Big hART's 30 Years of Practice: Cultural Justice and the Right to Thrive

SCOTT EDMUND RANKIN

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the 9000 people who have been co-creators in over 55 communities across the country during the last 30 years. They, and the hundreds of collaborating artists and producers, have been fine teachers, and our work together has given rise to this research.

My heart also reaches back across the decades to the Chadwick and Rankin families of my heritage. They held and then gifted a resilient aesthetic, as well as a hope for justice, which allowed a shy skinny boy, to embark on a loudmouth journey.

And lastly, to my grown children Darcy, Lachlan and Ginger – who, through times of happiness and sadness, taught me afresh what love is.

THANK YOU

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The whole Big hART team and Board past and present have provided the hard work and the inspiration for thinking. They are in my thoughts page by page. I thank them for their skill and dedication and the learning they continue to provide.

I also thank my long-time friend and collaborator Andrew Viney, simultaneously stoic and stressed, and one of the few people who can produce beautiful things, essentially so they can then quietly apologise for them.

It is a rare and precious fluke to meet exactly the right artistic collaborator and for that creative relationship not to be destroyed in the machinations of making over the decades. And so I am forever grateful, for the work of Genevieve Dugard – on and on.

Finally, I thank my co-founder John Bakes, quiet and comfortable in the background, who saw Big hART through to reasonable odds, then wisely got out of the game.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made.

SIGNATURE

16.06.2022

DATE

Abstract

THE DISCOVERIES FROM THIS RESEARCH CONCERN THE WAYS IN WHICH CULTURAL JUSTICE INTERMEDIATIONS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRECONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR COMMUNITIES TO FLOURISH.

By investigating 30 years of Big hART's practice, I establish a trajectory from standard Community Cultural Development company, to Cultural Justice powerhouse. The findings of this investigation reveal a more effective and calibrated approach to Cultural Justice intermediation, which acts in communities as a form of narrative primary preventions. The examination of these Cultural Justice intermediations is analysed through five exemplar, large-scale Big hART projects, spanning 15 years. These are described and scrutinised for clues to the provenance of the organisation's practice, as well as the flow of consequences which drive effective Cultural Justice intermediations.

The research demonstrates the ways in which these intermediations set up the preconditions for communities to flourish. The study establishes the concept of intermediation, a term borrowed and adapted from the world of finance, which has real praxis power in the community sector, delivering new kinds of layered cultural and community diplomacies.

The findings of this investigation reveal that when we take up the mantel in relation to Cultural Justice, we must ask the question: How can we cultivate better intermediations? We then explore these possibilities through a series of extractions. These discoveries show how Cultural Justice intermediations work together to hold space in the layers of community interconnectivity, so participants and communities can be seen and heard and also made safe. This visibility and safety are tangible manifestations of the preconditions of flourishing and are critically needed in our most vulnerable communities. Further, the study shows that, as well as achieving virtuosity in content, we must pursue virtuosic ways to hold intermediated space for co-created narratives. This will then produce deeply storied ecologies, deep processes and authentic content based on lived experience, which can be made visible in the mainstream through muscular, empathetic intermediations.

The intermediations and the subsequent flow of positive consequences described in the study are captured in digital artefacts so as to allow community participants to speak in their own voice through their own co-creations, thus providing a picture of community flourishing.

The conclusion speaks plainly and with weight as to where we are as a field in relation to Cultural Justice, insisting that we do not have the luxury of tweaking the edges of a cultural policy when it comes to Cultural Justice. The findings of the study help us get to the centrality of the issue: culture is a human right and if we get cultural policy settings wrong, we are robbing the most vulnerable in our community of their narrative inclusion and primary protection.

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Instructions to the reader

THIS PhD IS NOT A TRADITIONAL MONOGRAPH. IT IS BASED ON CREATIVE PRACTICE AND ITS PRESENTATION MIRRORS THE DIVERGENT CHARACTERISTICS OF BIG hART'S WORK.

In this regard, the writing style and structure champions non-linear ways of knowing, being and expressing. It utilises a bricolage of dramaturgical tools, crafts and approaches, the juxtaposition of which may surprise the reader. Poetics, scripted works, text, video, image, polemic, data, podcasts, opinion, visual prompts and intimate personal reflection are designed to work rhizomically, breaking down linearity and illuminating accumulated and contestable knowledge.

To further illuminate this exegetical exploration of Big hART's 30 years of practice, place in the field and the development of and commitment to Cultural Justice approaches across three decades of practice, it is supported by accompanying material: a two-volume set of image and descriptors, video and additional digital documentation. Pulled from this critical background material and foregrounded, are five exemplar projects, which become the focus of the study in relation to how Big hART's approaches have evolved into a Cultural Justice practice and how this practice best contributes to the preconditions of flourishing.

The reader is strongly encouraged to self-curate:

- use the links provided to align the text with examples of creative practice in the accompanying video;
- explore the photographic project descriptors in the Big hART 25 Years (Rankin, 2017a) two-volume set (referred to collectively as the 25 Year Volumes, or individually as Volume 1 (Projects.Places.People) and Volume 2 (Essays. Research.Ideas);
- follow the links to feature documentaries and other materials for richer experiences of the creative practice in the field – its successes and failures;
- dip into sample reports and evaluations, especially in relation to indications of legacy in Big hART's work.

Complementing the self-curation, a suggested journey through the additional material is suggested in the body of the exegesis.

Creative components can be found in bulk on the accompanying website or via links in the text.

READ A LITTLE, WATCH A LITTLE.

Italicised and indented text is to be read as inner thoughts and reflections extracted from reflective journaling. These include time jumps and notes or letters from the field. The reflective materials work in tandem with the dramatic and declamatory devices in the text.

In most cases, throughout this study, the term First Nations is used and capitalised in recognition of Australia's First Nations peoples' original and ongoing custodianship of this country as well as acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people belong to their own nation/linguistic/clan groups. However, Elders who advise our work in the Pilbara, have indicated their preference for the word Aboriginal, more so than either First Nations or Indigenous, and this will be used in specific circumstances in the text. Spellings for First Nations places and people are derived from community advice, noting that in some instances new spellings are emergent.

Cultural Justice is capitalised throughout for emphasis, urgency and to focus the text.

For practical reasons, individual artists and producers on individual projects over the last three decades are mostly not named in the exegesis. The names of many (hundreds) of artists can be found in the Big hART 25 years two volume set, as part of this study.

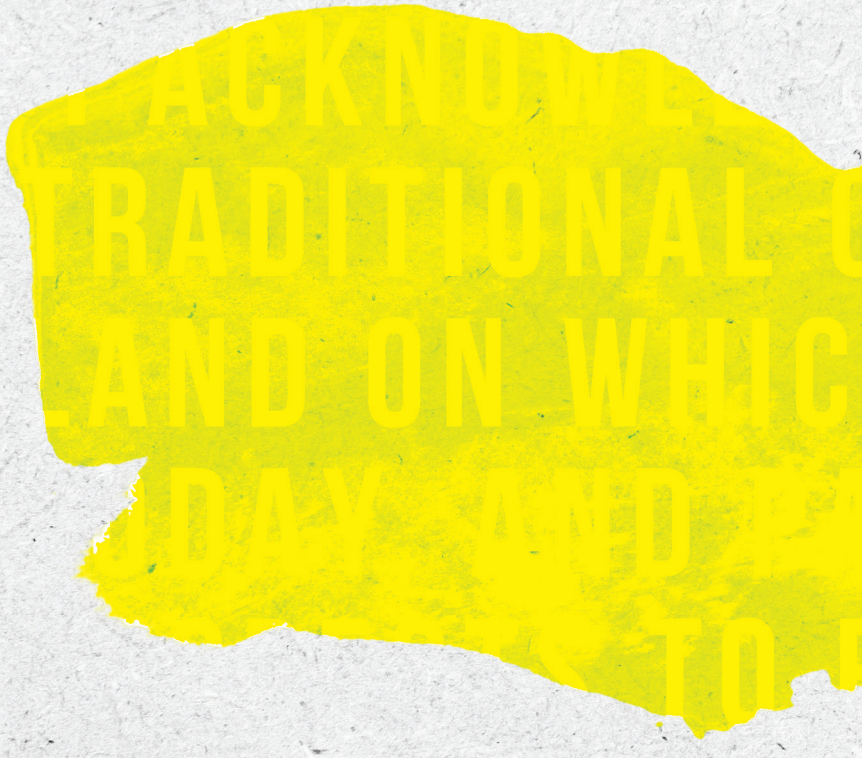
Acknowledgement

As a settler, this is the place where I gladly acknowledge Country and Elders and pay respect. In doing so, the reader may understand cultural care has been taken and cultural safety invoked. The words usually begin with something along the lines of:

> I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which I write today, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

However, in the context of this research into Cultural Justice I cannot bring myself to write these words only. The breath of the perfunctory has left my lungs.

Of course I do pay my respects, but on a deeper level I wonder why this kind of Acknowledgement so often feels dangerously close to a profound cultural injustice?



