages are sourced from Anne Longmire's historical accounts of the times, 1989, p. 260-277.

- For more information on street sex work in St Kilda see; The City of Port Phillip's *Street Sex Work - Information Sheet. Street walking blues* by James Rowe was published in 2006, after interviews with 14 St Kilda sex workers. His 2010 report 'living next to street sex work', is a narrative of stories by residents which aims to give voice to the perspectives of some residents 'Living next to Street Sex Work' (2010) commissioned by CoPP but does not seem to be publicly available). Shantusi: Surveying HIV and need in the unregulated sex industry (2011). The Attorney General's Street Prostitution Advisory Group (AGSPAG) Final Report, 2002 , p. 24-32 offers a detailed history of street prostitution in Victoria and pp. 39 - 48 outlines the situation in the City of Port Phillip at the time. Also see http://www.beeworld.net.au/rdoor/timeline.htm.

- Protest groups include: Westaction, The St Kilda Women's Liberation Group, The Prostitutes Action Group - later called Hetaira, and the Women Behind Bars Collective.

7 Public place dwelling

‘It is a human right to be housed’

(text on *The Great Wall of St Kilda*).

‘Council recognises that homelessness can have complex and diverse origins and that it can happen to anyone at any stage of their life. Homelessness can be caused by something outside of a person’s control such as not being able to locate secure, safe and affordable accommodation’ (City of Port Phillip, *Think and Act: Homeless Action Strategy 2015-2020,* p. 4).

In 2012 the Council to Homeless Persons rated homelessness in the City of Port Phillip as the second highest in the state of Victoria and said that a third of people seeking assistance from homelessness services did so due to family violence (Council to Homeless Persons, 2012). The City of Port Phillip's Homeless Strategy focuses on the situation of being homeless and what this entails:

> 'Port Phillip's approach to homelessness encompasses both individual and structural factors. We understand that life circumstances of individuals and the social and economic contexts in the broader community can lead to homelessness. Homelessness places people at harm, impacting on personal safety, health and wellbeing, security of possessions and their ability to engage and connect with employment and education opportunities. In the 2011 Census, over 1500 people were counted as experiencing homelessness in Port Phillip' (City of Port Phillip, *Think and Act: Homeless Action Strategy 2015-2020,* p. 2).

When I interviewed Wendy Butler about the mural, she returned to the topic of homelessness many times. She described to me the three types of homelessness; 'Primary' - where you are sleeping on the street; 'Secondary' - where you are couch-surfing or sleeping in the house of a friend; and 'Tertiary' - where you are sleeping in a rooming house (See Chamberlain and Mackenzie 1992). Wendy explained that many things contribute to homelessness in Australia, including: rental

auctions, empty houses, negative gearing, unauthorised rooming houses, the high cost of rent in relation to people's incomes, and the concentration of public housing in areas where less employment is available. Butler shared with me the stories of two people she knew who had lost their homes because of illness thus providing examples of how homelessness can happen to anybody. She explained how difficult it is for people who suffer from illness or homelessness to rent a house when most estate agents require references and evidence of ongoing employment (Butler 2016, Interview). Homelessness often arises out of a crisis in someone's life: the loss of a loved one, unemployment, ill-health or a traumatic experience. None of us are immune from these things - any one of us might suddenly become homeless.

> 'The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines rooming houses as a form of homelessness due to the less secure form of tenure and often limited amenity and private space in this accommodation. The largest group of people experiencing homelessness in Port Phillip live in rooming houses' (City of Port Phillip, *Think and Act: Homeless Action Strategy 2015-2020,* p. 14).

Note: Wendy Butler's description is based on Chamberlain and Mackenzie 1992 'Cultural definition' of homelessness which has also been used by the City of Port Phillip's 'Protocol for Assisting People who sleep rough'.

St Kilda has a history of affordable accommodation - shared accommodation, private hotels, boarding houses, rooming houses and halfway houses which provided people with a place to stay (City of Port Phillip, *Think and Act: Homeless Action Strategy 2015-2020*). Many of them were developed in the Depression of the 1890's, as large mansions were sold and divided into single rooms to rent with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities (Rowe 2006). You could stay for one night or you could live in them (Butler 2016, Interview).

Media reports often discriminate against rooming houses in St Kilda, and residents also protest against public housing. In her report: 'Community Engagement and Community Housing for City of Port Phillip', Mandy Press (2009a) explained the objections to public housing proposals in the City of Port Phillip.

‘Most proposals were resisted based on their proposed use and the types of tenants to be housed. The concerns expressed were about an increase in crime, the impact on public safety, increase in drug trafficking and that tenants would have a negative impact on the community. This kind of stereotyping of tenants was common in all those proposals which were contested, with neighbours unable to acknowledge that those to be housed were more often than not already living in the area or at least having close ties to it. The greatest fears were reserved for proposed rooming houses’ (Press 2009a, p. 69).

There is an effort to exclude based on stereotyping and fear.

Rosalyn Deutsche (1996), in her exploration of art in public space, retells the story of Jackson Park, a tiny triangle in Greenwich Village which had been reconstructed and then locked, in order to protect ‘public space’. Deutsche argues this was part of the eviction of homeless people from city parks and the reclamation of public space from undesirables. This story serves as an example of conflict over public space and differences in perspective about who is ‘the public’ (ibid., p. 277). Deutsche argues that the homeless person is seen as something that disrupts harmony, a negative image created to restore positivity and order to social life. ‘The vision of the homeless person as the source of conflict in public space denies that there is an obstacle to coherence at the very core of social life. The homeless person embodies the fantasy of a unified urban space that can-must-be retrieved’ (ibid., p. 278).

‘To challenge the image of the homeless person as a disruption of the normal urban order, it is crucial to recognise that this “intrusive” figure points to the city’s true character’ (Deutsche 1996, p. 278).

Deutsche (1996) argues that the presence of homeless people is a symptom of uneven social relations and suggests that public art programs (as part of urban development and collaborating with architecture and urban design, create sites which suppress their conflictual character. ‘In so doing, they also constructed the homeless person - a product of conflict - as an ideological figure - the bringer of conflict’ (ibid., p. 279).

Debbie Qadri 2018

Public artwork in St Kilda goes against this grain in projects which have involved marginalised people in the subject matter and their voices in public art and memorial: *Monument on Wheels, Aunty Alma's Seats*, the *Margins, Memories and Markers* plaques, and *The Great Wall of St Kilda,* and *The Homeless Memorial,* are all permanent artworks or markers which engender respect for people in difficult circumstances and public place dwellers.

Arias, speaking of his experiences of being homeless in St Kilda, explained that there were some aspects which were positive.

> ‘It’s warm, you share everything in the street, the street family. I found in the street - Warm[th] love, support, family, friends’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

A few people had made a decision to be homeless:

> ‘I have met some characters on the street which at one time had made the decision to be there . . . I mean we are talking about people with professional backgrounds, university backgrounds, being fully functional in society at one point . . . Whatever happened to them, they made the radical decision to let everything go and to touch ground and be there, under the rain and under the weather. Some of these Aboriginal fellows . . . they refuse strongly and [are] determined not to be part of anything that is in place right now and when you talk to them it’s political, it’s ideological, to do with identity, a lot of things, they just don’t want to be part of.
>
> Because they are real to start with. They are real people and it took some courage to do that, to be exposed that way to society and people. It takes courage, so my respect is directed to that courage, to that honesty about it. They are just very honest about the pain. There are a lot of things they do not hide about themselves (Arias 2016, Interview).

The discussion paper *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Perspectives on Homelessness* (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013), demonstrates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture includes differing and diverse, concepts about homelessness. It is particularly apt to consider these perspectives, when less than 200 years ago, Aboriginal people lived in the area of St Kilda and were the owners of the land.

‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, when asked to discuss stories of homelessness, broadly perceived homelessness as:

- **House-lessness**: Inability to obtain shelter.
- **Family disconnection**: Includes concept of 'choice' in being homeless.
- Having a dwelling, but not on country or in community: Separation of dwelling from concept of home’ (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013)

Memmott, Long and Chambers (2003b), explain that the most visible Indigenous ‘homeless’ people are small groups who live in public spaces (often calling themselves names such as parkies, goomies, long grassers, ditchies or river campers).

> ‘They are public place dwellers who identify with particular public or semi-public places as their ‘home’ environment, usually conforming to a 'beat' of such places where they camp and socialise. In certain contexts the current authors believe 'public place dwelling' should be the nomenclature preferred over such words as 'homeless' or 'itinerant', because the latter terms have specific, and sometimes narrowly construed, meanings that are not always helpful in analysis and strategic thinking’ (Memmott et al. 2003b, p. i).

In Indigenous culture, home may be a set of public spaces and homelessness can then be redefined as losing one’s sense of control over, or legitimacy in the public spaces where one lives (Memmot et all 2003b, referencing Coleman 2000). Memmott et al. explain that the context of ‘home’ in ‘classical or pre-contact Aboriginal Australia,‘was country, cultural landscape and the repertoire of places in it’ (Memmott et al 2003b, pi).

> ‘Residency could be at any one of a range of campsites and if shelter was required it could be constructed with minimal effort. Home was a place or set of places, not a building. In terms of contemporary Indigenous public place dwellers, the forging of strong connections to particular locations may be particularly marked and bound up with concepts of 'spiritual homelessness' and dispossession’ (Memmott et al 2003a, p. 20).

In this sense, we need to be wary in identifying people as ‘homeless', when we find them sleeping in public space. Perhaps these places **are home**.

The City of Port Phillip Homeless strategy also refers to the exclusion that people experiencing homelessness may encounter:

‘Program providers have highlighted the high incidence of trauma and entrenched exclusion experienced by people who remain homeless for long periods, in particular those who have moved from experience of homelessness as a child or young person through to adult homelessness’ (City of Port Phillip, *Think and Act: Homeless Action Strategy 2015-2020,* p. 6).

Arias recalled some of the numerous incidents he had witnessed of homeless people being discriminated against and of being violently beaten up by passers-by (Arias 2016, Interview). The City of Port Phillip acknowledges that homelessness places people at risk of harm, (City of Port Phillip, *Think and Act: Homeless Action Strategy 2015-2020*) and their strategy uses a 'human rights based approach to rough sleepers and managing public space . . . to protect the rights and interests of vulnerable people sleeping in public space' (ibid. p. 18). The City of Port Phillip have developed protocols so that people 'are treated appropriately and are offered relevant support services' (City of Port Phillip, *Protocol for Assisting People who sleep rough,* p.1).

> 'People who are experiencing homelessness have a right to be in public spaces and will be treated as any other member of the public. The protocol aims to balance the rights of all people to be in public places, while respecting the right of communities to live in a safe and peaceful environment' (City of Port Phillip, *Protocol for Assisting People who sleep rough*, p. 3, 4).

> ‘The belongings of a person who is determined to be sleeping rough must be respected and must not be arbitrarily interfered with’ (City of Port Phillip, *Protocol for Assisting People who sleep rough*, p. 5).

I was walking down Swanston Street in the Melbourne CBD in October 2017 and I noticed an agitated woman. She was standing near an older man, with her torso facing the shops. She turned to her right to project her voice but didn’t look that way. She called out; “How would you like it if someone crept into your house and took your doona!”

TENT WITH CARDBOARD
ACROSS OPENING
CLOTHING
IN TREE
ST KILDA FORESHORE
8.2.18

I kept walking and wondering about what this meant, till I saw very clearly - Five men in hi-vis vests were collecting the bedding, sleeping mats and personal belongings of homeless people and piling them into a City of Melbourne ute.

Lisa (quoted in Rowe 2006) explains her experience of being homeless and then gaining a home. She says when you are homeless it's no use owning anything of value because it may get stolen, and each day she was concerned about whether her clothes would be there when she got back. Having stable housing, made her more independent, and placed her back into the community.

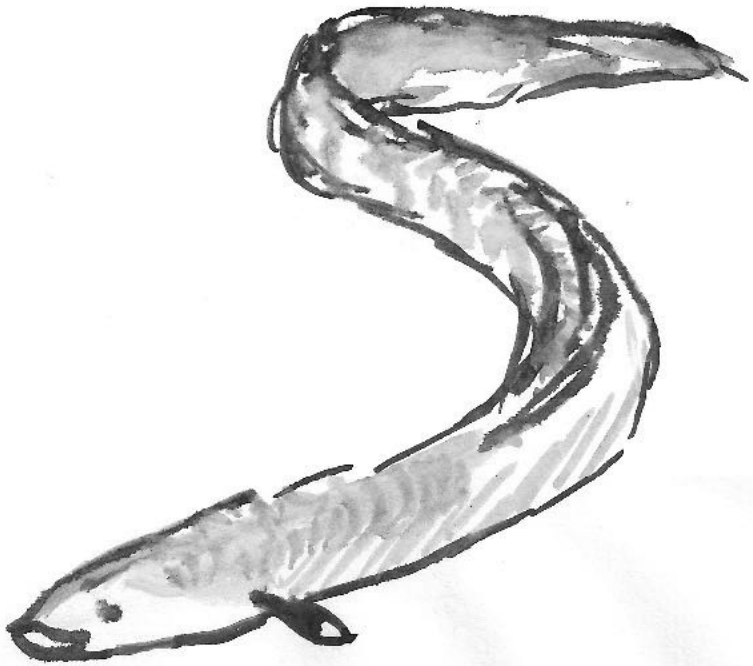
> 'If you're not stable in [terms of] where you're going to sleep each night what else can you do? You need stable ground to be able to build on everything else' (Lisa quoted in Rowe 2006, p. 166).

CAR PARKED AT CATANI GARDENS, INTERIOR COVERED BY BLANKETS.

FEB 2017

8 Place and Territory -

amenities blocks,
rooming houses
and triangle wars



Very early in the history of St Kilda, exclusion was exercised through the taking of land and subsequent destruction of the natural resources which had been traditionally used by the Indigenous people for food and shelter.

Much of St Kilda's ongoing inclusion and exclusion has to do with particular places. Exclusion is exercised, through the removal of architecture and amenities, through making or blocking changes to laws, through media debates, protests and politics. At the same time *inclusion* is exercised through some of these same means and others - debate, protest, policy, protocols, provision of assistance and artworks, markers and memorials.

There were arguments happening in St Kilda around the time of the mural, *about* public space, which were also argued *in* public space - the proposed tolerance zones for street sex workers (discussed earlier), the debate about the Gatwick Hotel, the removal of amenities from Cleve Gardens and the St Kilda Triangle Wars. I include these stories because they contribute to the context of the mural and its place in Talbot Reserve. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* emerges in the midst of these arguments.

Exclusion from Cleve gardens

A bronze plaque in O'Donnell Gardens, tells this story:

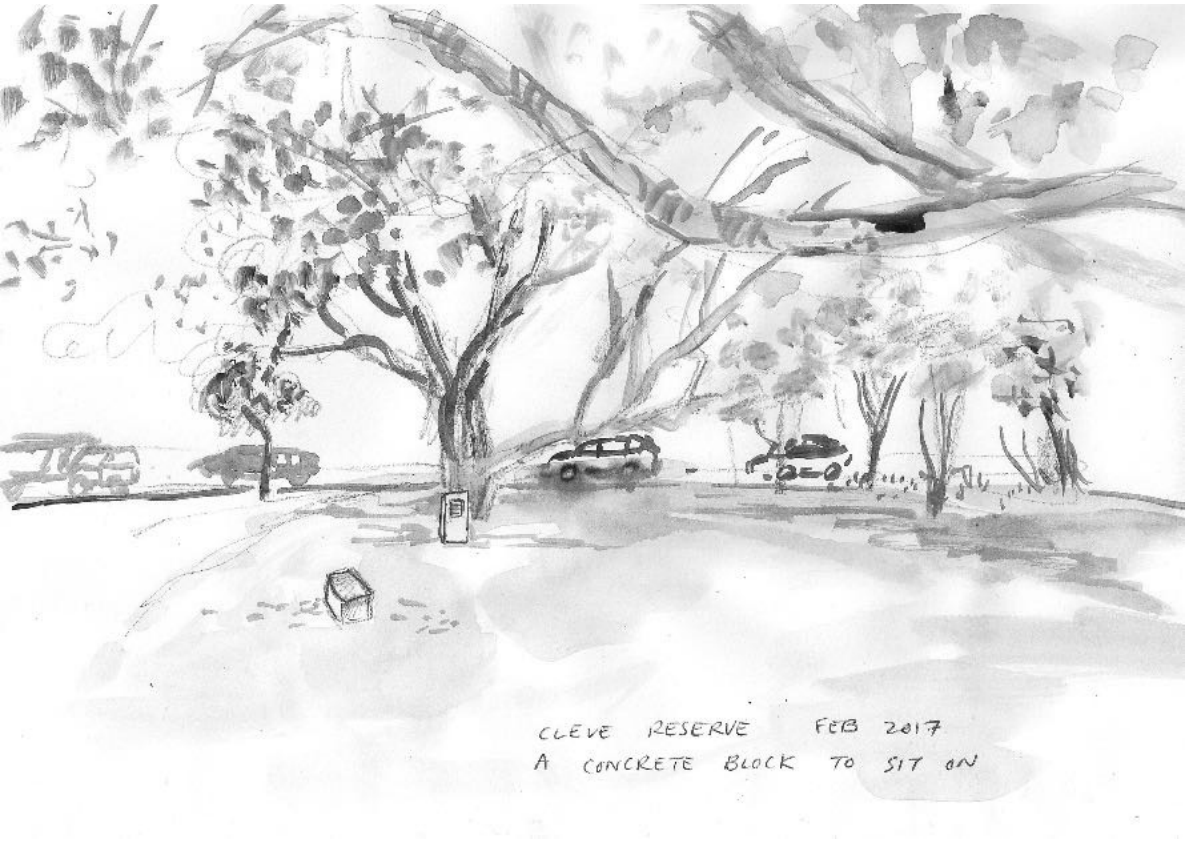
> 'We used to hang out in Cleve Gardens on Fitzroy St and shelter around an old toilet block. We lost some important people there. When the Grand Prix was just about to kick off they demolished it. We didn't know where to go at first but now we hang out here.'
>
> *Myrtle, Alma and the Parkies. X marks the Memory*'
>
> (text on bronze plaque, part of the X Marks the Memory series of artworks, 2003, for the *Margins, Memories and Markers* project, City of Port Phillip)

Although the destruction of the toilet block in 1996 sounds uncontroversial, it was, 'the destruction of a modern sacred meeting place for the Koori people who gathered there' (Monument Australia (website) 2017) and it facilitated the exclusion of Indigenous people from Cleve Gardens (Farouque 1997; McGaw & Pieris 2015; Eidelson 2001). Meyer Eidelson explains:

> 'Aboriginal people, including visitors from interstate, have used this reserve as a meeting place for decades despite attempts to discourage their presence. Local by-laws were often used to restrict public meeting places in areas like Fitzroy. Residents remember Cleve Gardens as a gathering place for the 'parkies' and the designs painted on the ablution block: the Aboriginal flag, giant lizards and Uluru' (Eidelson 2001, p. 31).

The site is registered as being of Aboriginal significance (Millward 1999) and included on Aboriginal Affairs Victoria's Historic Sites Register (Eidelson 2001). McGaw and Pieris argue that authorities are 'ambivalent' to Aboriginal occupations of places, 'on the one hand, site specific works to affirm the parkies' position of significance in the

Indigenous community [here they reference the Cleve Gardens memorials to Robbert Hunter and William Forbes, and the sculpture- *Aunty Alma's Seats* in O'Donnell Gardens] and legislating on the other to ban drinking in public areas, as a mechanism for displacing the Parkies population once again' (McGaw and Pieris 2014, p. 131).



In 1997, a year after the destruction of the toilet block, there was recognition of the importance of Cleve Gardens as an Aboriginal place with newly landscaped gardens, ‘wave seats’, winding paths and a cultural marker (Eidelson 2001). Other plans for its redevelopment included Indigenous designs on the concrete walkways surrounding and through the gardens, an information stand and the Koorie Flag and a flagpole (Millward 1999) which seem not to have eventuated. When I visited Cleve Gardens in 2017, all that remained to sit on in the park, was a concrete slab about 130 X 35cm deep by 30cm high.

There were typical park benches on the footpath which faced away from the gardens, onto Fitzroy street. If you sit on these seats your back is turned away from the memorials and the cultural marker. Instead you face the street of businesses and traffic. I could not find the wave seats or the bronze plaque from the *Margins, Memories and Markers* series which was supposed to be in the area. I concluded they had also been removed.

Triangle wars

Divisions erupted in 2007 into what is described as a small war, between the local community, the council, and developers, over plans for a triangle of crown land alongside the Palais Theatre, between the esplanade and the foreshore in St Kilda, (antidote films, *The Triangle Wars Press Kit*). *The Triangle Wars* film, tells the story of this conflict, which exposed differing perspectives about St Kilda, its identity and how its future is imagined.

> ‘*The Triangle Wars* is a first-hand look at how messy democracy can get when it’s actually working. As a meditation on the lengths to which people will go to defend the sense and meaning of place, it is both a portrait of one of Australia’s most beloved locations and a parable on the nature of engagement and competing notions of progress in contemporary society’ (*Triangle Wars Press Kit*, p. 4).

Rosie Jones (the director of *The Triangle Wars)* describes the main characters involved - Serge Thomas (who began the community group unChain St Kilda), Dick Gross (councillor), and Steve McMillan (property developer) - and ‘the other character that emerged was St Kilda itself’ (*The Triangle Wars Press Kit*, p. 5).

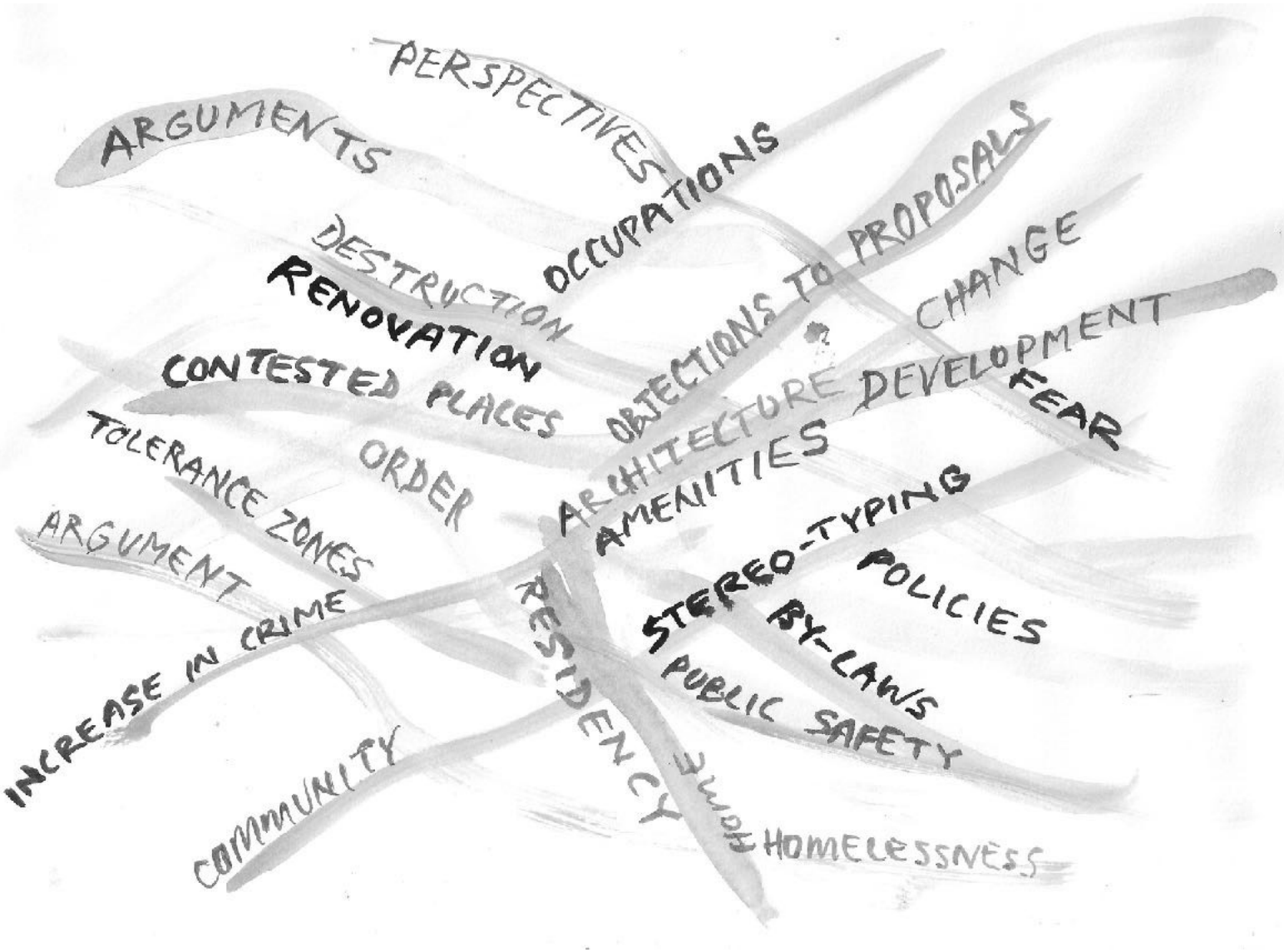
GROSS

THOMAN

McMILLAN

‘UnChain St Kilda’, was formed by the community coming together to fight against development and the subsequent change to the character of St Kilda. They succeeded in preventing the development. At the council elections in 2008, five councillors in support of the development were voted out, and in 2009 the developer was paid 5 million to walk away from the project (Valentish 2014).

This argument was going on at the same time as the workshops for the mural, and in the same place of St Kilda. I see these arguments as ‘messy democracy’, interweaving and splicing into each other as the mural was made around St Kilda with ‘St Kilda’ as the theme.



CROWN
LAND
OUR
LAND
TOO
BLOODY
BIG

The Gatwick Hotel

‘Welcome all, always room at the Gatwick’

(text on The Great Wall of St Kilda)

Whilst I researched the mural, the controversy over the Gatwick Hotel raged and eventually in 2017 it was sold. Yvette Kelly and Rose Banks, are sisters who worked at the Gatwick from 1977 when their parents Ronald and Vittoria Carbone, bought it in order to run a low-cost rooming house. After their parents died, they took over the hotel and continued to run it. Yvette and Rose said they felt pressure to close the hotel from the media, the police, politicians and local businesses (*The Saints of St Kilda* (film) *2015;* Lusted & Edwards 2017; Banks and Kelly 2017).

John Silvester (2016) reports in his article for *The Age*, that 'Gatwick residents vary from being nuisances to threats, leaving many businesses in the street struggling to survive'. Here Gatwick residents are grouped and described as both physical and economic threats to society. When I read Silvester's article I also heard Wendy's voice saying 'the Gatwick was my home for ten years, I loved living there' (Butler 2016, Interview).

Rose Banks stressed that it had been a rooming house for over forty years,

> 'They needed to look before they came here. We were always here'
>
> (Rose Banks, speaking in *The Saints of St Kilda* (film) 2015,14.00)

The Gatwick Hotel became a symbol for homelessness in St Kilda, both positive and negative. It was often a focus of debates with underlying agendas of exclusion. Rose Banks felt that how you saw the Gatwick depended on your perspective.

> ‘Every day trying to explain yourself and explain that all these issues that they're having with people coming in and doing whatever, we have these issues too, but nobody seems to want to see it our way’ (Rose Banks quoted in Lusted and Edwards 2017).

The Gatwick was sold in 2017, for use in a reality television show, where its 66 rooms would be transformed into three luxury apartments. Rose and Yvette, pasted a message onto the Gatwick Hotel after they left, which sums up their feelings and perspectives about having sold it.

> ‘We remember all those who came to the Gatwick and allowed us the privilege of being part of their lives. For whatever reason anyone ended up at the Gatwick, we never judged or asked questions. We always made this place feel like home. Unfortunately, not everyone felt the way we did, or understood how important it was for people to have somewhere they could go, a room to sleep in, somewhere they could be themselves. Instead, politicians, police and local traders saw it differently, and wanted a different outcome for those who had nowhere else to go. The media constantly hounded us for giving refuge to those who really needed it. In the end the ultimatum we were given made it impossible to continue, and that will be a lifelong disappointment. So what we have now are the memories. It’s all any of us have. We remember the residents as the unique characters that they were, and we are grateful they touched and enriched our lives by being our friends’ (excerpt from text of paste-up on the walls of the Gatwick, 2017, by Rose Banks and Yvette Kelly - for full text, see appendices).

WE WERE ALWAYS HERE
THEY TOUCHED AND ENRICHED OUR LIVES
ISSUES NEEDS
SOMEWHERE TO GO
NUISANCES
ISSUES THREATS
STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE
A BED

The Gatwick was a scapegoat (Richards 2017), and a place to be blamed. This is explored in Wendy Butler's iconic poem *Blame it on the Gatwick,* where bad things in St Kilda and all around the world are blamed on the Gatwick.

> Homeless camp in Fitzroy Street, Blame it on the Gatwick.
>
> Rubbish thrown in Jackson Street, Blame it on the Gatwick.
>
> Keith Richards fall down from a tree, Football fans go on a spree,
>
> St. Kilda player hurts his knee, Blame it on the Gatwick.
>
> (Wendy Butler, the first Stanza of *Blame it on the Gatwick,* for full text of poem, see appendices)

The poem also 'highlights the powerful effect the Gatwick has had on the St. Kilda scene' (Richards 2017). The interviewees spoke about the Gatwick, and when I mentioned my research to other people, they often brought the Gatwick into the conversation. It became a metaphoric and a real phenomenon that moved in and out of the research. The Gatwick Hotel as architecture and place was an action towards inclusion. You were offered

somewhere to sleep and shelter and you were welcomed. The Gatwick spoke about the rights of people to have somewhere to sleep, and be in St Kilda. I came across The Gatwick and The Gatwick crossed my path.

Note: The Gatwick has been well documented in several art forms, including *The Saints of St Kilda* (2015 film) and an Luke William's story, 'Gimme Shelter: One month at the Gatwick'.

Debbie Qadri 2018

Rooming houses VS apartments, gentrification

There is division about whether St Kilda should make way for changes or stand against development. The increase of high rise apartments threaten to change the character of St Kilda through: changes to how it looks, increasing residential restrictions on the live music scene (Valentish 2014) and the availability and affordability of accommodation (Attorney-General's Street Prostitution Advisory Group 2002).

St Kilda and neighbouring Balaclava have traditionally had the highest concentration of rooming houses in Melbourne and a long history of both advocacy for and provision of community housing (Press 2009b). But the availability of rooming houses has dropped dramatically. In 1955 the area of St Kilda/Balaclava had over 6000 rooming houses with over 9000 beds compared with 2005, when it had less than 100 houses with around 1000 beds (Aspin 2005 cited in Press 2009b). Data gathered by the City of Port Phillip in 2007 showed a total of 444 rooming house beds in the City of Port Phillip with 422 of these being in St Kilda (City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy 2008). It estimated that 74% of the City of Port Phillip's rooming houses (accounting for 94% of private rooming houses) were concentrated in St Kilda (City of Port Phillip Housing Strategy 2008, cited in Pahor 2011).

Chris Chamberlain (2012) offers the viewpoint that overall rooming house accommodation is on the increase, (identifying a six fold increase in inner Melbourne over the period of 2006-2011), which indicates an increase in tertiary homelessness. But this availability of cheap accommodation seems not to be echoed in St Kilda, where the current trend is to sell rooming houses in order to build new apartments. The tide of gentrification does its best to overturn and sweep out rooming houses and community housing, whilst organisations such as St Kilda Community Housing and the City of Port Phillip advocate and work towards the provision of housing diversity, which in turn supports social diversity.

Debbie Qadri 2018

The Great Wall of St Kilda, Part B: Division and place

9 The history of the Talbot Reserve as a contested space

Talbot Reserve was a highly contested public place. Prior to its renovation, criminal activity and challenging behaviours often occurred and many perceived it as unsafe place (Press 2003).

When I first met and interviewed Robyn Szechtman, (the facilitator of the mural), she explained its history as a site of exclusion.

> What happened with that particular park . . . it used to have a hedge . . . so it was used a lot by homeless people, it was used a lot by sex workers . . . across the road there was a phone-box in the petrol station . . . so the sex workers used to use that, they used all the toilets in the petrol station, and they also used to ring that [phone] for all their drug deals then go and score and hit up in the park. So there was a lot of action going on in that park and the hedge also made it unsafe. We were contacted by a lot of residents about it . . . So we did an experiment and that experiment was a *Design-In*, which was run by Andrea Cook [consultant] and the idea behind that was that you invite everyone who is represented in that park. So you invite residents and you invite sex workers and drug users and representatives of them and you go through a process where you actually redesign the park . . . it was a two day workshop (so that was many years before the mural) . . . and so what happened is, and what we learnt through the *Design-In* is that those residents came in and they decimated it . . . Basically they took the hedge down, they didn't want barbeques, they didn't want anything . . . they didn't want any facilities . . . nothing. They wanted to decimate it so that there was no shelter, no syringe (receptacle), no bins, nothing . . . And that's fundamentally what happened (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

The meaning that the site held for Robyn Szechtman, and the history of the site as a highly contested public place may not have been known to many. Wendy Butler, who was one of the participants in the project, said she found out afterwards:

> ‘Later on Camille said that Robyn chose the wall specifically, because the working girls used to sleep in that park a lot, then it was cleaned up and the barbecue was taken away to stop encouraging [them]’ (Butler, 2016, Interview).

Even though the *Design-In* was described as inclusive (Press 2003), and its focus was on ‘re-building relationships’ (Press 2003, p. 61), there was an imbalance between the participants in the process with 52% (24) of participants being housing occupants and home owners, and only 16% (6) being advocates for users of the Reserve. Difficulties also arose when people who did not participate in the *Design-In*, spoke against proposals at public meetings, voicing strong negative views about marginalised groups (which were not challenged) and influenced change in the collaboratively designed proposals of the *Design-In* (Press 2003). Robyn Szechtman explains:

> We set it up that everyone would be a part of it, but their voices drowned out . . . (the local owners) . . . were very vocal and orchestrated quite a campaign, they didn't let up, it went on and on and on . . . One of the fundamentals of the workshop was, we wouldn’t design anyone out, but fundamentally it did’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

Whilst the *Design-In* offered an alternative approach, and attempted not to ‘design out’ marginalised people (Press 2003, p. 64), the outcomes witnessed through visiting the reserve in 2018, is that it has been levelled ‘so that anti-social behaviour can’t be hidden from view’ (ibid., p. 63), the barbeques have been removed, and it is now difficult to use for private activities.

Robyn Szechtman, changed her mind about the *Design-In* process, and its ability to foster democratic outcomes. She said, ‘they learned to do it differently’ (Szechtman 2016b, Interview). The divided outcomes of the *Design-In* also serve to highlight the role that the idea of ‘resident’ plays in debates. The advocates of the users of the reserve (6 people) found it difficult to have their say and be heard alongside others who lived in buildings and had businesses around the reserve (Press 2003). ‘Residents’ are often constructed as those in well functioning, law-abiding households and families (Press & Szechtman 2004). Ironically ‘residents’ claiming rights based on their ‘resident’ status are themselves attempting to deny rights to other residents (Press & Szechtman 2004).

Malone argues that the fragmentation and segmentation of space in terms of legitimate and illegitimate user groups is based on a climate of fear, suspicion, tension and conflict between social groups (Malone 2002, p. 159, cited in Press 2009a p.12). Public space is a contested domain, where the desire to regulate, control and purify public space excludes those people who don’t conform (Press, 2009a, p.12).

For as long as I can remember, walking into Luna Park was free. On one of my walking trips in St Kilda in 2018, I thought I would go inside, to document the public art by Pamela Irving, but I was halted by a man at a gate. Luna park now has a $2 entry fee. ‘Oh’, I said, ’What’s going on?’
‘Well there’s an official pamphlet’, he explained (as he waved it), ‘It’s about fundraising’. But then he continued,
‘But the real reason is . . . to keep out the dodgy people and it works’.

Luna Park was no longer a public place.

10 Foment, towards, together - land at site

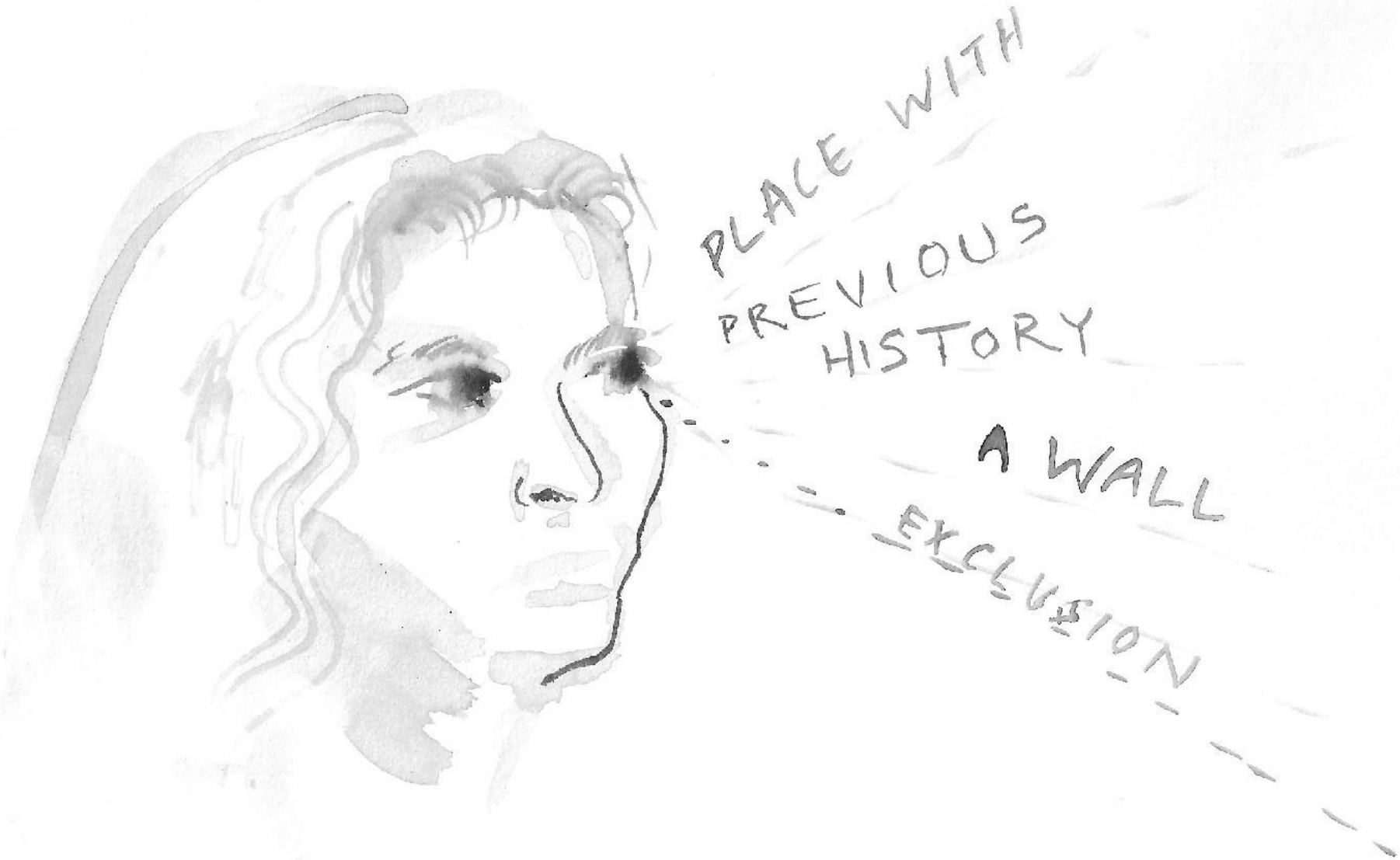
‘Camille said, “I want to do another mural”, and I said “Okay, I’ll find you a wall.”

