

---

## Contained Memories or Catalysts?: Some Aboriginal Memorials in Australia

Catherine De Lorenzo  
and Vivien Chow

---

## Contained Memories or Catalysts?: Some Aboriginal Memorials in Australia

Catherine De Lorenzo and Vivien Chow

---

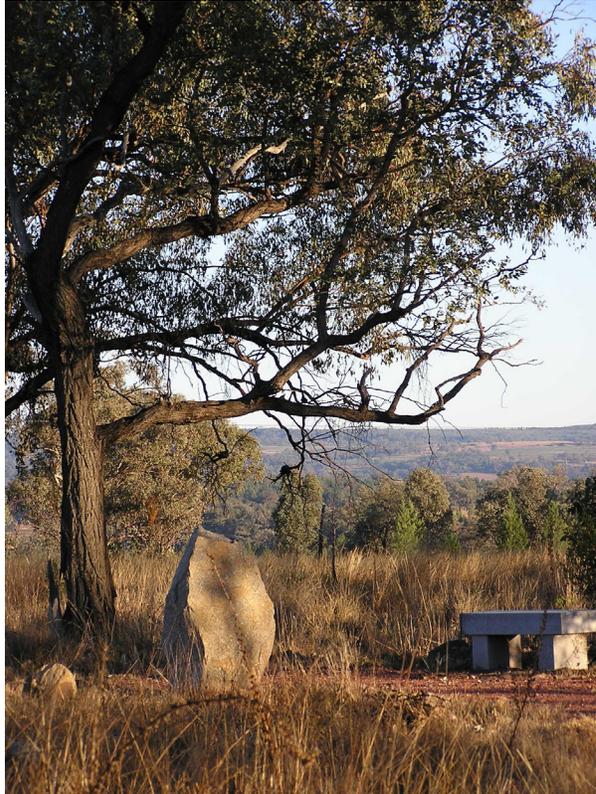
### Abstract

Most of the many war memorials in the Australian public domain commemorate wars that were fought offshore. Conversely, memorials dealing with the fractious and sometimes violent interactions between Aboriginal and settler Australians since colonisation are rarely evident. This article examines selected examples of recent public art dealing with Aboriginal-settler issues. Beginning with a study of the *Myall Creek Memorial* (2000) on a remote site in the northern tablelands of New South Wales, Australia, the authors then briefly consider more recent public art projects by indigenous artists that expand the symbolic repertoire of massacre memorials. Examined in terms of their use of material culture and symbolism, the authors also question the degree to which specific art works function as contained memories or as catalysts for cultural change within the rural and urban fabrics.

Keywords: Australian Aboriginal memorials, public art, Myall Creek Memorial, Australian Aboriginal artists, reconciliation and art

Recent research has shown that memorials play significant roles at official, community, and individual levels. This article seeks to build on contemporary historical studies of memorials that commemorate indigenous themes and people in Australia, especially the celebrated Myall Creek Memorial (2000).<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1. Myall Creek Memorial 2000. Photo 2006. All photos by Catherine De Lorenzo.



It does so by expanding the critique from social history into the discourse of art history. This is in part because one legacy of this massacre memorial has been the enabling of major public artworks on similar themes around the country, providing art historians with opportunities to closely examine important cultural drivers behind art production. It is also because there appears to be common ground between the artists and communities behind the making of such artworks, on the one hand, and art historical research, on the other, given that both embrace “obsession, archive and encounter”.<sup>2</sup> We will closely examine the *Myall Creek Memorial*, and then briefly consider two more recent Aboriginal memorials in Sydney. The article will conclude with observations about how some of these works have successfully catalysed projects beyond the imagined specificity of their singular significance.

## Memorials, history, and colonisation

Typically, memorials commemorate the dead. Ken Inglis's study on Australian war memorials—including shrines, statues, and the ubiquitous obelisk found in most town parks—noted these “sacred places” commemorate soldiers who gave their lives to wars fought outside Australia.<sup>3</sup> They not so much “mark the spot” as serve to remind local citizens of a broadly defined point of departure (the town itself), and provide a gathering place for subsequent generations to engage with cultural memory. Invariably, they are settler monuments. Inglis was puzzled that Aborigines raised “no legible monuments to either their own traditional civil wars or their resistance against invaders”.<sup>4</sup> Yet markers of intellectual and cultural pursuits abound within and on the land throughout the country, so one might also have expected to find works that critically addressed cross-cultural experiences.<sup>5</sup>

That the monument-building European newcomers “seldom commemorated conflicts between black and white” was understandable, given that it is difficult to put a heroic gloss on deaths perpetrated by one's cultural forebears.<sup>6</sup> Such traditional memorials as do exist depict Aborigines either in minor roles—“as killers of the innocent, as loyal helpers, and as a race doomed to extinction”—within a grand colonial narrative, or as faithful friends honoured in death through a headstone or a “lonely cairn [that] translated a mark on a map into a place”, both of which were “cheap and easy to erect”.<sup>7</sup>

Remembering the past, especially those aspects William Logan and Keir Reeves have called the “Difficult Heritage”, is something Australians have come to acknowledge only since the early 1990s.<sup>8</sup> It has not always been the case. In 1968, just one year after Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia were finally granted citizenship, anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner identified amnesia as one of the distinctive attributes of non-indigenous Australians.<sup>9</sup> In December 1992 official silence was broken when then Prime Minister Paul Keating, in his Redfern Park speech, recognised the truth of colonial devastation and asked non-indigenous Australians to imagine suffering such injustices.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the 1990s new laws were passed on indigenous rights and native title,<sup>11</sup> and in February 2008 then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd gave his apology on behalf of all non-indigenous Australians to the indigenous community, for a series of government policies enforced from the late nineteenth century whereby indigenous children were taken from their families by government authorities and usually placed in institutions. Through this means, settler Australians acknowledged the “the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations”.<sup>12</sup> Delivered 40 years after Stanner's observation, Rudd's apology on behalf of the nation marked the very significant cultural shift that occurred over these decades.