Perhaps it is Australia's lack of treaty casting a long shadow of implicit untruth, which increasingly deepens my discomfort with the lukewarm forms of Acknowledgements we tend to use. As First Nations awaken us to a new, more holistic national future, perhaps the good intentions of our Acknowledgement of Country are now manifesting more as a micro-aggression, and its role as a shroud concealing the horrors and injustices of colonisation has lost its solidity. As the ground shifts beneath once sure-footed and naive settlers like me, this discomfort with Acknowledgements by rote indicates a rising awareness of an ongoing and extreme cultural injustice we can no longer ignore.

— TO ACKNOWLEDGE OR OBSERVE?

It is important to recognise that the narrative of Acknowledgement was hard-won by First Nations people with assistance from many non-Aboriginal people of goodwill, and it remains a Cultural Justice marker, even if weakening. In the paraphrased words of Edward Said, 'nations are narrations' (Said, 1993, p. xiii), and we are emergent as a nation, imagined and incanted into being in the present, and changing as we move forward. This contested emergence is fertile ground for Cultural Justice and it's the ground on which Big hART lives, learns and works - the ground this study is exploring. I'm reflecting here on the act of Acknowledgement to indicate the serious intent of this study's focus on Cultural Justice.

In our narration of the nation, previous markers can become millstones as our perceptions grow, and we must name these changes so as to let them go and move on. Perhaps Acknowledgement is becoming one such millstone and a deeper approach is needed.

— OBSERVANCE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Acknowledgement of Country takes its shape from First Nations cultural diplomacies spanning millennia, and our contemporary form of Acknowledgement has its roots in the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC)'s long quest for recognition and justice. From the mid-1950s, NAIDOC has increasingly become a growing symbol of pride, recognition and progress utilised by First Nations communities, as well as by businesses and governments in Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) and social licence aspirations. Since 1974 it has been a week-long celebration across Australia, usually in July.

Perhaps because of this modern use, most people think of NAIDOC as a recent initiative. Few Australians would recognise that NAIDOC is part of one of the longest-running civil rights movements in the world. An organised, established, intentional and public campaign through which First Nations people have lived, organised and died in our midst since the 1920s. This movement, growing out of previous centuries of resistance and trauma, included many aspirations, such as winning hearts, minds, recognition, representation, treaty and Cultural Justice.

To give it raw, brutal and shameful context, the fight began at a time when under Australian law, First Nations people were considered and managed as part of the flora and fauna. The movement for justice emerged organically and with great urgency across the continent, including in 1933 a plea for help to King George V in the form of a petition against the Australian Government, which the government of the day never sent.

Soon after, on 26 January 1938, protestors marched through the streets of Sydney, followed by thousands of people (First Nations and non-Aboriginal) to attend a Town Hall congress on what was then known as the Day of Mourning. Yet few Australians know the provenance of this civil rights campaign or recognise that it is ongoing to this day. Why is the powerful and courageous story of this remarkable civil rights movement not told, celebrated and taught from pre-school on? Why is it culturally invisible? Perhaps the ongoing burial of this civil rights narrative is part of a covert cultural strategy. Perhaps the more easily palatable notion of Acknowledgement is part of this burial and part of our cultural injustice.

— INVISIBILITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

If this globally significant story of civil rights were highly visible in the ongoing 'narration of our nation' would we face international boycotts? Would there be implications for sport or international trade and tourism? Would there be supply chain problems that result in negative impacts on our national productivity? Is this cultural invisibility just negligent, or is it actually a weapon of cultural injustice? Is this cultural injustice a genocide by narrative attrition? Is it preventing and inhibiting the opportunity for First Nations people to flourish? Who is in charge of this exercise in

[1] One of a number of dates used for Australia Day.

invisibility? And where does our work as arts institutions, artists and cultural workers fit as part of this invisibility?

With this in mind, this research is choosing not to use the increasingly tacit Acknowledgment and instead will use the original term of Observance - the O in NAIDOC[2].

— WHY OBSERVE?

Observance comes from the Latin observantia, meaning: an act of paying attention, showing respect, regard, reverence, to note, to take heed, look to, attend to, comply with, to watch, listen and notice. This is active and ongoing. It suggests a subtle but important difference to Acknowledgment. It suggests new, ongoing ways of learning, knowing and being.

Perhaps each of us can recall times of uneasiness regarding an Acknowledgement of Country. Times when it felt prosaic, glib and like a kind of cultural gaslighting, as if we settlers are acknowledging only so things can stay the same i.e. now the Acknowledgement is done, we can get on with what we're really here to talk about. What if instead we receive this as an invitation by First Nations people to observe Country deeply, to adhere to place, to be mindful, to be present, to be quiet and listen to the Mother[3]. And through this listening and learning, we are changed.

[2] Permission to openly contemplate and discuss Observance and Acknowledgement in the hope of deepening our commitment to it, is done so in discussion with the Ngarluma Elders who have advised our intercultural Pilbara projects for the past decade.

[3] Ngarluma Elder Patrick Churnside uses the term 'the Mother' for Country, nature, earth.

So why this invitation to observe, listen and comply with Country? What benefit is there in that?

> **Globally, Indigenous Peoples currently steward areas that hold 80% of the world's biodiversity - yet they inhabit only 22% of the world's surface**
>
> (Redvers et al., 2020, p. 1).

In this context, I suggest that what we recognise echoing in our Observance of Country is an invitation into the longest continuing culture of stewardship in human history. We are being invited in, not only to recognise that the land on which we meet remains unceded and without a treaty, but also to wellness, safety, stewardship, depth and the Mother. Observance of Country is therefore about the preservation of the planet.

In this act of Observance, we are turning the lens on ourselves and sensing our deficits, rather than our 'victories' and the destruction they wrought. In Observance we are sensing the depth of knowledge, belonging, joy, continuity, stewardship, diplomacy, sustainability, medicine, astronomy, organics, precision foraging and farming, harmony, biodiversity, leisure, sensuality, feasting and the everyday festival of life on Country that always was and always will be. These are two very different versions of the same narrative.

> **…all is considered alive, of living energy, and of spiritual value rather than materialistic or financial value…**
>
> (Redvers et al., 2020, p. 2).

For me then, Observing Country is not a glib 'risk mitigation' strategy at the beginning of an exegesis, but an openness to the particularity of what Country brings to this moment (or this gathering, this research etc.).

So now I recommend the reader pause for a moment and observe Country, the Mother, narrative, connectedness, and bring to mind the intention of this research, the urgency of Cultural Justice, and the ways in which together we can better facilitate flourishing (Rankin, 2020).[4]

[4] Written by a settler on never ceded Tommeginne Country (North West Tasmania, Australia).

Figure 1: Roebourne on-Country workshop, 2021. Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

Preface

> Success is not final. Failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.
>
> W. S. Churchill[5]

It is uncomfortable to begin with a quote only loosely attributed to Churchill, but this mention of continuing sets the desired tone. Big hART is, and always has been, a continuing, and this study examines the organisation in this way - as a flow. A flow of continuing attempts, from raw beginnings through the provenance of ideas as a learning organisation, to the positive consequences across the last 30 years. It is a continuing rather than a fixed-point project, initiative, strategy, campaign or institution. This study explores this continuing from its beginnings as a community cultural development (CCD) organisation focused on juvenile justice to where it is now with a focus on Cultural Justice.

[5] The author is aware the attribution of this quote to Winston Churchill is disputed by Churchill historians (Langworth, R., 2011); (International Churchill Society, 2013).

Figure 2: Acoustic Life of Sheds, 2020. Photo: Heath Holden (Big hART).

As co-founder of the organisation, my positionality within this continuity implicitly influences the curatorial ideas which determine the direction of this research (Coffey, 1999; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Pillow, 2003). This positionality is signposted and explored with intimacy and honesty in the form of reflective journaling e.g.:

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 1 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, JULY 2021

As Jung puts it, 'Life is a luminous pause between two great mysteries, which in the end are one'.

I am in the latter part of this luminosity. Of my expected 750,000 hours as a Western, well-nourished primate I have around 174,000 left. I have used most of my working hours on building Big hART, and am now looking back upon the flow of these hours - the joys, the ego, the virtuosities, the learnings, the fears – for the origins of why, when and how I became interested and involved in cultural injustices and then Cultural Justice. And I'm also looking at this lifetime of contribution across 30 years of Big hART for better practice and to unearth the Cultural Justice intermediations which lead to the pre-conditions of flourishing.

These are big concepts, and here, even in this opening reflective comment, as the words finally cascade onto the page in September 2021, they hit the pit of my belly with a wave of trepidation and questioning, and a hint of fraudulence. What have I learned? How best should I distil it, and for whom? What are the dangers for an untrained researcher, drifting in and out of the researcher's voice? It is not in my playwright's nature to hide or obfuscate. And so in setting down these thoughts, I'll write with all the dramaturgical tools, craft and tone at my disposal. I'll paint the picture of this journey to a Cultural Justice practice, and speak back into it here, with reflexivity, during the last months of assembling this research – beginning with the circularity of the entries below spanning 60 years.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 2 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

Here in Iremugadu in the Pilbara, I've returned to the site of the final exemplar project examined in this research - the Yijala Yala project. It is both a rewarding and melancholy moment. One enriched by observing the achievements of the community in this co-creation with Big hART, across more than 10 years, and one in which I've learned and changed in the hands of this Ngarluma Country and those that steward it.