I drove past Talbot Reserve

and Talbot Reserve, we had a whole history with’

(Szechtman 2016, Interview).

The mural has been called several names, *The Inclusion Mural, The Start all Mural Experiments Project* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda*. These three names reflect the history of the mural’s beginnings. Many things, positive and negative, inclusionary and exclusionary, led towards the mural and collided at the site at a particular place and time which enabled the project.


PLACE WITH
PREVIOUS
HISTORY
A WALL
EXCLUSION

Note: previously an aerosol artist had made an image of stop all animal experiments on the wall. The text was along the bottom. A community project was made and attached to the wall but there was a gap along the bottom and the previous text could still be seen. Later the text was adjusted to say 'Stop all mural experiments', which referred to the ongoing saga of the wall in terms of new artworks being put on and then vandalised or falling into disrepair. Robyn's title of 'Start all mural experiments project', refers to this slogan.

Robyn Szechtman worked for the City of Port Phillip's Municipal Drug Strategy, and had previously facilitated a ceramic mural with artist, Camille Monet and the community of Park Towers (in South Melbourne). They had developed a method of working with communities which Robyn was eager to use again because it had improved relationships between people (Szechtman 2016b, Interview) and using the arts with communities was supported by Robyn's manager Mandy Press (Szechtman 2016, Interview). Around this time, a mural painted by the community members (in the Jackson street area) had been accidentally painted over by a graffiti removal team, so making another ceramic mural was appealing as it was less likely to be destroyed (Szechtman 2016, Interview). There was also evidence that the employees of the City of Port Phillip were very amenable to inclusive methods of making public art:

> ‘Cultural development was already integrated with health, strategic planning and community development. The City of Port Phillip has, for a number of years, used public art as a way of defining community, and creating a sense of belonging, local identity and social connectedness between individuals’ (McLeod et al. 2004, p. 30).

The City of Port Phillip had become involved in a research project with Swinburne University of Technology’s Institute for Social Research (Brackertz et al. 2005, 2008). The mural project was used as a case study for this research - *Community Consultation and the ‘Hard to Reach’: Local government, social profiling and civic infrastructure* which focused on methods used to engage people and the consultation undertaken with workshop participants about health issues (Brackertz et al. 2005; ‘History of the start all mural experiments project’).

Recent events had heightened divisions in St Kilda. There had been removal of facilities (toilets, barbeques, seats, plants which provided shelter and privacy, amenities and facilities to prepare meals) in Cleve Gardens and Talbot Reserve, which had been used by people who slept rough. Street sex workers had been the target of an ongoing campaign by residents and traders. The implementation of tolerance zones, which may have minimised harm for the street sex workers and

residents, had been stalled during the lead-up to an election, and then became unfunded as the government changed hands (Press and Szechtman 2004). Likewise the plans for supervised injecting rooms in the City of Port Phillip had fallen through in political processes - ‘the legislation to enable safe injecting facilities to be established did not proceed as the Government failed to secure the majority support required’ (Press & Szechtman 2004, p. 85). Research evidence suggests that safe injecting rooms and tolerance zones would assist in preventing harm, and saving lives (Mendes 2004; Press and Szechtman 2004). Much time and resources had been spent on lobbying and preparing for legislation and implementation of the safe injecting rooms. For those staff who worked with people affected by drug use and street sex work, there would have been a strong emotional response to the failure of the tolerance zones and the safe injecting rooms to make it through legislative changes. This contributed to the focus of the mural in engaging particular groups of people who had been further disenfranchised by these recent events.

ANGER
AMENITIES REMOVED FROM CLEVE
TALBOT RESERVE RE-DESIGNED
A MURAL ACCIDENTALLY PAINTED OVER
TOLERANCE ZONES SHELVED
SAFE INJECTING FACILITIES FALLEN THROUGH
RESERVE
TELLING THE REAL STORIES OF ST KILDA
INCLUSION MURAL
LOCAL PLACES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN WORSHOPS
HOPE
THE INCLUSION PROJECT
THE SWINBURNE RESEARCH
INVOLVING ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE ALL OVER ST. KILDA
PURPOSELY INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE OFTEN EXCLUDED
INCLUSION

Robyn had been looking for a site for a new mural and when she drove past Talbot Reserve which had been a recent place of contention, she envisaged the artwork on the substation wall as a response to the exclusion.

Since Talbot Reserve was still in the process of an upgrade the mural could be part of this. The substation had hosted several artworks, both commissioned and interventionist which tended to be vandalised or in disrepair, so a ceramic mural offered a permanent solution to the ongoing need for repair and replacement.

All these things coalesced at the site and were transposed into action. The mural was both a formal response articulated through legitimate channels but one which also arose out of diverse events, many of them emotional, which came together at the site. The *St Kilda Inclusion Project* included the mural under its auspice, other organisations joined in by hosting workshops and the Swinburne Research jumped on board. Methods of inclusion were layered, coming from the different

perspectives, organisations and events that came together to support and enabled the mural.

> ‘Silence never won rights, they are not handed down from above, they are forced from pressure below’ (text on the *Great Wall of St Kilda*).

I felt that the unrest and the groups of people coming together to debate and protest about St Kilda, and people’s rights to be in its public space had built a foment for the mural. This anger and unrest was harnessed as an opportunity to move this negative exclusion through into the positive actions of inclusion through making the mural.

DESPAIR
WORKING TOGETHER
TIME
THE VALUE OF EACH PERSON
TEACHING
HOPE
SYMBOLISM
MATERIALS
INCLUSION
VOICE
PERSONAL STORIES
MAKING
TELLING
SHARING
ANGER
EXCLUSION

I have taken time and the physical space of words and drawings to articulate this background and perspective of how people were experiencing exclusion because of their circumstances. The mural needs to be imagined within this context of foment and emotion broiling in St Kilda about the rights to public space. At this moment, the idea of the mural was a symbolic, gestural and emotional answer to the things that were happening in St Kilda at the time.

Notes:

* The Swinburne study was concerned with helping councils extend their consultation processes to become more inclusive (Brackertz 2008, p.1).The researchers worked with eight partner councils (including the City of Port Phillip) 'to identify the conceptual and practical difficulties associated with including hard to reach groups in consultation.

* The St Kilda Inclusion Project (beginning in November 2008) was an initiative of the City of Port Phillip, the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Department of Human Services. It began in November 2008 (The St Kilda Inclusion Project Webpage) and many community events and projects were included under its auspice. The Project Evaluation was conducted by Jessica Anson and Tsharni Zazryn of Monash University.

The Great Wall of St Kilda

Part C:

MAKING THE MURAL

11 Mobility, Process and Inclusion through tile-making

Though it was an open project which welcomed local residents and visitors, the focus of the mural project was to reach particular groups of the community who were experiencing homelessness, living in temporary accommodation such as rooming houses, or marginalised through various circumstances (Brackertz et al. 2008; Monet 2010).

I met with Robyn Szechtman again and this time she was joined by Deborah McIntosh who had worked over many years with some of the people who were involved in the mural. I met them at the *Great Wall of St Kilda* in Talbot Reserve and then they took me for a walk. We walked around St Kilda, going to the Veg Out Studios and then across the hill to look at the *Jackson Street Mural* which was painted by Camille and the St Kilda community in 2009. As we walked to the places, they were brought into the story of the mural and made clearer for me but I also realised that mobility, walking and moving to different sites was an important part of the mural process.

Wendy Butler's recollections of when she first met Camille during the project also focus on mobility.

> 'I went around to the Women's House and met Camille there. We got along really well and at that stage . . . she was going around in this little van painted with flowers and stopping in parks and stopping here and there and everywhere and talking to people' (Butler 2016, Interview).

First of all, Camille went around the community consulting about the theme and design of the mural. Then she began mobile workshops using either a van or a trolley to take the wet clay tiles to people where they were, in parks where people hung out, at service providers, health and welfare agencies, community centres, rooming houses and schools (Brackertz et al. 2008; Szechtman and McIntosh 2016, Interview). This mobility of the workshops allowed Camille to reach out to the people who might want to be involved by going to the places where they were. She purposely sought out people who are not often consulted, and those who are often excluded, as Wendy Butler recalls:

> ‘The Womens House . . . the Beach House, the Women’s Centre . . . there were lots of working girls there’ (Butler 2016, Interview).

Butler also explained how Camille found that being outside facilitated a greater connection with people:

> ‘Back then [2006] . . . you’d have about a dozen people sleeping across the road [from the Gatwick] most nights, you had three or four vacant shops and wherever there was a vacant shop there were people sitting outside . . . There were always people in blankets wandering up and down Grey street and loads of people sleeping on the verandah at Sacred Heart and later on the other church. And she [Camille] met loads more people just through hanging around outside the Gatwick, either in front of it or the other side of the road’ (Butler 2016, Interview).

Physically taking the workshops to places in which the people felt comfortable was one of Camille's strategies for involving people. Camille also made hand-written flyers and placards, which presented the information in a 'simple, personal and casual way' (Brackertz et all 2008, p. 21).

As I walked and talked with Deborah McIntosh and Robyn Szechtman, other places were brought into the conversation. And even when I sat still and listened to people talk about the mural, we were still travelling through conversation, all over St Kilda, not only through the process of making the mural but also through its context and subject matter which was about places and being in public space.

The artwork sits in the site of Talbot Reserve, but came from the broader place of ‘St Kilda’. The artwork went around St Kilda on a journey, collecting the creativity, thoughts, words and fingerprints of the people. The artwork was made as it moved through St Kilda as a growing collection of clay tiles - it *became* through *being* in different places. Then it took those places back with it to the site of Talbot Reserve as the installed artwork. It is a whole assemblage which resides in a particular place. A larger context of place; the places of St Kilda and the place of St Kilda as *home*.

For many residents of St Kilda the idea of ‘home’ is mobile. Home may not be a permanent place to sleep, but the *place of St Kilda* may be home. You might call St Kilda home because you feel connected to a network of places in St Kilda - The Gatwick where you could find a place to sleep, O’Donnell Gardens where you might catch up with friends, Sacred Heart where you might go for a meal, the Gatehouse or Lounge-room where you might go for a break or some help, Alma Park where you might get a haircut. A mobility of places connected by movement between them. Moving on foot across St Kilda might be traversing *your home*.

Later a studio at Veg Out was used for the project as an ongoing workshop and this provided a continuity for people who became engaged with the project, and enabled them to work on their tiles over time. Instead of the workshops travelling to the people, the people repeatedly travelled to the workshop. Here, workshops were held regularly over five months in summer (November 2007 till March 2008) and often combined with a barbecue. Between workshops Camille often had the studio open and welcomed opportunities for people to be involved (Brackertz et al. 2008).

The Swinburne Research report, whilst focusing on consultation, noted in great detail the tile-making workshop at Talbot Reserve. I have quoted this description intact, because the researchers render the Talbot Reserve workshop in relation to the history of the site:

> ‘This [workshop] held special significance, as the reserve had in the past been a contested space, with the various user groups (homeless people, families and the wider community) not always comfortable in each other’s presence. Creating tiles here provided participants with an opportunity to picture how their tile would fuse with the other tiles made, which represented the experiences of those living in the area. It also created a space for people to imagine how the spatial and social dimensions of the reserve could be transformed. During this art session, many of the participants wandered over to the poster billboard and commented on how different the park would look when the mural was constructed. Conversations were held about how other areas of the reserve might be redesigned to make the public space more accessible to a range of people and how the playground could be made more appealing to children. In this way, the community mural project linked with another council initiative that aimed to generate ideas about how the reserve could be converted into a more harmonious public space (Brackertz et al. 2008, p. 21).

It was a re-occupation of the space, a re-enactment of the *Design-In* done differently - a metaphoric performance as well as a workshop for making tiles. A link was created between the workshops and the later installed mural, through physically being in the space, looking at the wall and conversing. On the actual grounds of Talbot Reserve, the mural was being contextualised and grounded.

12 Making, speaking, eating

‘The method involved inviting participants to use damp clay to create a tile, together with the community artist. During the process, the artist talked with them about the concepts they wanted to illustrate and assisted them in creating images’ (Brackertz et al. 2008, p. 20-21).

The Great Wal

Debbie Qadri 2018

The permanent artwork was a common goal and focus, but each person made their own individual tiles. The process of making them was both about themselves, about the others around them (conversation, working together, finding commonalities) and also about the over-arching theme of 'St Kilda'.

Serge Thomann, (who was involved in the mural through his role as local Councillor), suggests that the hand is the expression of what's in your head and *hand*-making the tile took time. Over this time of making, people would begin to feel comfortable and talk about their feelings, concerns and problems (Thomann 2016, Interview). The making, thinking and speaking went hand in hand.

The opportunity to talk about issues was an important part of the process of making *The Great Wall of St Kilda*. This was implemented through consultation as part of The Social Inclusion Project and the Swinburne Research project.

‘Time taken by the community artist and researcher to listen to people’s stories, and to ask questions, was important to many homeless people who do not often have opportunities to be heard or occasion to be the focus of a large-scale project within the community. Some art participants commented on how they enjoyed chances to partake in the research component of the mural project as it accorded them a chance to reflect on living in St Kilda and to consciously value their involvement in the mural project’ (*History of the Start all mural experiments project*).

The workshops provided places for participants to speak. A space for a voice both during the workshop time and also a speaking voice permanently fixed in their tiles on the wall. Some of the larger phrases in the mural were physically made by Camille, but were gathered through conversations with participants. The artist, the workshop conversation and consultation and making the tiles for the final artwork were mediums that people could speak through.

The workshops brought diverse members of the community ‘to sit side-by-side and converse’ (*History of the Start all mural experiments project*) as residents of St Kilda, tourists and people from all levels of society became involved in making the tiles (Arias 2016, Interview). The tile-making process was a conduit for people being together and facilitated conversations, telling stories, discovering shared experiences and problems, and social bonding (Brackertz et al. 2008).

The length of time that the workshops continued, gave people a space to feel comfortable, to talk about issues, make connections with people and also provided an opportunity to be referred to a service.

Mauricio Alejandro Arias, who assisted Camille in the workshops, described the clay as an ‘earth connection’, the material being ‘a touch of ground’ and very therapeutical, because it helped people have a good time (Arias 2016, Interview). He says that ‘for some it was the most important thing that was going on for them at the time’ (ibid.). They became absorbed and ‘they used to be there every day, roaming around [asking], “Oh when are you going to open”’ - for some people it was an opportunity to make something very private and they were very serious about it (ibid.).

> ‘Once you connect with the person . . . it’s not just the storytelling, it’s a bit of counselling, a bit of listening and . . . at the same time, then the person, it’s about creating confidence. Some of these people were very shy, it was about bringing out this inner child . . . it was a bit more therapy. It was beautiful’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

Arias said that his involvement in the project was personally beneficial, because he had his own issues and was homeless when he was initially involved in the project. He was paid to assist Camille and so he was in the position of being on both sides of the process, he was a facilitator but could draw on his own experiences and understanding of the people that the project was intending to reach.

I noticed that although many people from all walks of life were involved in the mural, the stories recounted by interviewees focused on people who were experiencing exclusion and their involvement was how the success of the project was measured. This is also revealed in the way that Deborah McIntosh speaks about the artwork.

> ‘So the other thing for me is that when I stand here and look at this I think, what an amazing piece of work. And not only is it an amazing piece of work . . . the fact that nearly every marginalised community got brought into this and participated in some way, and all the services that have been around over the years . . . [which] have supported marginalised people . . . everyone was involved in supporting this project and it brought people together’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

What becomes evident about the mural process is the enormous amount of time that was invested in being with people; eating, speaking and making which is now set into the depth of the clay in the mural, in the finger prints, imagery and texts on the ceramic tiles - which are the physical artefacts remaining from and representing this time.

13 Where's Camille?

Wendy shows me a page from one of her self-published magazines. There is a heading 'Where's Camille? The question on everybody's lips'. It refers to how people were always asking where Camille was. The artist had the ability to touch people and develop individual rapport. The ability to bring people together and to become part of their lives. She was, 'a natural at getting on with people and getting people involved' (Butler 2016, Interview).

> 'She has a big loving heart, she's very nurturing, she was always giving food to people, she could not stop at that, she was always gathering people around' (Arias 2016, Interview).

One of the reasons that Robyn wanted to do another mural with Camille was because she 'embeds herself in the community, because she is one of the community' (Szechtman 2016, Interview). When working on the three artworks she was involved in for the City of Port Phillip - Park Towers' *Wall of all Nations*', *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, and the *Jackson Street Mural* - she moved into the area, provided meals for people and was often with the community at all hours of the day and night (Szechtman 2016, Interview; Butler 2016, Interview).

> 'Amazing what she did, I dunno it was a big family at one point . . . we were able to share our meals somewhere together . . . you know Camille would take some of the people to the house if there was an extra meal to share or something to eat, and share stories, eat and share stories' (Arias 2016, Interview).

> 'Camille had this spiritual level . . . Her heart was there she was like the big mother . . . people used to love her, she became iconic. She was very touchy, very physical, food, this love for food, it was beautiful' (Arias 2016, Interview).

In this project the artist was more than an artist. She became a community member and through this was able to connect with people and bring them into the project.

> ‘And that’s the thing that I always found hard, like she probably ended up being paid a dollar an hour for what she did because you couldn’t . . . I never said to her ‘no you can't do this , but it was . . . she just kind of made her own hours and what she wanted to do’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

Camille was also an extraordinary communicator (McIntosh 2016, Interview) and able to develop genuine rapport with people, through talking to people and getting to know them, so the project became well-known through word of mouth, and gained support throughout the community (Brackertz et al. 2008).

> ‘People would talk about Camille in such a positive way, people would bring other people to do stuff . . . the Koori hotline and also the homeless hotline . . . everyone knows what’s going on (Szechtman 2016b, Interview).

As we were walking back from the *Jackson Street Mural*, Deborah McIntosh pondered on the role of artist in public space, the role that ego and fluffing oneself up, plays in obtaining work. I said that I felt when artists make the work with communities they have to do the opposite. They must downplay their own role in the artwork in order to get the participant involved and to establish the individual's potential as an artist. I have to constantly remind people that the community members make the artwork in my murals and I arrange it into the permanent artwork. The paradox of working with community is that the artist must recede for the community to come forward as art makers. The artist must come forward in order to become known and recognised for their skills, to plan and facilitate the artwork with others as a leader. But they must step back in order to let the community come into the light.

Camille's other roles had been to create the larger scene in the mural using consultation with the community to create an image of 'the real St Kilda', and a focal point for the mural. Her main scene develops the message of the mural and provides context for the surrounding tiles. With its deep sculpting, bright colour and detail, it is a scene of wonder and beauty which draws together the

disparate voices on the tiles. Camille, in her role as artist, makes it cohesive, gives it compositional form and reinforces the message.

> ‘Having her own artwork on the wall was not very important’ (Butler 2016, Interview).

> ‘Camille was a very humble woman and this humility helped her to work with people’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

I felt a pathos in this, as the mural was a possibility because of what Camille could do and her role was more complex than working with people to make the artwork:

> 'She invested a lot of time and also not only a lot of time but she was emotionally engaged in ways . . . because often . . . she would talk to me and I would follow up with people’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

> ‘There was always a lot of debriefing about issues that people were struggling with . . . It wasn’t an easy thing’ (Szechtman 2016b, Interview).

When Szechtman says Camille is ‘all loving, all compassionate, and people flock to her and take her under their wing’, there is a note of reciprocity. Part of what attracted people to Camille was that they could do something for her as well. She was open to listening and learning from other people’s stories. Part of the respect that she gave other people was her humility. From accounts, she seems to be both a carer of others but someone who also invites or allows others to guide and care for her. She had an unusual openness towards people.

As the *Great Wall of St Kilda* was being installed in 2009, people remember her being heavily pregnant with twins when directing the workmen in placing the tiles. She left the area and returned to her family home to bring up her children.

> ‘Where’s Camille?’ they continue to ask.
>
> ‘I want to do another project with Camille but Camille is not here’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

14 Everyone working together - momentum

There was a feeling that everyone on all levels of society came together to make the mural happen (Arias 2016, Interview).

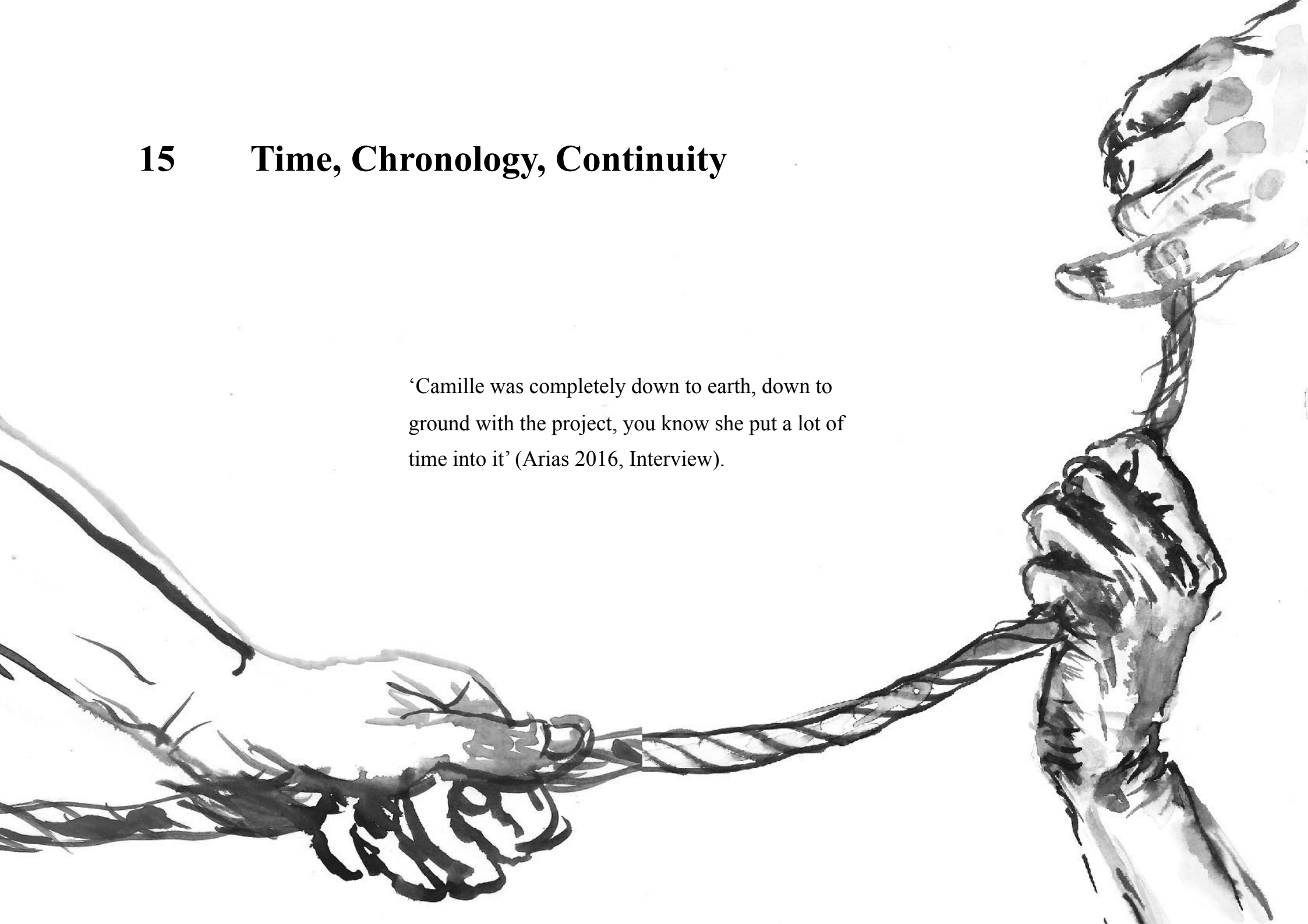
> ‘It was a momentum . . . that lasted for maybe a year or two and that momentum . . . it was from the council down to the bottom, everything was working like a clock. A lot of good people involved, amazing communication, amazing teams, everything was efficient, the people [were] very committed to it, this passion, this thing, there was something good about it, it was just that momentum’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

Momentarily these divisions between layers of society were suspended and people worked together to make the artwork. In the workshops making tiles, getting everyone involved, organising the installation, and celebrating the final artwork - layers of society in St Kilda worked and talked together, whereas otherwise they might pass each other on the street without acknowledgment.

The mural is a wonderful instance of ‘coming together’, and as the product of coming together, and in its imagery (where Camille’s central picture offers a scene of what coming together might look like). The final artwork is a reminder of this process, and an ongoing ‘sign’ of the possibility and potential of coming together.

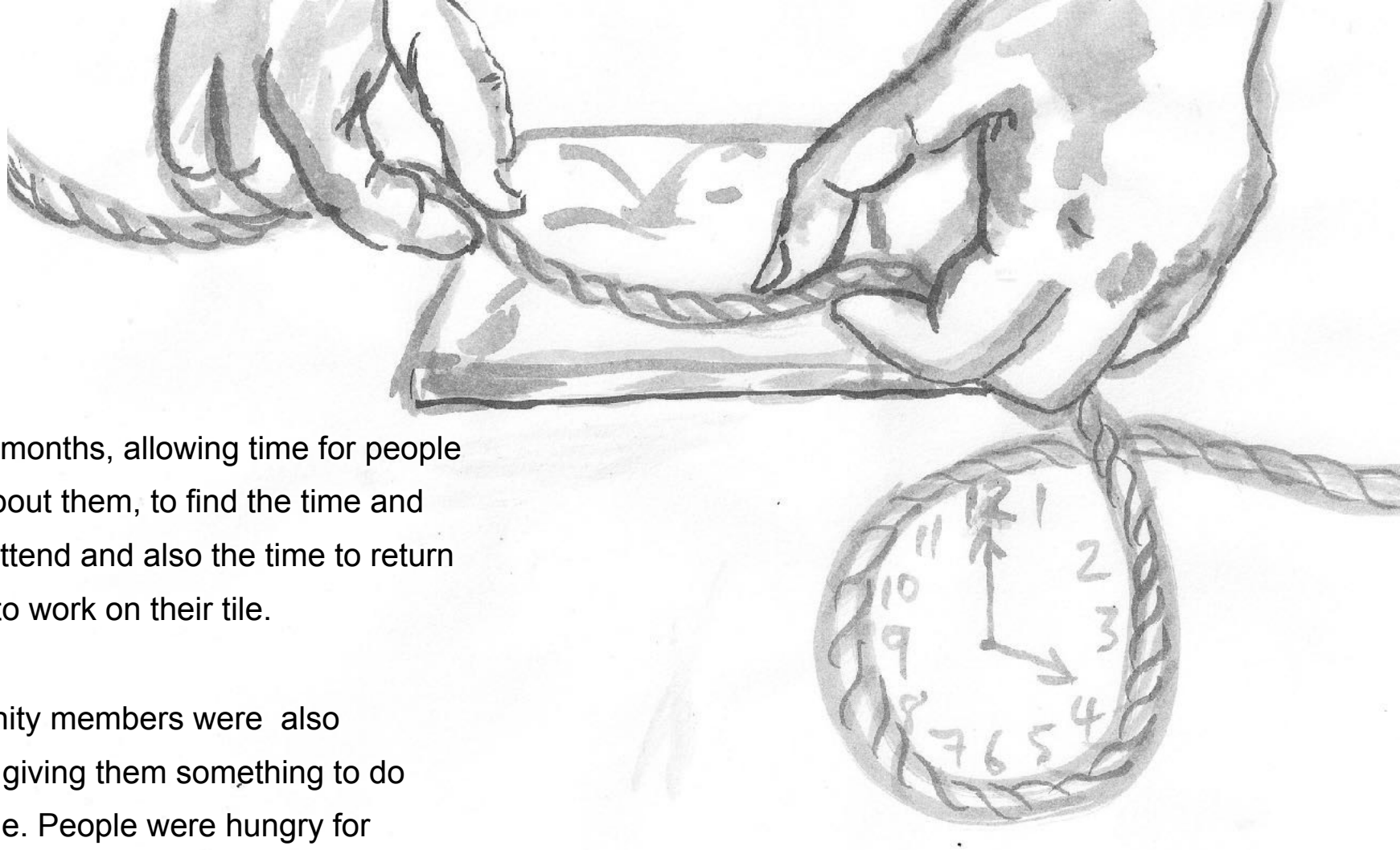
15 Time, Chronology, Continuity

‘Camille was completely down to earth, down to ground with the project, you know she put a lot of time into it’ (Arias 2016, Interview).



The artwork has many connections to time. Having the project go over a length of time allowed the inclusion of more people; it allowed ‘time’ by offering repeat workshops so that the participants had time to become engaged and complete their work. The artist gave an enormous amount of her time to the project so that many could engage in it. The project benefited from having *ample* time.

Mauricio Alejandro Arias recalls that it may have taken three weeks to eventually convince someone to come and make a tile and sometimes people would return to work on their artwork, over weeks (Arias 2016, Interview). The studio workshops at Veg Out, ran over



the summer months, allowing time for people to find out about them, to find the time and courage to attend and also the time to return over weeks to work on their tile.

The community members were also ‘reached’ by giving them something to do with their time. People were hungry for something to do (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

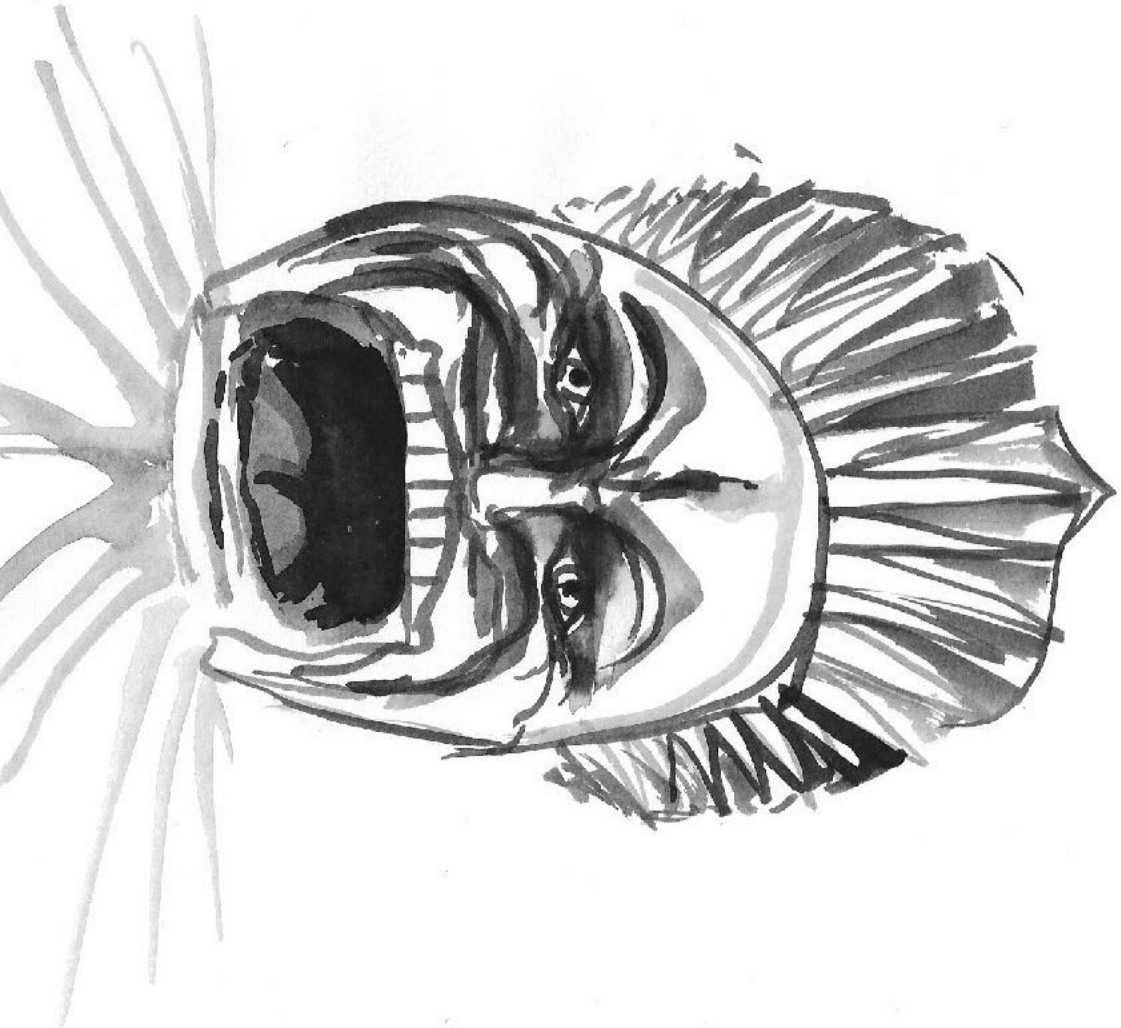
In many people who were experiencing homelessness, Arias witnessed a loss of the reality of time. He explained to me that many homeless people have been very traumatised and are in pain, grief or shock, so that they cannot handle the responsibilities of everyday life, such as banking or organising a place to stay. It is easier for them to remove all of these things and then feel free. But as part of this, there is a dis-connection with what time means (Arias 2016, Interview).

For people who have no hope, remembering the past and planning for the future might be placed out of mind. The workshops created the ‘value of filling up time . . . like a rope . . . They were looking forward to what you are

going to create' (Arias 2016, Interview) and the workshops 'reinforced them on the moment' (ibid.).

The mural has to do with time through the process of being made over a length of time. It also then captures a time, an era, the times of its making. It sits in Talbot Reserve over time, its permanence gives the artwork continuity with its makers and durational time in public space.

16 Unexpected challenges - division and exclusion



Although the project was a coming together, seeds of division also grew. There were clashes between some of the workshop participants and the regular users of the Veg Out Studios and Gardens.

In order to work in the Veg Out studio, the participants had to enter through Veg Out Gardens, a community garden run on the site of a former lawn bowling green (The land is administered by City of Port Phillip but owned by the State Government). The project was seen by some people as attracting drug addicts and drunk people (Arias 2016, Interview).

> ‘All the worst scenes of behaviour could be shown at this community garden. I'm talking about jealousy, aggressive behaviours, racist behaviours, discriminative behaviours’
>
> (Arias 2016, Interview).

These negative behaviours were exhibited by only a few people, but it was a sad outcome of the mural process.

Discontent also arose about who was included in the larger scene of the mural (Szechtman and McIntosh 2016, Interview). Near the end of both of Camille's large projects (The *Great Wall of St Kilda* and the earlier Park Towers *Wall of all Nations*) some members of the community turned on Camille. Deborah McIntosh and Robyn Szectman recall:

> DM- they did, they turned on her . . . it became political as always . . . problematic, it was a bit of a split
>
> RS - It's always a particularly tricky part of a community . . . "He featured in it and he didn't",
>
> DM - When you're working with community sometimes, is that the smallest things become the most ugly things and there's really no point to it. It's around bringing someone down. It's that lateral violence that occurs . . . I think it was disappointing to Camille . . . but you're always gonna have that split, no matter what you do.'
>
> (Szechtman and McIntosh 2016, Interview)

Both Szechtman and McIntosh agreed that now their strategy is to work across the community instead of at particular places - suggesting perhaps that the issue is about territory and place.

The saga of exclusion and inclusion had been played out in the life of St Kilda (which led to the mural being made), but also within the mural, like a smaller vignette of life. It was an illustration of coming together with a little reminder about division inside it.

It is interesting that the conglomerate of voices on the wall also include dissension and argument.

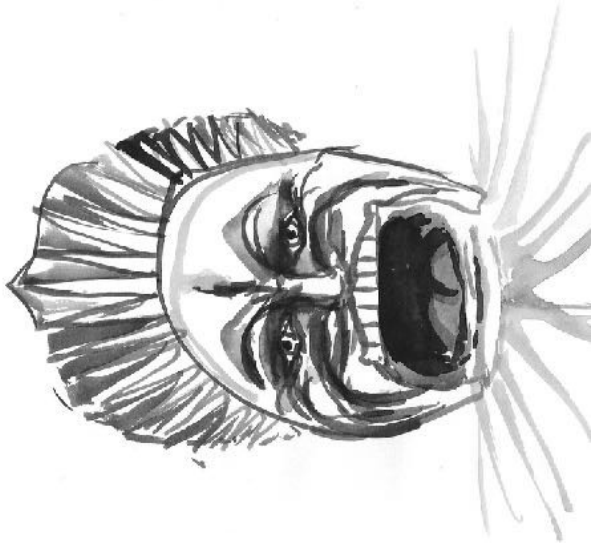
> 400DD Thousand in THE NAVY ONLY 1/2 CAME BACK
> “Get out of my Kitchen” (in speech bubble), Elaine ruled the Gatwick Kitchen and haunts it still

I DON’T LIKE ST KILDA, TOO YUPPY, TOO MAD, GENERAL ATTITUDE IS BAD.
Shame on a government That put’s Money before the environment
Silence never won rights, they are not handed down from above, they are forced from pressure below
I’m thinking about making a world revolution. Join the Rebels.
BRING BACK THE CONNIES, TRAM CONDUCTORS BRING A HUMAN TOUCH TO MELBOURNE’S TRAM SYSTEM
I LOVE St Kilda I Hate
(Above: texts from *The Great Wall of St Kilda*)

In some way the disparateness of the messages on the wall, encapsulate difference. They point, to the reality of community - that it never comes with a common set of interests (Press 2009b, citing Amin 2005).

We can view working towards democracy and equity, as being inevitably bound up with processes of division and argument.