The profound cultural changes marked by these events are clearly seen in public art museums where, especially since the 1980s, contemporary Aboriginal art is valued, not least for its engagement with politics.<sup>13</sup> One spectacular example is the *Aboriginal Memorial* (1988), conceived by indigenous arts worker, Djon

Mundine, for the 1988 Australia [Sydney] Biennale and now located in the National Gallery of Australia collection. Artists from Ramingining in Eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory made 200 poles, simulating their community's traditional hollow-log bone coffins.<sup>14</sup> Mundine claimed the bicentennial project was like “a large cemetery of dead Aboriginals ... a War Memorial to all those Aboriginals who died defending their country ... [during] two hundred years of white contact and black agony”.<sup>15</sup>

The Ramangining memorial seemed to encapsulate stories of racism and dispossession from around the country that had been documented in numerous histories such as those by C.D. Rowley, Henry Reynolds, and numerous others.<sup>16</sup> So it came as a surprise when in 2001 the newly-opened National Museum of Australia showcased Aboriginal dispossession in the wake of colonial occupation and unleashed a vitriolic tirade by conservative historians who were uncomfortable about oral histories, especially Aboriginal testimonials of colonial cruelty and injustice. The ensuing robust debate known as the “History Wars”, which hinged on the accuracy of historical sources and methodology, was front page news in the country.<sup>17</sup> There were no quibbles, however, about the well documented 1838 Myall Creek massacre because it provoked a seminal and celebrated court case resulting in the white perpetrators being not only tried but, for the first time in Australian history, executed.<sup>18</sup> Because the trial generated detailed records, all historians at least agree on the documented facts of this case, even if interpretations of other frontier massacres differ markedly.<sup>19</sup>

If acknowledgement of colonial conflict was evident in official government statements, the museum, the academy, and the popular press, the same could not be said of memorials in public spaces or public art. The best-documented public memorial to massacred Aboriginals is the *Myall Creek Memorial* (2000), commemorating the 28 Wirrayaraay men and women murdered at Myall Creek in 1838. Building on insights by cultural historian Katrina Schlunke<sup>20</sup> and historians Heather Goodall, Bronwyn Batten, Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton,<sup>21</sup> as well as our own examination of the site and records of the project, we will begin our brief examination of Aboriginal memorials with this work.

### Myall Creek Memorial

Located in the Gwydir Valley in the northern tablelands of New South Wales, the *Myall Creek Memorial* is roughly eight hours drive north-east of Sydney. Situated within a landscape of rolling hills, and adjacent to a minor highway connecting the tiny township of Bingara (30 kilometres south) to larger towns such as Inverell (less than an hour's drive north-east), the memorial stretches along a half-kilometre winding path. Despite this significant scale it is invisible to passing motorists. At the entrance visitors are invited to “sit and reflect at intervals as [they] proceed along the walkway to the Memorial Rock”. Those who take the

meandering path through tall grasses hear the crunch of the red gravel underfoot and the birdsong in the trees nearby. They are invited to pause at each of the seven intervals, where knee-high granite rocks are twinned with a slab bench for sitting and contemplation.

Figure 2. Myall Creek Memorial, 2000. Photo 2005.



An aluminium plaque on each rock incrementally reveals the story of the massacre using image and text. Images by a local indigenous artist, Colin Isaacs, are amplified by succinct bilingual texts, beginning with “We Remember Them”, in the local Wirrayaraay and English languages.

Figure 3. Myall Creek Memorial, 2000. Photo 2009.



Figure 4. Myall Creek Memorial, 2000. Photo 2007.



At the end of the memorial path stands a majestic boulder about two metres in height, with a bronze plaque proclaiming that the memorial was erected “in an act of reconciliation, and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history”. The project was initiated by local indigenous and non-indigenous residents who constituted themselves as a steering committee in order to oversee design development and implementation. Their carefully-minuted meetings and publications confirm they wanted a “fitting national memorial to all the Aboriginal people who died in the massacres”, because it would acknowledge “this history is part of the history of all of us” and that although it is a massacre site, “the memorial should also be a celebrating of life, of resurrection”.<sup>22</sup> One spectacular outcome of the long process of community dialogue and deliberation was that local indigenous people, who used to say “hush-hush” when near the awful site, were able to break the taboo and actively discuss both the massacres and the need for reconciliation, and to do so even on national television.<sup>23</sup> Importantly, from the outset the committee included descendants of both the murdered and murderers. Since its inauguration on 10 June 2000, 152 years to the day after the massacre, an annual commemoration ceremony attracts a crowd from near and far who also want to acknowledge past hostilities and participate in current dialogues.

The history of the site, and its continuing impact on descendants and others today, led the committee to think of it as a “national sacred site”.<sup>24</sup> Its claim to be national alludes in part to the fact that everywhere is Aboriginal at base, and anywhere could be another unmarked massacre site. In that sense the memorial functions synecdochically as a “national” monument: it is a little bit of a much larger whole. A sense of the sacred in this instance stems from three attributes. The first is as a place where spirits of the dead reside. A second is embodied in the natural and designed components of the memorial, including the annual