There are strong feelings of futility and foreboding. However, these lose their sting when I let go of linear preoccupations with solutions and deliverables, and see changemaking more as participation in a 'flow of change'. And instead, see that change itself is actually an exchange. It is these notions of flow - the flow of change, the flow of community, of doing no harm, the flow of exchange, of all the learnings, the flow of flourishing, and the place of Cultural Justice within it, which this research is investigating. Still, it remains true that, in some ways, it is an investigation of melancholy more than triumphalism; and of the work of others, from whom I have benefited; of burnout as much as success; and of what dwindles as much as what is achieved.

Big hART is in its 30th year. True, it is a renowned, multi-award-winning organisation taught in Tertiary as an exemplar. It is independent, has resisted institutionalisation, remains respected by most, and survived. However, could this 'best on ground' organisation originate from little more than the self-expression of an immature outsider? Is it perhaps just an imagining. A 30-year work, a real-world installation.

Or is it, as our media releases state, an authentic and savvy quest for Cultural Justice, honed into a precision set of dramaturgical tools, which champion hidden stories, based on lived experience, so as to speak truth to power and bring positive influence to assist the 'long moral arc, bending towards justice' (to paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr.) Either way, it often feels illusory. Could it be, for all its accolades, that Big hART is merely a knee-jerk reaction to a childhood, spring-loaded with triggers and injustices, now writ large?

Figure 3: Blue Angel Slavery at Sea Project, 2014. Photo: Brett Boardman (Big hART).

My reflections on childhood below preface the research narrative and explore what may have triggered the sensitivities, the outsider attitude, an interest in the unseen in our midst which now form the hallmarks of Big hART's leaning into Cultural Justice.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 3 – ON CHILDHOOD, BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, FEBRUARY 2021

I grew up from age three on a Chinese junk - illegally as it turned out - with my parents, two sisters, a mad Nanna, and two ducks on Sydney harbour. The abiding memory of this childhood is one of dangerous adventure in small boats without lifejacket or supervision; free play and sunburn; and having to be very, very quiet so that we wouldn't get booted from this idyllic outsider life.

If the water police cruised by, we'd go quiet and still, freckled cheeks scrunched, eyes watchful slits. If they asked if we were living on this boat, my dad would say, 'no, we live in the boat shed.' If the council asked if we were living in the boat shed, he'd say, 'no we live on the boat.' It went on for 21 years.

The inevitable happened. Six squad cars of police turned up, and to my parent's great shame and anger, we were forced to leave, immediately. I remember my tall Irish father hurling our possessions onto the deck of the Chinese junk, weighing it down below the waterline. Other chattels thrown into the back of a van, and in a matter of hours, surrounded by slightly embarrassed police, we were gone - our idyll ruptured.

My sisters happened to be away, and somewhere under it all, as the youngest child, I cherished the opportunity of being in some kind of struggle with my Mum and Dad, alone. Smelling his fight or flight adrenaline, his sweat and anger and her stoic shame. Since then, or maybe earlier, I've always struggled with landlords, with authority, and been triggered by the smell of life's transience, or op-shop mustiness. I've always been watching my back for an end that is coming unannounced.

With the Chinese junk full of our meagre, aesthetically simple, patina brushed possessions, we were momentarily homeless (it seemed such fun) and had to secretly move into my father's showroom - handmade timber interiors and furniture - (another brilliantly creative dream, designed to lose money).

Every morning for weeks we'd get up at dawn and hide our shabby mattresses, burred toothbrushes and other family detritus, and dress for school before posh clients arrived. I remember staring in the windows of other stylish showrooms (Karl Neilson Industrial Designer) and feeling the awakening of design aesthetics and art as a possibility, an idea, a call – as if I was staring in the window of how life actually is for normal people.

Killing time before school started, I'd also look at displays in a fancy bookshop. There was a strange exotic cover of a book about some dancer called Vaslav Nijinsky, and, still stewing over the police, the landlords, the whole embarrassing mess of school and feeling for my stoic mum, I wondered who he was, and what it meant to dance. Why would you give your life to that?

There is not the space in this preface to trace the details of these early formative experiences, suffice to say I feel the germination of interests in justice and aesthetics dormant in these early morning moments. In the midst of it, I never felt poor, I felt lucky. Bread with dripping was made to feel like a gourmet treat from my parent's WW2 histories; a Sunday night 'bits and pieces tea' of carrot sticks and sultanas, and cubes of cheese in little bowls, was just for fun, not because the cupboard was bare.

However, without knowing it, I grew up with a strong outsider foreboding - of being the same as others, but not the same as their lives; of not knowing how the world worked, or what people were actually like; with an imagination that threatened to reshape reality as a dream, and dreams as reality. In my heart was a platonic love affair with both Nijinsky and St Francis of Assisi. Not the real St Francis, but one from a Zeffirelli film, and not in a religious sense, but that he did something in the world. They were both prepared to be radical, to speak up and hold conformity at bay.

As school lost interest in me, I immaturely protested the stupidity of it by refusing to really work at anything but art. And then, a year at Sydney College of the Arts beckoned. Except it too seemed dumb. Lecturers jaded, failed artists, with a disdain for teaching, but an interest in superannuation - they had no interest in changemaking but could teach toothbrush handle design. I developed my immature eye roll. And so, as a self-righteous counter-dependent young outsider student, I deferred, and, when asked to go and work in some youth centre and an employment program, unpaid, in some far-away place called Burnie, Tasmania, near to where those exotic environmentalists were tree-hugging the Gordon Franklin rivers to freedom, I jumped at it, and it has led me to this work – first to youth work and art, then youth and community and art, then community cultural development, then Cultural Justice, and now to this study.

Figure 4: Ngarluma Country, 2021. Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

Introduction

My favourite quote from any critique of my/our works across 30 years is:

> **This is the kind of show that is ruining Australian Theatre**
> (Banks, 2001).

Ron Banks was right, but there is so much more to ruin and I include my own turgid, hegemonic, conservative work, which has reinforced stereotypes for the sake of royalty and survival in that statement. When someone like me, brilliant or not, is privileged to fill limited stage time, other voices don't. Culture is never a neutral space, so what we choose to do and not do, what we back and how, what institutional choices we make, is as pertinent to Cultural Justice as the content we put on stage, screen or walls. The concept of Cultural Justice will be explored in detail in Chapter 2.

Figure 5: Nelson Coppin and Trevor Jamieson performing in *Hipbone Sticking Out* at Canberra Theatre Centre, 2013. Photo: Greer Versteeg (Big hART).

1.1 — HOW THIS STUDY EXPLORES BIG hART'S WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL JUSTICE

With this privileged caveat in mind, this study acts as a map of discovery to describe Big hART's continuity across 30 years starting with: Who or what is Big hART as an organisation? What choices have we made and do we make? What has this organisation done over its three decades? To help facilitate this, it is recommended the reader takes a moment to study the Big hART **timeline** and to return to it from time to time during the study. The timeline works in tandem with the Big hART **show reel**, which highlights context and project titles in captions.

As we drill down into the research further critical questions emerge around the field and sites of practice. The study will address where Big hART's practice fits within the various contested definitional boundaries of the sector. The research will then home in on more particular questions i.e.:

- What kind of contributions has Big hART made to its field?
- Where is Big hART (within this field) placed in relation to arts and culture, both in Australia and more broadly?
- Where do Big hART's approaches place the organisation in relation to Cultural Justice?
- What is Cultural Justice?
- How does Cultural Justice relate to flourishing/thriving?
- What is flourishing?
- Is Big hART a justice organisation, a cultural organisation or a Cultural Justice organisation?

This last question is especially pertinent in relation to Big hART's value propositions:

- Everyone everywhere has the right to thrive;
- Disadvantage is a setback, not a life sentence;
- The voice of the powerless can influence decision makers;
- Injustice can be exposed through powerful stories;
- No issue is too hard, and no one has to be left behind.

VIEW THE BIG hART TIMELINE →

WATCH THE BIG hART SHOW REEL →

These questions feed the inquiry. If Cultural Justice has sharpened in focus as core to Big hART's purpose over the last 30 years, how then do Big hART's intermediations help produce the preconditions for communities to flourish? And how can we do this better?

To explore these aspects of the research question, the study will make use of an informal curatorial set of sense making tools:

- The terms Lines of Provenance and Flows of Consequences will be co-opted to help trace and pin down the rhizome characteristics of Big hART's organisational learning.
- These Lines of Provenance will scaffold the research around five exemplar projects from the middle years of Big hART which will be observed in detail.
- The Flows of Consequences coming out of the fifth exemplar Yijala Yala will then be examined for how these intermediations best produced the preconditions for flourishing.
- Finally, examples of flourishing in the voice of the Roebourne community will be illustrated digitally before the conclusion.