> ‘Conflict, division and instability . . . do not ruin the democratic public sphere, they are the conditions of its existence. The threat arises with efforts to supersede conflict, for the public sphere remains democratic only insofar as its exclusions are taken into account and open to contestation’ (Deutsche 1996, p. 289).



17 Getting it installed

After the many tiles were made by the community it was difficult to find a kiln to fire them and it took a long time (Arias 2016, Interview; Butler 2016, Interview). The central part of the mural took a year for Camille to produce. She carved it at her studio at Phillip Island (Monet 2010). The carving was very deep and the tiles heavy and it was decided by the engineers that the mural was too heavy to be mounted onto the substation, so at one stage it was almost as if it couldn't be done (Butler 2016, Interview). A separate support structure needed to be constructed and the cost for this was estimated at $60,000 much more than the original budget had allowed.

The newly elected local councillor Serge Thomann (a protagonist in the Triangle Wars) recalls seeing the unfinished mural as a pile of pieces on the floor covered in dust. He had no idea what it would look like when installed. His impetus to help find the funding for its completion was impelled by the need to respect the people who had done the work of making the tiles and that not completing the project would be dis-respectful (Thomann 2016, Interview).

Debbie Qadri 2018

Robyn looks at the mural and says, ‘It’s absolutely amazing that we got this up . . .’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

Debbie Qadri 2018

8 *The Great Wall of St Kilda*

Part D:

AFTER THE MURAL

> ‘The art object remains, life goes on. Art; whether we like it or not, continues producing affects’ (O’Sullivan 2001, p. 126).

The Great Wall of St Kilda remains. The end of the process held a gain and a loss. Loss for the making community because the process had ended, but gain in the permanent reminder of the project. This art object holds a memory of the process, and permanently displays the messages of the artwork. It sits in public space over time and (amongst other things), it changes the discourse about: the idea of community members making public artwork, the character of St Kilda, and who belongs in Talbot Reserve.

18 Re-engagement with the artwork

After the artwork was installed there was an opening. Research by McLeod, Pryor and Meade (2004) suggests that the public celebration of the work of the community members, enables participants to look back on their achievements with pride.

The artwork is still. A moment captured through the firing of the kiln. There is no more making, no more togetherness. The artwork waits for the audience to come and look and touch it. Community engagement with it begins in a completely new way.

From my own experience of making ceramic murals, I feel the artwork has to renegotiate its value and meaning with the audience and also with the people who made it. They have to reconnect with the work after it's fired because it often looks different - the colours have changed and it is shiny and perhaps unrecognisable. They might have to find out where the object sits because it's not the same place where they made the artwork. It is no longer their artwork in clay - instead its ceramic and now has become collaboratively part of a bigger permanent artwork.

I often have to help the people who made the clay work to engage with the object by making the connection between what they made in the workshop with me, and their work in the completed object.
I ask them:

'Do you remember what you made?'
'Can you find it?'
'Do you like it?'

If they don't connect the activity of making with the finished artwork, then it may have no meaning for them.

One of the workshops for the *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, took place at Talbot Reserve, which connected the making process with the final mural. The opening of the Mural, also gave people a chance to reconnect with their artwork.

In most of the interviews, I felt the meaning of the final artwork, was that of memory. The focus was about the process of inclusion and the wall contained the memories of this process and was a memorial of the *time*.

How does the mural share its story to an audience? I stood in front of it several times and heard people tell its story. I witnessed people looking at it, reading it, talking about it and touching it.

> 'I come here and when I bring people, because there's so many people that I know that have passed . . . and I know the history behind this and their stories, I always feel like, I pay homage to the people and also I tell the story . . . you know I had friends from Brisbane come down and I did a walk around, an art walk and I begin to talk, and now my mum does it, she's 78, my mum was part of this as well . . . and she brings older people back who have lived in St Kilda and who have never seen this . . . So it sort of becomes that handing the baton on as well' (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

I felt that we didn’t know very much about how the artwork would speak to its audience over time, but it was important for it to be there. It was a possibility, a hope that the mural that came from all of those people in St Kilda, would get to speak for a long time and that the story of the mural would be passed on verbally.

> ‘Public art is that connection between time, space and the public, because it will stay there for a long time’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

19 Inclusion

‘Keep diversity and inclusion a strong part of St Kilda culture’ (*The Great Wall of St Kilda*).

‘Welcome to our site of community reflection, respect, recovery, resistance, compassion across difference. This is a place where differences are forgotten and your heart unites with others’ (*The Great Wall of St Kilda*).

Debbie Qadri 2018

Two of the names that people use when referring to the mural, *The Great Wall of St Kilda* and The Inclusion Mural raise opposite metaphors about inclusion and exclusion. The ‘Great Wall’ could be envisaged like The Great Wall of China, created to exclude others, a reminder of difference and separation. Alternatively, *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, sounds also like there’s a great wall owned by St Kilda, something that heralds it, something to see that is great!

‘The Great Wall’ is also the name of an earlier community artwork in Los Angeles, which may have served as inspiration for the St Kilda mural. *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* was organised by artist Judith Baca and hand painted by over 400 young people and their families along a floodway in Los Angeles. The first stage of this painted mural was completed over five summers, beginning in 1978. The mural is 13 feet high and runs for 840 metres. Discrimination and exclusion serve as starting points from which Baca's ‘Great Wall’ rises up to create positive discrimination: also known as The History of California, it tells a chronological history of the region from the perspective of the Chicano population.

Judith Baca says, ‘When I first saw the wall I envisioned a long narrative of another history of California; one which included ethnic peoples, women and minorities who were so invisible in conventional text book accounts.’ (Baca, ‘The Great Wall of Los Angeles’). Baca (2014) says that when she began making murals with young people in public places she began to ‘understand the politics of public space and (Mexican Americans) having it or not having it’ (p. 74).

Judith Baca’s mural tells an ‘other’ story, through an act of inclusion. In the title, *The history of California*, she replaces the dominant white history with an ‘other’ history. Similarly, Camille Monet’s artwork aims to capture the ‘real’ St Kilda’ (Melbourne Places), it makes a claim for an‘other’ version of the truth.

Camille Monet’s version of St Kilda unflattens the categories that people are placed into, by including the imagery and words of individuals and including portraits of particular residents of St Kilda in the scene, providing ways in which people can be valued for being themselves, having their own skills and contributing their own knowledge, experiences and understandings.

Camille had walked the streets to consult with the community about the scene (Brackertz et all 2008).

> ‘The Second Part was for me as the Community Artist [was] to gather all the interesting stories I had heard while engaging [with] such a diverse community and turning them into a design which depicted the true essence of St Kilda’ (Monet 2010).

After this consultation and the detailed making of the scene, its placement in the mural gives status and importance to the chosen characters and people through permanent public display.
First of all, top and centre, Camille brought Indigenous history into the mural.

> ‘This mural is in respect of the Boonerwrung people - traditional owners and caretakers of this land. Euro-Yroke is the original name for this land, named after the red sandstone along the beach. This land will always be protected by the creator Bunjil, who travels as a eagle, Waarn, who protects the waterways, travels as a crow’ (*The Great Wall of St Kilda*).

Robyn Szechtman and Deborah McIntosh also describe how she brought the local community into the mural:

> RS - 'There were key people in the community that she wanted to represent and there were key communities, that she wanted to represent, so you've got gay pride, you've got Veg Out, the Gatehouse, the parkies, sex workers . . .'
>
> DM - 'The Gatwick . . . which was a huge part of Fitzroy Street. She was able to hold it, you know it's extraordinary how she was able to do that. And having Bunjil, for the First Australians. The sun's there and . . . the Indigenous colours, and that also pays homage to the Indigenous People' (Szechtman and McIntosh 2016, Interview).

The mural includes places which assist people in need, such as; the Gatwick, Rhed (Resourcing health &

education in the Victorian sex industry), the Gatehouse and Sacred Heart. These are amongst icons of St Kilda - historical and current - the Esplanade Hotel, the Palais Theatre, Luna Park, Veg Out gardens, Scherezade Cafe, Acland St Cakes, The Front Bar, the pier and its cafe, the ship *The Lady of St Kilda*, the Peanut Farm Oval, a tram, and important events - the Gay Pride march and the Esplanade market. It could be read as a general scene of St Kilda, but most characters represent real people and each place, person or character (such as the very large street sex worker) was chosen and included purposefully. More than a picturesque scene, it represents the human story of St Kilda (Thomann 2016, Interview).

> ‘Many of the people depicted in the mural are local characters and legends that are rarely recognised and being acknowledged in such a public manner has generated enormous energy and excitement’ (*Media Notes for the Start All Murals Project*).
>
> ‘They emerge from the shadows to take the limelight in unashamed cameo appearances’ (*Media Notes for the Start All Murals Project*).

Amongst the real people in the mural are; Wendy Butler with her trolley, the Twins, Cowboy (a guitarist who used to play across the road from the Gatwick), Big Mama, Sidney with his guitar, Uncle Ray and Rob Taylor.

Few people ever have their portrait permanently installed in public space. Before the mural, St Kilda had portraits in public space of Captain Cook, Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell KCMG KBE RAN (Founder of the Australian Navy), and Carlo Catani, (the designer of the St Kilda foreshore gardens).

But now they have been joined by many others, representing the diversity of ‘the real St Kilda’.

20 Voice, learning and discourse

‘The voices of drug users and sex workers have been virtually non-existent in the written history of St Kilda’ (Szechtman 2008, p. 159).

Debbie Qadri 2018

During the process of making, there were opportunities to speak; to other people at the workshop, to the artist about what should be in the main scene of the mural, to be part of the consultation about issues in St Kilda, to speak through artwork by making a tile.
The artwork also continues to speak. Camille describes her intentions for the mural as a story-teller on her blog:

> ‘This project is designed to tell the stories of people who would very rarely get the chance to turn their stories into art. This project will create a forum where the wider community can be educated about the people of the streets of St Kilda’ (Monet 2010).

In Camille's vision, telling stories is linked to educating the community: the idea that speaking and telling relate to learning and knowledge. Camille saw the potential of the artwork to educate others. The Swinburne research study saw the workshops as places to gather information and knowledge from the participants (consulting), so there was a lot of learning going on, but specifically both the mural and the consultation was learning from people who are often not asked for their knowledge and input. This was empowering for the people whose knowledge was gathered - through two processes, the consultation about health, and their knowledge of St Kilda incorporated into the tiles (both the smaller individual ones made in the workshops and consultation for the larger scene in the mural).

There was meaningful and purposeful speaking, listening, telling knowledge: a creation of discourse which generated learning, and some of this was recorded in the final artwork.

Miwon Kwon (2002) writes that the site [or place] of the artwork is discursively determined and that an artwork might seek to be part of this 'site' of discourse (p. 28). The discourse about the site of Talbot Reserve was powerful, particularly that of the *Design-In,* which had created physical changes to the

landscape. Kwon (2002) alerts us to the possibility that the discursive site is also generated by the artwork, in other words, the artwork contributes to the physical and visual landscape, but also the conversations about the meaning of the place. The making of *The Great Wall of St Kilda* was a return to the discourse about Talbot Reserve. It was a response to previous discourse about the site, and as an artwork, it also has the ability to create a new discourse about whose place Talbot Reserve is.

The Swinburne research report (2008), also interprets the mural as responding to the events of exclusion and reframing the site:

> ‘The project was also intended to build acceptance of diversity and provide an expressive outlet for the wider community. In this way, it was a means to reframe a public space that had been contested by different socio-economic groups in recent years. The tangible result was to be a public mural to be erected in the contested space (Brackertz et all 2008, p. 20).

The completed mural can be imagined as a voice talking-back to the *Design-In* and a broader re-insertion of the subject matter of ‘place’ and ‘home’ within the context of St Kilda and its people.

You could say that the mural itself is speaking from a particular perspective - that of the organiser, the artist and many who worked with them to make the artwork and get it installed. The mural is subjective, in that it tells *a* version of ‘the real St Kilda’, but this perspective is told by many voices, each expressing their own understanding of St Kilda, which is what makes it so powerful. Serge Thomann points out that there is not just one narrative, there are many disparate

voices, which offer the audience a range of things to pick up on or respond to (Thomann 2016, Interview).

> ‘People who contributed to the mural don’t usually have a voice or get listened to, so the fact that this is permanent - in a way we have given them a voice forever’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

21 The aesthetic of many artists

The mural was a metaphoric response to the *Design-In* and subsequent re-development of Talbot Reserve. The process of making art and the installed permanent artwork were both used as the vehicles for this metaphor but they were physical, involved real people, action, doing and making.

The process of art was utilised as a means of physically making the metaphor or meaning. Hundreds of people worked together towards making a physical thing which was heavy, weighty, solid and permanent.

Mauricio Alejandro Arias suggested that the artwork is valuable because it was made by many artists.

> ‘Well it’s not too corporate to start with. Corporate artwork relates straight away to one creator to one artist . . .
>
> This is basically a social art project. That’s different. You know a public artwork involves community, different creative people in it, not just the one artist, you know anyone can be an artist’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

You didn’t have to consider yourself an artist to participate (McIntosh 2016, Interview) and by including everyone, the project reinforced the idea that anyone can be an artist.

> ‘It’s done by many artists, it’s not selfish, it’s the opposite of that, it’s community, all those people doing the one piece together, that's the beauty of it’ (Arias 2016, Interview).

Robyn Szechtman said that she ‘never knew what that mural would look like’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview). She had to have faith in what Camille would come up with, but knew from past experience that it would be beautiful (Szechtman 2018). Throughout the interviews and documentation of the mural, the idea of enhancing the site or making something of beauty was rarely mentioned as a reason for doing the mural. The mural was only *seen* as a beautiful after it had been installed.

The tiled area made by the community is disparate, ‘very all over the place’ (Thomann 2016, Interview). This quilted or patched appearance, created by the contribution of many smaller artworks by individuals is found in many community artworks, and is very much a part of its quality of being made by many different people. Difference is innate in the aesthetic.

The aesthetic of the artwork was not only visual. How it affects the viewer and how the viewer interprets the artwork is part of its aesthetic. Each person experiences it differently, how it is experienced aesthetically is personal. For example, Deb McIntosh says:

> ‘It’s so good, it makes my heart sing when I stand here. I’m bringing someone down on Saturday to have a look and do a tour’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

She feels that it’s good, and it makes her want to bring other people to see it.

We are standing in front of the mural, midway through the interview and a woman approaches us and asks us if we have any change or a smoke. Then she nods towards the mural,

> ‘I love that . . . when I saw that . . . I just thought that was the coolest thing ever.’

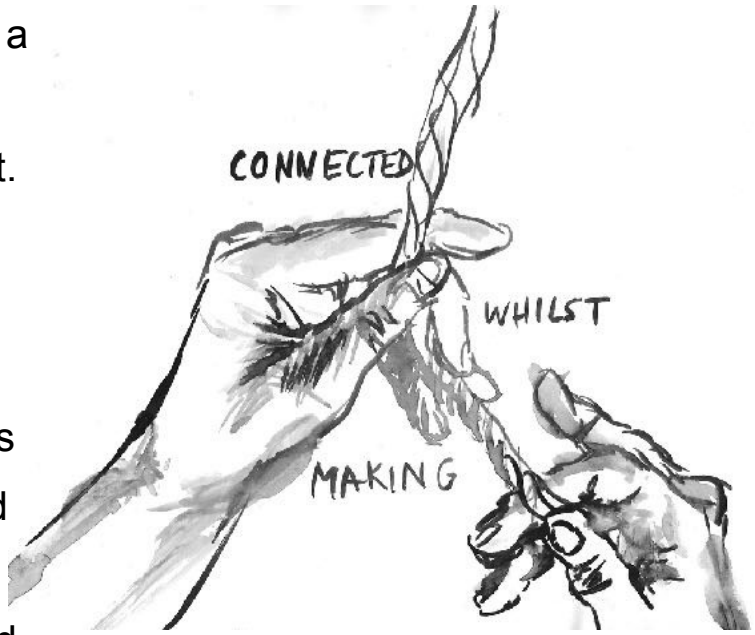
the times
memory
process
people

22 Permanence - a time, voice, respect and memorial

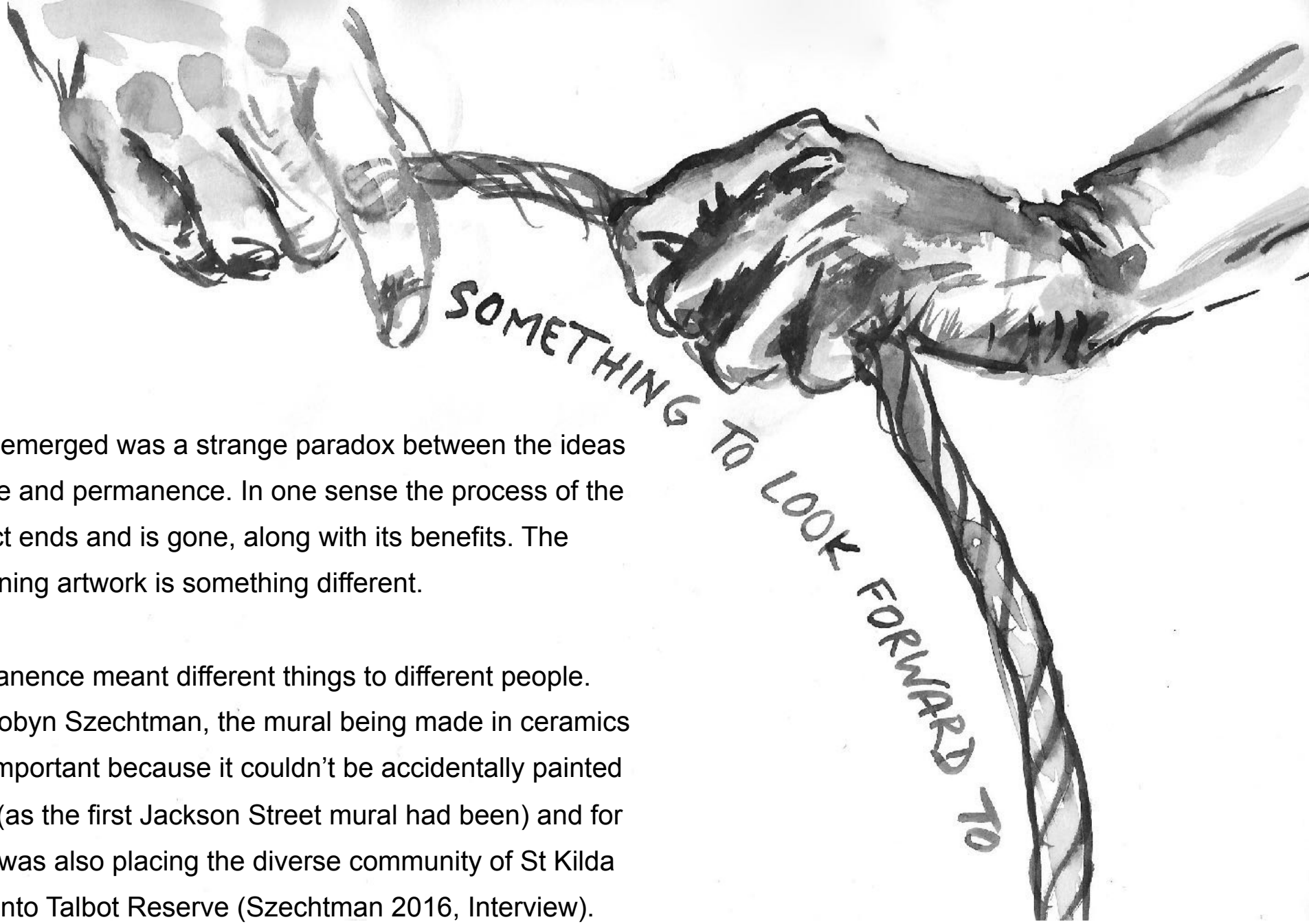
The Times

When I asked Wendy Butler ‘What do you think about when you go and look at the mural?’ she went very quiet. Her head bowed down toward the table that we were sitting at and I felt that she was momentarily blocking out all sound and vision in order to remember something clearly. She said that she always remembers the times, what a good time it was and all of the people. The mural reminds her of a particular era (Butler 2016, Interview).

When I spoke to people about the mural sitting in Talbot Reserve it seemed it was a frozen snapshot of a moment - not the scene visually portrayed, but a reminder and symbol of the ‘time’ when everyone came together and were connected whilst making it.



When the process of the mural was over Mauricio Alejandro Arias said he felt very sad because for many people the experience of making the tiles was quickly forgotten (Arias 2016, Interview). It provided something that was beneficial and needed, but when the process finished that benefit was removed. Arias felt that St Kilda needed ongoing projects of the sort, that it needed to continue, be repeated, or done again because it gave people something to do and look forward to (Arias 2016, Interview).



What emerged was a strange paradox between the ideas of time and permanence. In one sense the process of the project ends and is gone, along with its benefits. The remaining artwork is something different.

Permanence meant different things to different people. For Robyn Szechtman, the mural being made in ceramics was important because it couldn't be accidentally painted over, (as the first Jackson Street mural had been) and for her it was also placing the diverse community of St Kilda back into Talbot Reserve (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

The permanence of the mural assisted in re-defining Talbot Reserve as a place for everybody. It broadened the range of people who could identify with Talbot Reserve, purposely bringing into the artwork, those people who had been marginalised by the *Design-In* and excluded by the park's renovation.

The art-making process forms a community, 'where different people find the same work meaningful' and this also has an impact on the space where the finished works are - the artwork will 'change the space for the people who were involved in it' (McLeod et al. 2004, p. 20). The community of the mural have a relationship with the reserve now.

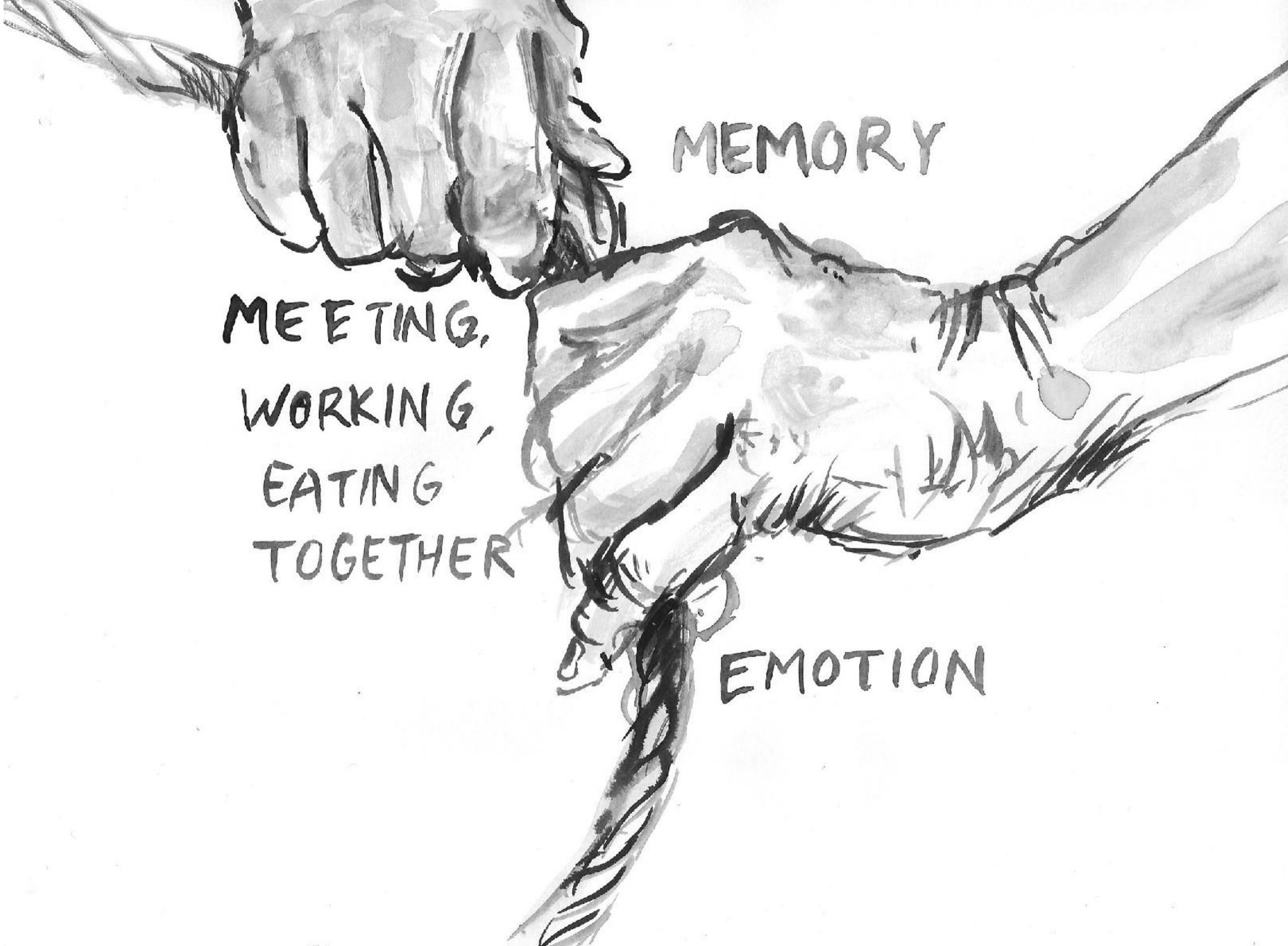
The mural communicates the importance of its subject matter through its permanence and duration. The people and characters in the mural as well as its messages, including local Indigenous history, have been 'immortalised' and given time for as long as the mural lasts in public space. Duration facilitates many viewers and an ongoing audience. In this way it lives out Camille's hope of educating people about the people of the streets of St Kilda.

If the workshops had been focused on making a temporary artwork, they would not have had the same impact. Arias says it would have ‘[missed] that connection, that the wall . . . is the fingerprint, it is the value of these people. That wall gives value to that' (Arias 2016, Interview). The importance of permanence lies in ‘the voice of the people, the fingerprint they are going to leave behind’ (Arias 2016, Interview). Permanence gives respect to those involved in making the artwork.

Serge Thomann says it was an important project because the opportunity to do a tile gave people a sense of purpose and it gave voice to people who didn’t normally have a voice - it was an opportunity to place ‘a piece of their thinking on a tile in a wall in the city’ (Thomann 2016, Interview). They were given an opportunity to ‘contribute to society and to the

beauty of the city' (ibid.). Permanence meant that people who didn't usually have a voice, had been given 'a voice forever' (ibid.). He says the people were more important than the tiles, 'the point was for everyone to be respected'.

Whenever I went to the wall with people who have been involved in the process of making the mural, they began to remember and speak about individual people - people depicted in the imagery, those who made tiles, whether they still see the people and who has passed away. The mural is about these individual people and I visualise them drawn (pulled through) the tiles into the wall and again outwards towards the audience. The people involved move through it and the spirit and memories of them reside in the mural. They are part of its material and core.


MEMORY
MEETING,
WORKING,
EATING
TOGETHER
EMOTION

A discussion of the mural is a discussion of the memory of the people involved in it. It evokes memory of a time of meeting, working and eating together. Remembered fondly and with emotion.

> 'I've got clients that have passed away that were or have been involved in this. I bring families down to show them what they've done and participated in and the story of the project (some interstate) . . . and talk to this as a history' (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

For those who were involved, the mural invokes memories of people who have passed away. Arias told me that he knows at

least of seventeen people who were involved in the wall, who have died in the ten years since it was installed (Arias 2016, Interview).

> ‘It’s a memorial, but . . . it tells a story. It’s such a positive way of creating community but also bringing people to life, and a piece of history, and also it’s very respectful’ (McIntosh, 2016, Interview).
>
> ‘I look at it and I get all teary’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).
>
> ‘I think of all the people who died and the anonymous tiles’ (Thomann 2016, Interview).

What comes out through the interviews is the overwhelming respect and acknowledgement for the *people*. I catch myself nowadays looking at pedestrians on the street and marveling that they have these complicated lives - of thoughts, memories, desires, and history - just as complex as mine. I get this feeling that the difference between the perspectives about people in different circumstances, is the difference between personally knowing people who have experienced those circumstances, and, not knowing anyone who has experienced them.

The artwork - this thing that is not human and not life - is created to show something about life and being human.

> ‘I saw the social and human significance and the respect, by doing this you are . . . recognising people who are not always recognised and showing them respect’ (Thomann 2016, 20).

Michel de Certeau (1998) says, ‘the memorable is that which can be dreamed about a place’ (p. 109) and in this sense the mural offers memory and dreaming together, of ‘the real St Kilda,’ because it evokes the memories of real people and times.

Deborah McIntosh describes her relationship to the artwork:

> ‘I get teary, I look at, I’ve worked in St Kilda since 2002 and I see so many people that are there [in the mural], that are no longer in this world, that participated and were happy when they participated in it. And for me it’s a piece of history that I was involved in and not only is it a piece of history, it’s for this time. It’s extraordinary because it brought and did bring everyone together, and as a celebration of every person’s life and broadly in St Kilda, and I look at that now and see how much its changed in the time I’ve been working here, and for me, I feel quite . . . I pay homage to this as a really respectful piece of work’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

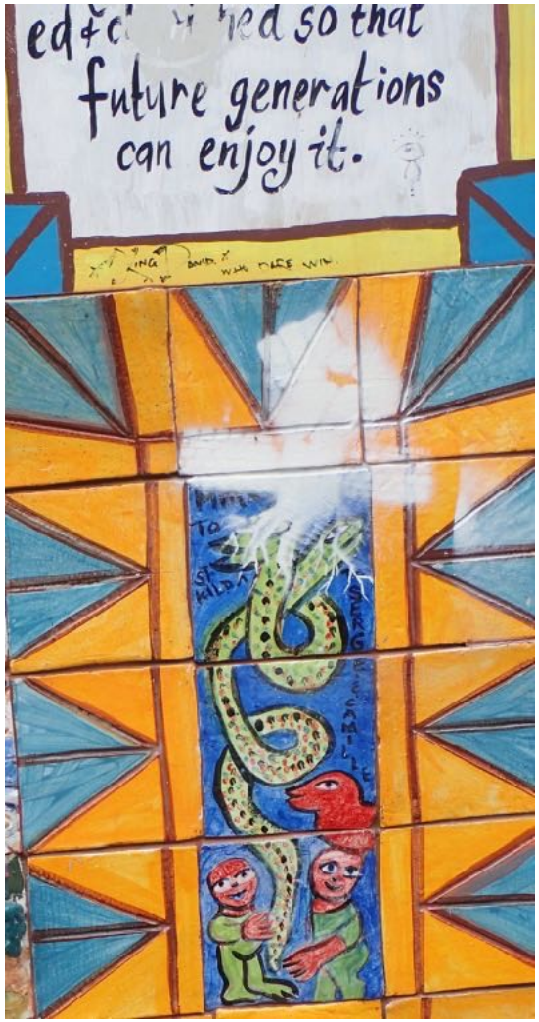
23 Ownership and maintenance in public space

In order to ensure the artwork was maintained, it was bureaucratically delivered into the maintenance register of The City of Port Phillip (Thomann 2016, Interview; Szechtman 2016, Interview).

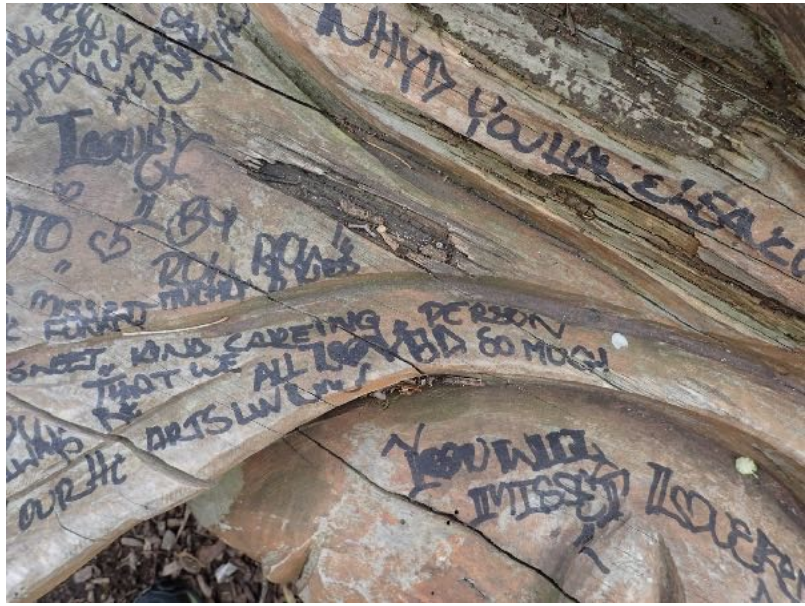
Robyn Szechtman says:

> One of the things that I did when I left is that I made sure that there was a contract with Camille, so that if anything happened to the wall, that she was the one who was going to repair it . . . I've got the little pieces at home, I used to go down and collect the little pieces' (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

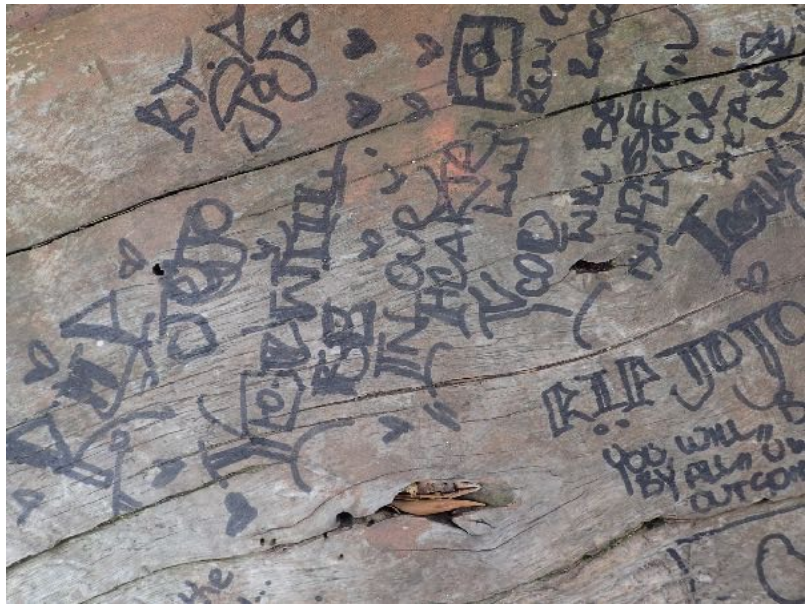
Although the mural was passed over to council maintenance with care and paperwork there is little evidence that it has been cleaned and maintained. Each time I met interviewees at the mural (in 2016) we surveyed the damage to the wall and noted tagging over the acknowledgment on the right side of the mural and across Mirka Mora's tiles, as well as a paper sticker stuck (out of reach) centrally on the sun. Two years later, in 2018, as I am writing, the mural remains in the same state.



Pieces had been broken off and Robyn had kept the pieces she had found so that they could be re-attached. It was ironic that murals are thought to discourage tagging, but that tagging is evidence of their neglect. Graffiti is a marker of the passing of time between the interventions of cleaning.



The Homeless Memorial at the Peanut Farm Reserve (A local sports oval and reserve) had also been tagged on the plaque and the carved seats which also were beginning to crack without maintenance. In 2016 each had a small tag or two and on a later visit I witnessed the market lapping around the memorial area with stalls and parked vehicles, I saw the tags had multiplied. There were also messages drawn and scratched into the seats in remembrance of loved ones. It was undergoing a metamorphosis as community members began to ascribe their own meanings on the seats (Qadri 2018).



Note: Peanut Farm Reserve has traditionally been a place for 'sleeping rough', and the Annual Homeless Memorial is held there each year. More information is provided in the Appendice - 'Places of St Kilda', and in Qadri 2018, 'Walking St Kilda, Public art and Memorial. <https://stkildawalkingpublicartandmemorial.blogspot.com>

The lack of maintenance on artwork which is made to honour community members or made by community members, raises questions about how it is valued by the local residents and those in charge of public space.

Permanence is associated with how an artwork becomes part of a place officially, perhaps on the council's register of artworks, part of a maintenance schedule, used to advertise city, part of council pride. What does it mean that *The Great Wall of St Kilda* is not maintained or mentioned on any of the public art, memorial or monument listings of the City of Port Phillip?

Why are some artworks neglected and others not?

I visualised the mural bending in towards the residents, where-ever they were all over St Kilda, and then through its installation, standing up proudly to address the outside world. I felt that as an object (perhaps animate) it was beleaguered. Not loved or maintained by those in power, and left to deteriorate.