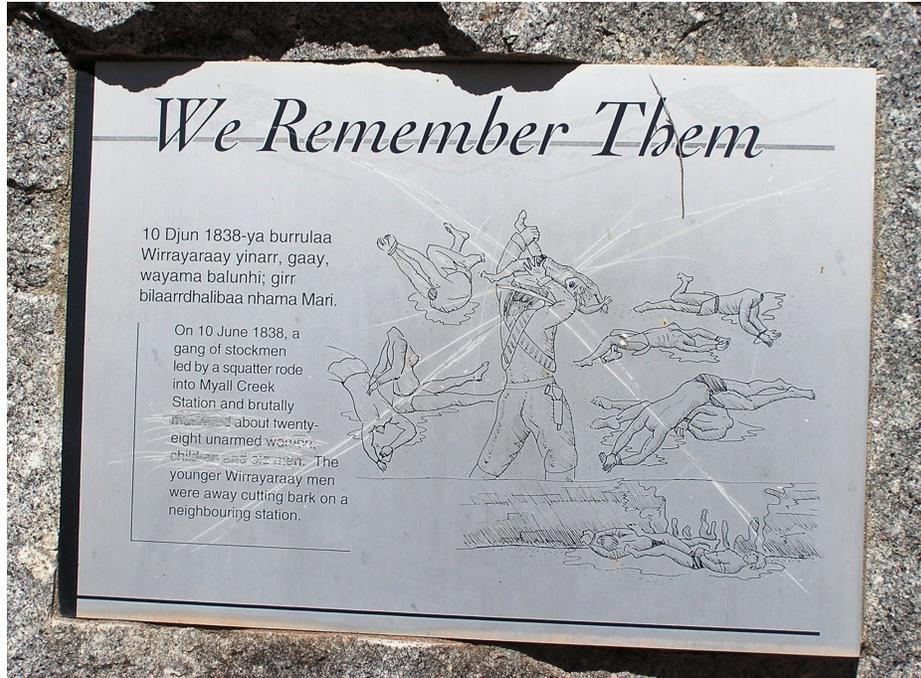
commemorative ceremony. A third attribute of the sacred foreshadowed in the brief to the architect, Tim Shellshear, was “a building where cultural objects could be stored, pictures and photographs displayed; a place where people ... may come to learn about history”.<sup>25</sup> With an Aboriginal “Keeping Place”, or a repository for sacred and special objects, at its heart, the proposal for such a centre underscores the need to harness a sense of collective memory. In this instance the Myall Creek project would be spared from some of the dangers of what Joanna Sassoon has named a “phantom memory”, because of the awesome and uncontested fact of the massacre site.<sup>26</sup> Like most memorial designs this one combines specific local identity within a “national context of concern”.<sup>27</sup>

Sociality, spirituality, and especially materiality informed the project brief. Carefully referring to minuted meetings, it identified that the memorial be a very large boulder made of natural materials which blend with the landscape, and where trees should be a feature. Plaques, comprising text and pictograms, would tell the full story “for the sake of truth, pride, justice and unity”.<sup>28</sup> Practical details were also itemised, but overwhelmingly the brief underscored particular ethical and historical concepts to be carried by the careful selection of materials. Both the story and the material elements are pared down to the bare essentials, so that the site as a whole exemplifies novelist Milan Kundera’s belief that the artist must clearly strive to “eliminate whatever is secondary” and strive for “*the ethic of the essential*” [italics in original].<sup>29</sup>

### First person account

To date the authors have visited the memorial on at least seven occasions, both as lone visitors and as participants in the annual commemoration service. The first encounter was on a hot summer’s day when there were no other visitors, so solitude and silence seemed all the more intense under the enormous blue sky. On that occasion we observed the memorial had been vandalised by vigorous scratching over the aluminium plaques in an attempt to erase the words “murdered” and “women, children, and old men” from the plaque that describes so minimally the actual event.

Figure 5. Massacre Creek Memorial. 5th rock. Photo 2005.



As seen in Figure 1, in the middle of a hot day the trees cast welcome shade at the rest points. At dusk and dawn low sunbeams catch the tips of grasses and draw long, soft shadows, revealing a special kind of magic. When the annual mid-winter commemoration services are held, the bushland site easily absorbs hundreds of visitors. These events begin with a “welcome to country” from a local indigenous elder, a country-and-western song about the story of the massacre and the redemptive memorial, and a traditional smoking ceremony, which is designed to ritually cleanse participants before stepping onto the memorial walk.<sup>30</sup> Cultural duality echoes throughout the proceedings, with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school children duly stationed at each stone to read aloud its inscriptions. Upon reaching the large memorial stone, attendees are dabbed on the forehead with white pigment by local custodians before gathering in silence to remember those slaughtered. Marked by this pigment of mourning, participants witness local school children conduct the “Lighting of Candles ceremony”. Every detail of the service is marked by symbolism and imparts to those present a sense of unity. What had begun as a nondescript site is transformed into an unforgettable place, made all the more so by the knowledge that it is but one of many similar massacre sites from this period.

Figure 6. Myall Creek Memorial. Photo 2009.



### From catafalque to catalyst

It is at these annual gatherings, especially when there is a potential for new social relations between participants, that the memorial becomes an agent for change. Philosopher Stewart Martin's redefinition of Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics is especially apt: "*the idea of relational aesthetics is that art is a form of social exchange*" [italics in original].<sup>31</sup> The fact that certain people from the Bingara district came together to propose, strategise, and eventually realise a public project is enough to warrant the term "relational art". That it continues to foster a high level of community participation underscores the claim. Now, over 10 years after its completion, the memorial is not so much hermetic, or self-referential, as it is catalytic: it arose from, and continues to provoke, social exchange.<sup>32</sup>

The *Myall Creek Memorial* has been generative of two additional outcomes. In 2008 the whole precinct, land and memorial, was awarded National Heritage listing under the Commonwealth of Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.<sup>33</sup> Then, in 2009, the grass roots committee engaged architect, Tim Shellshear, to develop plans for a new educational and cultural centre adjacent to the memorial.<sup>34</sup> The centre is intended to house relevant cultural artefacts, be equipped with the latest interactive technologies, and provide a range of facilities for visitors. In 2011, the committee was awarded a grant to develop a business plan to this end.