These terms require precision so as to avoid over-reach, because Big hART does not try to assist everyone to flourish, rather the organisation is focused on enhancing the preconditions which allow the possibility of flourishing. And this study is enquiring into better ways in which Big hART's Cultural Justice intermediations can enhance these preconditions. This difference may seem subtle, however it is important to Big hART's core values including 'do no harm' and helps mitigate against the arrogance of some approaches to changemaking.

The study examines the trajectory of Big hART's 30 years, from its original site of practice to its present-day projects. The exegesis is supported by images and descriptors in the 25 Year Volumes and accompanying video material. In part, this documentary material helps capture the dilemmas as they unfolded in the field. It sits alongside the reflective journaling throughout the study, both of which are designed to take us more deeply into the work, including reflections on the baseline of 'do no harm'.

Figure 6: John Pat Peace Place fire, 2021.
Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

1.2 — REFLECTIVE JOURNALING AND THE FLOW OF CONSEQUENCES

One of the privileges of my positionality in this study as it draws to a close in 2021, is being able to sit within the Flow of Consequences from the Yijala Yala project at a key Site of Practice (the John Pat Peace Place at the Cultural Centre in Roebourne on the banks of the Ngurin River) and reflect on the 10 years of this exemplar project in action. There is a richness here and much of the journaling that deepens the research has been written in this context.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 4 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

It's September 28th 2021, the 38th anniversary of the death of John Pat in a police lock-up in Roebourne in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. His passing triggered the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody[6]. Big hART and the community have just staged the fourth annual concert in a series called Songs for Peace, which is staged in and around the John Pat Peace Place.

The community write songs at the Ngurin Cultural Centre and in the prison, including members of the Pat family. A fire is lit at the John Pat Peace Place – a space co-designed with the family – to drink tea, rehearse with an intercultural band, and then stage the open-air concert by the Ngurin river. Songs for Peace is a way of remembering, resolving and leaving a legacy of conflict resolution.

For me though, reflecting on our work and finishing this research here in the shadow of this concert, there is a privileged discomfort in this moment. What have we actually done? What have we, in our intermediations with the community, achieved in relation to Cultural Justice? Whether these concerns are well-founded or not, they need to be visited, in the context of our Cultural Justice aspirations and this study.

[6] The full report from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody is available on the Australasian Legal Information Institute website

1.3 — WHY SHOULD WE CRITIQUE THIS PRACTICE?

Building on this intimate and reflective critique, it is important to be clear regarding the purpose of critique in this study. After 30 years of Big hART practice across 55 communities, the nature of Big hART's work has changed. It appears to have deepened and professionalised into a layered, flow of changemaking, or Flow of Consequence as alluded to above and moved more and more towards a Cultural Justice focus. Why?

All communities are changing all the time (Hawkes, n.d.) and within this Big hART's changemaking has also grown and expanded in sophistication to now involve five, layered Domains of Change, which work in simultaneity, exchange and complexity to drive the Cultural Justice intermediations. Because of this, the lens used to critique the practice will almost inevitably be too linear, missing the subtleties of the work.

However, there are many different ways of knowing and being that manifest through the intercultural nature of our work. With this in mind, this study privileges intercultural ways of knowing and being inspired by our learnings within communities such as Roebourne. These tend to be constructive in examination and critique, so as to add value to social transformation rather than observe from afar.

> **…what is equally needed is constructive theory and activism which leads to the reconstruction of culture and its energizing as a path of social transformation**
>
> (Jackson, 2011, as cited in Clammer, 2019, p. 104).

This is autoethnographic research. It is messy and confessional; it knowingly sullies the petri dish (Rankin, 2017b). It explores Big hART's practice from inside the sites where the practice occurs. In this way, the research is an extension of that practice as it looks back upon it actively and reflexively (Ellis, 2004; Van Maanen, 1998).

Because of the living and ongoing relationship with real participants in communities, this research needs to remain accessible and useful and alive, in the sense of belonging to these participants within the media and narrative used. It needs to remain mindful of varying literacies, cultures, accessibility, digital exclusions and cognitive impairments, amongst participants. It needs "to be able to reach wider and more diverse mass audiences… and make personal and social change possible for more people." (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 5). In other words, it needs to play a part in flourishing, and the research, media and design needs to tell an enthralling story.

As part of this quest (as outlined in the Instructions to the Reader) the writing styles and structure champion non-linear approaches, and utilise a range of dramaturgical approaches - poetics, text, video, image, data, opinion, visual prompts, and scripts, e.g. a childhood story and podcast; an Observance; a short theatre work; song lyrics; videos and photographic records.

1.4 — DRAMATURGY OF THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Dramaturgically, the research is shaped by an A story and a B story.

The A story gives an overview of 30 years of praxis:

- It begins with Big hART as an obscure, small organisation informed by place (Burnie) and describes this site of practice from three perspectives: personal narrative, deficit narrative and asset narrative.
- We then explore the acceleration of Big hART's impact in the CCD field across the first decade, and the beginnings of the provenance of the organisation's approach.
- From this, four exemplar projects highlight different Lines of Provenance, captured as domains in which change takes place: individual, community, content, influence, ways of knowing.
- These Lines of Provenance feed into the legacy impacts of a fifth exemplar project (Yijala Yala), which are then captured as a Flow of Consequences from that project.
- Extractions are then drawn from these consequences, which are epistemic and philosophical in nature in the context of the how and why of our emergence as a Cultural Justice organisation, and even whether this is now becoming an urgent new frame for the sector.

The B story is written reflectively:

- With exceptions, this reflexivity is delivered as the present moment for the reader: sitting in Roebourne (Iremugadu) in the Pilbara in the midst of the Flow of Consequences from the Yijala Yala project, watching the community and the Big hART team co-creating together. It is a privileged autoethnographic position, requiring honest reflexivity and provides a platform to make extractions informed by the immediacy of praxis.

1.5 — THE STUDY IN MORE DETAIL

Chapter 1 describes the dramaturgy of this research and how we will explore the work of Big hART.

Chapter 2 leads us through the who, what and why of Big hART, its value propositions, mission and where it sits in the field(s) of practice. It seeks to define Cultural Justice in relation to both Big hART and the hidden social and ecological issues which comprise most of Big hART's work. The chapter also defines what is meant by flourishing and sets out why this study is focusing on Cultural Justice and the preconditions for flourishing. It also looks at the ways in which arts and culture may inadvertently contribute to and support a lack of Cultural Justice.

Chapter 3 defines Big hART's initiating Site of Practice in Tasmania from three points of view: deficit, asset and personal, and looks at the way this site has shaped the organisation, the practice and the artists and producers within it.

Chapter 4 explores the literature in relation to the various names for this practice and the nuanced differences in the field, so as to situate Big hART's emergent approaches. It then moves beyond these definitions to settle on Cultural Justice. The chapter drills down into the specifics of the Australian context, regarding problematic resourcing and the propping up of hegemonies through cultural funding.

Chapter 5 is an extension of the introduction and outlines the methodological approach in detail. It includes the research question and the rationale for the use of reflective and autoethnographic practices. The chapter also expands upon the reasons for the various media, artefacts, journals and markers. It also seeks to assist the reader make curatorial choices.

Chapter 6 looks at the arts and funding environments in which Big hART delivers Cultural Justice Intermediations. It examines the disconnect between the focus areas of the Australia Council for the Arts (Australia Council) and its funding priorities, and the pressures this places on place-based, CCD and Cultural Justice work.

Chapter 7 shifts into a narrative portrait of the precarious foundational years of Big hART and how its beginning established a cogent approach to practice and new experimentation. It dwells on the establishing project *GIRL*, the novice practices that ran through it and the subsequent experiments as the company established its way of working. This part of the infancy narrative then describes the luck involved in formalising its governance structure and how fortuitously this influenced and enhanced its trajectory.

Chapter 8 selects and examines four of the five exemplar projects from across Big hART's suite of possible works – Drive in Holiday, Northcott Narratives, Ngapartji Ngapartji and Namatjira. The intention is to trace the decade of these projects in action as Lines of Provenance, building and shaping the practice, and being applied on future projects.

Chapter 9 examines the fifth exemplar Yijala Yala and its legacy project New Roebourne, drawing together the Flows of Consequences as they play out in the field as a series of accelerating legacies. This also meshes with the reflective journaling on this site of practice. Findings regarding Cultural Justice and the preconditions of flourishing are extracted here as epistemic and philosophical approaches to future and better practices, which in turn leads to the conclusions (**Chapter 10**).

Figure 7: *When Water Falls* First Nation's Choir Sheffield, 2021. Photo: Nicky Akehurst (Big hART).