I asked the people whom I interviewed, the question; ‘Who owns the mural?’ Deb McIntosh replied:

> ‘If you think about being in the open and in open space, no-one particularly owns that except the people standing then and there, so that’s a moving feast as well. So, today there might be us standing here, tomorrow there’ll be someone different, so even though there’s some territorial stuff that you may have, depending on the day and what’s going on, that may shift and change. I’m saying today it’s us, but tomorrow it will be a different demographic’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

Similarly, the workshops for the mural gathered in people who were in the public space of St Kilda at the time, residents and visitors, ‘whoever was out and about . . . also got to do something and whoever was walking past and said, “what are you doing?” Then, they got to do something’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

TENT IN
ST KILDA FORESHORE GARDENS
APRIL 2018

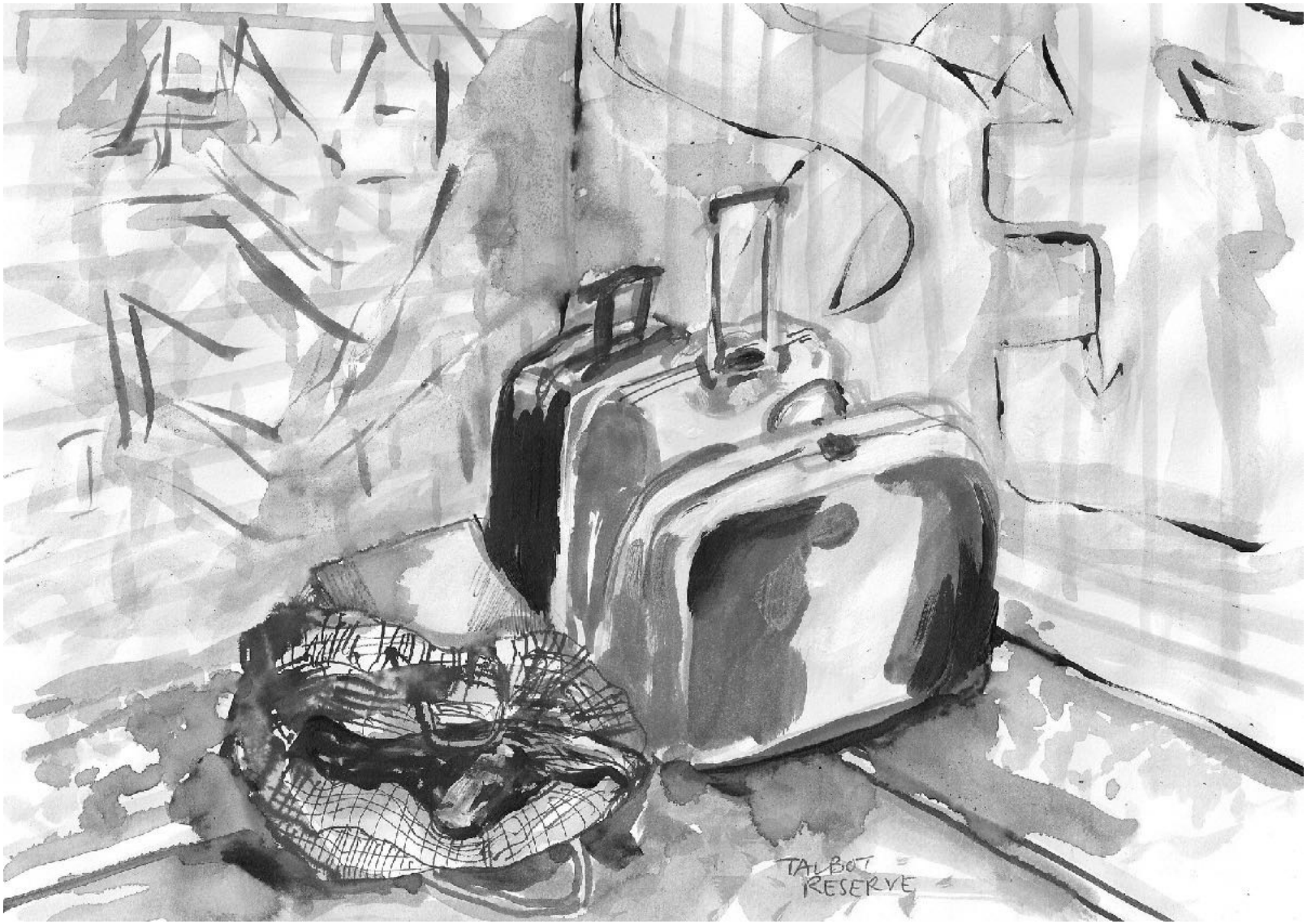
Mauricio Alejandro Arias referred to the fact that St Kilda is the place it is, because people come here from outside. It is not only owned by residents, it is a place for those who come to St Kilda (Arias 2016, Interview). These ideas move ‘place’ away from connection with owning property, towards public space belonging to the public who are in that space at that moment.

How the mural is owned by the community, is difficult to ascertain but there is evidence that aspects of the mural are important to some groups of people. The biggest character in the mural, that of the sex worker, is used in publications and advertisements associated with street sex work, such as; *Shantusi* by James

Rowe, and Rhed publications which advertise the annual Red Umbrella Day (when people wear red and peacefully protest about violence against street sex workers and remember local women who have been victims of violence)(See *Timeline* in appendix for dates of Red Umbrella Events at Talbot Reserve. At least five sex-workers have been murdered in St Kilda since 1990.)

Talbot Reserve is still often used by people sleeping rough. I visited the mural on several occasions over 2016 -18 and often found evidence of people sleeping rough in Talbot Reserve - a tent in the far corner of the park, a trolley, striped bags of belongings.

Debbie Qadri 2018


TALBOT
RESERVE

24 In the context of St Kilda public art and memorial

Although Talbot Reserve is the site of the completed mural, I consider the whole place of St Kilda as its site, because the mural encompassed St. Kilda in its making process and the mural's context is the place of St Kilda. I also wanted to understand the mural within the context of other public art in the area of St Kilda.

Note: Baxter’s hut was the first colonial building in St Kilda.

I had presumed that permanent public artwork, memorials and markers usually refer to dominant narratives of the identity of place, but St Kilda surprised me and refuted my assumptions. I also discovered that the ‘council’ weren't always the protagonists: many public artworks and memorials eventuated from public subscription or were brought about through resident groups. There were only two works which referenced colonisation, these being the sculpture of Captain Cook and the plaque claiming Baxter’s Hut to be the first building (it was the first colonial building).

There were military/war memorials (recognising the losses of the lives of young men and women from St Kilda, in the Boer War, First World War and Second World War) as well as tributes to individual people, civic acknowledgements of leadership and service in St Kilda such as the bust of Carlo Catani and the Edward O'Donnell Fountain.

From 1996 onwards, artworks and markers celebrated a more diverse St Kilda, and were less about people who were powerful and *seen* to be important. It seemed to me that the *Great Wall of St Kilda* was part of a larger turning tide, which had begun to acknowledge diversity, Indigenous heritage both past and present, and all walks of people. But I had concerns about how these new artworks were respected. Their maintenance, how they were documented and written about and whether they were called public art, are things which might measure this respect.

Note: At the time of writing there was little comprehensive documentation of its public art by the City of Port Phillip (see Qadri 2018), and none of the documents or websites which are to do with public art in the City of Port Phillip mention *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, or relate artworks made by community members to the contexts in which public art is discussed - City of Port Phillip, 'Art Precinct Map', City of Port Phillip Public Art Guidelines 2017, City of Port Phillip, 'Public Art' webpage. See Reference List for details of these and see Qadri 2018 for a survey of public art and memorial in St Kilda.

25 Summary

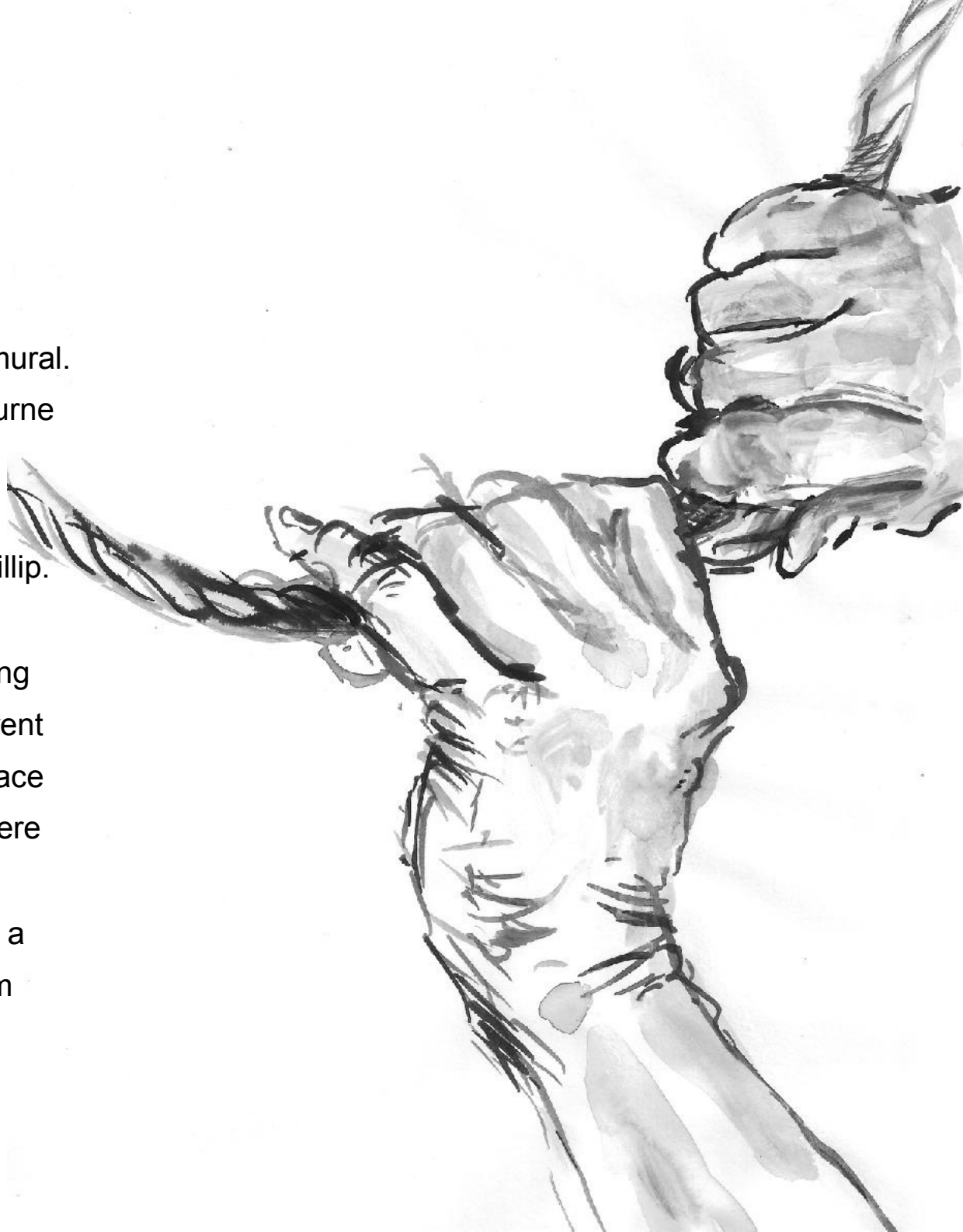
‘Hope is power’

(text on *The Great Wall of St Kilda*)

Debbie Qadri 2018

Inclusion

The interviews revealed a very emotional impetus behind engaging people who were experiencing difficult circumstances in the mural. It was theoretically supported by the Swinburne research project, and also emotionally, philosophically, physically and financially supported by the staff of the City of Port Phillip. And then it was made physically by people involved in facilitating the workshops, working together to organise the workshops at different places, and working on the streets face to face and with the community. The people who were involved worked together, in this complex relationship and alliance, towards engaging a particular group of people and carrying them along through the vehicle of the mural.



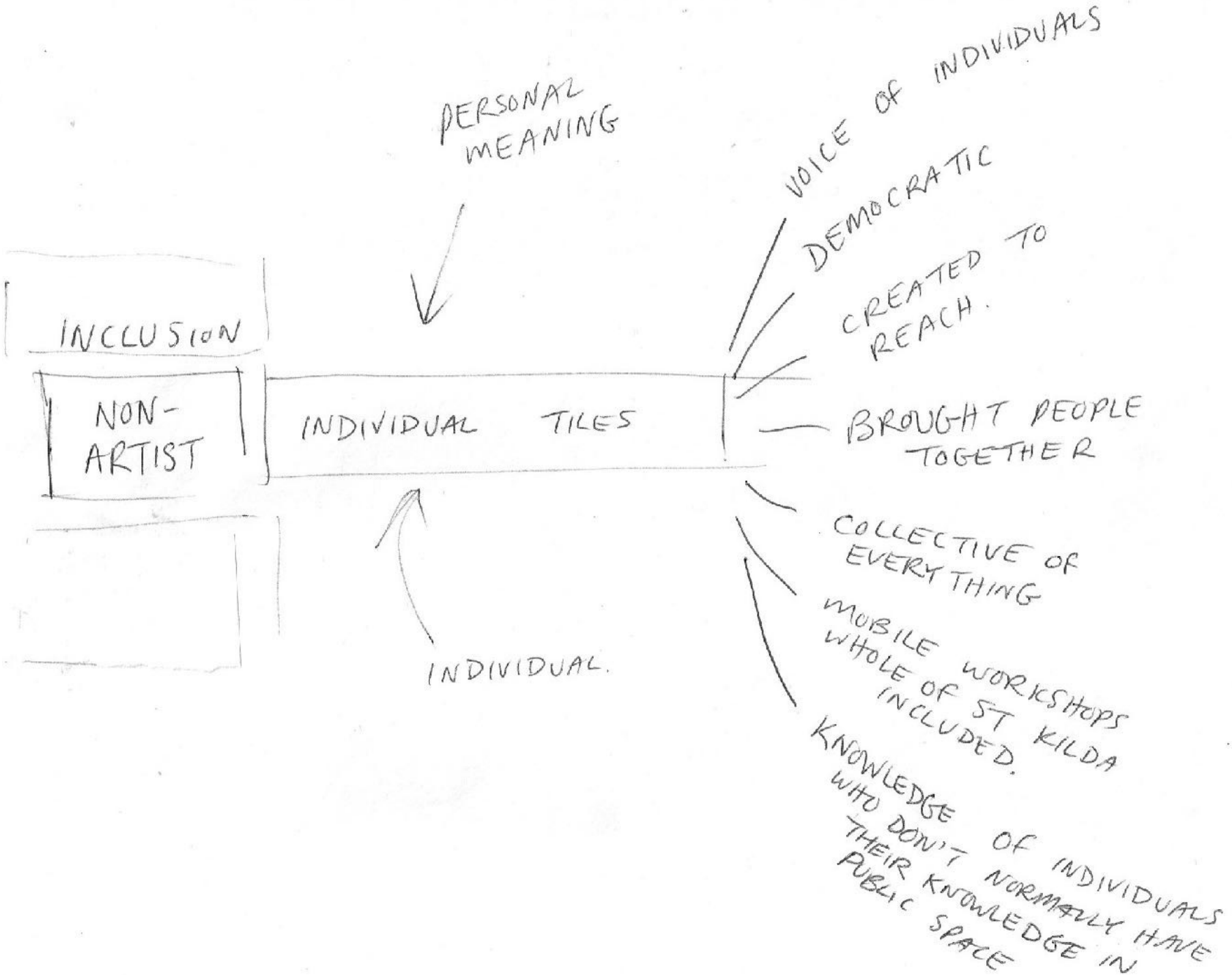
The workshops provided something good for people to do and brought residents of St Kilda from many walks of life, inclusively together over a long length of time. They also directed participants to services that they needed. From the outset it was aimed at community engagement but in many layers - layers of process - consultation, sculpting, painting, talking, and the final mural as the focus of the work. The project also demonstrated that consultation was possible, between the City of Port Phillip and people who were experiencing homelessness, 'that it is possible to successfully reach out to them and get their input into council processes' (Brackertz et all 2008, p. 21).

The Swinburne research focused on the term, ‘hard to reach’, in terms of the target groups for the mural, but I am not convinced that they were ‘hard to reach’. The term, ‘hard to bend’, came to my mind to describe an attitude and approach towards marginalised people which may prevent people from ‘moving’ or ‘bending their bodies’ in order to reach.

Debbie Qadri 2018

Camille demonstrated how to *reach*, by moving outside onto the streets and speaking with people, by visiting places and bringing the opportunity of real agency and an opportunity to speak through an art process which had a permanent outcome. One which gave respect to those who participated.

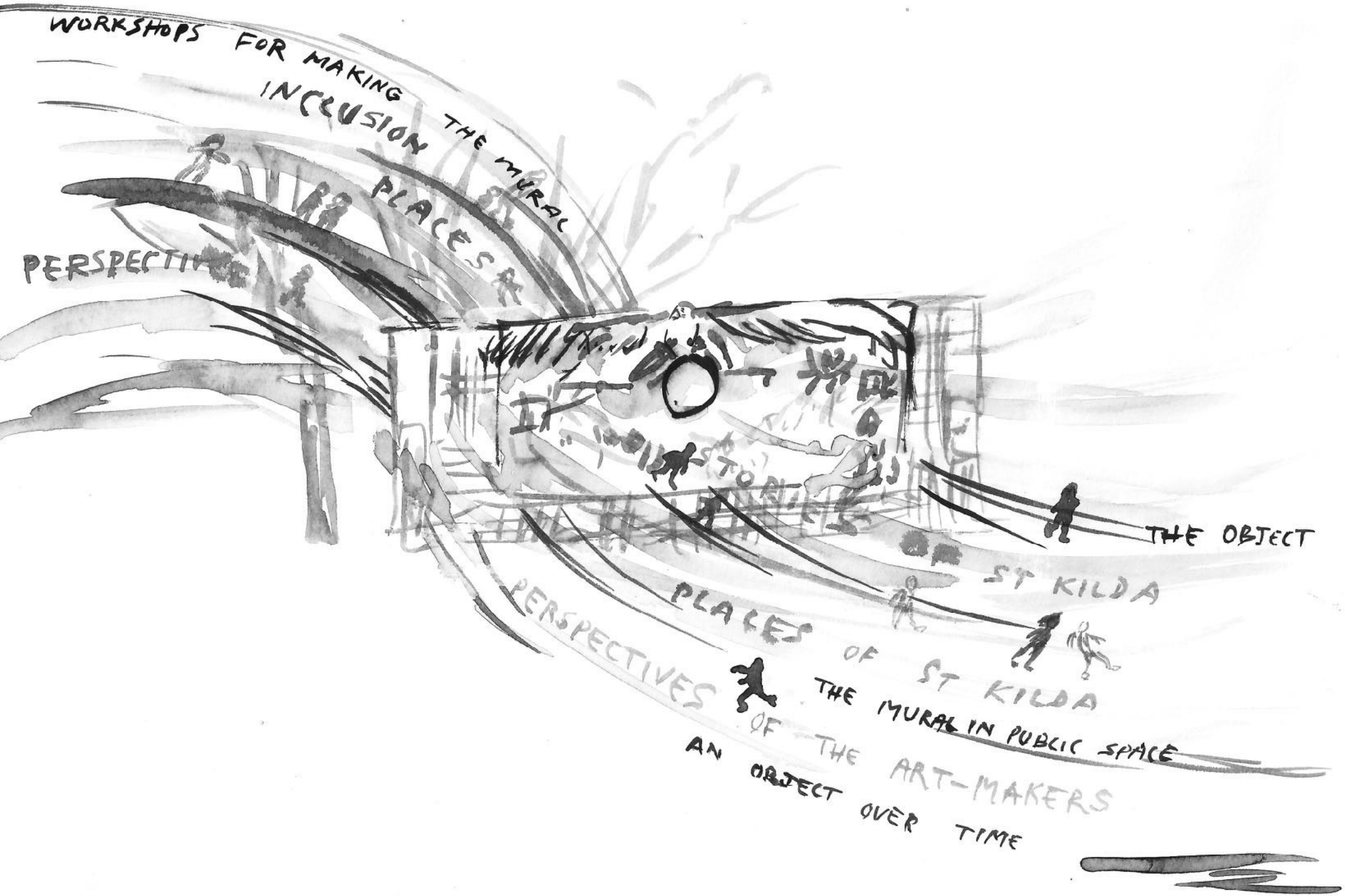
The mural was never a solution for exclusion. But it exemplified *inclusion* through its process and illustrated what inclusion looks like in the final artwork. In the context of *inclusion*, it was an expression of possibility and of hope.


PERSONAL MEANING
VOICE OF INDIVIDUALS
DEMOCRATIC
CREATED TO REACH.
INCLUSION
NON-ARTIST
INDIVIDUAL TILES
BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER
COLLECTIVE OF EVERYTHING
MOBILE WORKSHOPS
WHOLE OF ST KILDA INCLUDED.
KNOWLEDGE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO DON'T NORMALLY HAVE THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN PUBLIC SPACE
INDIVIDUAL.

Process VS Object

The Great Wall of St Kilda drew my attention to the paradox between the process and final artwork. The process was very important in itself, but the context of making towards a permanent artwork created the seriousness, the quality and strength of the process. But when the making ended, in a sense, so did the community. The object remained in public space, bereft of these relationships and action. What remained was the object as memory, memorial and symbol of the process.

The places of St Kilda, the people involved in the workshops and the times of being together and included, were pulled into the mural and then at the moment of installation, were cast still in time. One comes before the other but they are intertwined and necessary to each other.
The importance of permanence lies in the possibility of the artwork being a continual presentation of the possibility of ‘inclusion’ in St Kilda.


WORKSHOPS FOR MAKING THE MURAL
INCLUSION
PLACES
PERSPECTIVES
THE OBJECT
ST KILDA
PLACES OF ST KILDA
PERSPECTIVES OF THE ART-MAKERS
THE MURAL IN PUBLIC SPACE
AN OBJECT OVER TIME

The mural is an emotional and metaphorical response to exclusion which had tangible (physically solid) outcomes.

> ‘They were really upset about the sex workers and you will see in that mural that the biggest thing is a sex worker and everyone who was designed out of that park is back in that mural - and that gave me a lot of pleasure’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

Robyn Szechtman recalls:

> ‘We didn’t achieve what we wanted with the *Design-In*, but we achieved it with the mural, which was to make that space safer, and more democratic’ (Szechtman 2016, Interview).

The Great Wall of St Kilda was actually couched in St Kilda, through the history of exclusion which emotionally birthed it, through the mobility in its making and through the art object being in public space in St Kilda. The artwork sits in St Kilda, and generates a different discourse, to that of other permanent artworks and memorials. Embedded in history and then folded back onto history, the mural speaks and its text is part of that history now. Permanence has this importance.

There was a vast difference between those who knew the mural through involvement and those who saw it without knowing its background. When I first saw it, I thought of it in terms of my own practice. Then later, through research, I came to know the deeper story of the mural's meaning and intent. Every person who comes to view the mural will see something different, and will bring their own experiences and perspectives through which to view it.

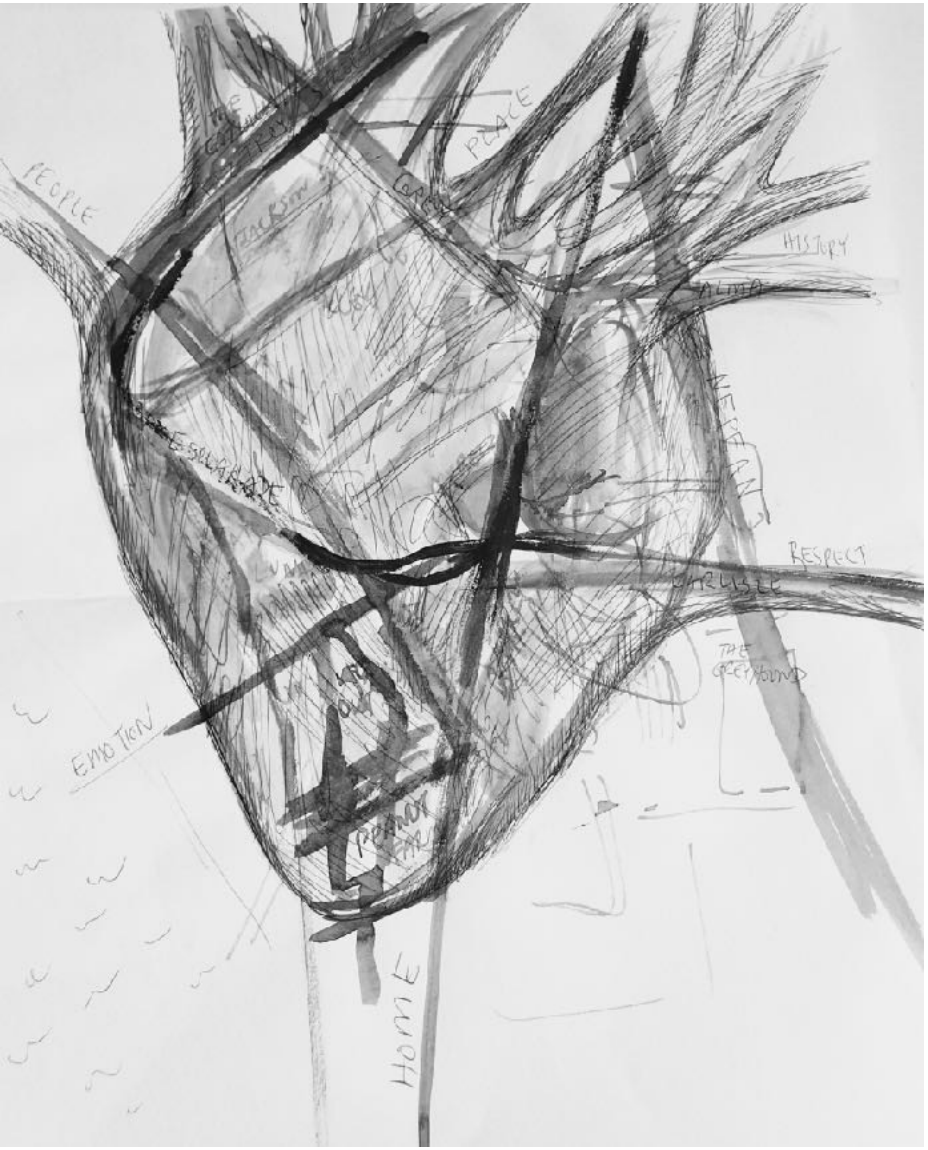
Serge Thomann felt that the artwork was ultimately about *respect*. He said, 'it's nearly as significant as Luna Park because of the meaning of it . . . it's a human piece of art because of the people who did the tiles . . . the people are more important than the tiles' (Thomann 2016, Interview)

Deb McIntosh says:

> ‘Every time I come here and I start talking . . . I talk to it, it talks to me and I talk to it. It's like a storybook for me in that it speaks to me. It’s a talking piece of art and I’m standing here talking to it and I might be telling the story to others, (which is my own perspective) and people come over and want to hear more, they may not know about it and may not know about the story and . . . it talks back and other people talk to it as well’ (McIntosh 2016, Interview).

Judy Baca (2014), who made many public artworks with communities describes the act of making as the answer to emotion;

> ‘When you have some huge emotional calling you don’t know what to do. You become paralysed by the emotional calling. Give somebody something to do about that and then it releases it. That’s why the creative act is so important’ (Baca 2014, p. 86).



She continues:

> ‘Grief, love, anger. Maybe anger at first, then grief, then love. It transformed into love. I mean you can’t sustain anger, its not a motivating factor’ (Baca, 2014 p. 86).

She provides a framework for looking at the mural as an act of love.

EMOTION of DIFFERENCE
INCLUSION
COMMUNITY
KNOWLEDGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
COMMUNITY FORMING
PROCESS
MEMORY
MAKING
INDIVIDUAL
FINGER PRINTS
CHOICE
VOICE
OWNERSHIP

Timeline

This timeline has been built purposely to support the perspective of this narrative. It chronologically maps the mural, as well as events in St Kilda which relate to the context of the mural.

1835 John Pascoe Fawkner's schooner, enterprise, lands in the area but, after deciding the area is not suitable for settlement and a place on the Yarra River is chosen instead.

1839 A grazing lease in the area was granted to Captain Baxter.

1840 A Quarantine station is established at Elwood for the immigrants on the fever ship *Glenhuntly*.

1842 The village of 'Fareham' is planned and the name changed the same year to St Kilda. Most likely named after the Lady of St Kilda, which was anchored near the foreshore in 1841 for some time, enough for the shoreline to be associated with its name

1844 A Sunday coach service brought day-trippers to St Kilda

1847 The Annual Village Belle at the Racecourse (now Peanut Farm Reserve)

1858 St Kilda Pier

1851	(July) The first frequent public horse-drawn omnibus service to St Kilda from the city was initiated (Peterson 2009).
1857	The St Kilda's first railway line was established in 1857.
1863	Sale of Mordy Yallock
1888	Tramlines enable large numbers of visitors to come to St Kilda (Rowe, 2006).
1890s	The depression, large mansions are sold and divided into cheap-boarding houses (Valentish 2014).
1906	Dreamland (later called Luna Park 1912)
1913	The Palais de Danse (1913)
1921	The Victory Theatre (later called the National theatre after renovations)
1923	The Memorial Cinema (1923)
1926	The Palais Theatre
1935	The Astor Theatre
1930s	Prostitutes driven out of Melbourne CBD, St Kilda becomes and remains the main place for street sex work in Melbourne.

1940s	‘Australian and American Troops fill the local barracks. Prostitutes move in and families move out’ (Valentish 2014).
1970s	Youth unemployment and the drug trade in St Kilda, create a new era of street sex work.
1994	The prostitute’s collective of Victoria held a rally in response to the murder of two street sex workers in St Kilda in 1994. The rally was held in Talbot Reserve.
1994	The City of Port Phillip was established following the amalgamation of former cities of St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.
1996	Demolition of the amenities block on Cleve gardens as part of the clean-up campaign for the Formula One Grand-Prix.
1997	Cultural marker and re-landscaping of Cleve Gardens to establish its importance as an Indigenous historical site.
1999	Proposed introduction of a supervised injection facility in the City of Port Phillip (Press & Szechtman 2004, p. 85).
1999	Formation of the Port Phillip Action Group (PPAG)

2000	Legislation which would enable the safe injecting facility in Port Phillip did not proceed (Press & Szechtman 2004, p. 85).
2001	The *Design-In* is conducted for Talbot Reserve (Press 2003).
2001	The homeless memorial is initiated - an annual remembrance service at the Peanut Farm, on the winter solstice.
2001 and	Rally held by the Port Phillip Action Group (PPAG) for the abolition of street sex work in St Kilda, a response rally by Queers United to eradicate Economic Rationalism (QUEER) in support of the rights of street sex workers (Press & Szechtman 2004, p. 85).
2001 - 3	Margins, Memories and Markers art project. Bronze circular marker placed in O'Donnell Gardens tells the story of the move from Cleve Gardens (see Qadri 2018).
2002	Rallies by resident groups.
2002	Government forms the Attorney Generals Street Prostitution Advisory Group (AGSPAG).
2002	(June) AGSPAG Final Report released which recommended the establishment of 'tolerance Zones'. Tolerance Zones/areas are drawn up for community consideration, but community clashes over 'tolerance zones' neither residents nor traders want them in their areas.

2002 and and	(August 13) Amidst protests and threats from community and traders as well as a Unite Residents Traders Action Group against street sex work (URAT) (claiming to represent twelve local groups), with an impending election, government shelves the 'tolerance zones' legislation (Kissane, K 2002; Press & Szechtman 2004, p. 86).
2002-3	Talbot Reserve renovated after the Design-In. Amanda Cook and Mandy Press organising the consultation with local residents and users of the park.
2003-4	Two St Kilda street sex workers are murdered.
2005	Camille produces the "wall of all nations" mural with local community at Park Towers Estate in South Melbourne.
2005	Swinburne University of Technology, Institute for Social Research, report published *Community Consultation and the 'Hard to Reach': Concepts and Practice in Victorian Local Government* (Nicola Brackertz, Ivan Zwart, Denise Meredyth, Liss Ralston, 2005).
2007- 8	The tiles for the Great Wall made by Camille Monet and the Port Phillip community.
2007 the	(May) The Triangle Wars begin - Local Council unveil plans for the $300 million development on St Kilda Triangle, next to the Palais theatre and the community responds with outrage. Local community members form an action group 'unChain St Kilda'

2008 (February) The City of Port Phillip Council approves the proposed Triangle site development despite over 6,000 written objections (Valentish 2014).

2008 At the council elections five councillors in support of the triangle development were voted out.

2008 (November) The St Kilda Inclusion Project (SIP) commenced (St kilda inclusion project website)

2008 Swinburne University of Technology, Institute for Social Research, report published which details the mural as a case study in terms of consulting with the 'hard to reach', *Social Inclusion of the Hard to Reach: Local Government, Social Profiling and Civic Infrastructure* (Brackertz, N and Meredyth, D).

2009 (Late March) Jackson Street Mural is painted with the theme, 'belonging in St Kilda'

(in 'piss alley') by Camille Monet and 77 residents included residents from: local houses, the Gatwick, Salvation Army Crisis Centre, rooming houses and Galiamble. The focus was on consultation process as part of the St Kilda Inclusion Project (See Qadri 2018).

2009 (August) The Shantusi project begins recruiting participants

2009 (November) The St Kilda Triangle Wars conclude with the developer being paid five million to walk away from the project (Valentish 2014) thus ending the Triangle Wars with victory for 'unChain St Kilda'.

2009 (4th December) *The Great Wall of St Kilda* is launched

2009 (17th December) International Day to end Violence against sex workers, at Rhed and Talbot Reserve St. Kilda (An image of the sex worker in the mural is used in the report about the day in *Red* #17).

2011 (June) Council begins a new round of community consultation about the St Kilda Triangle.

2011 (December) Rhed's Red Umbrella March to commemorate International Day to end violence against sex workers, meeting at Talbot Reserve for speeches and a barbecue.

2013 (17th December) Red Umbrella Day, International Day to end Violence against sex workers, at Talbot Reserve St Kilda .

2014 (11th November) Scarlet Alliance Red Umbrella Day, 4.30 - 6pm speeches and performances from 5pm, Talbot Reserve, Albert Street St. Kilda.

2016 (25 March) Holy Trinity, Good Friday Easter five-act play, which stopped at Talbot reserve and concluded at O'Donnell Gardens.

Further Appendices for the Great Wall of St Kilda are at the end of this thesis.

8A: Further information on Places in St Kilda

8B: Text in the mural

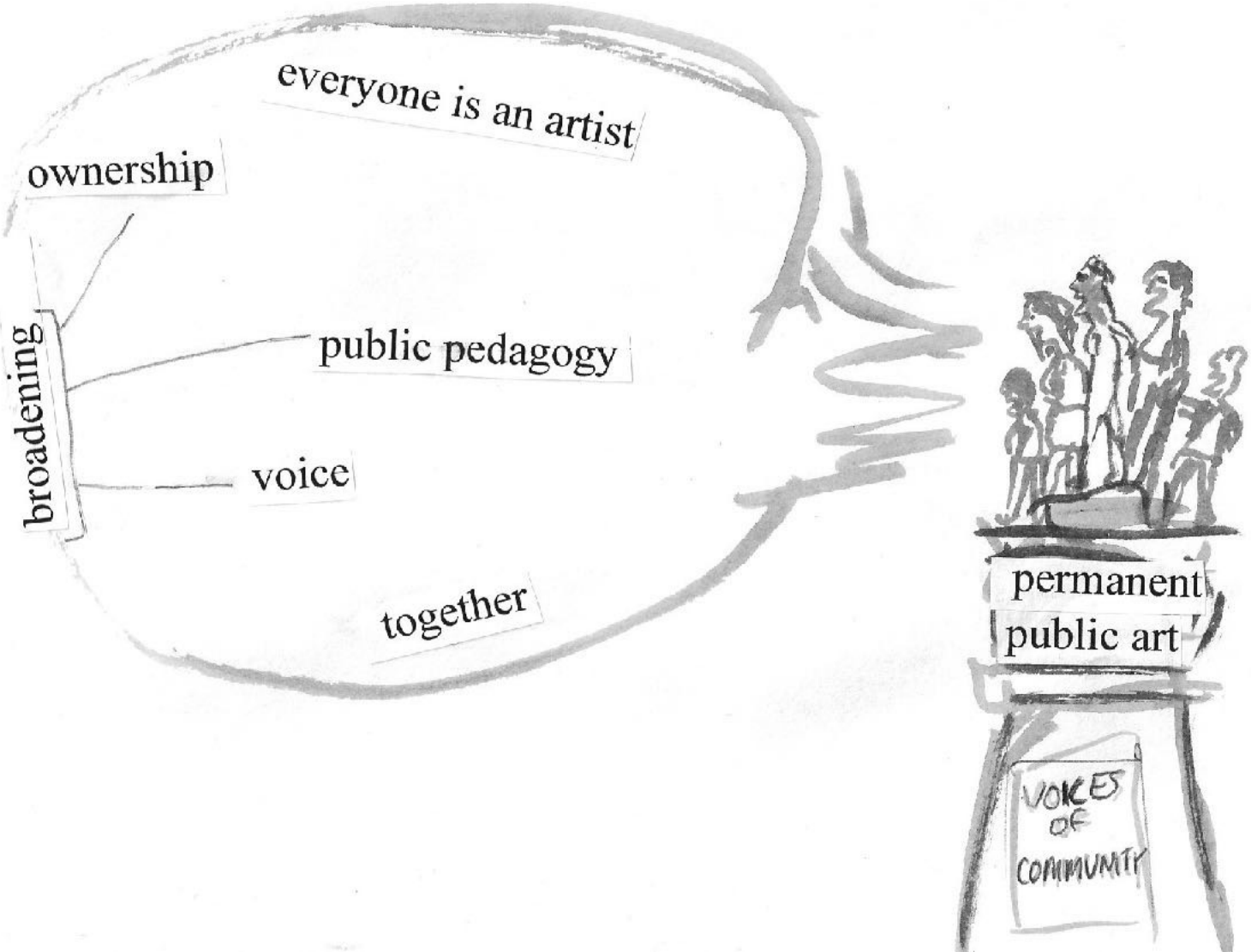
8C: Local Support Services and community groups in St Kilda

8D: Names of places and streets in St Kilda

8E: Full text of Gatwick Paste-up by Rose Banks and Yvette Kelly

8F: *Blame it on the Gatwick*, by Wendy Butler

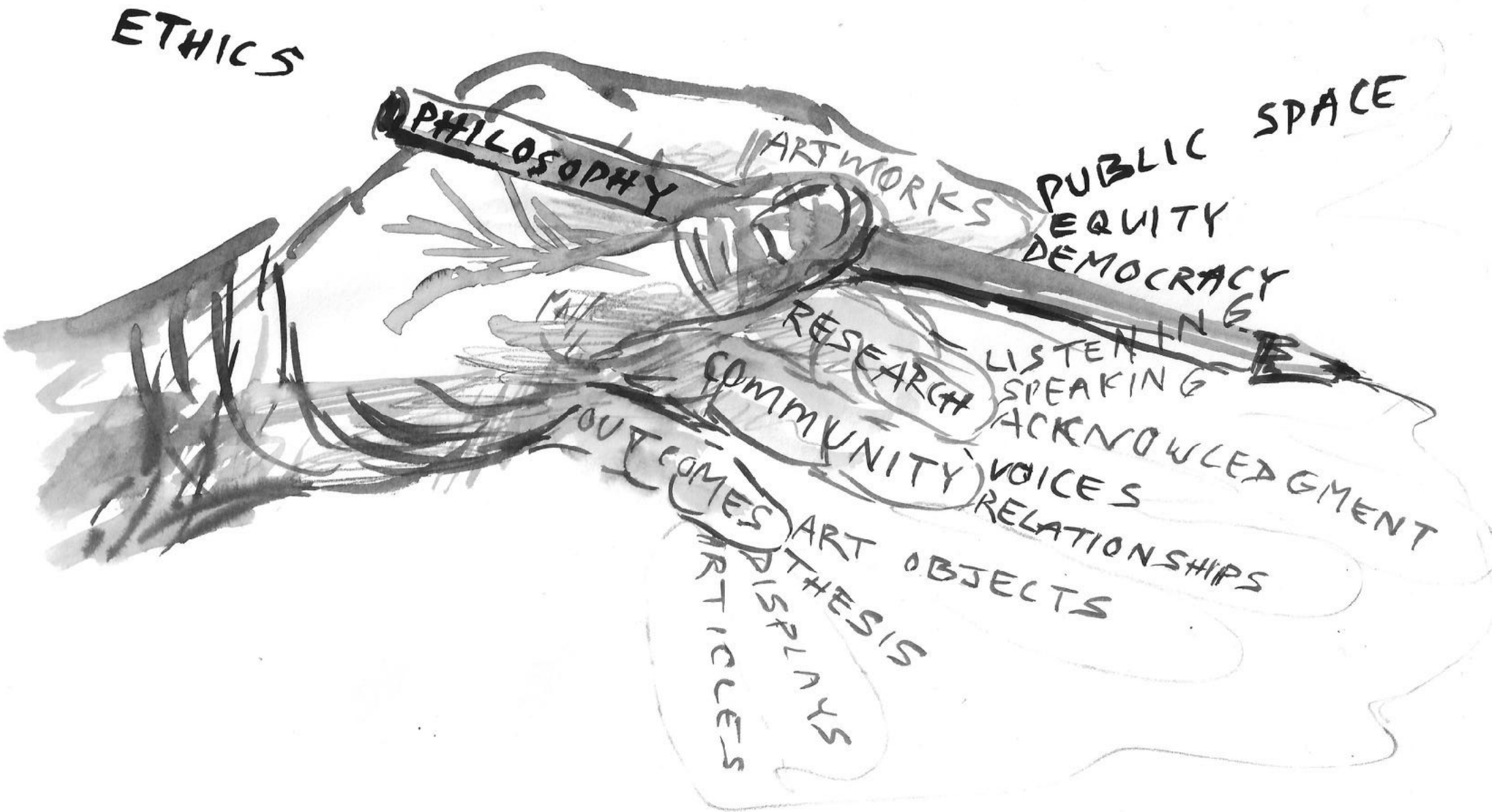
9 Curling Gallimaufry: Discussion of Portraits



public place
THE ARTWORK
emotion
perspectives
process
anonymity,
identity,
aesthetic control,
territory
history
categories
division and exclusion
representing
inclusion
everyone
equitable access
working
TOGETHER
camaraderie
voice
learning and demonstrations,
diversity
acknowledgement,
eating
community involvement
reciprocity
speaking -
trust,
diversity
relinquishing the role of artist
stereotypes
labels
Unexpected challenges -
contested space
INDIVIDUAL
learning
power and authorship
discourse
culture
context

This chapter explores the main themes which emerge from the portraits, '*The Great Wall of St Kilda*', '*The Blacksmith's Tree*' and the self-portrait of my practice ('Prelude', 'The Scroll' and 'Epilogue'). The portraits of the artworks were written primarily for the audiences of their respective communities and created as self-contained documents. As such, the analysis within each has not referred explicitly to findings across all three portraits. Here the three portraits are drawn together, not for the purpose of comparison but for the discussion of emerging themes and metaphors which connect them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997).