Before 2000 there were no monuments or memorials in the public domain that specifically addressed indigenous massacres by settlers (the geographical naming of hills and gullies and fields being another matter). There were, however,

public art projects that addressed cross-cultural relations. An outstanding example is Sydney's *Edge of the Trees* (1994), the city's first commissioned public art piece awarded to an indigenous (Fiona Foley) and non-indigenous (Janet Laurence) team. The intention of the unusually-informed and provocative brief for the artwork was to foster curiosity and reflection on first encounters between Aborigines and settlers that must have taken place outside Old Government House, the site on which *Edge of the Trees* stands outside the Museum of Sydney.<sup>35</sup> The Laurence-Foley artwork of wood, steel, and sandstone columns, continues to be acclaimed for its robust conceptual and aesthetic qualities.<sup>36</sup>

Until the Myall Creek project, however, massacres were not addressed in commissioned public artworks. If it is true to contend that the Myall Creek project has spawned the development of other massacre memorials, this legacy has been not so much visual as conceptual. The absence of a massacre memorial tradition in Australia has meant that new typologies have had to be imagined. With no precedents to guide or inspire them, the Myall community employed a typology widely used in the region for placemaking, but hardly the stuff of innovative art practice. That they have managed to reinvent the plaque-on-plinth typology by embracing the land, its trees, grasses, sky, and a silence that settles on the place when the galahs are not screeching, indicates how very ordinary elements can both exceed the sum of the parts yet seem imperceptible. One is reminded of Jochen Gerz's comment about his *Place of the Invisible Memorial: 2146 Stones Against Racism* (1997) in Saarbrücken, Germany, that it was "all but invisible ... out of sight and therefore, *in mind*".<sup>37</sup> What the sprawling *Myall Creek Memorial* lacks in terms of a memorable gestalt is compensated for in a conceptual programme, and it is this aspect, not its appearance, that has been embraced by artists.

### Memorials and black humour

A full investigation of Aboriginal memorials, whether personal tributes or reminders of a "difficult heritage", exceeds the possibilities of a short article. From inner Sydney alone, for example, it would be apposite to include street murals referencing local indigenous luminaries, as well as a memorable temporary piece in 2008 by New York artist, Michael Rakowitz, *White Man Got No Dreaming*, which roughly replicates Tatlin's 1920 *Monument to the 3rd International* using debris from the derelict housing on the Koori-owned land in inner-city Redfern known as The Block.<sup>38</sup> The authors have selected two public artworks in Sydney that best extend ideas of memorialisation. One is a permanent piece that memorialises a friend, and the other a temporary work that addresses unspecified massacres. Unlike the community-developed memorial at Myall Creek, each is artist-driven.

Individual claim to public space to mark the death of a loved friend or relative is most frequently seen in roadside memorials.<sup>39</sup> In 2007, however, Badtjala artist, Fiona Foley and Urban Art Projects were commissioned by landscape architects

Spackman Mossop Michaels in collaboration with the architecture/urban design firm, Bligh Voller Nield, to design play spaces and a waterscape for the redesign and upgrade of Redfern Park, Sydney.<sup>40</sup> Foley seized the opportunity to make the waterscape feature, referred to in the documentation as “Lotus Line”, a memorial to friend and fellow indigenous artist, photographer, and filmmaker, Michael Riley.<sup>41</sup>

Figure 7. Fiona Foley. Bible and Bullets (detail), 2008.



Before he died in 2004, Riley had given Foley a print from his *Flyblown* series, a sepia-toned image of a Bible bearing a Latin Cross, the forlorn book apparently discarded in a pool of water. Foley used the cruciform shape in her waterscape project to mark out a smooth masonry base from which rise 1.6 metre tall bronze poppies. These opium poppies are a potent symbol in Foley’s art, as seen in two earlier works in Brisbane: *Witnessing to Silence* (2004) outside the Brisbane Magistrates’ Court where, under the guise of naming places in Queensland destroyed by flood and fire, she had inserted the names of massacre sites; and *Black Opium* (2006), an installation in the Queensland State Library, which draws attention to the state-sanctioned use of opium amongst Aboriginal communities.<sup>42</sup> Initially called *Lotus Line*, but now *Bible and Bullets*,<sup>43</sup> the water feature is seen to best effect when fine mist descends from the tall poppy heads and random squirts of water eject from holes underfoot to drench the unwary and provoke shrieks of delight, especially from children.

Figure 8. Fiona Foley. Bible and Bullets, 2008.



Viewers have to be close to the work to read text engraved at head and foot of the cross. One acknowledges Riley, including his role as a founding member of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative, while the other quotes from Paul Keating's Redfern Park speech, mentioned earlier. Visually the work is simple, an unobtrusive element in the park. Conceptually it is even more complex than the interwoven themes of the personal and national, the elegiac and the ludic. For Foley has injected her signature sting, this time, unusually, directed not at a corrupt white society but at fellow indigenous art workers who, in paying tribute to Riley, have under-acknowledged his fellow artists (including Foley) who helped co-found Boomalli in nearby Chippendale in 1987.<sup>44</sup>

If Foley dared to complement hard-hitting points of memorial and cultural critique with the pleasure of spontaneous laughter, Brook Andrew's Jumping Castle War Memorial (2010), an outdoor temporary installation at the 17th Biennale of Sydney, pushed the coupling of memorial and merriment to an extreme, provoking one writer to proclaim that "Two ideas more at odds with each other are harder to conceive."<sup>45</sup>

Figure 9. Brook Andrew. Jumping Castle War Memorial, 2010.



Unlike the 1988 Ramangining *Aboriginal Memorial* with its fine craftsmanship, this inflatable vinyl castle is decked out in crazy black and white geometric lines that look like a three-dimensional Bridget Riley Op Art painting from 1960s. However, the lines are in fact derived from Wiradjuri designs found on carved trees and other artefacts from central-west New South Wales (that coincidentally includes Myall Creek).

Andrew has placed a towering black man in the middle of the 7 m x 7 m castle, which is defined architecturally by a turret at each corner, each with an upper window containing skulls. The artist instructed that only those over 16 years of age could be allowed to make the decision to jump in the castle, in the hope that jumpers would be conscious of the ironies of having fun while the skulls are flung thither and yon as a consequence of the jumpers' actions. The artist said: "It's a memorial for the people who haven't been the victors of invasion or colonisation, or war." After also adding, "there's incredible irony and fun", it comes as no surprise to hear him reflect, "I want it to create debate."<sup>46</sup> By using black, almost gallows, humour, Andrew also casts virtually all who do the decent thing and refuse to jump as cantankerous agelasts, that is, people who are "incapable of laughter, who do not understand joking".<sup>47</sup>