The Who, What, Why of Big hART

IT IS HARDER TO HURT SOMEONE, IF YOU KNOW THEIR STORY.[7]

This autoethnographic research explores Big hART and its 30 years of practice. The organisation is emergent and the practice hybrid. This shape-shifting means it can be hard to gain a clear picture of what the organisation is and what it does. This contextual review provides a few focused definitions in overview, so as to gain a strong foundation of this complex layered organisation.

[7] Big hART's ethos *It is harder to hurt someone, if you know their story* was inspired by the ideas and life's work of German Psychologist Wolf Wolfensberger's, especially normalisation theory. For more information: https://wolfwolfensberger.com/life-s-work

Figure 8: Project participant Jade Song Writing Workshop, 2021. Photo: Rachel Small (Big hART).

2.1 — WHO IS BIG hART?

BIG hART IS ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR COURAGE TO CONTINUE.

When we formed Big hART 30 years ago, it was important to reflect our reason for being in the name. Big hART was chosen as a way of capturing the dual ideas of: art and heart, content and process, aesthetics and impacts. The small 'h' places the heart (values) implicitly in the processes of the practice, rather than explicitly in the content. 'Big' referred to big in scale, timeframes, place and intention. A hint of the mythic 'the heart of the country' and Australia as a 'big country,' as described in Big hART: Origins, Foundations and Making a Difference (Rankin, 2021).

The simple phrase 'it is harder to hurt someone if you know their story', has also grown in significance to the organisation to become a key signifier for who Big hART is and how we try and stay true to purpose. It is a phrase that helps us see beyond the opacity of this sometimes arcane field of CCD in which Big hART works. It helps us keep a watchful eye on mission-creep in our delivery in the field. There is also a narrative of hope beneath these words: an implicit primary prevention, which helps Big hART champion and promote flourishing or eudemonia (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

This draws on Deci and Ryan's (2008) discussion of eudaimonia as an approach to wellness which focuses not so much on pleasures and feelings, but rather on the fullness and depth of life through the processes of living well. In this context, goals such as personal growth, healthy relationships, a sense of community and belonging, and a healthy lifestyle are seen as intrinsic and are embraced as valuable in and of themselves, rather than proven valuable through the outcome of living well (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The implicit primary prevention in making known the story of those who are less visible in the community stems from creating emergent opportunities for a full life of health, depth and belonging.

Its name and this foundational phrase both point to who Big hART is i.e. a learning organisation that changes and keeps changing so as to: continually scrape the barnacles off; keep deinstitutionalising the organisation; keep growing. This phrase helps us stick to the core values of who we are:

- Big hART exists to co-create and mentor hidden stories with those who hold the narrative of their lived experience; and
- We intermediate with community dramaturgies to build agency amongst individuals and communities and to bring these narratives into spheres of influence.

Big hART's work can most often be found in regional, rural and isolated outer metropolitan communities.

It is worth noting that it is also easy to hurt someone if you know their story – and tell it your way. This can be propaganda. And so propaganda and co-creation walk a knife-edge. The knife-edge shadow in the words is instructive to Big hART. It indicates the dangers inherent in co-creating and our desire for changemaking. This points us towards the importance of self-questioning that is required if we are to do no harm in our work.

In this research into Big hART's praxis, this self-questioning is essential, hence the reflective journaling throughout the exegesis, the aim of which is to be constructive rather than indulgent, while remaining accessible.

Figure 9: New Roebourne On-Country Workshop for young people, 2021. Photo: Karella Walker, project participant (Big hART).

2.2 — WHAT IS BIG hART?

Big hART is a precision Not for Profit. It is in its 30th year. Over that time, it has been invited to work in 55 communities, with around 9500 participants, raised around $75 million in funding, and enjoyed very strong in-kind and volunteer resources. It has received 45 awards - local, state, national and international. Big hART is considered an exemplar organisation in the CCD field and is researched as well as taught in tertiary.

AS A SNAPSHOT, THE 2020/21 FIGURES (DURING COVID) LOOK LIKE THIS:

23,311	Social media followers
10,837	Audience
1772	Participants
1557	Young People engaged Australia wide
867	Workshops
328	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participants
316	Media Stories
104	Artists
70	Prison inmates engaged
47	Events
29	Trainees
7	States and territories
6	Conferences
5	Disadvantaged communities

Funding for these outcomes come from very different sources, year by year. Big hART is the recipient of little funding from arts and culture sources. These issues are explored further in the contextual review in Chapter 6.

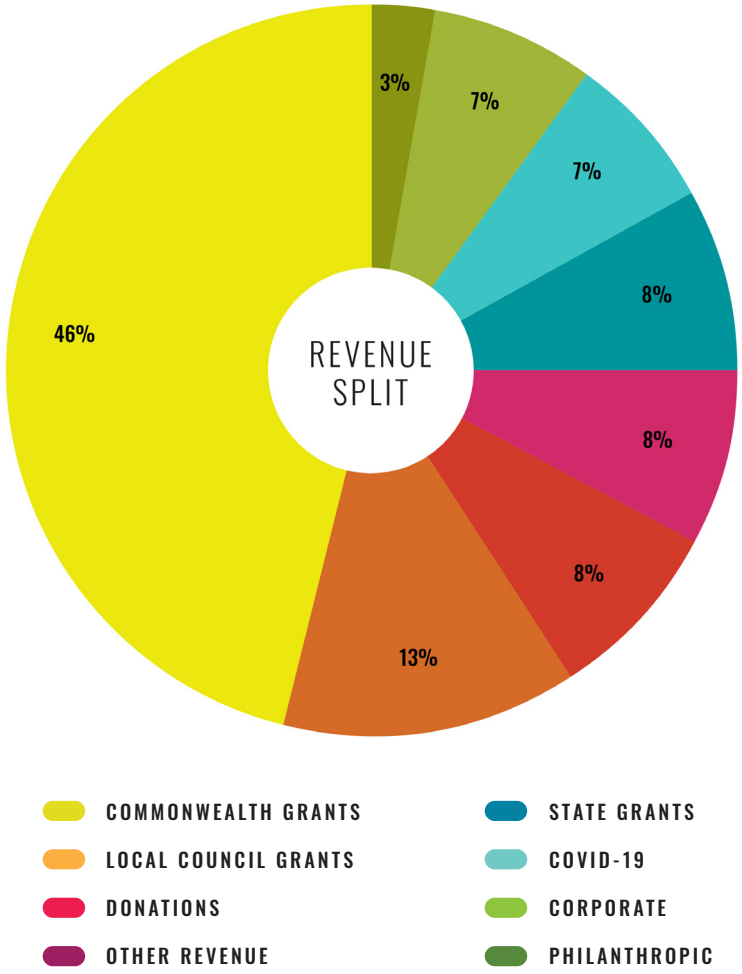


Figure 10: Big hART's 2020-2021 Financial Report. Image: Monica Higgins (Big hART).

Note to the reader: At this juncture, I suggest lightly exploring the following useful material for context. The Big hART 25 Years Volumes outline the first 25 years of Big hART, including the five exemplar projects highlighted in this study. Please flick through the images and the brief outlines.

Volume 1
Volume 2
Big hART's website

2.3 — WHAT BIG hART IS SOMETIMES MISTAKEN FOR

The fields in which we work are relatively young and the definitions of those fields are varied. These fields operate in a scarcity culture, which tends to encourage sectoral dogma and terminology. The practise itself, however, continues to shape-shift and remains emergent. In this context, Big hART often experiences pigeonholing into one part of the field:

- A campaigning arts company
- An arts for social change organisation
- A CCD organisation
- An interdisciplinarity, placemaking organisation
- A collective of teaching artists
- Participatory, co-creating, applied arts etc.
- A First Nations company (we are not; our work is intercultural)
- Community art
- An intermediation organisation
- A youth arts organisation (we are not; our work is intergenerational).

These kinds of definitions are useful, and elements of these approaches can be found in Big hART's practice. However, the organisation is rhizomic and responsive to place, context or hidden and unpopular issues. Big hART intermediates between these and other labels to deliver its purpose, which is often described as: make content, build communities, drive change. This research is tracing an arc-of-purpose for Big hART over our 30 years, from aspects in our work captured by these labels towards a Cultural Justice organisation.

2.4 — WHY? BIG hART'S MOTIVATIONS

Why does Big hART make content, build communities and drive change? The work is driven by the values of the organisation and the reason it became a not for profit. In a broad sense, as the rigour within Big hART's practise has developed, the work has found satisfaction in links to fundamental Human Rights, in particular the right to thrive (Article 22), the right to education (Article 26) and importantly Cultural Rights (Article 27).

> **Culture, in its original meaning "cultura animi" or "cultivation of the soul" represents the "all-embracing conglomeration of universal human values that, throughout time, has found expressions in the most variable creations of human genius that are able to elevate, inspire and raise the level of human consciousness. To reverse the dead-end race of our degrading society, we need to restore the true value of culture, defending it with the proclamation of the Right to Culture as an inalienable right of every human being, and humanity as a whole**
>
> (Koush, 2017, p. 60).