These themes include; emotion, voice, inclusion, metaphor and the relationship between the process of making and the final object.


ETHICS
PHILOSOPHY
ARTWORKS
PUBLIC SPACE
EQUITY
DEMOCRACY
LISTENING
SPEAKING
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
VOICES
RELATIONSHIPS
RESEARCH
COMMUNITY
OUTCOMES
ART OBJECTS
THESIS
DISPLAYS
ARTICLES

Reciprocity

Reciprocity was an important practice in this research, because I found that ethical considerations in my art practice and the subject matter of the research needed to be applied to the research process and the outcomes (Keen & Todres 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997; Harrison et al. 2001; Michel & Bassinder 2013). I used reciprocity with people related to the research, as an ongoing, backwards and forwards consideration and practice. I applied aspects and issues across the situations of community members making public art, the art objects that are made, the practice of researching (my role as researcher with community members) and the outcomes of research - considering things across lanes, roles and places, extending to their fingertips and toes. This ethical and philosophical curling across art practice and research was very important to my sense of how the research should be ethically undertaken.

OBJECT
RESEARCH
THESIS
RESEARCH
PROCESS
PRODUCT
PRACTICE
OBJECT
PROCESS
METAPHOR
VOICE
OUTCOME
OBJECT
OUTCOME
OBJECT
VOICE
PROCESS
PLACE
THESIS
THESIS
DISCOURSE
TEXT
VOICE
SPEAKING
INCLUSION
DISCOURSE

THROUGH INTERVIEWS - GIVING VOICE - ATTRIBUTING VOICE - ACKNOWLEDGING VOICE

THE RIGHT TO SPEAK

VOICE AS KNOWLEDGE AND MAKING KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY PUBLIC AND ACCESSIBLE

MAKING COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBLE

BACKWARDS ← RECIPROCITY → FORWARDS

THROUGH ~~AND~~ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PUBLIC MEMBERS

ETHICS OF MAKING ART

WITH COMMUNITY EXTENDED

INTO RESEARCH PRACTICES

AND OUTCOMES

WRITING FOR THE COMMUNITY WHO IS RESEARCHED

PRACTICES OF WORKING TOGETHER

THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

Public art in public space for the public - the public makes public art
Community contributing to research - community receiving the research
Writing about community - writing for community

Acknowledging the knowledge of community members

This was also about the right to speak and to be heard through text and imagery.

Text and drawings
Voice and making imagery
Interviews and having the artwork seen.

A consideration of the ethics of relationships that go backwards and forwards between the artworks, between people and ideas, between the practice and the product, between the research, the thesis and the community.

A CONSIDERATION OF ETHICS THAT GO BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS

BETWEEN PRACTICE AND PRODUCT

BETWEEN RESEARCH, THESIS AND COMMUNITY.

PAYING ATTENTION TO AND ACKNOWLEDGING INDIVIDUALS

THE RESEARCH DRIVEN BY THE INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES EXPERIENCES

THE PARTICULAR THE INDIVIDUAL

UNIVERSAL PATTERNS

THE GENERAL

COMMON EXPERIENCES

PARTICULAR ARTWORKS AS PORTRAITS USED TO EXPLORE MORE GENERAL UNDERSTANDINGS

THE AESTHETIC OF COMMUNITY OF DIFFERENCE AND OF THE PARTICULAR

DEVIANT VOICES

DIVERGENT THEMES WHICH REVEAL LARGER CONTEXTS

THE RESEARCHER AFFECTED BY THE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF THE PEOPLE SHE WORKS WITH

The General and the Particular - Gallimaufry

Both of the artworks, as well as my own way of working with communities, involve people producing individual artworks or texts. These are particular, but they merge together as a gallimaufry, in forming (and informing) the single artwork. I chose the two artworks because they were part of a general category which I have used for the scope of this thesis - ‘permanent public art made by community members’.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot advocates paying close attention to the particular (in portraits), in order to, ‘capture the specifics, the nuance, the detailed description of a thing, a gesture, a voice, an attitude, as a way of illuminating universal patterns’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997, p. 14). [Through this research, I have documented some of the particular aspects of the work, which can be used to explore more general aspects of permanent public artworks made by community members. This research is primarily locally focused in content but in methodology and in its findings demonstrates broad applicability. Themes emerge from these particular artworks which relate to the broader field of public art. The research values the core essence of the local and presents a system for exploring and explicating the many locals globally.]

ARTWORKS

THE SPECIFICS

GESTURE

DETAIL

WORDS

PARTICULAR

EXAMPLE

NUANCE

STORIES

VOICES

THE UNIVERSAL

PATTERNS

BROADER

GENERAL

FIELDS

DISCOURSE

THEMES

THEORY

KNOWLEDGE

PUBLIC

ART

Although my interview questions and my own interests guided a particular approach to the research, the portraits were also driven by the themes emerging from the particular artworks.

Whilst attempting to group ideas together in paragraphs and develop a chronological order and narrative, I found themes were intractably interconnected with each other. Leggo, Sinner, Irwin, Pantaleo, Gouzouasis, and Grauerf (2011), say that ‘often in our research we seek to control the messiness, to tame the wilderness, to order the chaos’ (p. 252-3). Try as I might, I found the emerging themes not easily separated into sections and paragraphs.

Despite re-writing and re-arranging the text, some themes appeared over and over again because they were inextricable from their various contexts (noisily drawing my attention to their multiple roles) they re-iterated, curled and (tenaciously) layered into differing situations.

Perhaps they needed to be, not chronologically constrained academic texts, but rhizomatic in connection (Leggo et al. 2011).

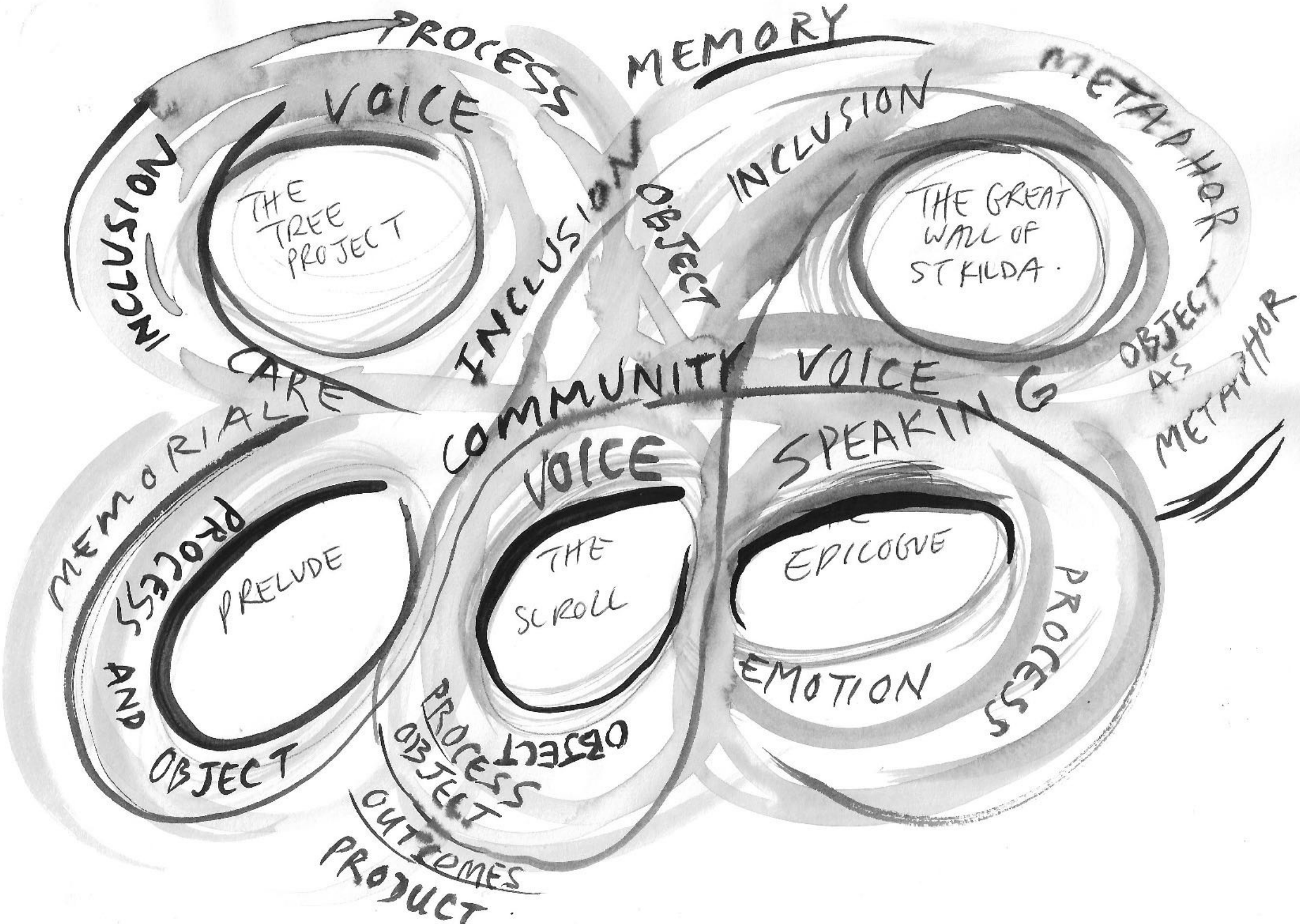
> ‘we need a poetic line,
> not a prosaic line,
> a line that plays with possibilities of space’
> (Leggo, cited in Leggo et al. 2011, ‘A Tangle of Lines’ p. 244).

Ideas such as voice, equity, audience, time, place and object had arisen in reference to other aspects and couldn't be neatly confined to particular contexts.

Everything was thoroughly inter-connected, tangled and woven but not in a singular line (Leggo et al. 2011).

This shaped and pressed long line of text conceals the complex way in which themes are linked to each other. The emerging themes brought to the surface in this chapter have been chosen from the mess and have been drawn out of their rhizomatic interconnectedness.

Emerging from the more general themes which surfaced, were also many particular ones, calling for my attention and demanding to be heard. Some have been given space and voice in this narrative of analysis, but not all. Those included are linked in many ways but do not always flow into one another neatly and smoothly. They sit instead, like the gallimaufry of individual creations within a collaborative artwork, or like the myriad meanings attributed to an artwork by its different makers and audience members. There is not enough time and space to explain all of the themes which emerged (instead, as the writer of this thesis, I have chosen what is included). I have tried to show this welter of meanings through the imagery and writing - to express the idea of this multitude and excess.


PROCESS
MEMORY
VOICE
INCLUSION
METAPHOR
THE TREE PROJECT
INCLUSION
OBJECT
INCLUSION
THE GREAT WALL OF ST KILDA.
OBJECT AS METAPHOR
CARE
COMMUNITY
VOICE
SPEAKING
MEMORIALS
VOICE
PROCESS
PRELUDE
THE SCROLL
EPILOGUE
AND OBJECT
EMOTION
PROCESS
PROCESS
OBJECT
OBJECT
OUTCOMES
PRODUCT

This relates particularly to the aesthetic of an ‘art of many’, the un-smooth and multi-texturedness (and multi text-edness) of the work. My work with communities purposely includes individual making and many different handwritings, so that it reflects each individual’s input, thus rendering an aesthetic that speaks of many people being involved. The ‘many people’ involved with the process assists with the complex development of the meaning of the artwork. Each new contribution (a new idea pressed into the artwork, not necessarily sitting in harmony with the others) adds to the collaborative whole, but also further develops the gallimaufry of difference, the true texture of many and diversity.

In my work with communities time is often limited. The project usually has to be completed by the end of the year, but my openness to changing the artwork during the workshops often means that the artwork extends outwards physically in size and time. For example, for *The Mont Albert Centenary Seat*[1], I wanted to include reminiscences of past students. A lot of reminiscences were passed on to me, and were so interesting, I wanted to include most of them. About 150 reminiscences were eventually included. This was an unplanned addition to the project which extended the time and labour of making the artwork as well as the material and physical space needed. Individual tiles had to be made for each word in all of the sentences, then the words hand-painted on, fired once, glazed, fired again, sorted into sentences and then fitted into the design. Being open to the discovery and inclusion of knowledge that will enhance the meaning of the artwork is important. In this example, the

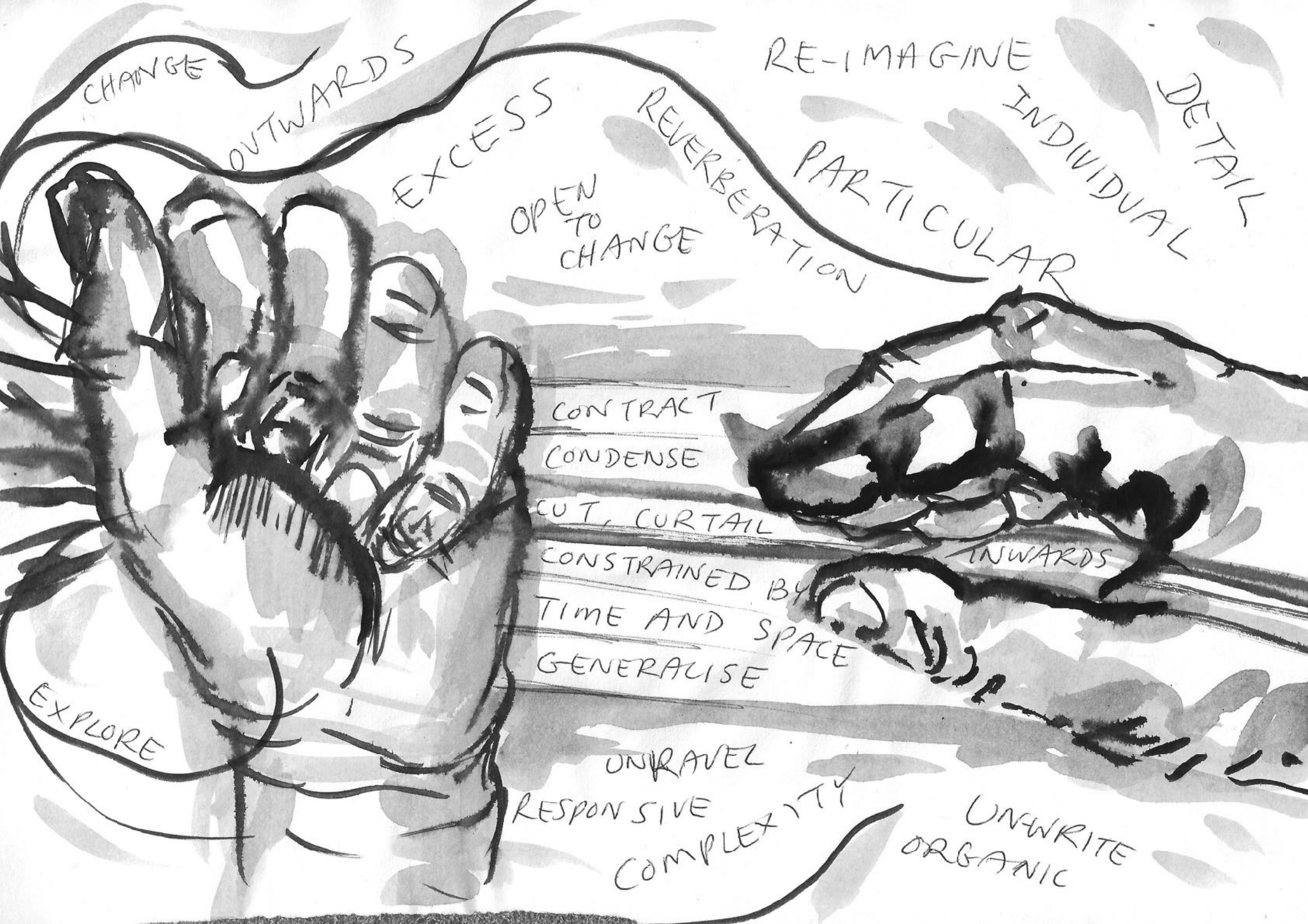
inclusion of the reminiscences provided contextual links into the artwork for past students, particularly the people who wrote the reminiscences and those of the audience who have had similar experiences. It also deepened the artwork's historical content.

The Great Wall of St Kilda and *The Tree Project* were excessive responses which met needs, and followed ideas. Excess was accommodated through acts of love and compassion for the community members that they sought involvement with. Both artworks also arose from an excess of emotion, an aspect, which isn't generally used to rationalise reasons to make public art, or ways in which to measure its outcomes.

My research of the artworks was also excessive because I felt they deserved to be pursued through this excess (of research, writing and drawing) so that the complexity and depth of the artworks could be conveyed to the reader. I felt a need to tell the detailed story without being constrained by time and space (writing thousands of words and making hundreds of drawings, some of them large). But then I had to cut, curtail, press, condense and contract the writing and drawing inwards into A4 documents, so that it conformed with thesis regulations, and digital representation.

Springgay et al. (2005) explains excess as: ‘an ongoing practice concerned not with inserting facts and figures and images and representations into language but with creating an opening where control and regulation disappears’ (p. 908). It is, ‘the reverberation that folds back on itself, that allows excess to un/ravel, un/write, and re-image in a continual process of exploration. Excess provides opportunities for complexity and deeper understanding: It is open, pliable, and in constant change’ (ibid., p. 908). The inclusive practices of the artworks in this research, generated excess (which extended the need for time and money). But this excess, created by including and accommodating community desires in the artwork, also facilitated deeper exploration of the context.

The way in which I researched the artworks was undoing, unfolding, laying out all the smaller details, the particular. An opening up to the ‘messyness of field research’ (Leggo et al. 2011, p. 250) and then a gathering back inwards; a contracted rendering and representation of *some* of the findings (through portraits, articles, displays and the thesis) within limited words and format. The artworks I researched, also opened themselves outwards, traversing physical spaces with workshops in order to include the imagery and text of many people, and then were pulled into a smaller physical work at a permanent still site.


CHANGE
OUTWARDS
EXCESS
REVERBERATION
RE-IMAGINE
INDIVIDUAL
DETAIL
PARTICULAR
OPEN TO CHANGE
CONTRACT
CONDENSE
CUT, CURTAIL
CONSTRAINED BY
TIME AND SPACE
GENERALISE
INWARDS
EXPLORE
UNRAVEL
RESPONSIVE
COMPLEXITY
UNWRITE
ORGANIC

Curling the collage

> ‘I am for a messy vitality over obvious unity’
> (Robert Venturi 1966, p. 14).

There is a lightness about aesthetic and a heaviness. To me, aesthetic is like a surface, which conceals a heaviness underneath. It is with heavy heart that I embark on a painting of my cat as a Christmas present. I know that the painting must not only look like the cat, but also be beautiful. But how do I know what beautiful is? Beautiful engages the viewer. Why must the painting do that? So that it is loved! It’s no use creating something unless it is loved! The aesthetic is both utilitarian and a cover to draw the viewer in. Skin-deep.

When I made the scroll into a journal article, I re-drew the imagery in a way that created an aesthetic and order, at great loss to the emotional and more visceral meaning conveyed in the original drawings. I re-inserted some of the original drawings into ‘The Scroll’ chapter in this thesis. As I chose these drawings I weighed up the aesthetic outcomes against intuitive strength, freshness, and gut feeling. The aesthetic is demanded of finished products and public outcomes. In *The Tree*

Project, leaves are twisted to make them more like gum leaves and similarly for *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, Camille rolled and cut the pre-made tiles to a uniform size, sometimes painted the tiles which hadn't been finished, and made the larger image in the centre of the mural to create a central focus. I often control the artwork that is made by a community by adding a wash to the tiles, controlling the colour scheme, smoothing the edges of works made by others and restricting size and shapes. This editing and control is done towards making the final object with an aesthetic, harmony and cohesion in mind. It caters to the viewer, aiming to please the audience so that the artwork has a life beyond the 'constructed community' who made it.

Jane Jacobs in writing, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* attacked modernist Urbanism's oppressive order (Finkelpearl 2001). In referencing how urban spaces are designed for the inhabitants, instead of by the inhabitants, she refers to a meaner quality, which is:

> 'The dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and be served' (Jacobs 1961).

A SURFACE OF WORKING TOGETHER
WHICH CONCEALS DIFFERENCE
EXCLUSION FROM PUBLIC SPACE

RULES FOR WHO CAN SPEAK AND WHO HAS POWER

MONEY
PERMISSION

THE ABILITY TO PLACE
TEXT AND IMAGERY
IN PUBLIC SPACE

AGREEMENT WHICH CONCEALS
DISAGREEMENT

CURLING MAKING SMOOTH

WHO'S IDENTITYS ARE
HIDDEN

WHO GETS ACKNOWLEDGED?

The contributions by community members can only be curled so far towards the whole if they have choice in how they contribute towards the artwork. The final artwork retains this struggle of individualism and difference. The artist/protagonist/person in charge, restricts, curls and tweaks the artwork, to get it to work as one piece against the differences (of which it is composed). The aesthetic of the work is important because unless it is pleasing to the eye, it won't get to stay in public place and fit into a landscape which is constantly cleaned, revitalised, tidied, rebuilt, changed, altered and 'improved'. Its aesthetic may determine if it is cleaned or allowed to decompose and disintegrate. The collage, the welter, the gallimaufry (of the artwork and the research findings) is evidence of 'disorder' and difference. It reminds us that community is not 'one', and that research findings are not seamlessly connected to form a curled and aesthetic design.

The aesthetic of difference is a metaphor for democracy - because democracy can only be played out if it includes difference.

Loss and Found

It is a great loss that the many meanings of the artworks are not revealed by simply looking at them. The physical art objects themselves do not convey the depth and complexity of each project (Sharp 2007; de Certeau 1988). Through research, I encountered a multiplicity of meanings for each artwork. I felt that with each successive interview the artwork opened further and opened further and opened further again, to reveal more meanings. It was like every single person who was involved in making the artwork, (if you can imagine in *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, about 600 people, and in *The Tree Project* perhaps a thousand or more people), all had individual interpretations of it. There were similarities and shared understandings, but also new stories which opened the artworks' range of meanings and their connections with more and more people. There were thousands of stories to be told about the meaning of the work, for those involved in making it and also for the audience.

Mulligan and Smith (2010) say that the social impacts of community art, 'are like the tip of an iceberg' because there are many less overt, more 'intrinsic' outcomes that can be very hard to detect or measure. They argue that the social impacts of good practice in community art can be 'unpredictable, indirect and slow-burning' (Mulligan & Smith 2010, p. 108).

These meanings are not always visible or heard. They are together and conglomerate in the artwork, but also a diaspora and disparate in that they are everywhere, but not accessible to all. Some are revealed more deeply through the verbal dialogue that happens around the artwork (Anderson & Conlan 2013). In this sense I felt that the portraits that I constructed about the artworks were useful, because they generated more of this dialogue over time (as accessible documents). Likewise the making of the feature film Forged from Fire, aims to tell the story of *The Tree Project,* creating dialogue through audience members (*Forged from fire* Media and Pitch Kit). In these ways, I see that one response to the loss of the artwork's ability to convey meaning is found in the ongoing dialogue between people about the work.

The meaning of the artwork can also be produced by the audience. If we return to Aristotle's idea that the highest contemplation cannot be rendered in speech (Arendt 1958), and imagine these ideas instead rendered into material which speaks visually, we can conceptualise the artworks of this research and the artworks which I make with communities, as: made in order to 'appear publicly' (ibid., p. 173), 'to shine and be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read' (p. 168). This speaking is also rendered through how the audience speak about the work, how the dialogue (stemming from their own experiences of making and encountering the artwork as an object) re-makes meaning and re-produces the artwork again and again in different ways.

Cultural Democracy - Imagined community; Processes of inclusion, Diversity and Equality

Ranciere warns against seeing ‘equality’ as a goal, as this confirms inequality in the present (1991, p. xix). He prefers to make equality a pre-supposition, rather than a goal: a practice, rather than a reward for the future (1991). In this sense I like to visualise the action and practice of the community making public art together as the practice of equality. Equality is practiced in the artworks through inviting everyone to participate as artists, contributors of intellectual ideas and as people with the potential to learn the skills in order to make the artwork. Equality and inclusion were also practiced through workshops which travelled to places, and through seeking the involvement of people in the work.

Gert Biesta (2012) identifies three different notions of public pedagogy: ‘a pedagogy for the public, a pedagogy of the public, and a pedagogy that enacts a concern for “publicness”’ (Schuermans et. al. 2012, p. 678). Biesta is most concerned with the latter - ‘publicness’ - with what kinds of actions and relationships are actually possible in ‘public’ spaces (Biesta 2012 p. 686). He uses Hannah Arendt’s definition of freedom, as contingent on our appearance to act in the public realm as well as the

freedom of others to respond to our initiatives (Biesta 2012). Thus, freedom is not singular, it has to be plural - a particular quality of human interaction (ibid.). Biesta (2012) draws on Arendt's (1994) idea that we are all strangers and have distinct uniqueness, suggesting that, 'the idea of a citizenship of strangers hints at a mode of human togetherness in which plurality is actively preserved and, so we might say, actively pursued so that freedom can appear' (Biesta 2012, p. 690).

I see these ideas of freedom in the public sphere as relating to the gallimaufry of direct individual mark-making through visual art and text in the artworks made by communities in this research. The direct hand-making retains the 'stranger' and the uniqueness of the individual, but at the same time is an example of human togetherness. The response to the 'call' to make the artworks in this research was only possible with the freedom to respond. The global community which contributed to *The Tree*, and the people of St Kilda making *The Great Wall of St Kilda* were voluntary enactments of the citizenship of strangers.

The strength of the artworks is the inclusion of the differences of those involved. Judith Baca's very first murals in Los Angeles, with young men who used the parks as their territory, were about the idea of bringing them together and including them in the life of the place. She was particularly interested in their movement across the landscape, across the suburb which Suzanne Lacy identified as a

‘performance’ (Baca1986, p. 107). The young men had territories which they weren't allowed to cross into but, through the painting of the murals, they went into each other’s territories and worked together (Baca 2014). *The Great Wall of St Kilda* and *The Tree Project* also used the movement of the workshops to include people and to build the community of the artworks across many places. This movement expanded the site of the artwork to include ‘community’ and in doing so enacted the citizenship of strangers.

The involvement of many strangers in making the artworks was understood as a way of bringing people together and creating a sense of community. This was achieved, in part, because works of art are able to embody the experiences of diverse people through each individual contributing individual work. A strength of both artworks is that they accepted diverse ideas and experiences. These were enactments of equality.

The artwork’s permanence makes the work a stronger act of equality because it includes voices (in text and imagery) over time in public space. The artwork is not private, nor is it a fleeting moment.

The artworks are not heroic. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* did not provide a place for the homeless to sleep or end exclusion and prejudice. However, in a suburb beset by advertising and imagery of the

good life, it is one of the few places in St Kilda which states clearly in large letters who the traditional owners of the land are, and calls for human rights and the preservation of diversity.

> ‘This mural is in respect of the Boonerwrung people - traditional owners and caretakers of this land. Euro-Yroke is the original name for this land, named after the red sandstone along the beach. This land will always be protected by the creator Bunjil, who travels as an eagle, Waarn, who protects the waterways, travels as a crow’

‘Everyone has the right to a roof over their heads’

‘It is a human right be housed’

(Text on *The Great Wall of St Kilda*)

In each artwork, a community was constructed around the artwork, through its making process. These specific communities did not exist before the artwork. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* welcomed everybody but purposely included people experiencing circumstances which often resulted in their exclusion. In *The Tree Project*, the community was both local and global. In my own practice, the artwork is often a catalyst for bringing a particular community together and strengthening their identity through the making process. The artworks also represent the action of bringing people together into the community of the artwork - the action of constructing community.

Susan Nicholls (2006) points out that ‘communities defined by a shared experience of disaster may have little else of importance (apart from that shared experience) in common’ (p. 3). Her own use of the term ‘community’ is characterised by a self-recognised and self-defined commonality of experience which changes over time’ (Nicholls 2006, p. 3). Miwon Kwon (2002) uses the term ‘invented communities’, where the community or organisation is newly constituted and rendered operational through the co-ordination of the artwork itself, these communities being dependent on the artwork for their existence. The communities of the artworks in this research were also dependent on the interaction between people, contingent on the freedom of others to be involved and the welcoming and inclusive attitude of the facilitators. For example, with *The Tree Project*, the careful inclusion of people and the care taken with their contributions was important. *The Great Wall of St*

Kilda used mobile workshops to reach people and then made the workshop at Veg Out available to people over time, to enhance opportunities for people to participate. The way in which *The Tree Project* was carefully sited through a democratic process was a way of facilitating human interaction and human togetherness (Biesta 2012). The idea of community was imagined as a good thing, built through the artwork process and given much respect.

Although the artworks brought together and created community, after the moment of installation these communities largely dissipated. However, a sense of community still exists through how people are linked by having been involved with the artwork.

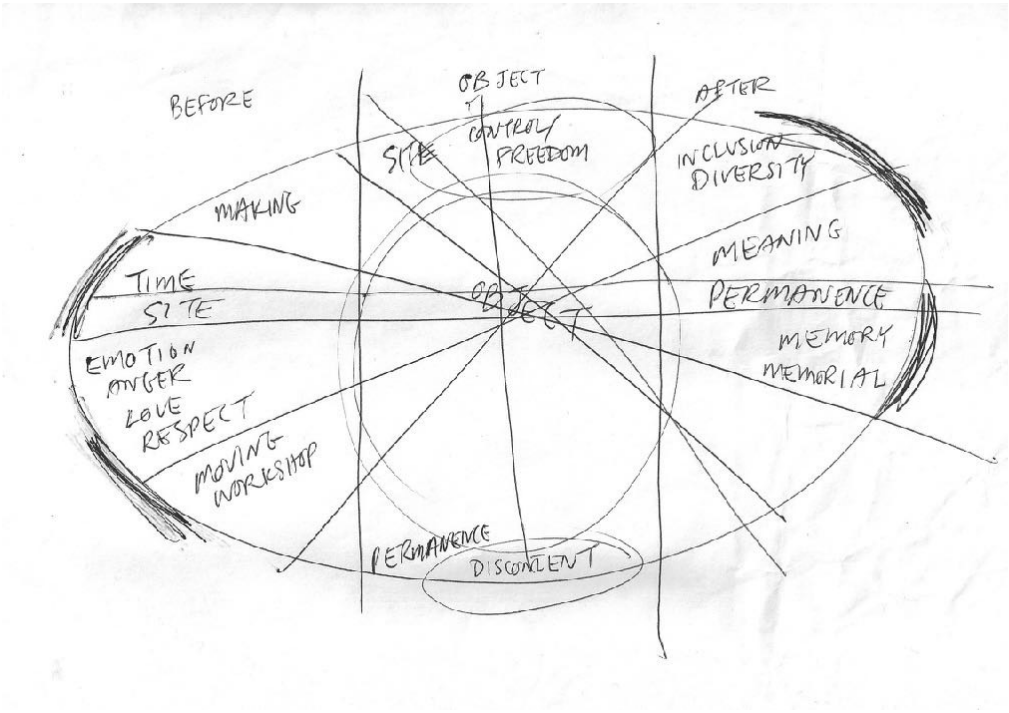
Process and Object

process : outcomes - with both artwork and thesis

p**rocess** leading to **art object : art object** driving the **process**

Process leading to **thesis : thesis object** driving the **process**

The artwork is a process towards making a physical object, which is installed at the site and then is permanent as it sits still over time. The research process and outcomes can also be considered within the same context of **process and object**.



I return to Estella Conwill Májozo's use of the blues structure as a metaphor for the artwork process and final artwork. In blues the first line is the call, the second a response and the third a release:

> 'The call is incited by the experiences we have with the world, by the human conditions and predicaments within our terrain that arouse our interest or consciousness. Next comes the response, the artist's creation - the attempt to name, recognise, and instigate change through his or her creative expression. But the artist's creation is not the end of the process, as it is often thought to be. The process continues as members of the community experience the release, the inspiration that allows them to enflesh the message and begin activating change in their own terrains' (Conwill Májozo 1995, p. 91).

Paradoxically, the process of making is different from the permanent object, yet is linked to the object through being how the object came into being.

My experience in making artworks with communities echoes this. The process is how I become involved and work with others enthusiastically on the idea. After the project is installed, my job is done and I walk away. I also leave the artwork in the care of the making community and its audience. There is a loss at the moment of the object's becoming. The point at which it is made, is the end of that particular 'community of making' and 'process'. The object will soon have a life of its own which I am not part of or privy to. It is left alone, standing in public space for the viewer to interpret it in their own ways.

VOICE THROUGH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
VOICE THROUGH PUBLICATION
VOICE THROUGH PERMANENCE
OBJECT
PROCESS
MAKING
INCLUSION
ARTWORK
DISCOURSE
COMING TOGETHER
OVER TIME
PUBLICATIONS
ARTWORK
THESIS
CHRONOLOGY
WRITING
PERMANENT
RESEARCH PROCESS
PLACE

Ranciere outlined the paradox of the spectator which identifies this loss of action and knowing. Being a spectator could mean a state of ignorance about the process of production. Considering this aspect, the spectator is passive and separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act (Ranciere, 2009). But in their own context, the spectators are actors, they don't passively receive, but instead they incorporate what they see into their own stories. What the audience takes away is not necessarily what the actors wanted them to learn (Ranciere 2009). It is also, mostly unknown. We don't know how knowledge will be found in the artwork or the mind of the viewer (Sullivan 2006).

Aware of this loss of meaning for the audience, I made blogs about the artworks as a communication tool, so that the involvement of the community members is explained with photographs and text. The context and meaning of the artwork is also conveyed using word of mouth, newsletters and interpretive text on the actual artwork. If a long time elapses between the workshops and the object, the relationship between them can also be lost to the maker. I feel that the connection and the communication with the community is very important in order to convey the intended meaning of the artwork and I often work to document and convey meaning against loss.

The Tree Project and *The Great Wall of St Kilda* also made use of varying forms of communication. The Tree Project used an online forum, social media, newspapers, radio and open days to deliver information about the project. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* used posters, networks between organisations in St Kilda, and word of mouth. Mobile workshops appearing at festivals and events were also used by both projects to engage people in the making and to inform them about the artwork.

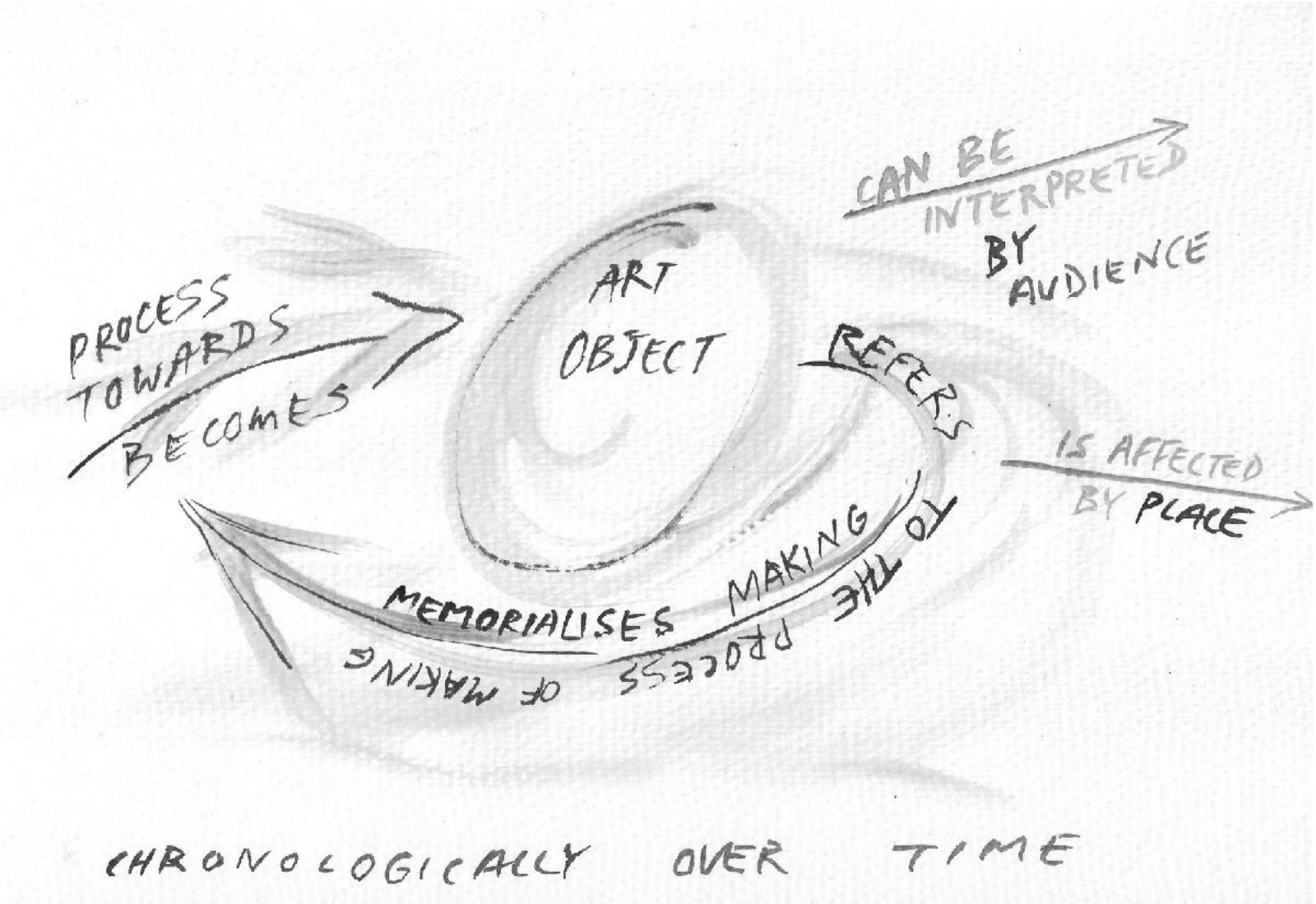
In both artworks, the community knowledge of the project assisted in ensuring that after installation, the artwork was known in the community. The meaning of the work is not only created through the object being in public space and being interpreted, but also how its meaning is communicated and framed. Similarly, this thesis is engaged with conveying the meaning of the artworks and of the broader field of permanent public art made by community members. The dialogue (interviews, research and writing) is a method of not only producing the thesis, but also to strengthen, extend and enrich the art projects themselves (Irwin 2015).