Like Foley's work, Andrew's memorial is best understood when seen in the broader context of the artist's oeuvre. Two years earlier, at the Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art in Utrecht, Holland, his exhibition, *Theme Park*, used design and humour to critique ethnographic archives.<sup>48</sup> At the same time as the *Jumping Castle* was attracting attention at the Biennale his 13 x 6 m, *The Cell*, at the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation invited the visitor to the prison-like cell to don a costume of similar stripey quality. The artist's idea was that on entering the structure one would feel invisible, worthless, and not unlike an inmate or asylum seeker. These two projects reveal a gravitas to the *Jumping Castle Aboriginal Memorial*, not apparent to the unaware onlooker, and not evident to the writer of the only negative review we uncovered which found the work a "shallow idea full of assumed self-importance".<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusion

So, to what extent might all these memorials be seen as catalysts? A few legacies of the *Myall Creek Memorial* have already been mentioned, not least of which has been to clear the air for open debate on massacres and other atrocities. The genesis of the Myall Creek project revealed to the descendants of the murderers, but also to us all, how liberating it can be to name the awful secret. One committee member noted that when a local Wirrayaraay elder embraced a descendant of one of the perpetrators of the massacre they all felt they had "really taken a step into the future".<sup>50</sup> What began as personal liberation for a few impacted on the nation. The multiple publics in our society, it seems, are recognising that robust public art is not so much meeting health and safety standards as engaging with a broad

spectrum of issues, from the tough to the intangible and often, as seen in each of these works, at one and the same time. Artists are seizing the opportunity to address issues of “difficult heritage” in the public domain. Cities too are seeking to embrace public art that reminds the viewer of Aboriginal heritage and experience.<sup>51</sup> We have seen that projects developed in order to make particular issues visible on sites pertinent to the narratives, have helped generate new public art. What were once contained memories are talking new life. They are set free.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Beryl Henderson ed., *Monuments and Memorials* (Sydney: Royal Australasian Historical Society, 1988); Bronwyn Batten, “Monuments, Memorials and the Presentation of Australia’s Indigenous Past,” *Public History Review* 11 (2004): 100-21; and “The Myall Creek Memorial: History, Identity and Reconciliation,” in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with ‘Difficult Heritage’*, eds. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008), 82-96; Bronwyn Batten and Paul Batten, “Memorialising the Past: Is There an ‘Aboriginal’ Way?” *Public History Review* 15 (2008): 92-116; Chilla Bulbeck, “Aborigines, Memorials, and the History of the Frontier,” in *Packaging the Past? Public Histories*, eds. John Rickard and Peter Spearitt (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991), 168-78.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Ann Holly and Marquard Smith, *What Is Research in the Visual Arts?: Obsession, Archive, Encounter* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; New Haven, 2008).

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth Stanley Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1998).

<sup>4</sup>Inglis, 21; see also Chilla Bulbeck, *The Stone Laurel: Of Race, Gender and Class in Australian Memorials*, Occasional Paper No. 5 (Nathan, QLD: Griffith University, Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, 1988).

<sup>5</sup>Melinda Hinkson, *Aboriginal Sydney: A Guide to Important Places of the Past and Present* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2001); Jon Rhodes, *Site Seeing* (Sydney: Jon Rhodes, 1994).

<sup>6</sup>Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge UP, 1996), 145; J. Baker, “Heritage Listing Keeps Proud Memories Alive,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 24, 2006: 7.

<sup>7</sup>Inglis: 24; see also Tom Griffiths, “The Language of Conflict”, in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds. Bain Attwood and S.G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 143ff; Batten, “Monuments, Memorials,” 105ff. The faithful friend quote comes from Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 159-60.

<sup>8</sup>William Logan and Keir Reeves eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with ‘Difficult Heritage’* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>9</sup>W.E.H. Stanner, *After the Dreaming: Black and White Australians – An*

*Anthropologist's View*, The Boyer Lectures (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1968).

<sup>10</sup>Paul Keating, Redfern Park Speech launching the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, December 10, 1992, accessed November 2, 2010, [www.australianpolitics.com/executive/keating/92-12-10redfern-speech.shtml](http://www.australianpolitics.com/executive/keating/92-12-10redfern-speech.shtml)

<sup>11</sup>For an overview of the *Mabo v Queensland [No 2]* (1992) and *Wik Peoples v State of Queensland and Others* (1996) legislation see Peter Butt and Robert Eagleson, *Mabo, Wik and Native Title* (Leichhardt: Federation Press, 1998). Also see the ANTAR website, accessed November 11, 2010, <http://www.antarvictoria.org.au/wikmabo.html>; Ronald Wilson [Commissioner], *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry Into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children From Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997), accessed June 10, 2011, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/>

<sup>12</sup>Kevin Rudd, "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, February 13, 2008, accessed November 3, 2010, [http://www.aph.gov.au/house/rudd\\_speech.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/rudd_speech.pdf)

<sup>13</sup>Recent accounts include Susan Cochrane ed., *Aboriginal Art Collections: Highlights from Australia's Public Museums and Galleries* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 2001); Benjamin Thomas, "Daryl Lindsay and the Appreciation of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in the 1940s: 'No Mere Collection of Interesting Curiosities'," *Journal of Art Historiography*, 4 (2011) accessed July 3, 2011, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/thomas-on-daryl-lindsay1.pdf>; Odette Kelada, "Opening the 'Wild Room'?: An Encounter With the National Galleries," *Artlink*, 31(2), (2011): 40-43. Also exhibitions: *Balance* (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1990) and *Cultural Warriors* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2007).

<sup>14</sup>Image <http://nga.gov.au/ATSIArt/GALLERY.cfm?GALID=1>; Djon Mundine, "200 Burial Poles: An Aboriginal Memorial," *Art Monthly*, 10 (1988): 24-25; "Interview with Djon Mundine [by] Rex Butler," in ed. Rex Butler *Radical Revisionism: An Anthology of Writings on Australian Art*, 88-92 (Fortitude Valley, QLD: Institute of Modern Art, 2005); Terry Smith, "Public Art Between Cultures: The Aboriginal Memorial, Aboriginality, and Nationality in Australia," *Critical Inquiry* 27(4), (2001): 629-61.