Big hART simplifies these motivating human rights to applicable, easily communicated expressions in the field. An example is the phrase above - it is harder to hurt people if you know their story - which often acts as a light bulb moment in discussions about Big hART's work, as people leave behind the old binaries of 'art for art's sake,' or the arts as a hobby, and become aware of other impactful instrumental applied arts approaches.

For Big hART, excluded people(s) and their lived experience are the focus. Mentored lived experience informs the content we make. The inclusion of content in influential narrations drives the lobbying. In turn, this can help prevent hurt, trauma or demonisation, which drives the organisation's purpose. These approaches provide the 'why' for Big hART's work - building narrative Primary Prevention intermediations, using the foundation of Cultural Justice.

2.5 — WHERE BIG hART PRACTICES

'Where' can be a vexed concept in the context of communities as it may impose a limiting expectation on what community could mean. Big hART is registered in Tasmania, and works nationally and internationally. The concept of where in this study, applies to both the geographic sites of practice, as well as where participants sit within social determinants and how they encounter Big hART.

Big hART's practice continues to emerge over time in the field through different approaches and sites of practice. It is like a collection of responsive rhizome related disciplines including hybridity, interdisciplinarity, events and activations, intermediations, community and political dramaturgies, applied content, participatory praxis and responsive producing. These varied approaches maintain a similarity of practice, and yet respond differently to fertile and varied opportunities. All affect perceptions of where Big hART works, and positionality in the CCD field.

Big hART's roots as a CCD organisation germinated 30 years ago, in live performance and theatre-making, and associated dramaturgies remain in Big hART's DNA. In the early 1990s, Big hART was assumed to be a community theatre practice. Along the lines of the kinds of practices that emerged from South and Central American modes of community-based collective creation in the 1960s (van Erven, 2001, as cited in Schaefer, 2021). However, a burgeoning hybridity of practice has always been one of the hallmarks of the organisation. Kuftinec (2003) notes the terminology of 'community theatre' derived from public funding language and was popularised in the 1980s to distinguish professional 'community-based theatre' from amateur 'community theatre.'

From the beginning, Big hART has also maintained a commitment to aesthetics and professionalising practice, as well as introducing the vexed concept of virtuosity in both content and process. The professional practice of community-based theatre nevertheless suffers from an association of amateur/community with 'bad' art within powerful (class-based) systems of aesthetic critique and discrimination (Kuftinec, 2003).

For the purposes of this study, the many possible labels for Big hART's early decades of work will be ring-fenced into the catch-all term, which, at the time of Big hART's inception was the most prevalent label for the practice in Australia - Community Cultural Development. This term, although specific to the Australian context, maintains a useful historical traction, which can include contemporary labels and disciplines, in the sector.

The constraints of these historic labels are explored further in the literature review, in so far as they situate Big hART's work and the provenance of the organisation. Sufficient to say Big hART has used many of the approaches of CCD while stepping beyond the dogma and history. With Big hART's burgeoning practice balanced between lobbying, advocacy, community dramaturgies and interdisciplinarity (Rankin et al., 2021), the organisation's CCD work has shifted to now sit more comfortably under the less used banner of Cultural Justice. This arc of practice is emergent in this study.

Figure 11: This Is Us Frankston Project O, 2021. Photo: Nicky Akehurst (Big hART).

2.6 — CULTURAL JUSTICE IN GENERAL TERMS

> Cultural Justice… refers to the processes and actions through which… injustices are resisted, subverted and challenged through discursive and material practices
>
> (Cantillon et al., 2020, p. 3)

This study uses the term culture in a flexible and accessible way, along the lines of Clammer:

> Our whole world is constructed through narratives…. that have immensely powerful effects on how we view our place in the universe (and even that there is a universe within which to see ourselves). Stories structure our experience
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 145)

In my 2018 Currency Press Platform Paper, I began to make the case for the criticality of Cultural Justice in this time of 21st Century urgencies and suggested we take it seriously and sharpen our focus towards it.

> If we take it seriously, culture is far from recreational, elitist or optional. It sits within the International Rights agenda. It is an issue of justice, which plays out in pragmatic ways, as an essential service, like education, health and sanitation. Culture is not benign. It is a powerful narrative contagion which binds us together
>
> (Rankin, 2018b, p. 3).

This became something of a turning point for the thinking within the organisation as if the blinkers came off.

> Because of the power of culture, we need to pay attention to it, and be vigilant about everyone's rights, not for the few, or many, but for all. If we don't, it can be weaponised and used against sections of society, demonising them, or rendering their story invisible and citizenry vulnerable
>
> (Rankin, 2018b, p. 3).

The platform paper advocated for taking the right to culture as seriously as other human rights and outlined ways in which the arts and government arts agencies were largely part of the hegemonic problem, rather than part of the solution.

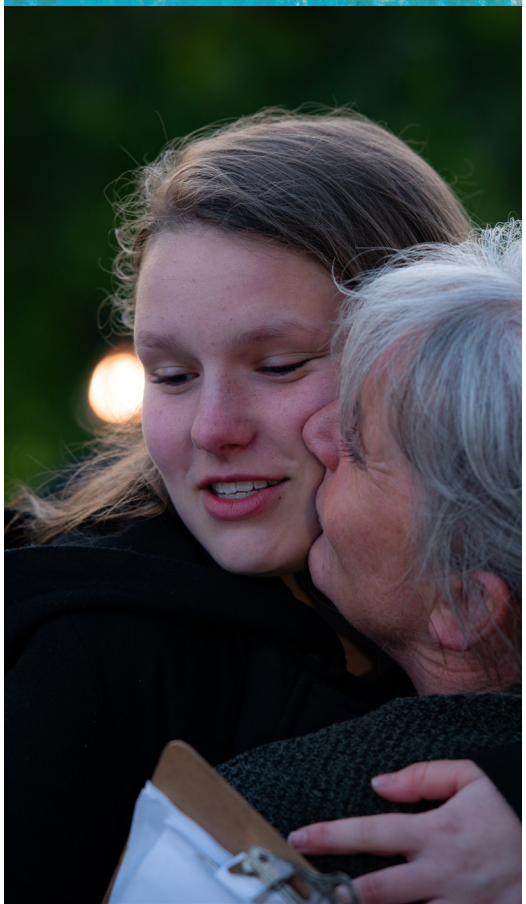
> …because insidious, disguised slow-genocides gain traction through the permissions that cultural invisibility can bestow on those on the fringes…..Therefore, we must keep an eye on culture – Is it being trivialised? Does it have a persuasive seat in Cabinet? Is it sufficiently enshrined in legislation? Are government agencies such as the Australia Council for the Arts and other powerful bodies being good policy stewards of it? Is it for the few or for all?
>
> (Rankin, 2018b, p. 3)

2.7 — CULTURAL JUSTICE AND THIS STUDY

This study takes these arguments a step further, and, having drawn a line in the sand regarding our obligations towards Cultural Justice, it explores Big hART's practice for the consequences of this commitment e.g. is it just back-slapping and rhetoric? What are the origins of our interest in Cultural Justice? What are the successes and failings? How does it manifest in actions and consequences?

> **Since Culture is largely a product of the human imagination, this primary faculty needs to be directed to the remaking of society, such that culture itself becomes a major tool for social transformation**
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 159).

Big hART does not shy away from this. Rather, its work draws on the essential lived experience of co-creators, intermediating this content, which is steeped in real and Deep Story, and creating participatory Narratives of Hope (Clammer, 2019). Big hART sees its nuanced community dramaturgies and interdisciplinary approach to Culture Justice as:



> **…a tool that transcends the pettiness and power-seeking of so much conventional politics. Cultural activism then becomes in a sense 'the new politics' – a way of acting in and on the world**
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p.248).

In this way, Big hART focuses on mentoring and producing these narratives - using community dramaturgies and advocacy – so as to speak truth to influence and power, built on lived experience and new virtuosities. This truth-telling utilises authentic languages and new disciplines, which are constantly built, refined and refreshed by arts-mentors in a healthy aesthetic tension between 'outsider art and insider art', developing what amounts to new literacies and new ways of acting in and on the world.

> **To reverse the dead-end race of our degrading society, we need to restore the true value of culture, defending it with the proclamation of the Right to Culture as an inalienable right of every human being, and humanity as a whole**
>
> (Koush, 2017, p. 60).

Figure 12: Project O Summer Dinner, 2020. Photo: Anna Cadden (Big hART).

The word culture is easily harnessed to particular agendas from heritage, the arts, ethnographies, nation-states, social change, pop, peoples and places. The least relevant definition in terms of Big hART's work is also the most prevalent in the West i.e. 'Culture' as content, or culture hijacked by the arts and creative industries. We tend to see our young Western society's expressions of heritage and art to be the highest form of culture – almost as if the arts are the vital cultural heritage globally.

> **… the assumption that Western culture represents the best that has been said and thought implicitly devalues other cultures. In our post-imperial world, it is no more than a 'racially tinged absurdity'**
> (Carey, 2006, p. 145).