But we also need to acknowledge that unintended meanings develop and proliferate through personal responses to the work (by both audience members and makers). The art object, like other things (including research), has unintended consequences.

> ‘The researcher and the researched are both changed by the research process because it is reflexive, and likewise ‘a viewer can be changed by an encounter with an art object or a research text as prior knowledge is troubled by new possibilities’ (Sullivan 2006, p. 28).

There were objects to consider in the research. The thesis (as an object) is also implicated in the paradox of process and object. Research is a process, but I needed to also consider how it played a role as an object afterwards. Like an artwork, its place in the public sphere and its audience need to be purposely considered. How did it play a role in the discourse of public art, and our understanding of permanent public art objects. This thesis is an object, in varying forms - articles, drawings, displays, printed documents, a website, digital files and the traditional bound thesis.

These physical properties depend on materials, time and labour which also exist in a world of financial exchange.


CAN BE INTERPRETED BY AUDIENCE
ART OBJECT
PROCESS TOWARDS BECOMES
REFERS
IS AFFECTED BY PLACE
MEMORIALISES MAKING TO THE PROCESS OF MAKING
CHRONOLOGICALLY OVER TIME

What Is Not Said - Economics

Lawrence-Lightfoot explores the idea of the deviant voice:

> ‘I must always listen for the deviant voice as an important version of the truth . . . allowing subjects to reveal their many dimensions and strengths, but also attempting to pierce through the smooth and correct veneers’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis1997, p. 187).

I came across many deviant voices in this research, but one of them *spoke* when the interviewer or interviewees fell silent. Firstly, I found it difficult to ask the research participants about money and budgets. Then, when I did ask, the responses were generally about how extra money had to be found and explaining that the main artist or protagonist were not well paid (but instead put in many hours above and beyond what was initially planned or expected). The discussion of money often opens projects and people to criticism, particularly in community projects where there are divisions between those who get paid and those who volunteer their time, intellectual content and emotion. In permanent public art processes money is needed for materials which can withstand time. Money assists with duration. Therefore, it is an essential ingredient, but a little discussed one.

This difficulty in discussing money reminded me about how, in my own self portrait (‘Prelude’), I neglected to explore the notion of money because I thought it might be construed as complaining. Through development of the self-portrait in this research I became aware that my concern about community members not being involved in larger council commissions in part evolved from my need to get larger commissions in order to make a viable living. I became aware of my own concerns (and need) for economic viability, but also how monetary concerns were necessary parts of the process.

Financing projects is an integral aspect in public art, but not generally discussed in academic writing. There is a big difference between budgets for permanent public artworks and budgets for projects which include community members as makers: the latter being much smaller. This disparity is not often referred to and is perhaps ‘justified’ by the tendency to reserve community making for ephemeral projects, where the materials cost less. The financial details are often hidden or kept away from public scrutiny and, in the same breath, so are the power relations within the project, which often are intrinsically related to money.

Often the artist and facilitator are paid for their work and this differentiates them from the voluntary participants. When some people are paid and others are not, power relations are created or

confirmed. Although community members have been offered the power to contribute to making a public artwork, through this same process they can be reminded of their powerlessness.

I learnt that involving the community costs a lot of money and/or a lot of time, and the artist/ protagonist often works more hours, or for less per hour, or voluntarily for many, many hours. This generosity is borne out of the emotional connection that the protagonist has with the work. You embark on this work so often because you are emotionally attached to and intrinsically interested in the work, not for financial gain.

However, what was important about the two artworks was that there was an openness to include people in the process and to follow the project where it needed to go organically. In both projects, timelines and budgets did not direct or restrict the making process (and consequently both projects had to find more finance to complete the artwork).

Issues about money are not solely about funding. There are increasing ideas that public art can be economically justified, but the benefits of communities making their own public artworks has no relationship with economic rationalism. David Throsby (2010) points to the recent trend in public policy of, ‘being increasingly interpreted in economic terms’ (p. x). This has created a concern with

justifying the arts as having economic benefits and ‘shifted the policy emphasis towards the economic potential of the arts and culture sector’ (ibid.). Watts (2017) explains that in the current political ideology of neo-liberalism the arts are argued in terms of ticket sales and audience growth, instead of making the world a better place. The difficulty with these recent trends, is that arts have always played roles in society other than economic, and these risk being less emphasised and valued.

Through researching the two artworks and my own practice I found that the community involvement in making permanent public art has no relation to economics, instead, it was *emotionally* driven. The artworks were outside of the ideas of urban regeneration, tourism and other reasons used to economically justify public art. Emotion was what initiated, and drove the artworks to completion.

Though this research I discovered that an important aspect of the process of a public artwork made by a community is allowing its organic growth and excess. This is a risk to budgets and time-lines by which those who commission public art are often constrained. It raises questions about how we plan and pre-design public art projects before embarking on them and challenges established formulaic approaches.

The Tree Project was completed by many contributions of ideas, experience, expertise, time and labour. If all of these contributions had been paid for, it would have cost tens of thousands of dollars. If the project had been commissioned by an organisation with yearly budgets and timelines, the project wouldn’t have been able to respond to community needs so organically and effectively.

I am wary of exploring these issues, because I don't want to discourage or provide reasons for not involving community members making art. In reality facilitating a permanent public artwork made by community members is achievable, as the City of Port Phillip demonstrated in making *The Great Wall of St Kilda,* and also demonstrated by my own projects.

When made inclusively and with a depth of meaning and context, a permanent public artwork made by community members takes time (sometimes years), much volunteer work (or money to pay the people involved), and money for materials. In order to include people in meaningful ways the process needs to be open to the include community members. In order to be inclusive, these projects need to have the flexibility to extend in physical size, duration of time, and available budget.

Pollock and Paddison (2010) echo this need for flexibility when they argue we need ‘a clearer and more robust framework for funding, policy and processes that create a space for the unpredictability

of creative process' (p. 354). I would argue that we also need to take up the opportunities of involving community members when they arise, and allow projects to grow where community needs take them.

Mobility and Place

> ‘Suzanne [Lacy] knew, in a sense, that I was a performance artist in some way. That what I was doing was orchestrating on the street these choreographed dances. These movements of people’ (Baca 2014, p. 107).

Both projects described in the current research were mobile and endeavoured to take the making experience to a number of different physical places in the community. This was a method of inclusion. The site of the artworks can be imagined as being broader than the place in which the finished public artwork sits. The site of *The Tree* was extended by mobile workshops and included the places affected by the Black Saturday Fires in its context. *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, also included mobile workshops in its making, and in this way included the broader context of communities and places in St Kilda. Through installation, the artworks became sited and permanently limited to one place, but through their making process, these links with wider communities and places are contained in the artwork. The inclusion of other places in making also facilitates the inclusion more diverse people, their locations, their experiences and reasons for participating to be held within the artwork.

Both artworks negotiated council regulations about their installation on the site which included engineers' reports and installation plans, ensuring they would last physically for one hundred years. Maintenance was also considered in these processes, in terms of the need to respect the artworks made by community members.

Although both of the artworks researched here were embedded into community by being made over many sites and places, when they were installed the community which formed through the making, in many ways dissipated and the artwork began a relationship with the place and the community of the place in which they were installed. Alongside the meaning generated by the visual dialogue of the artwork and verbal dialogue around it (Anderson and Conlan 2013), context develops further in relation to the artwork's permanent site.

The permanent artwork changes the site irrevocably but also the site has powers over the artwork. In other words, site can affect the context of artwork as it becomes considered within the context of that place.

For example, the site of *The Tree* made it more amenable to being seen as a memorial because it could be attended purposefully and with reverence. The *place* enhanced the peace and solitude and

the nearby, *Strathewen Community Memorial* re-enforces this context. In the beginning, the paths to *The Strathewen Community Memorial* and *The Tree* were purposely made of different toppings. But later, when the council offered to repair the paths, they received the same topping. When there are weeding days for *The Tree*, local residents come and work. Later signage was designed based on drawings of local students (Strathewen Primary School), and included both places: 'Strathewen Community Bushfire Memorial' and 'Blacksmiths' Tree'. It is not that the two memorials are coming together but rather, where they are both located is developing as a place (influenced by both artworks). *The Tree* is in the process of being adopted and owned by the community of the *place*, and as such, the community of *The Tree* is growing.

BRANCHING IN AND BRANCHING OUT

Loss of Community and Ongoing Community Through Permanence

In both projects the making process was beneficial and needed, but when it ended, there was loss to the community of the artwork. There was loss of the activity of the making, the coming together around the context of the artwork, and of the momentum towards completing the object.

> 'Whilst the community can be drawn into the process of creating the artwork and at that moment it seems lived, once a process has manifested itself into an aesthetic object, it is up to the community, as to whether any process continues' (Pollock and Sharp 2007, p. 1076).

After *The Great Wall of St Kilda* was installed and then celebrated, the response of its making community seems to have been visits to the artwork and the continued use of Talbot Reserve as a meeting place for events which relate to the Street Sex Work[2]. People who were involved with the project, continue to tell the story of the mural, or recount the process of making when they show people the artwork. The community of *The Tree* continues to meet through activities such as; maintaining the landscape, polishing *The Tree*, making the film and the signage. News of *The Tree*,

continues to be shared on *The Tree Project* Facebook page and in *The Drift*. Individuals and groups also continue to visit privately. These communities are not formal, counted or known.

The process of making is completed and no longer available, but the artworks are accessible and present, both physically and metaphorically. Photographs of *The Great Wall of St Kilda* and *The Tree* are used symbolically in photographs and included in documents which celebrate the role of particular communities.

Throughout this research I gave much thought to why I was so interested in permanent art. When I was about nineteen, I visited the mural town of Sheffield, in Tasmania, and was inspired by it. I offered to voluntarily paint a mural and was given the opportunity to paint a large mural of birds and trees on a toilet block. Only a couple of years later I was contacted because someone had heard that the toilet block was going to be pulled down and the mural destroyed through the process. I asked advice about what I could do to save it, and the answer was that there was little I could do, as I had volunteered to do the artwork and there were no contracts in place. I gained a wariness from this emotional experience of having my artwork so quickly and easily destroyed. It spurred an ongoing interest in the duration of the artworks that I made. In some ways, my works on paper have had more chance of remaining permanent than those I have painted onto walls. Whilst doing this research, my

murals at Victoria University (which had been inside building M for twenty years) were painted over, for the purpose of renovation. Some of my ceramic murals have been destroyed when the buildings they are on are replaced or altered. Both *The Tree* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda* are technically made to last 100 years and although these timelines were set as part of the council installation guidelines, it does not guarantee their longevity or permanence.

Permanence has a metaphorical purpose for *The Tree*. It projects the object into the future to withstand natural forces such fire, and as a human act of resilience and defiance. One interviewee said; 'We'll put a tree back and you won't be burning this one down!' (Overton 2016, Interview). *The Great Wall of St Kilda* was a metaphor for putting the former inhabitants back into the place of Talbot Reserve. Both artworks played metaphoric roles of putting back permanently, shaking their fists at fire and exclusion. The permanence of the artworks is integral to this purpose.

Although the permanence of the object held importance, some people expressed an ambivalence towards the object of the artwork, and focused instead on their memories of the process of making the work. The permanent object is also a reminder of this process and of the time when it was made.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005,) recalls being the subject of an artist's portrait and the experience of being attended to fully by the artist. She says that 'after the warmth of this human encounter, the artistic product was almost forgettable' (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005, p. 5). The encounter of having her portrait made was more memorable than the artwork. Individuals painted themselves into community-made artworks through self-portraiture; hand-making (or contributing text of) themselves, their feelings, their voices into the physical material. Memory and memorial are intrinsically involved because the process of making takes place over a period of time and is captured and memorialised through the permanent artwork.

A memorial is an object that serves as a focus for memory, coming from the latin word *memoriale* meaning memory. Both, *The Tree* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, as well as being artworks, are memorials. Deborah McIntosh (who knows many of the people who made artwork for *The Great Wall of St Kilda*), brings people to Talbot Reserve and tells the history of the artwork and its story through her memories of those who were involved. People visit *The Tree*, in memory of the project and in memory of the people whom *The Tree* memorialises.

Metaphor

The role of art as metaphor is strong. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* facilitates a metaphorical return to the site of exclusion at Talbot Reserve. *The Tree* was placed back into the burnt-out bushland and this time it cannot be burnt down; it will withstand, as a metaphor for the strength of the community making something resilient.

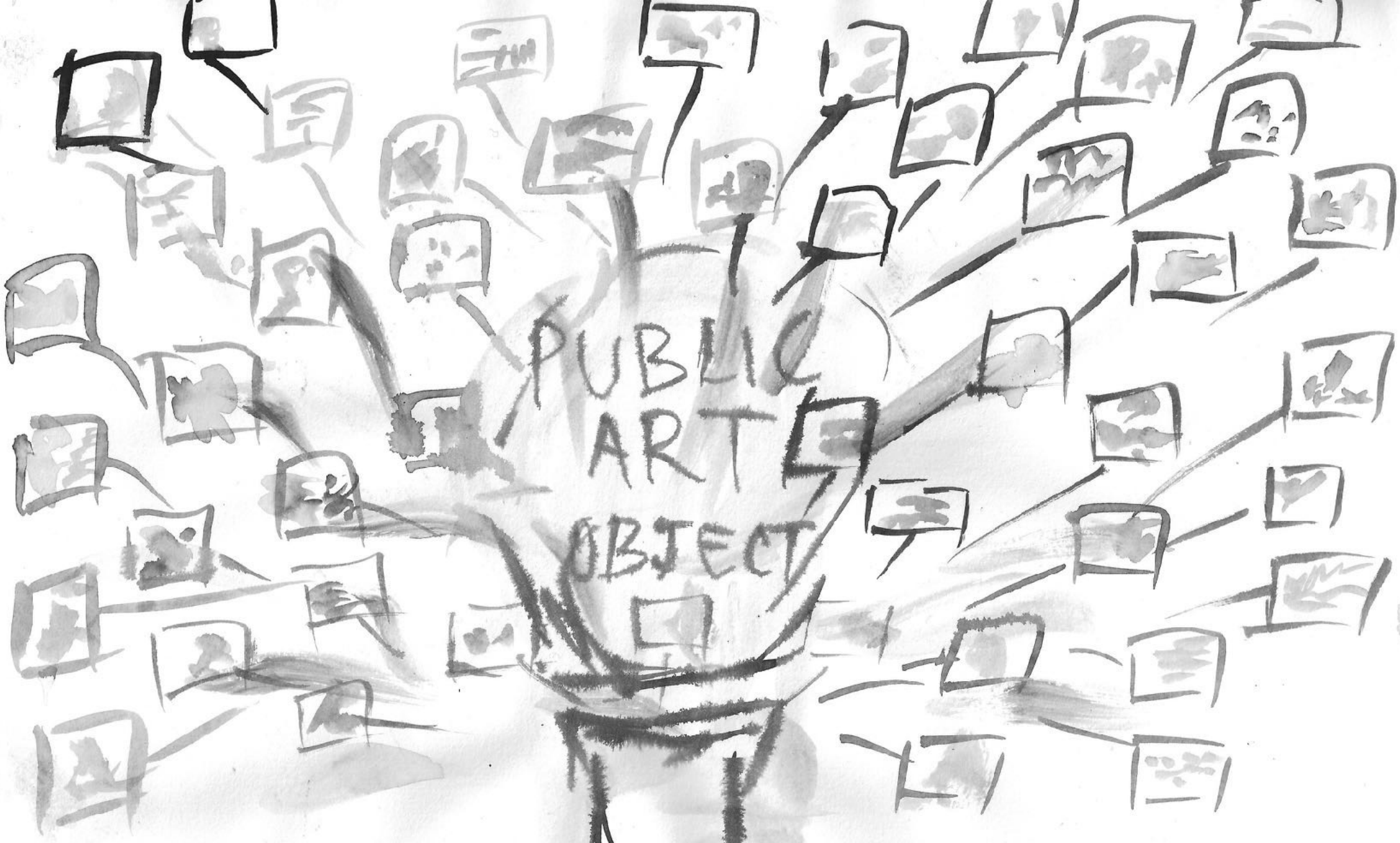
Metaphor does not change physical situations but can change how people feel about the situations. Judith Baca says of her work with young men in Los Angeles:

> 'It was a metaphoric way of creating a reality. That transformed reality that was unbearable. A vision of something else. And that space between dreaming those visions and making it real was shortening and shortening. That in fact I could dream it, I could make it, and I could make it be real' (Baca 2014, p. 97).

When Judith Baca speaks about the tragedies in her own family as well as the tragedy in the lives of the young people she worked with (drugs, prison, murders, addiction, police brutality), she said that the question was, 'How do you turn tragedy into triumph? How does it get transformed? It was like

the metaphoric recycling'. Her interviewer Karen Mary Davalos points out that Baca speaks very little about the actual murals, instead she says Baca has talked about 'relationships and space' (Baca 2014, p. 97).

Springgay et. al (2005) include metaphor as one of the methods of rendering research and suggest that 'literal language could be argued to exist within systems of containment and classification, whereas metaphor and metonymy permeate boundaries, disturbing system and order' (p. 905). In this sense metaphors move across boundaries - out from the literal allowing multiple readings; meanings attributed by both the audience and the makers of the artwork. I am reminded of the gallimaufry of meanings which emerged from the interviews in this research: with every new conversation, new meanings, metaphors and relationships between people and the artwork emerged.



A GALLIMAUFRY OF MEANINGS EMANATING FROM THE PUBLIC ART OBJECT

Scaffolding

I was struck by Baca's reference to the tagging that was going on in her area in the 1970s, which was like a marking of territory. Her practice was about communities emerging, but she also referred to the other artists who made murals at the time. There were several things going on at once: the tagging, the mural making by artists and the murals she was making with young men in the area. This reminded me that the artworks that I was exploring often had other artworks related to and in context with them. *The Tree Project* had relationships with the *Ypres Poppies* and *Roses for Norway* projects which shared the method of being made by community members. *The Strathewen Bushfire Memorial* had been drawn into the portrait because it shared context and place.

For the portrait of *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, I felt the need to find out about the other art in the area and consider the mural in this context. I discovered that there were several artworks and memorials created with input or by community members. Many had happened around the time of the mural. It pointed to, not singular artworks, but to a series of artworks which sat in context with one another. They could be imagined as a supportive scaffolding of artworks which demonstrated the possibilities of involving the community, and their potential role in the landscape of St Kilda. I also found out through this research, that some of the war memorials in St Kilda had been envisaged by one person

and then funded by community fundraising. These artworks didn’t happen alone; they were brought about within the context of community, and by the mutual understanding of a number of community members[3].

When a permanent public art is made by community members, it demonstrates the possibility and potential of this type of public art. It makes the practice visible and seen, and contributes to the discourse about public art.

Time

Through my examination of artworks I found that chronology was very important. Three main stages emerged; the context which precipitated the artwork's beginning, the process of making it, and its life as a permanent art object after installation. *The Tree Project* began in the context of a particular historical event. The long time which it took to make also indicates a measure of the work involved in making *The Tree*, and also assisted in community involvement which branches out from *The Tree* and back into *The Tree* - over time. The timeline of *The Great Wall of St Kilda* demonstrates how the mural project arrived within the context of a chronology of ongoing events in St Kilda relating to inclusion and exclusion.

Time is a prevailing context:

- Events which are markers in time, contribute to the beginnings of the artwork
- The timelines recorded for each artwork provide insight into both the context and the making process of the artworks
- The makers hoped to accomplish things over time by making the artworks
- The contexts of the artworks existed over time

- People became involved, knowing that the work would be permanent (durational over time).

Thus the enduring quality of the artwork, (long after the making stage) was an intrinsic aspect of the artwork's context.

Chronology, in the form of *limited time*, often constrains public art projects from being excessive. Both *The Great Wall of St Kilda* and *The Tree Project* took a long time, much longer than originally planned and expected. This was positive because it increased the ability of the projects to include more people, extending their benefits to a wider community. *The Tree Project* opened up to community members contributing leaves, and in *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, the artist did not set limits (on the time or mobility) in how she worked with people in her quest to get people involved and to represent the 'real St Kilda'. Mulligan and Smith (2010) suggest that often shorter community art projects end abruptly and leave 'everyone downhearted and upset because there is no capacity to build on what was started' (p. 15). Though the artworks in this research went for longer, some interviewees experienced the end of the project (the completion of the artwork) as a loss because the gathering together of the community to make, and the benefits this produced, came to an end.

Although, in the end, the community gathering to make the project finishes, the permanent object still reminds us of this community and retains the remembered community through their mutual connection to the artwork and the place of the artwork. Being permanent extends the duration of the context, subject matter of the mural and the messages it conveys to be in the public sphere. The artworks also remind us of how these communities did join together, and of the powerful possibilities offered by people coming together to make artworks.

Projects and grants are usually limited to yearly budgets, and time lines are short. Real community collaboration needs time to be able to organically grow in its own way, and in a direction that is useful for all involved. Duration also assists to draw in the resources needed to succeed. The Benalla Ceramic Mural is a good example of this, taking 27 years to be completed (Jensen and Moore 2013). Projects need to be flexible and allow for organic growth - for how a project might develop deeper relationships with community through making, without being constrained by boundaries of time.

INTERVIEWS – VOICE – SPEAKING – KNOWLEDGE – PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK PUBLICLY?

THE ABILITY TO SPEAK

TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY

PROFESSIONAL VS COMMUNITY MEMBERS

WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK

BOTH ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

MADE DIFFICULT TO ACCESS

WHO CAN BE HEARD?

ARTWORK MADE BY COMMUNITY TO BE HEARD

ENABLING OTHER VOICES

WORKING TOGETHER TO LEARN

WHO CAN SPEAK?

Words and Text: Writing, Speaking, Voice, Being Heard

Visual imagery crept into the thesis, and likewise, text had moved into the artworks. The text moves into art as part of the urge to connect with audience, the urge to explain, to share experience and intent. The urge to write and to speak - ‘be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read’ (Arendt 1958, p. 168).

In my own practice of working with communities, text has become an important means of giving voice to the participants. Likewise, the two artworks *The Great Wall of St Kilda* and *The Tree Project* have provided ways in which voices could be directly contributed to the artwork. This research also provided avenues for the voices of the makers to speak about the meanings of the artworks through interviews, the inclusion of direct quotes and asking research participants to read the research in order to give feedback and make corrections.

Cliff Overton recalls the introduction of sponsoring a leaf for *The Tree*, which brought text into *The Tree Project*;

> ‘The piece changed dramatically at that point because it went from being a piece of art built to look like a tree, to becoming a vehicle that carried in print a whole lot of emotion and sentiment . . . *The Tree* actually carries the thoughts and feelings of the people that contributed’ (Overton 2016, Interview).

In *The Tree Project*, messages were contributed by individuals, then each letter was hand-stamped onto the leaf, twig or branch by a blacksmith. Individual tile-making in *The Great Wall of St Kilda* enabled people to directly write on, or scratch into, a tile what they wanted to say. The theme was ‘St Kilda’ but many took the opportunity to write personal messages or place their own names and initials, or those of loved ones onto the tile. In both artworks, the words were statements and messages to the audience or to people who had passed away; expressions about the meaning of the artwork and the names of the writer or those of other people (which they chose to make permanent in the artwork). Likewise, many other projects have grown large in response to this opportunity for direct and individual contribution with the capacity to include words, such as the *Aids Memorial Quilt* (Farber 2005) and the *Million Pebbles* project (Skinner 2012).

These methods of writing are related to graffiti, making your mark with a rock on a cave wall, scratching in the wet concrete. We are all mark makers - ‘we use drawing to denote ourselves by marking our presence as humans on this earth’ (Kalin 2009, p. 4). Writing can produce powerful

emotional and physical sensations: pride, pleasure, enjoyment and recognition (Halsey and Young 2006, p. 279). In the same manner, Taki 183, an early graffiti artist, wrote his nickname all over Manhattan. As Waclawek explains, ‘expression through words, symbols or figures on city walls can be . . . [an] anonymous way to feel heard, an act of personal or group empowerment, a mode of protestation’ (Waclawek 2008, p. 72).

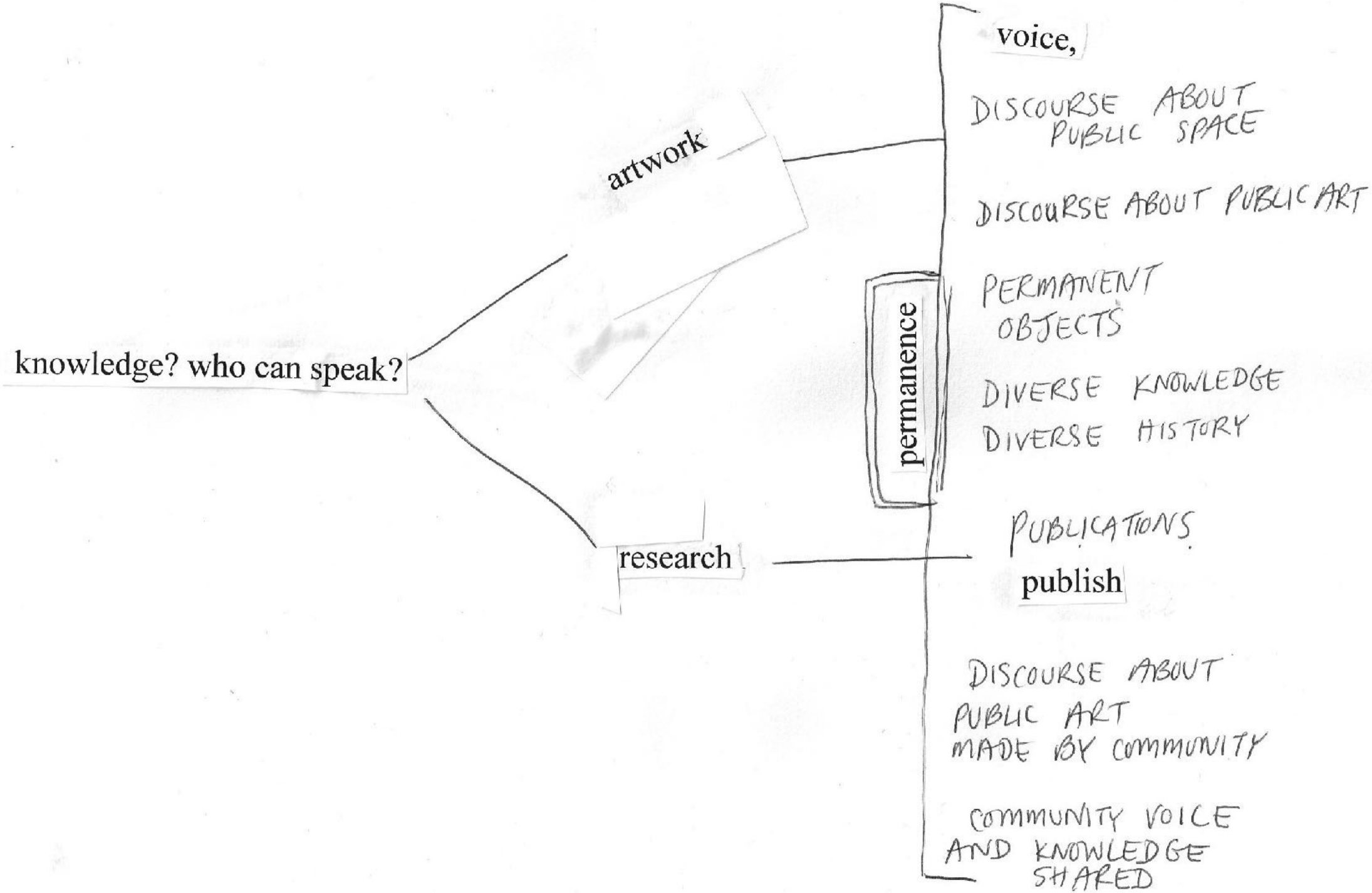
I often walk a particular way and I read the same message on the wall each time I pass; ‘Kelly Lee has a broken heart’. It is spray-painted and doesn't quite fit along the length of the wall. At the end the writer attempts to squash the letters in and then, giving up, steers the last letters below - perhaps written in haste. Each time I see it, I wonder; *did Kelly Lee write it herself ?* Writing how you feel and what you want to say, was offered through the artworks, and has the directness of an aerosol text. I also ponder the relationship that tagging and graffiti have with the text in the artworks that I have researched, which both created a space for writing directly from the heart onto a surface of public space in order to ‘speak’ and ‘be heard’ (Arendt 1958, p. 168).

As I sat down in Acland Street, St Kilda, one day, I found myself being directly spoken to by a man sitting two metres away, who had caught my eye. He was in the midst of speaking a compelling mix of conspiracy theory and truth, speaking loudly and clearly in public space, and addressing the public. He was not more than three blocks from the *The Great Wall of St Kilda.* He spoke to me because he caught my gaze and interest, as if he knew I was contemplating what role the voices of

individuals played in public space. His speech evoked the capacity of *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, for giving voice to its fellow-makers.

The artworks speak through text and imagery, conversation and discourse. Both the artworks' process and their existence as permanent artworks in public space, facilitate speaking, dialogue and thus, discourse. *The Great Wall of St Kilda* generates a discourse about the diversity of people and values of St Kilda, and *The Tree Project* provides a discourse of caring, compassion and support in the context of the Black Saturday bushfires. Both artworks contribute to a discourse about the ability of community members to make art. I created their portraits in the hope of generating more discourse about these types of artworks.

Relationships between words and art have also been explored through this research, through the format of the thesis and its public accessibility for a broad audience. Words and imagery became drawn together in the artworks in public space, and in the research outcomes of portraits, displays, websites and documents.


knowledge? who can speak?
artwork
research
permanence
voice,
DISCOURSE ABOUT PUBLIC SPACE
DISCOURSE ABOUT PUBLIC ART
PERMANENT OBJECTS
DIVERSE KNOWLEDGE
DIVERSE HISTORY
PUBLICATIONS
publish
DISCOURSE ABOUT PUBLIC ART MADE BY COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY VOICE AND KNOWLEDGE SHARED

Emotion

Emotion is poured into my personal artwork. It is the means that I use to explore relationships between ideas and emotional states in my personal life. The abstract in life is made into the abstract in art.

> ‘It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by human hands’ (Arendt 1958, p. 168).

This quote represents for me the two opposites that this art by many community members does. On one hand art provides us with a ‘say’ against nature and the world. But at the same time the works by community draw attention to the conditions of everyday life. An artwork made by many people, is very evidently human and of the human condition, which is individual and personal, but also reflects aspects which are shared by other human beings. Further, it reflects relationships between humans generally and specifically - as well as relationality between those who assisted others to make the artwork, the learners, the content (and context) of the artwork, the processes, the spaces (and places of making) and the permanent objects (Sinner, Wicks & Zantigh 2017).

Anderson and Conlan (2013), also focus on relationality when describing the meaning of the process of making murals with communities - when people work together to make something, it helps them understand that ‘we all have the same humanity under our cultural differences’ (p. 36), a chance to see each other not as ‘other’ but as friends and neighbours (p. 41).

I was surprised by the emotional content of the artworks, arising from an anger, emotional despair, concern and love. During the interviews I was quietly startled to find that both artworks were described by some as being very angry responses to situations. But it was, importantly, an anger which carried a concern for those people who had suffered through circumstances. This anger was processed through action which transformed the anger into a positive energy of making permanent artworks which included those people who they were concerned about. The artworks generated relationships and a ‘community’ between those who were angry (and who moved this anger into action), and the people for whom they were concerned.

There is no compelling evidence that the artworks physically or psychologically changed the situation of the people involved and nor did they aim to do so. Interviewees mentioned that the emotional problems of some people were only temporarily assuaged by the process of the artwork, not solved

by the artwork. Personal circumstances did not change, nor did transformation occur. Instead, the projects facilitated working together and speaking through an artwork. Relations between people were developed through making the artwork, through inclusion, acknowledgement of what had happened and an emotional response to what had happened. The art process and the art object, offered other humans respect, caring and love, through actions which made connections and relations between people.

The community were the materials of their own object; not because they had been the community chosen or gathered by an artist, but because they voluntarily chose to unite for a purpose (Murphy and O'Driscoll 2015) and the artwork they made was not mediated, but was used directly in the work.

They are resoundingly human artworks, about, and responding to, human situations. There was an urge to make something physically solid, and permanent, so that it would speak for longer. And there was a strong sense of the need to make it together, to join with others to make the work. As someone pointed out to me in reference to a project I was making in their community - many people had come together to make it possible (the funding, the school principal, the art teacher, the other staff, the committee, the community members as artists) in acts of joint activity and co-operation (Becker 1982). Similarly, although Camille Monet and staff at the City of Port Phillip organised *The Great Wall of St Kilda Project*, many other organisations and people joined in, because they also felt it was a good idea and wanted to be part of it. I felt that the artworks in this research succeeded in engaging their communities because the projects found emotional **traction**, with other people, who were motivated to join in with physically making the artwork.

In this sense, the works are distanced from the welfare model of community art and its focus on individual transformation (Kester 1995). We need to be wary of the terms; consultation, participation and engagement which are often assumed to be democratic, but may be token, and engender power relations between those who can speak and those who can't.

Community *making* permanent public art can constitute "real" participation and engagement because it involves relationships between people and the opportunity to express individual ideas through making. The artworks in this research focus on the original meaning of *community*, meaning 'together with our gifts' (Blek, 2015 p. 148) by including what people wanted to bring to the artwork. Gifts were brought by community members in the form of existing skills, the potential to learn, their knowledge and experience, their imagery, their voices and their hands.

Permanent Public artworks which utilise the community coming together with their gifts, practices and verifies equality (Ranciere 1991); following the implications that human beings are equal in all respects in terms of their intellectual and discursive capabilities (Deranty [on Ranciere] 2010). This is echoed in Ranciere's basic premise that, 'everybody thinks, everybody speaks' (Hallward [on Ranciere] 2005, p. 26).

HUNGRY

Notes

[1] The Mont Albert Centenary Seat was made in 2017 with 600 students and staff of Mont Albert Primary School, Victoria, Australia. For more information, about the project, see: http://montalbertcentenarysculpture.blogspot.com

[2] The imagery of the street sex worker made by Camille Monet for *The Great Wall of St Kilda*, is used in advertising for Red Umbrella Day and on the cover of James Rowe's *Shantusi* (research about the experiences of street sex workers). *The Tree has been* used on the cover of a report about the community recovery after the bushfires.

[3] This research about the other artworks in St Kilda, entitled 'St Kilda Walking: Public Art and Memorial' is documented online: https://stkildawalkingpublicartandmemorial.blogspot.com

10

Epilogue - (Self-portrait)

Critical self-reflection emerges from the process of research. I have gained personally, through insight into my own practice and philosophy about the work I do with communities. These insights are explicated here.

Confirmation

I found the research gratifying because the people I interviewed expressed ideas and experiences similar to my own. From reading the literature, it might be construed that non-professional artists have no business making art in public space, and that it rarely happens. When I am asked to work with communities to make art, the people who hire me already share my perspectives, and when I interviewed people for this research I again encountered this shared understanding of what it is and what it means. It was heart-warming and encouraging.

Whilst undertaking the research I was purposely reflexive of my experiences, reactions and conversations when working on projects with communities. This connection kept my research grounded in the reality of practice. When I witness people's excitement in discovering their contributions in the finished artwork, it always reminds me of its value.

> 'It gives all staff at Mont Albert Primary School great joy to see our students bring their families to the school and hear them say "Look what I made!" They have taken such pride in their work individually but also on behalf of the school' (letter to myself, from Mont Albert Primary School, Principal and School Council President June 2017).

Whilst working on another artwork in a pre-school, a teary mother said to me, ‘It makes me cry that our children’s artwork is in that mural’ (personal communication 2016). Expressing her emotion about the children’s artwork being permanently on the wall confirms my idea of the importance of community members having their artwork in public space. It confirms the value of what I am researching and writing about.

In the methodology of portraiture, portraits are ‘painted’ by the researcher but the experience of being painted by an artist is also described by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis 1997). Whilst I was writing the self-portrait about myself, I was also becoming aware of how I was shaped and moulded by my experiences of making art with communities. I wasn’t the only protagonist. It was a reciprocal relationship where working with a community affected my attitude to my work and how I undertook it. I was being created and painted by these experiences. I began with I, I, I, in my self-portrait but in reality, these ideas had been developed collaboratively with the people who engaged me in projects and worked with me to make them. The philosophy of my practice is collaboratively generated as we work together. It is also developed by our knowledge and responses to other permanent public artworks made by communities, which we have seen, which we discuss, and, which inspire us.

Role of the Artist

I discovered that the protagonists in community artworks take on roles of service to the artwork and the community of the artwork; that a role is played in order to include community members. It is of service, but also of power and creates an identity for the artist. Within that role lies the tensions between working together as a community, and needing to serve individual needs of each community member and the artist/facilitator.