<sup>15</sup>Mundine, "200 Burial Poles," 25; Nick Waterlow, *1988 Australian Biennale. From the Southern Cross: A View of World Art c.1940-88* (Sydney: The Biennale of Sydney in association with The Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988): 230.

<sup>16</sup>See, for example, C.D. Rowley, *Outcasts in White Australia* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1972); Henry Reynolds, *The Trevor Reese Memorial Lecture 1984. The Breaking of the Great Australian Silence: Aborigines in Australian Historiography 1955-1983* (London: University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Australian Studies Centre, 1984).

<sup>17</sup>For an overview of the debate see: Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The*

*History Wars* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne UP, 2004); Stuart Macintyre ed., *The Historian's Conscience: Australian Historians on the Ethics of History* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne UP, 2004); Bain Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005).

<sup>18</sup>R v Kilmeister (No 1) NSW Supreme Court 105 (November 15, 1838), Australian Legal Information Institute, accessed August 15, 2009, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/sinodisp/au/other/NSWSupC/1838/105.html?query=myall%20creek>; R v Kilmeister (No 2) NSW Supreme Court 110 (December 5, 1838), Australian Legal Information Institute, accessed August 15, 2009, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/sinodisp/au/other/NSWSupC/1838/110.html?query=myall%20creek#disp1>; Len Payne, "The Myall Creek Massacre, A Correlation of Known and Attested Facts from the Past and the Present Concerning the Infamous Myall Creek Massacre of 1838", accessed June 15, 2011 <http://www.goodbyebussamarai.com/MyallCreek%20Massacre.doc>

<sup>19</sup>See footnote 17 above.

<sup>20</sup>Katrina Schlunke, "Incommensurate Suffering: 'Making' Women and Children in Massacre," *Australian Feminist Studies* 16(34), (2001): 61-67; Schlunke, "In-Between the Memorial, the Library and the Lesbian," *Cultural Studies Review* 9(1), (2003): 77-84; Schlunke, "Dumb Places," *Balayi: Culture, Law and Colonialism*, 6 (2004): 72-81; Schlunke, "More Than Memory: Performing Place and Postcoloniality at the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial," in ed. Gay McAuley, *Dramaturgies: Unstable Ground* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006).

<sup>21</sup>Heather Goodall, "Mourning, Remembrance and the Politics of Place: A Study in the Significance of Collarenebri Aboriginal Cemetery," *Public History Review* 9 (2001): 72-96; Goodall, "Too Early Yet or Not Soon Enough? Reflections on Sharing Histories as Process," *Australian Historical Studies*, 118 (2002): 7-24; Batten, "Myall Creek Memorial"; Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton, "'Unfinished Business': Public History in a Postcolonial Nation," in eds. Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer, *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2009).

<sup>22</sup>Myall Creek Memorial Committee [MCMC]: Minutes of Interim Planning Committee, 1998-2001, unpublished; MCMC, Brief for Architect, 1999, unpublished; MCMC, *Myall Creek Massacre & Memorial: Our Shared History* (Revised edn), (Bingara, NSW: Myall Creek Memorial Committee, 2008).

<sup>23</sup>Sue Blacklock in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation television documentary *Australian Story: Bridge Over Myall Creek*, July 26, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> MCMC, Brief for Architect.

<sup>25</sup>MCMC, Brief for Architect.

<sup>26</sup>Joanna Sassoon, "Phantoms of Remembrance: Libraries and Archives as 'The Collective Memory'," *Public History Review*, 10 (2003): 40-60.

<sup>27</sup>Sue-Anne Ware, "Anti-Memorials and the Art of Forgetting: Critical Reflections on a Memorial Design Practice," *Public History Review* 15 (2008): 62.

<sup>28</sup>Much of the language used in this paragraph is a précis from the brief.

- <sup>29</sup>Milan Kundera, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts*, (Trans.) Linda Asher (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 96-97.
- <sup>30</sup>For details on the Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony and other protocols see the Department of Aboriginal Affairs website, <http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/data/files//Aboriginal%20CulturalProtocolsandPracticesPolicyFINAL.pdf>
- <sup>31</sup>Stewart Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," *Third Text*, 21(4), (2007): 370. See also Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, (Trans.) Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002).
- <sup>32</sup>For a development of these ideas see Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics".
- <sup>33</sup>Commonwealth of Australia, Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Inclusion of a Place in the National Heritage List, *Gazette Special S11608*, July 2, 2008.
- <sup>34</sup>Personal correspondence from Ivan Roberts regarding a public meeting scheduled for October 30, 2010. Received October 20, 2010. The authors have seen the developing designs at the annual 2010 and 2011 commemorations, but they are not yet finalised and hence are not available for publication.
- <sup>35</sup>Stories on the contributions Aborigines made to early memorials in the Sydney region are detailed by Maria Nugent, "Historical Encounters: Aboriginal Testimony and Colonial Forms of Commemoration," *Aboriginal History* 30 (2006): 33-47.
- <sup>36</sup>The Museum of Sydney is built on the site of Old Government House, where one can imagine encounters between the local Gadigal people and the new settler administration. For a detailed study of the art project see Dinah Dysart ed., *The Edge of the Trees: A Sculptural Installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley from the Concept by Peter Emmett* (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2000).
- <sup>37</sup>James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2000), 142.
- <sup>38</sup>Koori is a term widely used by indigenous peoples in south-eastern Australia to refer to themselves.
- <sup>39</sup>See Ashton and Hamilton, "Unfinished Business," 11-15; Kate V. Hartig and Kevin M. Dunn, "Roadside Memorials: Interpreting New Deathscapes in Newcastle, NSW," *Australian Geographical Studies* 36(1), (1998): 5-20.
- <sup>40</sup>The Badtjala people are from a coastal region north of Brisbane that includes Hervey Bay and Fraser Island.
- <sup>41</sup>The major publication on Riley is *Michael Riley: Sights Unseen*, ed. Brenda L. Croft (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2006).
- <sup>42</sup>For details on these and other projects see: Fiona Foley ed., *The Art of Politics, the Politics of Art: The Place of Indigenous Contemporary Art* (Southport, QLD: Keeaira Press, 2006); Jay Younger, "Critically Engaged Permanent Public Art in the Context of Art Built-in (1999-2006)," (PhD diss., University of NSW, Sydney, 2011); Louise Martin-Chew, "Public and Political: Recent Major Sculpture by Fiona Foley," *Artlink* 31(2), (2011): 62-65.
- <sup>43</sup>Tess Allas, "History Is a Weapon: Fiona Foley History Teacher," *Artlink* 30(1), (2010): 56-61.