Even a cursory look at this compared to the depth of cultures on our own continent, and the holistic way they are valued as the whole of life makes it plain that the arts in the West has hijacked culture to help protect its base, and ring-fenced content as commodity only. However, as Deming (2001) points out "culture is both the crop we grow and the soil in which we grow it" (cited in Clammer, 2019, p. 151).

2.8 — COMBINING CULTURE AND JUSTICE

In our simple touchstone phrase, 'It's harder to hurt someone if you know their story', Big hART brings culture and justice together. The value proposition behind these words is instructive: it is harder for someone to become the victim of injustice(s) if their story is visible in the emergent narration(s) which are part of the cultural soil. The value proposition, becomes an action in the field, informing the dramaturgy of Big hART projects, and is proven in ongoing positive consequences – flourishing communities.

The definition of their story is critical here to avoid demonising, othering, colonising and generating propaganda. Their story, in terms of Cultural Justice, is not so much the content, but more importantly, it is their making/telling of their story – the process. When someone is provided with the opportunity to gain the agency to participate in the making (or co-creating) of their content, from their lived experience, by being in the process, that content can bring both visibility and agency. If they become known and seen in and through the processes (agency), it contributes to primary prevention, and hurting becomes harder and resilience stronger. In this way, the value propositions of Cultural Justice become a set of behaviours in the field.

Lived experience becomes an asset and a gift to society, as both valuable narrative and primary prevention. Co-creation, participatory process, intermediation, teaching artists, applied and intentional artmaking, become tools in the pursuit of justice, helping to establish and enhance flourishing. It is this Cultural Justice praxis and these enhancements of the preconditions of flourishing that have moved Big hART's work beyond the simplicities of earlier manifestations of Community Arts and CCD.

As we see in this study, over time, the mandate for Big hART's practice has transitioned to align with the urgencies of cultural injustice. The organisation does not take on work unless there is a hidden issue that needs to be illuminated, thereby championing Cultural Justice in both local and national contexts. It is this that dictates our organisational attention, geographic sites of practice, shape and aesthetic output. This alignment with Cultural Justice scaffolds this study.

2.9 — CULTURAL JUSTICE AND HIDDEN ISSUES

Hidden issues are everywhere, hidden in plain sight e.g.:

- young offenders in jail (54% of children aged 10 -17 in juvenile detention are Aboriginal (Allam & Murphy-Oates, 2021))
- seafarers who are slaves at sea (1.6 million seafarers globally, 400,000 are slaves, delivering in our supply chain (ITF Seafarers, 2020))
- 1 in 5 Australians live with a disability, yet arts funding for disability is negligible (Shand, n.d.))

While other hidden issues are emergent: rural young women and family violence; isolated communities and dying with dignity; Aboriginal superannuation; farmers, drought and suicide; young people and eco-anxiety; rural young men and autocide; underfunding remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres; the NDIS and abandonment, climate justice and our Pacific neighbours. On and on.

These issues become hidden because they are excluded from the narration. They are not election winners or they're in the too hard basket. Cultural Justice in these hidden contexts helps intermediations to drive action, visibility and change, even while the issues are unpopular, hidden and difficult to fund.

This is the territory where Big hART applies its CCD and emergent Cultural Justice practice. Later in this study, each of the five exemplar projects examines a different hidden issue to assist the exploration of Cultural Justice as applied through the work.

Figure 13: Boss Man photograph for Our Ngurra Exhibition, 2021. Photo: Drew Woodley, project participant (Big hART).

2.10 — CULTURAL JUSTICE IN RELATION TO MAKING ART

2.10.1 — IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Across all the groups and issues that lack visibility, during Big hART's intermediations, culture and identity work hand in hand. They are central to Big hART's approach, and therefore important to this study. The fundamental layers of Big hART's work revolve around the expression of self and the interplay between identity and culture. Therefore, our work has strong foundations in self-expression through the arts.

> **To effect profound change, requires that we educate ourselves about our own interior wildness that has led us into such a hostile relationship with the forces that sustain us. Work on self is work on culture**
> (Deming, 2001, cited by Clammer, 2019, p. 68).

Although I have written critically on aspects of arts funding policy and its relationship to Cultural Justice, we gladly work within the arts and are wedded to it across the dimensions of our work in both process and content. Creativity, agency, community innovation, cultural industries, development, social design are all interwoven in Big hART's work.

2.10.2 — CONTENT AND PROCESS

Big hART's Cultural Justice purpose manifests in both the content made (20% of the praxis), but equally importantly, in the intricate, interwoven processes used in the making of content (80% of the praxis). Both of these domains are intricately connected to identity and culture. This individual and group co-content making is then supported by community dramaturgies, which curate and place the content in spheres of influence and power – local, legislative, philanthropic and capital. In this study, this action-based approach is captured and illustrated through the series of five interlinked Domains of Change, working in simultaneity (Wright et al., 2016).

2.11 — THE DANGERS OF CHANGE-MAKING IN THE PRACTICE

Change and fanaticism walk a knife-edge. The Taliban wants change. It is difficult to want to contribute to positive change and to 'do no harm'. Similarly, 'story' has its dangers in subtle ways. Narratives can both entrap or free. Reminiscence, for instance, is often used as part of CCD practice. Although a fairly innocuous form of story-making, it can, without a good duty of care, entrap and enslave communities and individuals in destructive past narrations, rather than release them. A deficit focus, combined with unresolved past guilt narratives, can unwittingly ensnare peoples in past trauma. Never letting perpetrators be gone, so they become lodged in deficit narratives.

Because story and change are central to Big hART's work, these need to be explicitly recognised across each of the five exemplar projects that are part of this study, so as to recognise and dispel the mythologising of story as a panacea to all community ills. There is some truth in the words and warnings of playwright and theatre-maker, David Mamet:

> **The purpose of theatre is not to fix the social fabric, not to incite the less perceptive to wake up and smell the coffee, not to preach to the converted about the delights (or the burdens) of a middle-class life. The purpose of theatre… is to inspire cleansing awe.**
> (Mamet, 1998, p. 39)

Mamet is right in some ways in regards to content - he wants to keep the didactic, the utopian, the changemaking off stage. However, the dramaturgy of the process of making the content is a rich mine for changemaking and contributes to the 'fixing of the social fabric', which is of acute interest in this study.

Narrative content and processes of making it are powerful. In the Yijala Yala project, examined as the last exemplar, we touch on this issue biographically regarding John Pat's death in police custody and the family's struggle to move on from it. We look at the use of story, artefact and outdoor installation to transfer this 'sticky' narrative from inner lives to actions and events, which allowed it to be remembered and honoured, but not entrapped.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 5 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

I'm sitting in the John Pat Peace Place, in Roebourne. I'm with Esther Pat. The last of John Pat's mothers, sister to Mavis Pat. Cup of tea in hand. It is dusk. The fire pit is alight. These days, Esther drifts in and out of a gentle dementia as she sits and stares into the fire. This place has been built, at Mavis's request, to remember John's life peacefully, to lay to rest these same churning narratives brought up by an unsatisfying trial narrative; protest narratives; anniversary narratives; books and plays and documentaries. Through quiet observation, somehow it seems to be this place which, for these sisters, seemed to allow the churn of memory (private and public), to drift away and untangle. How easy would it be for our work with the Pat family and their iconic story to become an entrapment? Perhaps instead this place is becoming a site of growing consciousness.

2.12 — THE ARTS AS CULTURAL INJUSTICE

> **Human beings in fact are – multifaceted and complex creatures… (with) an extraordinary capacity to adapt, change, evolve, survive, suffer, enjoy, celebrate and create new patterns of organisation, expression and meaning. All of this is included in the elastic category of culture…**
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 166).

Following on from the arts hijacking culture and siloing it, the arts in the West are also addicted to dead white male Eurocentric canons. A cursory glance at theatre subscription seasons or the visual artist gender gap (i.e. who is collected and for how much by our major galleries) speaks loudly and clearly. In a postmodern world, we are also dismissive of beauty and virtuosity (Hobsbawm, 2013) and craft and participation. I've spoken previously at conferences regarding the performing arts, and our preoccupation in tourist numbers, hotel beds, food and beverage, merchandise, and increasing our box office by providing expensive experiences to whet the appetites of metropolitan status-junky audiences of new and still newer versions of the same-same, and, if we are lucky, a touch of the sublime (Rankin, 2018a). In the arts, we remain siloed, self-satisfied and aloof from what culture is, does and could do, and - in relation to this study – how it could contribute to Cultural Justice. The recognition of the relationship between culture and justice is… a key to a humane and truly sustainable (and desirable) future (Rankin, 2018a). Thus, culture is critical to our futures.

The arts in the West, with all our insularity (including myself as a playwright), have in many ways become part of the problem of cultural injustice, when we could be part of a powerful solution if backed by good policy and strong leadership from government agencies. If we were to loosen our addiction to content as commodity and focus on the value of the inclusive processes for making content, we would see that we are stewarding powerful grounds for intermediation and positive social change.