In the early analysis of my art practice (‘Prelude’), emotion and metaphor were not something I thought very important in my work. But since then, experiences in my own life changed the way I viewed my art practice with communities. In the beginning of 2017, I moved interstate to care for my parents. As part of this move, I decided to give up working with communities to make art, and instead return to teaching (as a more viable form of income).

I had been considering giving up working full-time as an artist because I was experiencing issues with my health. The hours were very long in the second half of the year, when most people wanted their projects done and so at the end of each winter I experienced prolonged colds, fatigue and then

in the 2016 I also developed carpal tunnel syndrome, from weeks on end of installing mosaic. Economic rationalism also played a part in considering the feasibility of the career as I earned less when I worked full-time as an artist than when I had previously worked half-time as a teacher. As an artist, I had no sick pay, holiday pay or superannuation and it was difficult to charge a rate which included an allowance for these. I felt proud to have supported my family for six years through working as an artist and I had thoroughly enjoyed the work, but perhaps the time had come to be pragmatic about how I earned my living.

In 2017 I weaned myself off making artworks with communities by only making two of them. And in 2018, I stopped working as an artist with communities and returned to teaching in schools. Through the process of leaving my career of making artworks with communities, I discovered an emotional impetus in my work which I had previously imagined as being more pragmatic and political. I discovered that although physically arduous, it was emotionally satisfying work. I learned new things about the role I had played, through its loss and absence. From being outside of the role I could look back, and in retrospect, see more clearly what it was.

One of the things I noticed was that the role of being an artist in a community was part of my identity. How I worked with people and how I managed my role had been carefully developed as part of my practice, my philosophy and my ‘self’. I was well-known for the work I did in Melbourne, so when I moved to another place, I felt the loss of identity. Although being an artist was hard work and low pay, it was enjoyable, rewarding, purposeful and respected.

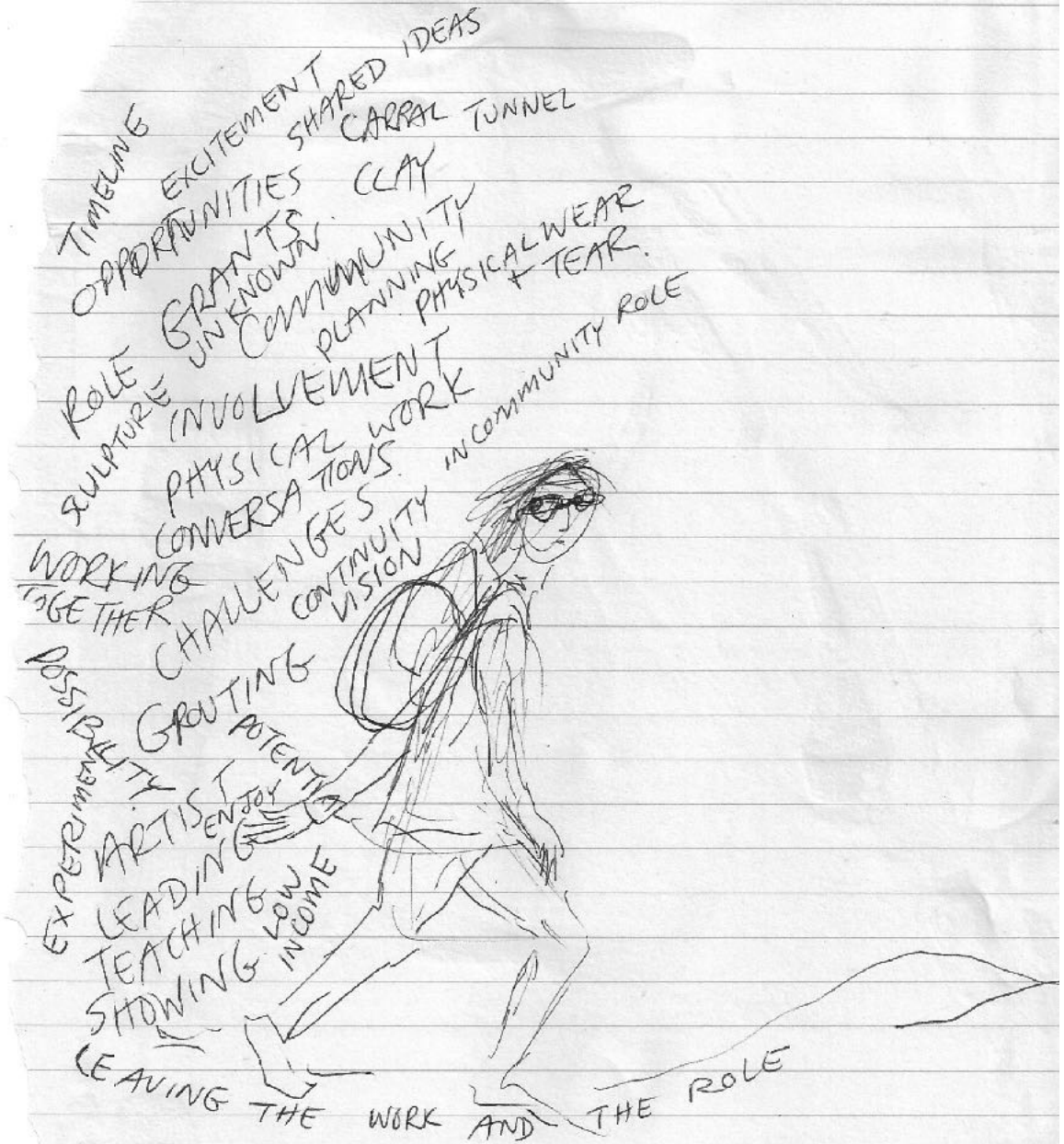
A revelatory theme in this research has been that the artworks with community involve emotion and that I myself was also caught in this emotion. I derived great pleasure from the projects I made with communities because I felt they were important. I liked the unforeseen outcomes, and how they gradually unfolded into beautiful and exciting artworks. I felt an emotional connection with the community through making together. I enjoyed being the protagonist who took people on the journey; showing them that they could make great artwork, that they were artists, that their work was important and could be permanently put in public space.

Everyone is an Artist - Acknowledgement

‘The immediate source of the art work is the human capacity for thought’ (Arendt 1958, p. 168)

I felt after the ‘Scroll’ journey that I would prefer to disappear as the author on community artworks. I benefited from my name appearing somewhere as evidence of what I could organise, but it was not solely my artwork. The research heightened this issue. I felt that raising the community up as artists themselves, could be enhanced by lowering my own profile in the work. I began to take more care with how I was acknowledged and to acknowledge the community (and individuals if possible) involved in making the work. I also became more interested in creating projects which involved deeper expression of the individual identity, voice and experience of the community members who were involved[1].

As previously mentioned (p. 269), in one of my interviews a discussion emerged about the role that acknowledgment played in an artwork and how people coming into the project for their own gain were not tolerated. The interviewee made the link to my own role as a researcher, and how researchers interview people and conduct research for their own gain. This paradox of ethics


TIMELINE
EXCITEMENT
SHARED IDEAS
CARPAL TUNNEL
OPPORTUNITIES
CLAY
GRANTS
UNKNOWN
COMMUNITY
PLANNING
PHYSICAL WEAR + TEAR.
ROLE
SCULPTURE
INVOLVEMENT
PHYSICAL WORK
CONVERSATIONS
IN COMMUNITY ROLE
WORKING TOGETHER
CHALLENGES
CONTINUITY
VISION
GROUTING
POSSIBILITY
POTENTIAL
EXPERIMENTALITY
ARTIST
ENJOY
LEADING
TEACHING
SHOWING
LOW INCOME
LEAVING THE WORK AND THE ROLE

between making art with communities (the subject of the thesis), and how research is undertaken (the vehicle of the research), resonated and affected the thesis, because I had already been thinking deeply about these relationships in my own art practice with communities.

It was a double standard when I claimed the community artwork as mine on my website, when whilst making the project with the community I told them it was their work. My promotion of myself as an artist was related to running my business and building a reputation so that people trusted me to make permanent artworks on their grounds. Similarly, when writing the thesis, or publishing papers about the research, the researcher's own future in the academic community is considered. It was a mesh of needs, desires, perspectives, which perhaps are unable to be resolved. The needs of the community and the philosophy of 'everyone is an artist', is weighed up against the artist's need to develop a reputation to make a living and a career.

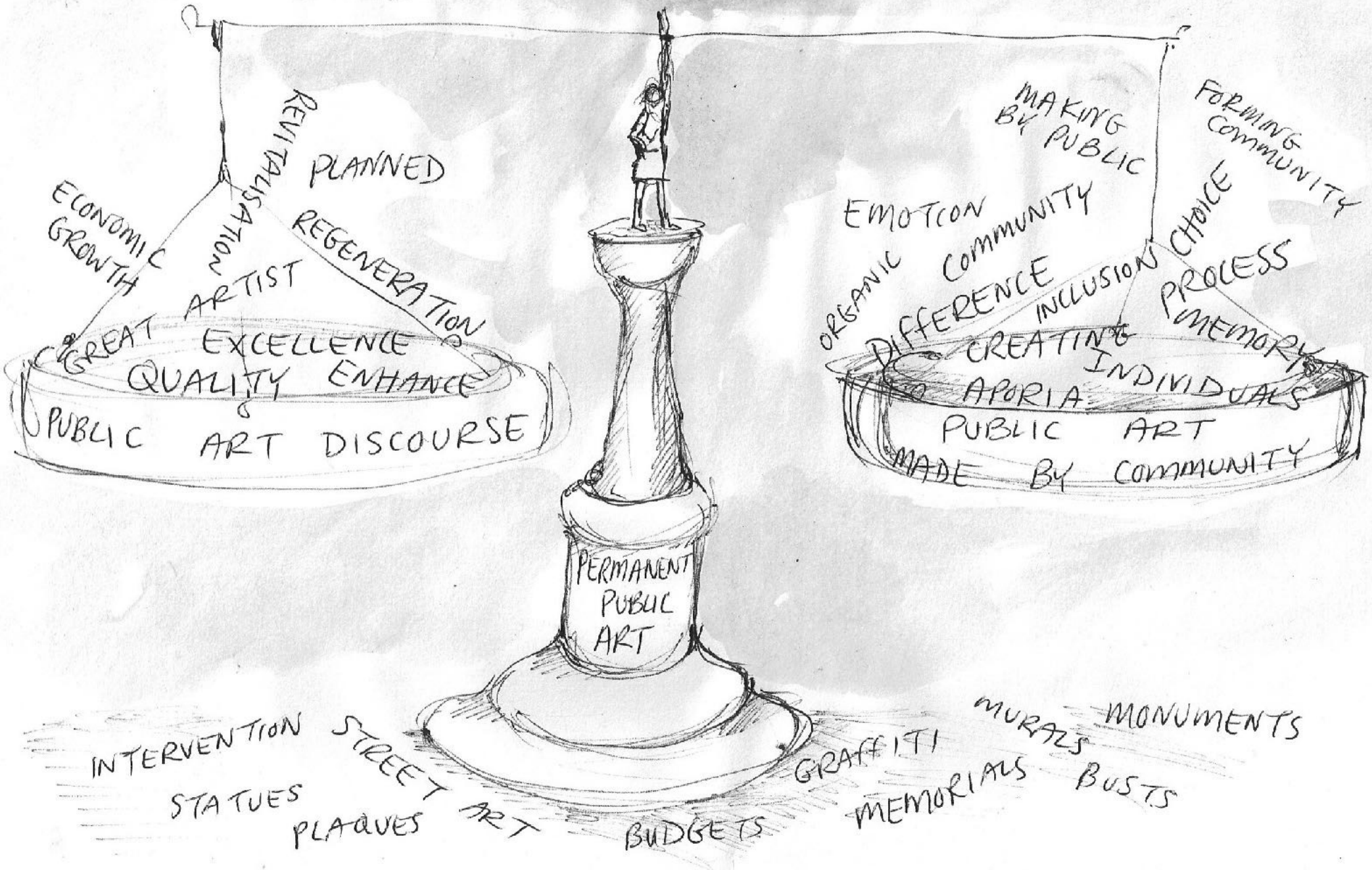
The balance lay between tangles of opposing needs.

I believe that everybody is an artist; that it is a fundamental thing that everyone can do. Doing this research brought out the importance of that belief for me and also the understanding that it is *not* how everybody thinks. I understand now that the idea of the artist as ‘genius’ in comparison with ‘lay-artists’ and participants, (Bishop 2012) runs deep in public art discourse and is also an integral part of the economic and ideological system of art (likewise, similar tensions exist between art and craft). My experiences were a world away from those projected by the ‘high’ art-world, and after my research journey had moved even further away from ideas which separated the makers from the audience.

The idea that only professional artists make public art needs to be challenged. *The Tree Project* is an example of public art which refutes these ideas. It was a project that grew larger because of community involvement, and those involved had to work out how to make it and learn new skills. Engineering requirements, aesthetics, and site were all worked out as they went along and it was all possible. The great wall of St Kilda provided space for the local residents to contribute their own intellectual ideas through words and imagery towards a permanent artwork. These artworks refute dominant ideas about public art, through their use of community members as art makers.

The artworks in this research exemplify Monica Gattinger's (2011) definition of Cultural democracy by focusing on 'inclusion, diversity and access to the means of cultural production' (p. 4). The artworks 'implore citizens/viewers to discover the relationship between art production and democratic participation' (Phillips 1995, p. 67).

Chantal Mouffe (2000) theorises the 'democratic paradox', as a tension between equality (between people) and liberty (of an individual), which cannot be reconciled (p. 5). She argues that current ideas of liberal democracy (Neo-liberalism) which tend to support the 'inviolable rights of property', and the 'virtues of the market' are presented as 'common sense' (ibid., p.6). These tendencies are echoed in definitions of public art which centre around permission and economics, which make it difficult for ordinary citizens to place their own voices and imagery in public space. When community members make permanent public art, it is despite these 'common sense' ideas of public art as being made by artists, of having economic value and needing to be commissioned.


REVITALISATION
PLANNED
ECONOMIC GROWTH
REGENERATION
ARTIST
GREAT
EXCELLENCE
QUALITY
ENHANCE
PUBLIC ART DISCOURSE
MAKING BY PUBLIC
FORMING COMMUNITY
EMOTION
COMMUNITY
CHOICE
ORGANIC
INCLUSION
PROCESS
DIFFERENCE
MEMORY
CREATING
INDIVIDUALS
APORIA
PUBLIC ART
MADE BY COMMUNITY
PERMANENT PUBLIC ART
INTERVENTION
STREET ART
STATUES
PLAQUES
BUDGETS
GRAFFITI
MURALS
MONUMENTS
MEMORIALS
BUSTS

Near the end of the research process, I exhibited a draft of the thesis and the original drawings of the research at VU at MetroWest, in Footscray[2]. I framed the exhibition as conveying the outcomes of the research to a broader community. Whenever I was at the exhibition, people engaged me in conversation about the research and the thesis. It seemed that having the thesis in public space was useful in generating discourse around the topic of 'permanent public art made by community members'.

I also offered a workshop about visual thinking to extend community engagement opportunities. Fourteen people came to the workshop, which focused on the visual aspect of the research. The participants came for differing personal reasons, but I also recognised afterwards that they were members of my audience. During the workshop they engaged me with questions about the subject of the thesis.

As we walked around the exhibition, I explained many of the paradoxes of the thesis, particularly about putting the drawings into the format of A4, and how the traditional thesis, was a cultural practice which we needed to participate in as well as challenge. I expressed the idea that we need to engage with academic writing, because it has the ability to change the way people think about things, particularly if the research is accessible (through language and physically). I explained that in my last

couple of weeks of writing this thesis I had difficulty with my re-enrolment and had been cut off from online access to the university library. This university was the portal through which I accessed the academic knowledge to build my research on. Through the experience of losing this access, I realised how much of the knowledge and discourse about the issues of public art remain inaccessible to the general public.

Some of this audience voiced concerns about issues I had been exploring in the thesis and so the workshop opened out to a discussion of these.

> Why are street art and other forms of art in public space not called public art?
>
> Why is knowledge produced by government funded universities so expensive and inaccessible to the general public?
>
> Why do local people have less voice than business entities, which speak so freely through advertising?
>
> How do we change these situations?

They challenged me to continue writing about these in an accessible way. I was also challenged to consider parallels between writing and making - in that we need to not only challenge through writing, but also through making art. This brought home to me what was important in the quote:

> ‘Disagreement is not only an object of my theorisation. It is also its method’ (Ranciere 2011, p. 2).

Again, the paradox arises of playing the game in which we need to work and be a part of society, but at the same time challenge it. We need to participate in these worlds and ideologies, in order to have voice. They are power structures we can use. Similarly I was challenged to continue making art with communities in public space, because this practice is important in challenging and changing discourse.

Emerging again was the importance of these ideas about public space, being explicated and demonstrated **in** public space. I needed to *speak* my disagreement through visual art and writing **in** public space where it can be seen, heard and read (Arendt 1958).

Permanent public artworks made by community members are also ‘sites of possibility’ and ‘democratic transformations’ (Giroux 2004, pp. 61, 60), not because they are necessarily good, but

because they are able to represent differing perspectives. I discovered through my engagement of researching the three portraits (my own practice, *The Tree Project* and *The Great Wall of St Kilda)*, that the practice of making permanent public art with community members is often driven by an emotional urge to include and give voice to people. This has led me to the title of this thesis, but also reinforced the importance of emotional relationships to public art.

The aesthetic of gallimaufry, excess, organic and unwieldy growth of projects in response to emotional instead of practical and pragmatic thinking, and their un-commissioned origins outside of the norms of public art practices - challenge the ‘sensible’ (Ranciere 2004b, 2011) revealing what Jacobs (1961) calls ‘the dishonest mask of pretended order’. The discourse of permanent public art continues to be a site of contestation, contention and disagreement which some argue is part of the ‘practice’ of equality (Ranciere 1991).

Notes

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[1] See *Message in a Cup*, where contributions from the community were named, and the *Deer Park History Mural* where all 600 participants had at least their first names in the mural.
http://messageinacup.blogspot.com
http://deerparkhistorymural.blogspot.com

[2] VU at Metrowest is a joint project of Maribynong Council and Victoria University, situated in Footscray, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia.

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Interview Schedule

(Questions which were submitted as part of the Ethics application)

Group 1 :Community member as art-maker

Why the artwork was made – philosophically

- Can you tell me about the artwork?
- How did it occur or come about?
- Who was involved?
- Can you tell me about the idea behind the artwork, reasons for it, its meaning and why it came about?
- How did you become involved in the artwork?
- What was your role in making the artwork?
- What was the idea behind the artwork?
- Community members participated in making this artwork –How were they involved? How did this come about?
- Can you tell me a little bit about that and what it means?
- How would the artwork have been different if community members had not been involved?
- Did the participants need to be instructed or taught particular skills or processes?
- Were participants voluntary or paid?
- How was the community input acknowledged?
- What is your perspective about the community involvement in the project? In what ways was it good or beneficial to the project?

How the artwork was made – physically

- Can you describe the artwork to me, what it looks like, feels like or what does it make you think of when you are near it?
- In what ways is this artwork different from other public artworks?
- What were the practical considerations for the artwork?

Making

- What materials did you use?
- What processes did you use?
- What were participants involved in when making the artwork? Did the participants need to be trained in special skills and processes?
- What parts of the artwork were done by hand and which parts by machine or technology?
- What specialist skills were involved? Who did these jobs?
- Was it difficult to use these materials and processes in a large scale artwork?

Permanence

- What makes the artwork permanent?
- Was the artwork initially thought of as a permanent work? Why, do you think?
- Is the permanence of the artwork important? Why? Why not?
- What factors may make the artwork more or less permanent?
- Was prevention of damage or deterioration a factor in your planning? How was this done?

Management of project

- How did you negotiate the use of the place, site or land?
- Did you have to source money or materials? How was this done?
- Were there time constraints? Why? Why not? How were these managed?

- Were there unexpected challenges? How did these effect the outcome of the artwork?
- Who owns the artwork?
- Who is responsible for its maintenance?

What are your perspectives about the artwork?

- How do you feel about your relationship to the artwork? What is good about it?
- Is the artwork important to you? Why is it important?
- How did you feel about the community involvement in this artwork? Why is it good?
- How do you feel about the aesthetics of the artwork? What is good about it?
- How do you feel about the processes that were involved? What was good about them?
- Do you feel there is any importance in making aspects of the artwork by hand?
- There were a range of roles and jobs in making the artwork, do you see a difference between making by hand and the other roles that were involved?
- Apart from who is legally responsible for the artwork or who owns it, do you feel there any other sort of ownership of the artwork for example do you feel it is owned by any particular group or part of the community?
- How do you feel about being involved in making a permanent artwork in public space?
- What were the outcomes of involving community members in the artwork?
- Were there other unexpected outcomes?
- Before we end the interview is there anything you would like to add?
- Have we covered everything that you think is important about the artwork?

Group 2 : Facilitator, organiser, main artist

Why the artwork was made – philosophically

- Can you tell me about the artwork?
- How did it occur or come about?
- Who was involved?
- Can you tell me about the idea behind the artwork, its meaning and why it came about?
- How did you become involved in the artwork?
- What was your role in making the artwork?
- What was the idea behind the artwork?
- Community members participated in making this artwork –How were they involved? How did this come about?
- Can you tell me a little bit about that and what it means?
- How would the artwork have been different if community members had not been involved?
- Why were community members involved? At what stage did this happen and why do you think it happened?
- How did you go about involving the people?
- Did the participants need to be instructed or taught particular skills or processes?
- Were participants voluntary or paid?
- How was the community input acknowledged?
- What is your perspective about the community involvement in the project? In what ways was it good or beneficial to the project?

How the artwork was made – physically

- Can you describe the artwork to me, what it looks like, feels like or what does it make you think of when you are near it?
- In what ways is this artwork different from other public artworks?
- What were the practical considerations for the artwork?

Making

- What materials did you use?
- What processes did you use?
- What were participants involved in when making the artwork? Did the participants need to be trained in special skills and processes?
- What parts of the artwork were done by hand and which parts by machine or technology?
- What specialist skills were involved? Who did these jobs?
- Was it difficult to use these materials and processes in a large scale artwork?

Permanence

- What makes the artwork permanent?
- Was the artwork initially thought of as a permanent work? Why, do you think?
- Is the permanence of the artwork important? Why? Why not?
- What factors may make the artwork more or less permanent?
- Was prevention of damage or deterioration a factor in your planning? How was this done?

Management of project

- How did you negotiate the use of the place, site or land?
- Did you have to source money or materials? How was this done?
- Were there time constraints? Why? Why not? How were these managed?

- Were there unexpected challenges? How did these effect the outcome of the artwork?
- Who owns the artwork?
- Who is responsible for its maintenance?

What are your perspectives about the artwork?

- How do you feel about your relationship to the artwork? What is good about it?
- Is the artwork important to you? Why is it important?
- How did you feel about the community involvement in this artwork? Why is it good?
- How do you feel about the aesthetics of the artwork? What is good about it?
- How do you feel about the processes that were involved? What was good about them?
- Do you feel there is any importance in making aspects of the artwork by hand?
- There were a range of roles and jobs in making the artwork, do you see a difference between making by hand and the other roles that were involved?
- Apart from who is legally responsible for the artwork or who owns it, do you feel there any other sort of ownership of the artwork for example do you feel it is owned by any particular group or part of the community?
- How do you feel about being involved in making a permanent artwork in public space?
- What were the outcomes of involving community members in the artwork?
- Were there other unexpected outcomes?
- Before we end the interview is there anything you would like to add?
- Have we covered everything that you think is important about the artwork?

Group 3: Audience of the artwork

- What do you know about this artwork?
- Do you think it is good? If so why is it good?
- Do you know why you like or dislike it? Are there reasons for your perspective?
- Do you have any connection with the artwork? What does it mean to you?
- Is the artwork important to you? Why is it important?
- Do you think it's a good artwork? Is it good for any reason?
- A group of community members participated in making this public artwork: What does that mean for you? Does it make the artwork better? Does it change the meaning of the artwork?
- Do you know how many people were involved? What type of people they were? Why they were involved in the artwork?
- Do you know anything about the reason or meaning behind the artwork?
- Do you know about how the artwork was made? Do you think it was difficult?
- How do you feel about the artwork? What does it mean to you?
- Was there anything unexpected about this artwork
- Can you describe it to me, what it looks like, feels like or what does it make you think of when you are near it?
- Before we end the interview is there anything you would like to add?
- Have we covered everything that you think is important to include about the artwork?

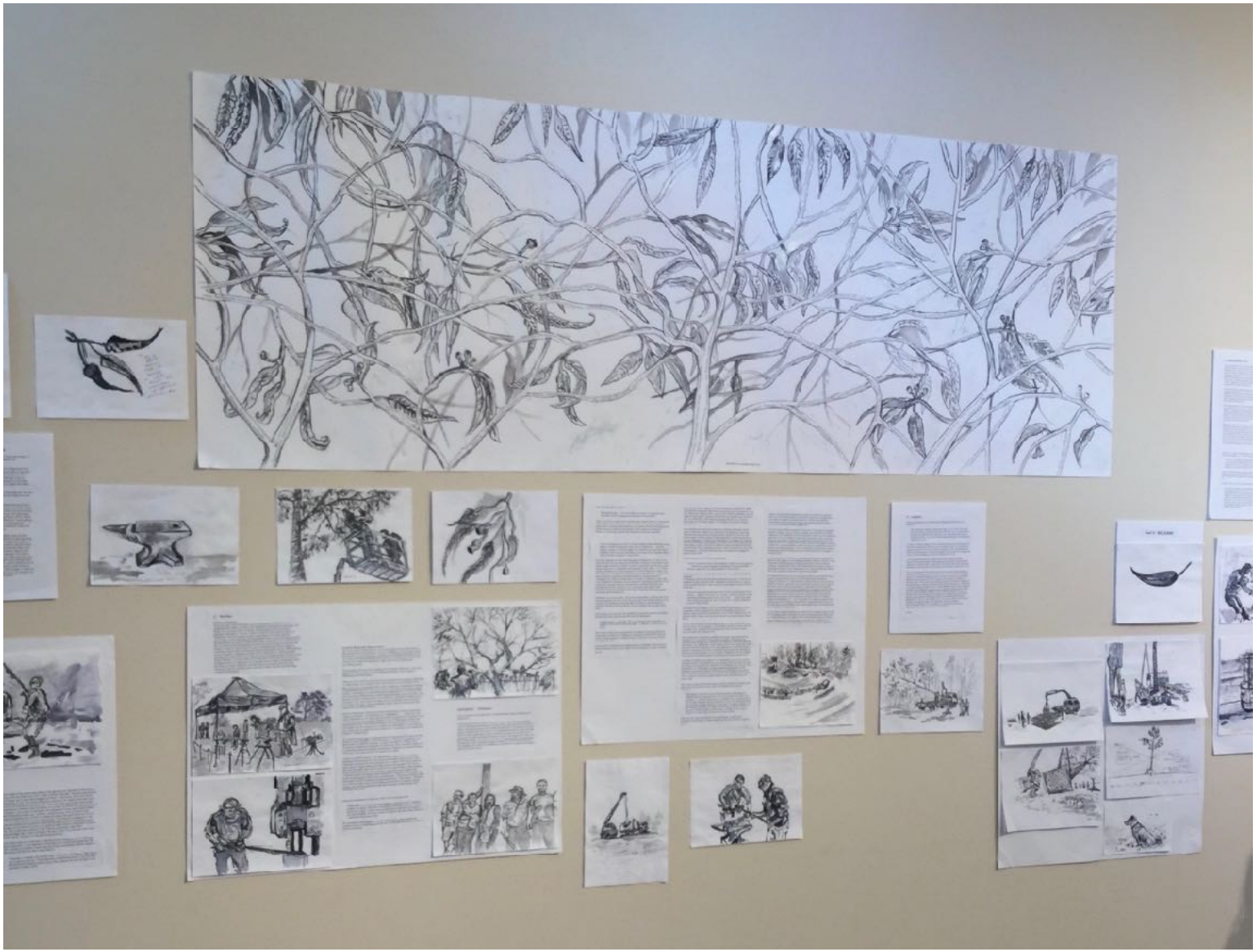
NOTE: *Not all questions will be used for every interview, as they may not be relevant.*
This list endeavours to express the broad scope of the questions which may be asked.

Documentation of the exhibition of *The Blacksmiths' Tree: A Portrait in words and drawings,* at Wadambuk, St Andrews Community Centre

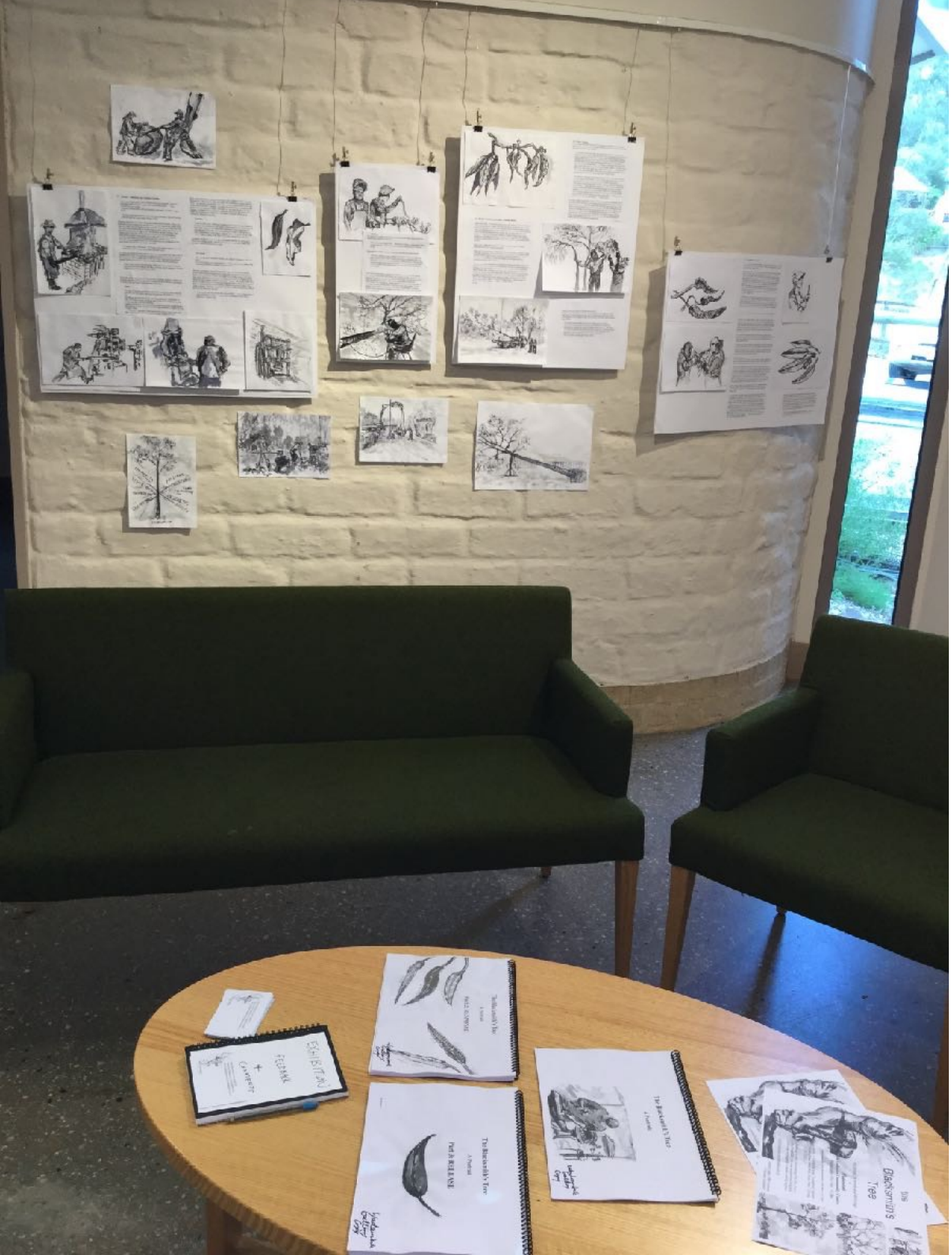
Photographs by Maddison Connor

Above: Panoramic photo showing all four walls of the display area.

Above: Showing two walls and the seating area.



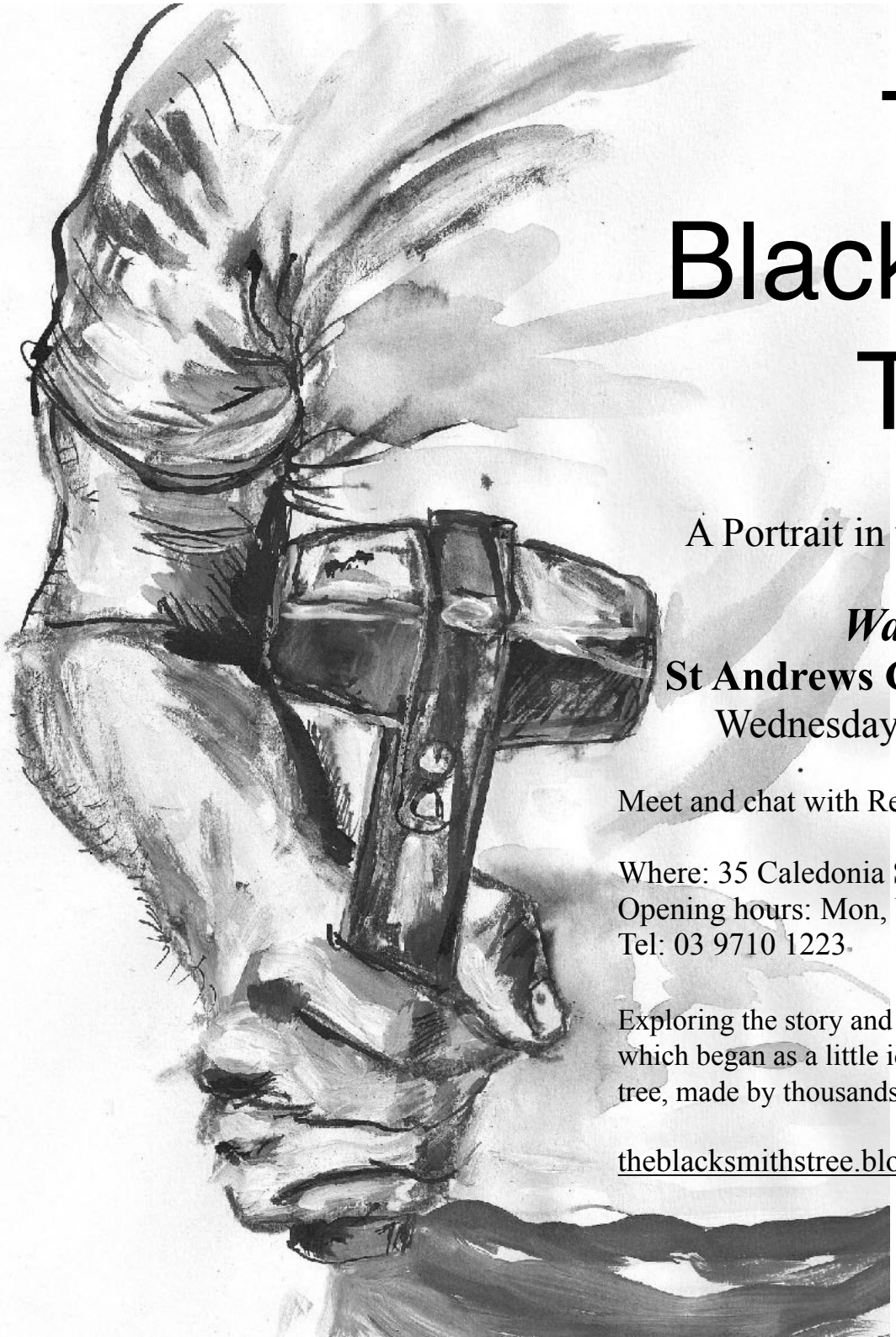
Above: Showing the *'Branching in and branching out'* drawing



Left: Table hosting, book versions of the Portrait, small and large flyers for the exhibition which give the address of the online Portrait, and visitor response book.

Below: Exhibition flyer

Debbie Qadri 2018



The Blacksmiths' Tree

A Portrait in words and drawings
at
Wadambuk
St Andrews Community Centre
Wednesday 15th Nov - 6 Dec

Meet and chat with Researcher 25th Nov. 10-1pm

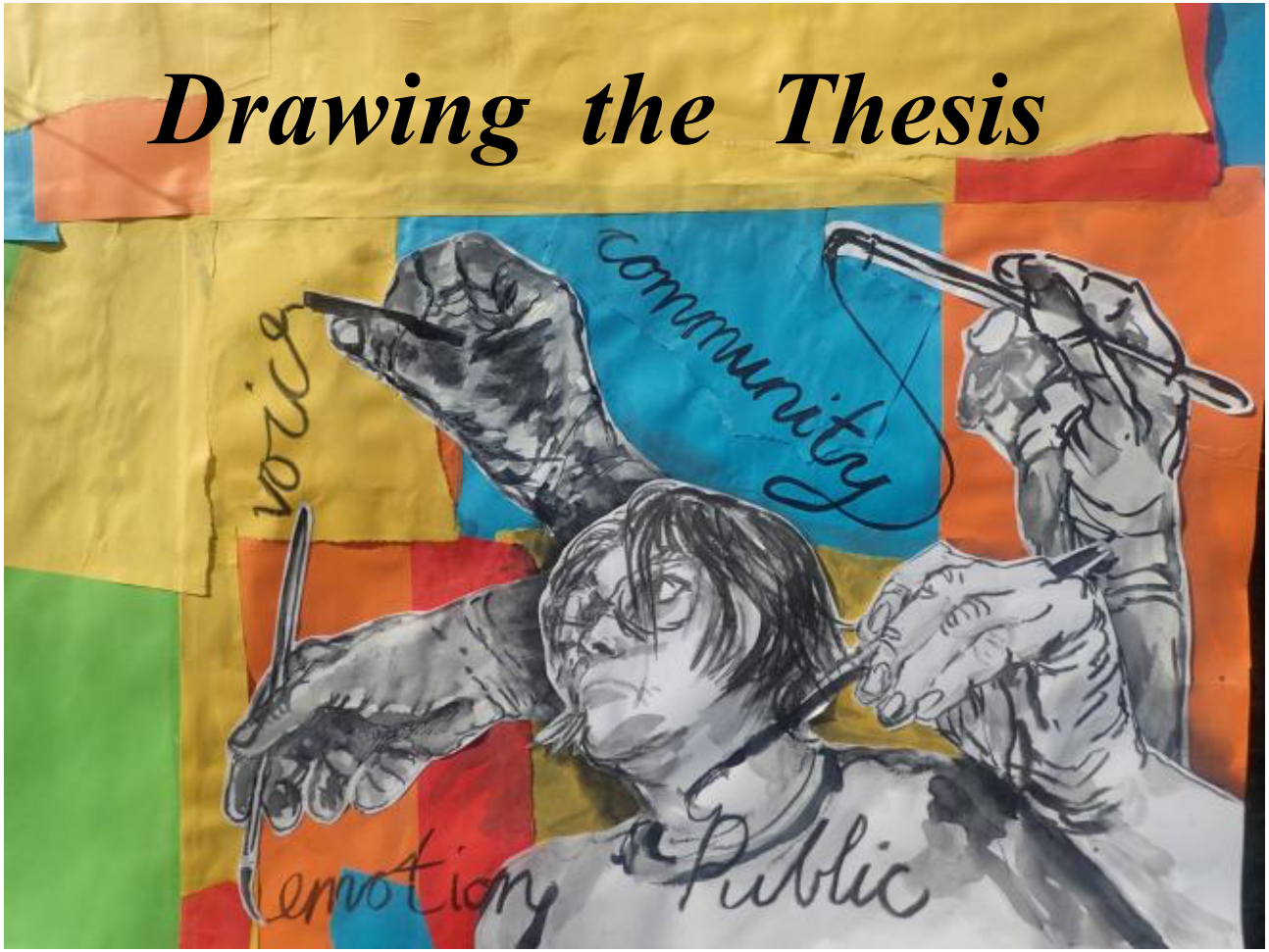
Where: 35 Caledonia Street, St Andrews, Victoria
Opening hours: Mon, Wed, Thurs, 9 am -1.30 pm
Tel: 03 9710 1223

Exploring the story and meaning of the *Tree Project* - which began as a little idea and grew into a big steel tree, made by thousands of people working together.

theblacksmithstree.blogspot.com.au

Debbie Qadri, (PhD student)
of Victoria University.