<sup>44</sup>The intent of the artist was gained from personal correspondence September 12, 2007.

<sup>45</sup>Joyce Morgan, “There Might Be Big Artworks But You Can’t Jump In Them: Brook Andrew”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 8, 2010: 4.

<sup>46</sup>All quotes from Caris Bizzaca, “Curiosity Ignites Sydney’s Biennale,” *AAP*, May 12, 2010, accessed November 12, 2010, <http://global.factiva.com.wwwproxy0.library.unsw.edu.au/ha/default.aspx>

<sup>47</sup>Kundera, *The Curtain*, 107.

<sup>48</sup>Brook Andrew, *Theme Park* (Utrecht, The Netherlands: Museum Voor Hedendaagse Aboriginal Kunst (Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art, 2009).

<sup>49</sup>Adam Gifford, “Languages to Talk About the World,” *New Zealand Herald*, May 22, 2010, accessed November 12, 2010, <http://global.factiva.com.wwwproxy0.library.unsw.edu.au/ha/default.aspx>

<sup>50</sup>MCMC, *Myall Creek Massacre & Memorial*, 19.

<sup>51</sup>For example, the City of Sydney’s *2011 City Art Strategy and Guidelines* (<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cityart/about/PublicArtPolicyStrategyGuidelines.asp>) builds on its 2008 strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030 and makes use of the concept of an ‘Eora Journey’ through the city to frame an experience that is mindful of Koori culture.

## Bibliography

Allas, Tess, “History Is a Weapon: Fiona Foley History Teacher,” *Artlink* 30(1), (2010): 56-61.

Andrew, Brook, *Theme Park*, Utrecht, The Netherlands: Museum Voor Hedendaagse Aboriginal Kunst (Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art), 2009.

ANTAR, accessed November 11, 2010, <http://www.antarvictoria.org.au/wikmabo.html>

Ashton, Paul and Paula Hamilton, “‘Unfinished Business’: Public History in a Postcolonial Nation,” in *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation*, eds. Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 71-98.

Attwood, Bain, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History* (Crows Nest (NSW): Allen & Unwin, 2005).

Attwood, Bain and S.G. Foster, eds., *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003).

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, “Bridge Over Myall Creek: Transcript of Australian Story, July 26, 2001”, accessed November 25, 2005, <http://www.abc.net.au/austory/transcripts/s332825.htm>

Australian Legal Information Institute, R v Kilmeister (No 1) NSW Supreme Court 105 (November 15, 1838), accessed August 15, 2009, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/sinodisp/au/other/NSWSupC/1838/105.html?query=myall%20creek>

Australian Legal Information Institute, R v Kilmeister (No 2) NSW Supreme Court 110 (December 5, 1838), accessed August 15, 2009, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/sinodisp/au/other/NSWSupC/1838/110.html?query=myall%20creek#disp1>

Baker, J., "Heritage Listing Keeps Proud Memories Alive," *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 24, 2006.

Batten, Bronwyn, "Monuments, Memorials and the Presentation of Australia's Indigenous Past," *Public History Review* 11 (2004): 100-21.

Batten, Bronwyn, "The Myall Creek Memorial: History, Identity and Reconciliation," in eds. William Logan and Kier Reeves, *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008), 82-96.

Batten, Bronwyn and Paul Batten, "Memorialising the Past: Is There an 'Aboriginal Way?'" *Public History Review* 15 (2008): 92-116.

Bizzaca, Caris, "Curiosity Ignites Sydney's Biennale," *AAP*, May 12, 2010, accessed November 12, 2010, <http://global.factiva.com.wwwproxy0.library.unsw.edu.au/ha/default.aspx>

Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Relational Aesthetics*, (Trans.) Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods and Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002).

Butt, Peter and Robert Eagleson, *Mabo, Wik and Native Title* (3rd edn), (Leichhardt NSW: Federation Press, 1998).

Cochrane, Susan, ed., *Aboriginal Art Collections: Highlights from Australia's Public Museums and Galleries* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 2001).

Croft, Brenda L., *Michael Riley: Sights Unseen* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2006).

Commonwealth of Australia, "Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Inclusion of a Place in the National Heritage List," *Special Gazette* S11608, accessed 15 July, 2011, [http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/laws/publicdocuments/pubs/105869\\_01.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/laws/publicdocuments/pubs/105869_01.pdf)

Dysart, Dinah ed., *The Edge of the Trees: A Sculptural Installation by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley from the Concept by Peter Emmett* (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2000).

Foley, Fiona, ed., *The Art of Politics the Politics of Art: The Place of Indigenous Contemporary Art* (Southport, QLD: Keeaira Press, 2006).

Gifford, Adam, "Languages to Talk About the World," *New Zealand Herald*, May 22, 2010, accessed November 12, 2010, <http://global.factiva.com.wwwproxy0.library.unsw.edu.au/ha/default.aspx>

Goodall, Heather, "Mourning, Remembrance and the Politics of Place: A Study in the Significance of Collarenebri Aboriginal Cemetery," *Public History Review* 9 (2001): 72-96.

Goodall, Heather, "Too Early Yet or Not Soon Enough? Reflections on Sharing Histories as Process," *Australian Historical Studies* 118 (2002): 7-24.

Griffiths, Tom, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Griffiths, Tom, "The Language of Conflict," in eds. B. Attwood and S.G. Foster, *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003).

Hartig, Kate V. and Kevin M. Dunn, "Roadside Memorials: Interpreting New Deathscapes in Newcastle, NSW," *Australian Geographical Studies* 36(1), (1998): 5-20.

Henderson, Beryl ed., *Monuments and Memorials* (Sydney: Royal Australasian Historical Society, 1988).