Documentation of the exhibition *Drawing the Thesis* at VU at Metro West



You are cordially invited to the Exhibition opening of

Drawing the Thesis
by
Debbie Qadri

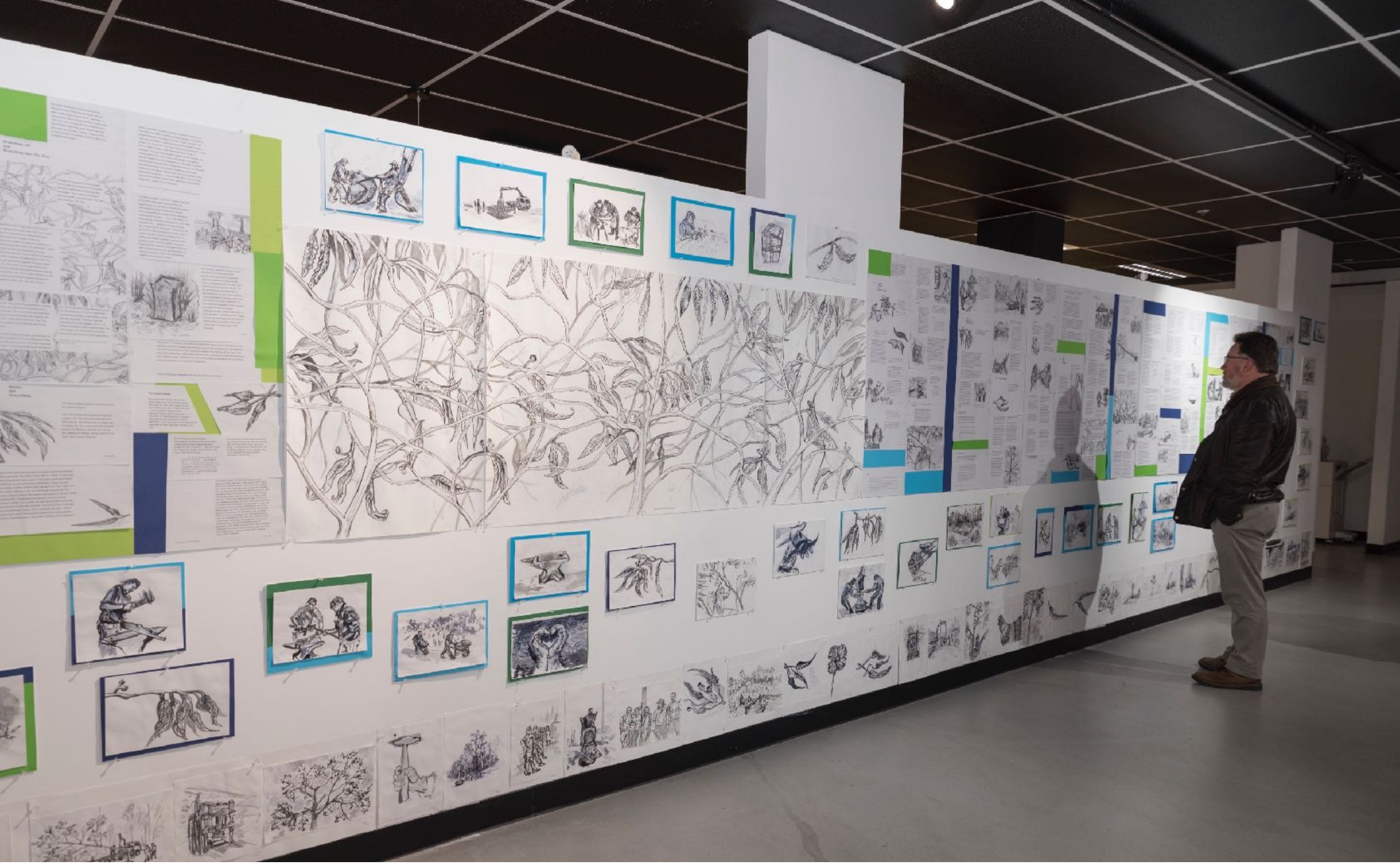
Thursday 5 July, 6 - 8pm

At VU Metrowest, 138 Nicholson Street, Footscray

Exhibition: 5 - 25 July
Presentation and workshop: Saturday 21 July, 11am - 1pm
Online: https://inclusionemotionandvoice.blogspot.com

The walls of VU at MetroWest will be covered with a PhD thesis, totalling 100,000 words and over 600 original drawings, for an exhibition by local artist and VU student Debbie Qadri.Her exhibition is motivated by the idea of sharing research with fellow students at Victoria University and the local community, making it accessible, and subsequently demystifying the thesis

Link to you-tube video of exhibition:https://youtu.be/mhnIe5958hE



Above: Display of ‘The Blacksmiths’ Tree’ chapter, photograph by Suzanne Balding

Above: Display of ‘The Scroll’ chapter

Above: Display of Prelude chapter, photograph by Suzanne Balding

Above: Images from the exhibition opening, photographs by Suzanne Balding (faces blurred by author)

Glossary

ABA(Vic) Inc. - The Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria) Inc.

Billet - A length of metal, that has a round or square cross-section

CFA - Country Fire Authority

DSE- Department of Sustainability and the Environment

Forge: (verb) as in ‘to forge’ a process of heating metal, and then changing its shape using a hammer and an anvil.

Forge: (noun) as in ‘the forge’ - the fire that the metal is placed into in order to be heated. Usually a coke fire with air running through it to produce a greater heat.

I Forge Iron: On online forum of Blacksmiths (iforgeiron.com).

Portraiture/ portrait: a methodology of research where the findings are written up as a Portrait - research presented as a narrative which describes the subject aesthetically as well as empirically. It was developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot. (See bibliography for sources)

Quench: Cool the metal down by either air or water.

Stainless Steel: A form of steel containing chromium, resistant to tarnishing and rust, (mild steel is prone to rust and so was not included in *The Tree*)

Stock: Steel metal bars (which were used for making leaves and branches) are often referred to as stock by blacksmiths.

TIG Weld: Tungsten Inert Gas (TIG) welding is arc welding that uses a non-consumable tungsten electrode to produce the weld. It is commonly used to weld stainless steel as the process produces stronger and higher quality welds, however it is difficult to master and slower than other welding processes.

Songs and Poems about the Tree

> ‘Maybe a poet will find the right words to describe the experience of the tree’
> (Garton 2016, 68).

Two songs written about *The Tree* have been included to show how it inspired writers and musicians, school children and the wider community. The songs provide evidence of how the community perceived *The Tree* and of their response.

Risen From the Flame

Written by children at local primary schools (St Andrews Primary School year 6, Strathewen Primary School Year 6, Kinglake West Year 5/6, Whittlesea Primary School year 6, music by Bridget Muir of Nillumbik Youth Services)
Performances: 30.11.2013 the Young Blacksmiths Choir sing the song *Risen From the Flame* at *The Tree Project Launch* Event at Whittlesea Showgrounds and for the fifth Anniversary of the Black Saturday Fires at Melbourne Museum on Sunday 9 Feb 2014. Three lines from the song are

stamped at the base of the tree. Footage of the song being sung at *The Tree Project Launch* can be viewed on: *The Tree Project Launch Event*, film, Tree Project Website, http://www.treeproject.abavic.org.au/news.html or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKgHsJhoSEc.

The Song of the Tree

Sung by Colin James and the band *Neatly Folded Goat and also s*ung by Colin at a planting day at *The Tree.* The song was a gift from the band to the people working on the tree. The words are also printed onto leaves in the canopy of the tree.
Lyrics by Neil Grant and Amanda Gibson, music by Colin James

Text for *Branching Out and Branching In*

The text below has been used in the large ‘branching in and branching out’, drawing (300cm x 80cm).
This drawing is shown in displays, but in this document only appear as photographs of details. Below is the text which has been placed on all of the branches in the drawing, telling how *The Tree Project* branched out into the community and how the community branched back into *The Tree Project*.

The Tree Choir - A choir of children from several schools St Andrews Primary School year 6, Strathewen Primary School Year 6, Kinglake West Year 5/6, Whittlesea Primary School year 6, music by youth worker of Nillumbik Youth Services. The song, *Risen from the Flame* was jointly written by children from local schools.

Later three lines of the song *Risen from the Flame*, are drawn back into the tree by being stamped onto its base plate.

At the *launch of The Tree* at the Whittlesea Show-grounds community groups who had assisted with the tree and the Black Saturday fires were invited to be involved.

‘Spirit of The Tree’ - Factory open day for local artists to take photographs, draw, paint and write poetry.

The Wish Box which accompanied the leaf forging demonstrations enabled people to write responses which would be planted underneath the tree and also visited local schools.

At the Whittlesea launch for *The Tree*, contributions of photos and film footage about *The Tree Project* were collected and copied at a stall. This documentation was used in the film trilogy ‘Forged by Fire’, which was shown at Federation Square, and will also be used in the feature length documentary that is being made of the project.

Leaf forging day and stamping people’s names into leaves, Warrandyte Festival.

Leaf forging demonstration at the Hildebrand Festival, Cottles Bridge.

Leaf collection points are set up in London by the British Artist Blacksmiths Association and in California by the Californian Blacksmith Association.

The Ukrainian Union of Artist Blacksmiths organise for European blacksmiths to forge leaves to bring to their upcoming blacksmithing festival in May 2009.

Leaf forging and name stamping at the first Hurstbridge Farmers Market.

Four boxes of leaves arrive from NSW, Kyabram, New York, and Maryland.

Leaf forging demonstration, Shire Council Offices, Kinglake

Four parcels of leaves and gum-nuts arrive from the USA and Canada.

Leaf forging demonstration at Lake Mountain (Marysville to Lake Mountain Fire Relief Ride)

Leaf forging demonstration, Hurstbridge Farmers Market

Leaf forging demonstration at the Alexandra Market, Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum.

At the 7th International Blacksmiths Festival in Ivano-Frankivsk an Australian representative is presented with leaves forged across Europe for inclusion in *The Tree*.

Leaf forging demonstration at the Bushfire Rebuilding Expo at Whittlesea Showgrounds

Festival of Leaf-making

Leaf forging demonstration at Eltham Town Square.

Leaf and branch forging demonstration at the Upper Yarra Historical Society, at Yarra Junction, The Wish Box collected wishes.

Forging leaves at St Andrews Market

Leaf forging demonstration at Marysville market.

Leaf forging demonstration at CFA headquarters, Burwood.

The Strathewen Community Renewal Association formally accept the tree to be placed in Strathewen.

ABA(Vic) Inc. 20th anniversary event at Briars Park, Mt Martha, with forging demonstrations and branch with 400 leaves on display.

Forging Demonstrations by blacksmiths from Victoria and Queensland (working together), at the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Conference at Gold Coast, Qld.

From the blacksmithing group *Lou Foc*, France, a box of 75 leaves arrives (accompanied by a photo of all the blacksmiths, including children, who made them).

Forging demonstration at the Eltham Town Fair.

Forging demonstration at Arthurs Creek Hall, as part of Nillumbik Open Gardens event.

Flown in from London and California, boxes arrive containing leaves from over 20 countries across Europe, the UK, USA and Canada.

Forging of sponsored leaves at Gulf Station Heritage Day

Twigs for *The Tree* go on display to the public in the Black Saturday Gallery outside the hearing rooms of the Victorian 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission.

A gallery of all the international leaves goes online.

Jeremy from Michigan, USA, one of the first blacksmiths to send leaves to Australia visits and takes part in welding leaves to branches with the Australian blacksmiths.

‘Art of the Ashes: The 2009 Emergence - art on the move’, exhibition. Demonstrations at Federation Square. 3 forges, 4 anvils, 12 members (Feb 2011)

Final images of sponsored leaves sent out to individual sponsors. Over 3000 images of leaves have been photographed, processed and emailed out to supporters of the project.

The Tree Project Facebook site shares the project online and allows other people to post comments and feedback.

The Tree becomes a sister project to the *Iron Rose for Norway Project*

17 October 2012: Eucalyptus Rose; a Gift from Norway arrives in Australia

The front and back covers of the Bushfires Royal Commission Implementation Monitor's Report feature images of leaves from the Tree.

One of the head blacksmiths for *The Tree Project* arrives in Norway to meet the Project Manager of the Roses for Norway Project and present a gift of Australian-made steel roses. The visit makes the news on Norwegian television.

ABA(Vic) Inc. YouTube channel launched which shows footage of the trunk and branch forging, including a time lapse of the trunk forging and interviews with the blacksmiths.

Main *Tree* branches displayed, blacksmithing demonstration and a rose from Norway on display, at Dunmoochin, Cottles Bridge, (part of the Nillumbik 2012 Open Studios event).

The trunk is stored in Somerton until the branches are ready to be attached.

Steel welding benches are welded together by the St. Andrews Men's Shed

Three blacksmiths from Belgium who forged leaves for *The Tree* during the Ukrainian Festival in 2009, visit the site of *The Tree* in Strathewen and the factory in Whittlesea to see the branches and leaves.
Three local artists spend a day sorting through over 3000 leaves, putting them into groups that will sit well together on a branch.

Local welders start piecing together the leaves and branches.

The Tree is visited from young men of Roma State College, Queensland (who have been participating in an exchange project with Eltham College), who had raised money for *The Tree*. They worked on *The Tree Project* for a day, welding and forging and some of them making leaves.

Students at Eltham High School Raise Funds for *The Tree Project.*

TIG Welding classes: a volunteer welding instructor teaches welding skills to local people, including a class of women, in order to have trained welders to work on *The Tree*.

Spirit of The Tree - Factory open day for local artists to take photographs, draw, paint and write poetry.

Forging demonstration at the *Into the Light Festival*, at Whittlesea.

W*hittlesea Factory Open Day* - Over 300 people visit to see the blacksmiths forging and many of the completed branches. The event was managed by three year 12 students from Plenty Valley Christian College, as part of their event management studies.

The Tree Launch at Whittlesea Showgrounds. Many organisations that were involved in assisting at the time of the fires were invited to be part of the day.

Display of *The Tree Project* and micro documentary of ‘Our Tree - forged by Fire, shown at the exhibition ‘Five Years On’, South Morang.

The documentary film *OUR TREE - Forged from Fire*, shown on the big screen at Federation Square, as part of the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, Melbourne.

Forging demonstrations, and enamelled gum leaf pendant-making and the screenings of the film *Our Tree - Forged by Fire,* at the *Wattle Festival* in Hurstbridge

The Tree Project wins the ‘Recovery’ category of the 2014 Fire Awareness Awards
Tree benches on display at the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition

Poppies are made for *The Ypres Poppy Project*, at Whittlesea factory.
Short film *Forged from Fire*, featured on ABC Open.

Local residents attend gardening days at *The Tree*

One of the main lead welders from *The Tree Project* went on to teach welding to more people who had been affected by the fires at the St Andrews Men's Shed.

Further information on Places in St Kilda

(listed in alphabetical order)

101 - 101 Engagement Hub, previously 101 Drop-In, 101 Carlisle Street St Kilda,located on the St Kilda Uniting Church precinct on the corner of Chapel and Carlisle. The Hub operates weekdays from 9.00am to 2.30pm providing a range of programmes and support, including breakfast and lunch.

Cleve Gardens
Cleve Gardens is at the bottom of Fitzroy Street where it curves into The Esplanade. It is also bordered by Jacka Boulevarde and Acland Street.

Galliamble: 66 Grey Street, St Kilda, a men's alcohol and drug recovery centre.

Luna Park: An amusement park, based on the original Luna Park at Coney Island in the USA was built in 1912.

National Theatre: Built in 1920 and opened in 1921 as Victory Theatre with 3000 seats for early Australian cinema Efftee Pictures F W Thring et al. In 1928 reconstruction to make it more luxurious to complete with new Palais and Regent theatres. In the 1920's visitors flocked to St Kilda to visit its theatres. June 26 1929 it converted to talking pictures. 1974 became National Theatre, a live theatre

venue with 800 seats. During the Talbot Reserve redesign the theatre was lit as a feature. References:(venue.nationaltheatre.org.au, viewed March 2017)

O'Donnell Gardens: The gardens, adjacent to Luna Park, are named after former St Kilda Mayor, Edward O'Donnell who served as a counsellor in St Kilda for 44 years. There is a fountain in the gardens (erected by public subscription) in commemoration of his service. It is not known when the gardens were built but it is believed they were designed by Carlo Catani.

Palais Theatre and Palais de Danse: The first Palais dance hall was built as a timber arched roof structure, in 1913. It was converted to show pictures in 1915 and re-named the Palais Theatre. In 1919 a large steel framed arched structure, was built over the Palais de Danse. Then the original wooden building was relocated adjacent to the site and became again the Palais de Danse. The steel framed arched structure remaining became Palais Pictures. It was destroyed by fire in 1926 and rebuilt in 1927 as the building we now call The Palais Theatre. The Palais Theatre operated as a cinema until the 1950's, and then became more popular as a live performance venue.

The Peanut Farm: There are two ideas for the origin of the Peanut Farm's name. One idea is that it derives from the idea of betting peanuts when it was a racetrack in the 1920's. From 1847 horse

races were held annually as The Village Belle Races, (or known as St Kilda Cup), and ran each summer till 1868. Another idea about the origins of the name 'Peanut Farm', is that the US soldiers who were stationed there in the 2nd World War planted peanuts.

The Peanut Farm is a place that sex workers have traditionally used (scarlett alliance.org) and also where people sleep rough. The homeless memorial is an annual event held on the winter solstice, at Peanut Farm Reserve to honour those who have died as a result from homelessness. It began with Aunty Jackie and Moo Moo planting two trees that were later removed. There is now a physical memorial there (organised by the Port Phillip Community group).

The Peanut Farm is also an indigenous gathering place. The mural, [on the Veg Out Wall] is an important feature of Peanut Farm and reinforces the reserve as an Indigenous gathering place. (http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Report_4_Attachment_3_-_Phase_2_Peanut_Farm_consultation_report_.pdf.pdf, 2016).

RhED: (Resourcing Health and Education in the Sex Industry): RhED is a program of the Inner South Community Health Service which offers a specialist statewide health and advocacy service for the sex industry in Victoria. RhED provides services to approximately 3000 clients a year. RhED also delivers the Street Sex Worker Court Attendance Program, known as the *Tuesday Court* and employ

an Arrest Referral project worker as coordinator. The project worker coordinates with St Kilda Police, the Melbourne Magistrates Court, Victorian Legal Aid, St Kilda Legal Service and health and community agencies to support and advocate for street sex workers charged with soliciting.

Sacred Heart Mission: Grey Street St Kilda, free meals are delivered daily in the dining hall. The mission also is dedicated to long term and individualised solutions to homelessness and trialled the *Journey to Social Inclusion Project*, which 'aimed to demonstrate that with the right financial and resource investment, it is possible to end a person's long-term homelessness and that this investment makes economic sense. This project focused on long-term support and addressing the underlying causes of the person's homelessness and the trauma experienced whilst homeless' (The Sacred Heart Mission Practice Framework, 2016).

St Kilda: was previously referred to as 'Green Knoll' and The Village of Fareham. The story goes that a drunken Governor La Trobe attending a picnic in the area in 1842 decided that the new village would be called St Kilda after the ship 'The Lady of St Kilda', which had been anchored for a time in the bay and had caused the foreshore to be called the St Kilda foreshore. The ship, 'The Lady of St Kilda' had been named after Lady Grange - a British patriot, imprisoned by her husband on the isle of Hirta, in the St Kilda Isles (marvmelb.blogspot.com.au).

St Kilda Community Housing Ltd.: Began as an agency in 1981 when concerned rooming house residents and local people came together to raise issues about the lack of rights for rooming house tenants and the effects that the increasing gentrification of St Kilda would have on rooming house residents. From this emerged the St Kilda Rooming House Issues Group in 1984. St Kilda Community Housing Ltd was formed in 2006, and it manages long term rooming house accommodation.

St Kilda Gatehouse: The St Kilda Gatehouse is a drop-in Centre and community space (run by a not-for-profit Christian organisation of the same name). Its ethos is to 'work alongside those involved in street based sex work or affected by commercial sexual exploitation as a result of hardship'. The Gatehouse provides a place of support, belonging, engagement and safety, in order to make individuals feel valued. It also hopes to provide a source of dignity and hope.

The Front Bar: (now the Acland street Bar).

The Gatwick: (1977 **-**2017) The most famous (and 'notorious') rooming house in St Kilda, features in the scene of the mural. It was built to house Navy personnel between the two world wars. It was run originally by Vittoria and her husband Rene and then by their daughters Yvette Kelly and Rose Banks. It was Vittoria's experience of first coming to Australia in the 1950's and having nowhere to stay that inspired running the Gatwick as a place to provide low-cost accommodation for people

down on their luck. (Williams 2015). It has been described as ‘hell on earth’, as well as the ‘best place I ever lived’. Undeniably it has provided shelter for thousands of people over the time it operated. Amidst controversy in St Kilda with ongoing calls to shut down, the Gatwick was sold to ‘The Block’, a television show on Channel 9 in 2017.

Veg Out: Is a community garden on the site of an old bowls club. It also has art studios and one of these were used as a workshop for making *The Great Wall of St Kilda*. The weekly Wominjeka barbeque is held here every Monday.

Text on *The Great Wall of St Kilda*

(From top left towards right bottom)
* some text was not able to be deciphered and so is not included here.
* Italics have been used for author's notes
* Lines of text on the mural which are above each other have been placed side by side in this document. In order to save space. Commas have been inserted to indicate where each part of text moves below the previous.

Thankyou to the City of Port Phillip
Local Drug Strategy, And, SPACEFORMER-CIVIL
(*Above: acknowledgement on12 tiles*)

The Great Wall of ST KILDA
This mural was built by over 600 St Kilda community members. Together we tell our stories of struggle, survival pride and celebration.
This is a community development project initiated by the City of Port Philli's Local Drug Strategy.
We would particularly like to thank Peter Streker and Robyn Szechtman for making this project an outstanding experience.
Our great thanks also go to Derek Aloysias from Sinclair Knight Merz for their generous gift of the structural design.
(*Above: acknowledgement painted onto board*)

BAD SPELLERS OF THE WORLD UNTIE
(Above: refers to Camille's spelling mistakes)

I changed my life and I moved to St Kilda. Traka

(An attribution at the bottom of a tile) Alison

ST KILDA Football
Sen *(Name attribution)*

TRUST (each letter written in red paint onto a tile each)

Great lives never go out. They go on. Harrison

St Kilda *(written onto a tile of a butterfly)*

Feb 07 , ONE DAY, I Will FIND, THE KEY, MARTIN H

Ceclea (or Cedea) and Bounty
(*written onto a tile which bears a picture of a woman with shopping trolley and a dog*)

Wisdom outweighs wealth, Sophocles
(Above: written across five tiles, words scratched into black colour)

THANKYOU ALEJO, CHILE
(the thank you to Alejo (Camille's workshop assistant) is scratched into the red part of a flag of Chile, (CHILE) *written graffiti style underneath the flag of Chile*)

400DD, Thousand in, THE NAVY, ONLY 1/2 sat *(difficult to decipher)*, CAME BACK,

KLM (*written inside a heart*)

The Beach House (written across there tiles, refers to a rooming house/ accomodation)

Jada *(Attribution at bottom of tile of sun and flower)*

Win ja Ulupna
(Written across several tiles, scratched into brown colour.
Win Ja Ulupna, is the Yorta Yorta word for 'Women's haven' and is a 24 hour residential Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre for Koori Women who suffer from alcoholism or a drug dependency problem (ref: ngwala.org.au))

Maurie, we love you *(on tile with picture of a dog riding in a dinghy)*

STORYTELLER *(with picture of a man)*

Get out of my Kitchen *(in speech bubble)*,
Elaine ruled the Gatwick Kitchen and haunts it still
(with image of kitchen stove)

KERRY *(attribution under abstract image)*

Troy

NGAREE

MORE MUSIC +, MORE LOVE, MORE OXYGEN! (On blue tile with treble clef and notes)

Sharon G
(Attribution on tile with heart and arrow)

Euro-Yroke, Is the original name for St Kilda. *(scratched into brown underglaze)*

GRACE (name written above a Canadian ? flag)

JADE (Attribution below image of person)

TUCKER *(3D letters on tile)*

M *(large green letter on red background)*

I DONT LIKE, ST KILDA, TOO YUPPY, TOO MAD, GENERAL ATTITUDE , IS BAD.
(top two lines are black 3D letters on white background,
Bottom four lines are painted white onto a black background)

HELLO LONELY CATS
(underneath image of a cat face)

AMYA NARARELLA, *(attribution written across a beach scene)*

JAMIE, *(attribution on tile)*

Syanna, *(Attribution across abstract tile)*

Auntie Most Beautiful, MYRTLE, lonc(g or a?)lest, Queen
(Myrtle with 3 D letters and also a 3d white flower)

MUM, *(above picture of a face and three hearts)*

Ha or Dha, *(attribution on black, blue, red and white tile)*

Phillip and Jim Krakouer, *(with image of football in St Kilda football club colours in centre)*

Escher, *(Attribution on textured and painted abstract tile)*

Buy Bye.

REPECT YOURSELF, YOUR MATES, YOUR ELDERS, NATURE AND EXPECT RESPECT and NOTHING ELSE. *(On white shape under eagles wing)*

This mural is in respect of the Boonerwrung people - traditional owners and caretakers of this land. Euro-Yroke is the original name for this land, named after the red sandstone along the beach. This land will always be protected by the creator Bunjil, who travels as a eagle, Waarn, who protects the waterways, travels as a crow.
(Written underneath the main scene)

Everyone has the right to a roof over their heads, We need more community hotels in St Kilda
(placard on Wendy's Trolley in the main scene)

Keep diversity and inclusion a strong part of St Kilda culture
(placard on Wendy's Trolley in main scene)

We all live with the objective of being happy. Our lives are all different and yet the same.
(On Wendy's trolley in the main scene)

BE HAPPY, *(in the main scene on the soles of Wendy's shoe)*

Thankyou lovely people from VEG OUT, *(In the main scene)*

VEG OUT Community Gardens, *(a sign in the main scene)*

St Kilda Skateboard Park, *(on the Skateboarder's t-shirt in the main scene)*

Gay Pride March, *(on a banner in the main scene)*

Hope is power, *(written under scene)*

(Text representing 'Roomers Mag' on a mag in Wendy's trolley in the main scene. Roomers Mag is a local poetry publication, of text works by poets who live in rooming houses, see Reference List)

Esin!

Eire, A.W. *(Eire referring to an Irish Goddess, is written above ? Celtic triskele, with A.W. as attribution written below.)*

EURO-YROKE, *(in white letters on a red background)*

National Dance, Sasha, *(on picture of dancer)*

CUONG + THE BIG ISSUE (perhaps referring to a seller of the Big Issue, a magazine sold by street vendors, who have * get quote about them)

Port Melbourne, *(title on tile)*

David McNamara, Sacred Heart, CHEF Best, This Century

To get going I need a kickstart, *(on a tile with a bird)*

Manon

Jim, *(Attribution under waves)*

I love you Daddy, *(written on a white tile)*

It is

22002 Ski(de)s, NTBS, Monica

KAID(I), *(with text underneath which is difficult to decipher)*

LOVE

Mum + Me, *(tile with two figures on it)*

Thankyou to my loving family

It is a human right be housed.

From little things big things grow.

Euza. M, *(Attribution to painted scene on tile)*

Lookout

Vanessa, *(attribution to luna park image on tile)*

Cyan, *(with painted handprint on tile)*

Mary, Robin, Em(ma?), Lisa, Belinda, Alex, Ellen, Kris, 2007
(more writing scratched into the clay then paint over, difficult to read)

ESSENDON, DANA

PRISON BREAK, Pearce
(likely refers to a luna park attraction called Prison Break which ran in 2007)

MEL
(attribution on tile picture)

One generation plant's the tree, Another gets the shade
(either side of a tree, the image goes over four tiles)

(A bird tile with Japanese symbols on it)

Cool, Jai, *(these words over green hand tracings)*

Moeve, *(with yellow handprint image)*

Oisnin M, *(Attribution with imagery of two figures)*

I LUV MUM, SWEENEY

NICK, *(on painting of a person and a tree)*

SAID, *(above a painting of a scene of mountains trees, houses)*

Coco and Syanna, *(written on the circle of a sun design)*

I LOVE, St Kilda, I Hate

LOVE & LIGHT *(with imagery of a hand holding something red)*

RW, *(attribution)*

THE Saint, Simon Templar
(with a stick figure of football player and the name carved in to the clay, refers to the stick figure emblem often used by the St Kilda Saints football club. The the stick figure was also used in the image for a television show called, 'The Saint' in which the main character Simon Templar was played by Roger Moore. The conflation of both things might refer to the idea that the football club stopped using the stick figure when the television show threatened to sue for copyright)

Shame on, a government, That put's, Money before, the environment *(black writing on a red tile)*

Summer in ST Kilda *(On tile with picture of a palm tree with an orange background)*

Kim Williams *(on red tile with image of head)*

Zoe *(Attribution to image of person in landscape)*

ENZO *(raised letters as attribution, in a sculpted and painted street scene with car, beach and palm trees)*

Sacred Heart Mission St Kilda, Thankyou

(written on white tile, with image of a red cross with black outline, refers to Sacred Heart Mission in Grey Street St Kilda which is involved in providing, community programs for the un-employed, affordable housing, a womens program and aged care amongst other things)

PEACE *(written over a yin yang symbol in red black and yellow, which could also represent the aboriginal flag)*

Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another

Chris dream *(which is placed in a landscape scene)*

Keep St Kilda Real
(written across four tiles, white lettering scratched into a black background)

Kim Williams *(white paint over abstract tile in peach and blue, more text which is scratched in, but difficult to read)*

Valella *(red painted 3D letters on a blue and yellow background)*

WHEN, U KNOW, BETTER, U DO, BETTER

Fresh, Frend, Fun, Fish, Flow
(on white wave? Design over colours, red, orange, green, yellow and blue)

LOVE, PEACE *(Black design on red background)*

I LOVE PIZIE, Nick *(image of cat)*

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the, Life you have imagined.
Thoreau

Belonging to something, to someone, - that's what health's about.

Justine Orlada 200 *(painting of two figures)*

UNLOCK *(image of door and steps opening up to a vision of the outside of a building)*

REDLIGHT, DISTRICT, 1970, EAP
(possibly refers to the 1970's which is nominated by some as the beginning of St kinda's notoriety as a red light district)

SURFS, YA, PHILLIP, ISLAND

Gay Rights

SPRING IN KILDA

STELLA

Our RAINBOW Place, Inner South Community Health

MAISON, JULE

BS

Kind words are the music of the World

Drugs $No, Be careful

By Rocket
(Attribution for a sculpted and painted scene of two dogs drinking at a table, on two tiles)

Hoodys

Lukas, WOOF *(scene of dog)*

Ian moved to St Kilda in 1968 and still lives at Edgewater Towers

NIANH *(attribution of picture of sun with hand in centre)*

2006 St Kilda

Hanah *(Attribution on tile of trees and sun)*

Irene May

Silence never won rights, they are not handed down from above, they are forced from pressure below

LOOKING AFTER, OUR YOUNG, PEOPLE, THEY'RE OUR, FUTURE.

Saff *(with paw print image)*

STEPHEN *(attribution on tile with car)*

If you cant feed one hundred people then you can feed just one. Mother Theresa

St Kilda, Leo

PJ

101 Drop in

Angela Neilson

Matthew

TALLULAH, LEO, MADI *(attribution on beach scene)*

Womens House

Here comes the Sun

More Community Housing in St Kilda

By Tiny Rose

HH *(on a house with person in front of it)*

O'Donnell Gardens, Our meeting place

Monique

Hear the Earth, The Heart, Art Hearth
(Circular text which does not end links these words)
EARTHEARTHEARTHEARTH

St Kilda , Gatehouse, Thankyou

Liliana 2007 *(attribution to tile of two slippers)*

Helen, Deb, Peter,
You are Lifesavers, THANKU *(over a sculpted and painted life-ring)*

Ella

The Saniga Family

Kar(r/t)iya *(image of sun, and a field of red flowers)*

I have - (?) two babies inside me, you both have brought me a new life. Thankyou.

LEO

AM(I)RA

DANNO

Den (Ben? Don?)

Ahad

I love you Craigy and. .. tigers

Would it be a problem if you had a peaceful mind?

CODI

AS

ARI

BH, MM

RUBY

ELIZA

The World is but canvas to our imagination
Thoreau

Holden, AG, RSTH, RC, 28/10/13 *(possibly graffiti onto a tile)*

Created by Camille Monet, And the Port Phillip Community 07-08
(on a red tile orientated sideways to the right of the main scene)

OUR , SAVIOUR , is born

GABI *(attribution for clock above waves)*

Florence *(attribution with map of Australia)*

HOPE *(across four red tiles)*

RC

Gabrielle Haynes, 2007, NTBS

CALLUM

Nick is going to meet his family in MALTA

ABBIE, 21-12-06

Goodbye, Howard

Australia

LOVE

To Marvel at a Butterfly, Its never too late. LR, T, M *(letters likely to be attribution)*

ADELE, DARCY, CARMEL, DANNY, Mummy

R.I.P., Cheeky, See u at the crossroads

TANITH, AND, ANIMAL, RIGHTS, SASSYGIRL 2000

Ngaio

I'm thinking about making a world revolution. Join the Rebels.

To be is to participate, Desmond Tutu

Hello Fairness

BRING BACK THE CONNIES, TRAM CONDUCTORS BRING A HUMAN TOUCH TO MELBOURNE'S TRAM SYSTEM

St Kilda *(With saints football logo, with the stickman)*

2007, ALYCE, +, CLAUDE

LESBIAN, WOMEN

Ruby

Kaye the essence is in Simplicity

We love you Ollie *(image of a pet)*

We *(heart shape),* U, NAN

Hollywood private, 342 (?), (picture of a big house)

WELCOME ALL, ALWAYS ROOM AT THE, GATWICK *(image of the Gatwick)*

VOTE GREEN FUEL.COM SAVERS

A special thank you to, SKM, Sinclair Knight Merz

Welcome to our site of community reflection,
Respect, recovery, resistance, compassion across difference.
This is a place where differences are forgotten and your heart unites with others.
This mural was launched on the 4th of December 2009 by Cr Frank O'Connor (mayor) and Cr Serge Thomannn, Mirka Mora, Carolyn Briggs, Aunty Jacko,
So that future generations can enjoy it.

. . To St Kilda, SERGE and CAMILLE *(on the three tiles by Mirka Mora)*

Full text of Gatwick Paste-up by Rose Banks and Yvette Kelly

(pasted onto the Gatwick after selling it in 2017)

> ‘In the next couple of weeks the Gatwick will be no more. It’s the end of an era, and we’re saddened that it has ended like this. But we’re left with a lifetime of memories. We remember all those who came to the Gatwick and allowed us the privilege of being part of their lives. For whatever reason anyone ended up at the Gatwick, we never judged or asked questions. We always made this place feel like home. Unfortunately, not everyone felt the way we did, or understood how important it was for people to have somewhere they could go, a room to sleep in, somewhere they could be themselves. Instead, politicians, police and local traders saw it differently, and wanted a different outcome for those who had nowhere else to go. The media constantly hounded us for giving refuge to those who really needed it. In the end the ultimatum we were given made it impossible to continue, and that will be a lifelong disappointment so what we have now are the memories. Is all any of us have. We remember the residents as the unique characters that they were, and we are grateful they touched and enriched out lives by being our friends’

*Blame it on the Gatwick b*y Wendy Butler

BLAME IT ON THE GATWICK
Homeless camp in Fitzroy Street, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Rubbish thrown in Jackson Street, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Keith Richards fall down from a tree, Football fans go on a spree,
St. Kilda player hurts his knee, Blame it on the Gatwick.

Hoons in heat drive round the street, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Local girls work their beat, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Public transport running late, Howard's reached his 'use by date,'
Mary Kehoe's waits its fate, Blame it on the Gatwick.

Parking attendant beaten up, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Beggar holding out his cup, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Woman dies on PO cruise, Italians beat the Socceroos,
Local drunks are on the booze, Blame it on the Gatwick.

Nightclub revellers urinate, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Drunken hoons regurgitate, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Hewie's restaurant closing down, Burrito's Café leaving town,
St. Kilda's score is going down, Blame it on the Gatwick.

Local milk bar losing trade, Blame it on the Gatwick
Tourist chased a man with blade, Blame it on the Gatwick

Police assaulted on the beat, an accident at Arthur's Seat,
St. Kilda suffers new defeat, Blame it on the Gatwick.

Frasier's dog has passed away, Blame it on the Gatwick
Computer virus holding sway, Blame it on the Gatwick.
Superman takes off again, Naomi Campbell chucks her phone,
Hungry Lions on the prowl, Blame it on the Gatwick