Holly, Michael Ann and Marquard Smith, *What Is Research in the Visual Arts?: Obsession, Archive, Encounter* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; New Haven: distributed by Yale University Press, 2008).

Inglis, K.S., *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 1998).

Keating, Paul, "Redfern Park Speech Launching the International Year for the World's Indigenous People," *Australian Politics*, December 10, 1992, accessed November 3, 2010 [www.australianpolitics.com/executive/keating/92-12-10redfern-speech.shtml](http://www.australianpolitics.com/executive/keating/92-12-10redfern-speech.shtml)

Kelada, Odette, "Opening the 'Wild Room'?: An Encounter With the National Galleries," *Artlink*, 31(2), (2011): 40-43.

Kundera, Milan, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts*, (Trans.) L. Asher (London: Faber and Faber, 2007).

Logan William, and Keir Reeves, eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008).

Macintyre, Stuart ed., *The Historian's Conscience: Australian Historians on the Ethics of History* (Carlton (VIC): Melbourne University Press, 2004).

Macintyre, Stuart and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Carlton (VIC): Melbourne University Press, 2003).

- Martin, Stewart, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," *Third Text* 21(4), (2007): 369-86.
- Martin-Chew, Lisa, "Public and Political: Recent Major Sculpture by Fiona Foley," *Artlink*, 31(2), (2011): 62-65.
- Morgan, Joyce, "There Might Be Big Artworks But You Can't Jump In Them," Brook Andrew', *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 8, 2010.
- Myall Creek Memorial Committee, 1998-2001, Minutes of Interim Planning Committee, unpublished.
- Myall Creek Memorial Committee, 1999, Brief for Architect, unpublished.
- Myall Creek Memorial Committee, *Myall Creek Massacre & Memorial: Our Shared History* (Bingara (NSW): Myall Creek Memorial Committee, 2001; Revised edn 2001).
- Mundine, Djon, "200 Burial Poles: An Aboriginal Memorial," *Art Monthly*, 10 (1988): 24-25.
- Mundine, Djon, "Interview with Djon Mundine (by) Rex Butler," in ed. Rex Butler, *Radical Revisionism: An Anthology of Writings on Australian Art* (Fortitude Valley (QLD): Institute of Modern Art, 2005), 88-92.
- Myers, Fred, "Uncertain Regard: An Exhibition of Australian Aboriginal Art in France," *Ethnos* 63(1), (1998): 7-47.
- Payne, Len, "The Myall Creek Massacre, A Correlation of Known and Attested Facts from the Past and the Present Concerning the Infamous Myall Creek Massacre of 1838," accessed August 15, 2005, <http://www.goodbyeussamarai.com/MyallCreek%20Massacre.doc>
- Rudd, Kevin, "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, February 13, 2008, accessed 3 November, 2010 [http://www.aph.gov.au/house/rudd\\_speech.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/rudd_speech.pdf)
- Sassoon, Joanna, "Phantoms of Remembrance: Libraries and Archives as 'The Collective Memory'," *Public History Review* 10 (2003): 40-60.
- Schlunke, Katrina, "Dumb Places," *Balayi* 6 (2004): 72-81.
- Schlunke, Katrina, "More Than Memory: Performing Place and Postcoloniality at the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial," in ed. Gay McAuley, *Dramaturgies: Unstable Ground* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006), 177-85.
- Schlunke, Katrina, "Incommensurate Suffering: 'Making' Women and Children in Massacre," *Australian Feminist Studies* 16(34), (2001): 61-67.
- Schlunke, Katrina, "In-Between the Memorial, The Library and the Lesbian," *Cultural Studies Review* 9(1), (2003): 77-84.

Smith, Terry, "Public Art Between Cultures: The Aboriginal Memorial, Aboriginality, and Nationality in Australia," *Critical Inquiry* 27(4), (2001): 629-61.

Stanner, W.E.H., *After the Dreaming: Black and White Australians – An Anthropologist's View*, The Boyer Lectures (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1968).

Thomas, Benjamin, "Daryl Lindsay and the Appreciation of Indigenous art at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in the 1940s: 'No Mere Collection of Interesting Curiosities'," *Journal of Art Historiography* 4 (2011), 1-32, accessed July 3, 2010 <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/thomas-on-daryl-lindsay1.pdf>

Ware, Sue-Anne, "Anti-Memorials and the Art of Forgetting: Critical Reflections on a Memorial Design Practice," *Public History Review* 15 (2008): 61-67.

Wilson, Ronald [Commissioner], *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children From Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997), accessed June 10, 2011, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/>

Young, James E., *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

Younger, Jay, "Critically Engaged Permanent Public Art in the Context of Art Built-in (1999-2006)," (Sydney: PhD diss., University of New South Wales, 2011).

### Biographical notes

Catherine De Lorenzo, BA (Hons) (U. Syd.), DipEd (U. Syd.), PhD (U. Syd.), is an art historian and senior lecturer in the Architecture Program, Faculty of the Built Environment (FBE), University of New South Wales, Sydney. Much of her research investigates cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary uses of photographs and public art. She publishes in a wide range of disciplinary journals, and is a Contributing Editor to *History of Photography*, an Editorial Advisory Board member of *Visual Studies*, and an Editorial Board member of the *Design and Art of Australia Online* (DAAO). In 2009, she won the Marian Mahony Griffin Award for contributions to interdisciplinary teaching and practice. She is currently working on an ARC Linkage grant investigating the impact of curated exhibitions on Australian art historiography over the last 40 years.

Email: [c.delorenzo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:c.delorenzo@unsw.edu.au)

Vivien Chow, BArch (Hons) (UNSW), MPD (UNSW), is a research associate at the Faculty of the Built Environment (FBE), University of New South Wales, Sydney. Influenced by her professional work across architectural design, planning and development, she is interested in investigating the social impacts of a built environment, and how consultation and collaboration with user groups can be used to enhance design projects. Vivien tutors in design, project management, and sustainable development.

Email: [v.chow@unsw.edu.au](mailto:v.chow@unsw.edu.au)