This opportunity for positive social change also includes critique and commentary and teaching in the cultural domain i.e. "…cultural activism is necessary to the pursuit of cultural justice" (Clammer, 2019 p. 104), and in a similar way Paolo Freire (1972) argued for cultural action for freedom.

The arts are in continuous development and new intermediation practices are emerging all the time. There is also renewed interest in processes of making and change as a place for career and virtuosities based on co-creation with people and place. In this context, Cultural Justice seems to be strengthening as an essential frontier for artists and arts workers as well as strengthening as a field for constructive critique.

A great deal of cultural criticism sees itself as *deconstructive*, while in this newer emerging field, what is equally needed is *constructive* theory and activism, which leads to the reconstruction of culture and its energising as a path of social transformation (Jackson, 2011).

This reconstruction is part of Cultural Justice in action. It is to be found in the re-energising of culture, in constructive activism, and in the interconnectedness of hidden issues, transformative processes and critiques. It is also in this collaborative reconstruction that we find narratives of hope.

2.13 — CULTURAL JUSTICE AND SITES OF PRACTICE IN THIS STUDY

What governments choose to do or not to do in relation to spending on culture reflects value priorities that are politically determined, and these choices will produce discernible societal outcomes.

> **Cultural Justice can be described as a form of social justice, in that both are concerned with power and inequalities. Cultural Justice however, offers a more precise lens through which to consider the cultural dimensions of injustice**
> (Cantillon et al., 2020 p. 3).

Further, the public funding of culture can reproduce the social hierarchy by preserving, or even strengthening, inequality between social groups.

Figure 14: Intergenerational workshop with Big hART Board Member Allery Sandy and participants Bella Warrie and Johnita Sandy at the opening of the John Pat Peace Place, 2017. Photo: Marg Bertling (Big hART).

> The use of art to exert power is twofold. On one hand, the privileged group tries to secure the hegemonic status of its culture as superior and legitimate and to establish a consensus on what constitutes cultural capital in the field. On the other hand, once this consensus has been established, this group seeks to limit access to certain cultural arenas within the larger field of art.
>
> (Feder & Katz-Gerro, 2012, p. 361).

We may not see it easily at first, but the neglect of cultural rights can and does have a catastrophic effect in places like the North West Coast of Tasmania (the initial, as well as an ongoing site of practice) and other invisible and indentured communities, seeing them with very limited access to cultural arenas.

> Limited access to these areas allows members in the privileged group to express their dominant status by participating in the consumption of art and by accumulating the cultural capital that is associated with the consumption of legitimate art
>
> (Feder & Katz-Gerro, 2012, p. 361).

However, the policy failure inflicted on these communities, and the deep and varied poverties that flow from it, can also act as a rich compost for experimentation as a site of practice and give rise to new approaches to reducing disadvantages by focusing on and reducing cultural injustices, exclusions, invisibility and stigmatising. As we will see, this has been the case for the West Coast for Big hART.

Everyone should have the right to participate, be represented, see themselves and have a voice in the cultural discussion, and be visible in the narration of our nation (Said, 1994). To be invisible, to be shut out, is a dangerous cultural twilight zone, it is abandonment, it is precarious, it is much easier to get hurt or damaged, and is difficult to flourish.

2.14 — FLOURISHING AND CULTURAL JUSTICE

This study is not so much looking at flourishing itself, rather it is interested in the preconditions required for flourishing to occur, of which Cultural Justice is a part. Flourishing here is leaning broadly into Aristotle's sense of eudaimonia and a life fulfilled or well-lived. The chance to aspire to contribute, and be the best version of ourselves, our ethics and our life, in and around others, with our skills and crafts and interests – and the harmony that flows from it. It is flourishing or thriving in this sense, rather than just happy or successful or able to have all the things that others have the chance to consume. Flourishing allows for the many and expected setbacks in life, and doesn't necessarily prevent them, however, flourishing allows for courage and resilience, in the face of these setbacks.

> **To see how particular good lives are built… one needs not a science of eudaimonia, but a "critical eudaimonics", grounded in thick description, in order to locate the conditions in which the good life is meaningfully possible.**
>
> (McKay, 2016, p. 424).

In this study, the thick description is being sought across the 30 years of practice, and the five exemplar projects in particular, to explore Cultural Justice and its role in contributing to the preconditions of flourishing.

In this context of justice and flourishing, culture is not about things, preservation or continuation, it is about inclusivity and visibility to set up the preconditions for narrative-driven primary prevention. For this reason, how Cultural Justice intermediations can better deliver this primary protective function and help set up the preconditions of flourishing, is the subject of this research and aligns with Big hART's core value – *everyone has the right to thrive* (Rankin, 2017a).

Consider the Tommeginne people who once thrived on the North West Coast of Tasmania. Ask the under-represented, invisible and shut out communities surviving against the odds – coming to the attention of policymakers as though they are nothing but statistics.

The absence of Cultural Justice, precipitating an absence of safety, is very real. In contexts like these, culture is not just a plaything, a hobby, a commodity or a lifestyle enhancer of those who can afford it. As we will see when we examine the Lines of Provenance and the five Big hART exemplar projects, the people Big hART works with mainly experience Cultural Justice as an absence of inclusion and safety and health and well-being – an absence of Eudemonia. Cultural inclusion is not just the right of the victor classes, it is a Human Right and urgent to all.

Because of this urgency, Cultural Justice has become the frame through which Big hART has come to see its work. I've previously prosecuted these arguments stridently:

> **Cultural Justice is more urgent than ever in the 21st century. And therefore we must be vigilant. We must bring all the persuasive language of the law to our passion for Cultural Justice, so as to speak truth to power, so as to assist our harried and one dimensional legislature to see the Cultural Justice as an essential human right, which, if we reclaim it, can bring protection, dignity and flourishing as well as other societal benefits when we take this issue seriously**
>
> (Rankin, 2018, p. 9).

As cited by Cantillon et al. (2020, p. 75), Andrew Ross suggests Cultural Justice refers to "doing justice to culture, pursuing justice through cultural means, and seeking justice for cultural claims", and that Cultural Justice is often associated with other kinds of struggle against injustice.

This is the context in which Big hART has come to define its work. Having begun, as we shall see, with a single diversionary project in the context of juvenile justice in 1992, and tracing a path through community art, community cultural development, and on into arts for social change, Big hART then began to define itself as a campaigning arts organisation, and after 30 years this has led to new definitions for its practice around Cultural Justice.

The initial interest in hidden story ('it's harder to hurt someone if you know their story') remains core, however this was subsequently given more practical structure in the middle decade of Big hART's trajectory using the three words - Make, Build, Drive – which captures our approach in shorthand for the Twitter generation:

- Making the content about justice
- Building community to have more agency to pursue justice
- Driving change to secure justice

Next, I seek to understand how the initial Site of Practice assisted to develop our social designs to make, build and drive Cultural Justice - the North West Coast of Tasmania, Tommeginne Country.

CHAPTER 03

Understanding the Site of Practice

3.1 — ORIGINS, PLACE, GENESIS – THE NORTH WEST COAST OF TASMANIA (TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY)

In this chapter we explore Big hART's initial site of practice. This is critical to being able to see clearly the developmental arc of Big hART's practice, and why Cultural Justice emerged from more traditional CCD practices to one of centrality for the organisation. The influence this site exerted on Big hART is as substantial as my creative influence has been as a founding artist and producer. As we will see, Big hART was perhaps seeded by life experiences, and then began as a poorly funded project in Burnie, Tasmania – the originating site of practice. This unique and quite isolated location shaped the organisation, giving rise to a practice that was, for the most part, iterative and scalable. It is instructive for the reader to have a strong picture of this in relation to the study, to help understand whether finding better intermediations is dependent on the unique characteristics of Big hART, or whether they are iterative and applicable to other sites and organisations. For this reason, we begin with an exploration of the originating site of practice from three perspectives, asset, deficit and personal.

Figure 15: Burnie, 2020. Photo: Darren Simpson, project participant (Big hART).

3.1.1 — MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF THE SITE OF PRACTICE NARRATIVE

Big hART sprang from the richness of the little known North West Coast of Tasmania, which, even though we export around the country, remains the originating Site of Practice. These formative years began in 1981, when I first arrived as a 21 year old, 11 years before Big hART's initial work *GIRL* premiered on 15 May 1992.

The North West Coast is itself a powerful character in the Big hART narrative and there are many ways to tell its story as the Site of Practice e.g. from the point of view of:

- Tommeginne Country and the genocides that occurred here;
- The life of local warrior Tunnerminawait and his hanging in Melbourne;
- Robinson's survey and zealot diaries of the North West Coast (Plomley, 1966);
- The statistical narrative of Braddon as a problematised marginal electorate;
- The agriculture and industrial story;
- The exquisite environmental story;
- The Closed Brethren stronghold story;
- My personal story of how I encountered the coast, and how it transformed me;
- Or perhaps through the Midnight Oil song 'Burnie'.

What follows are different narratives for the same place. As a theatre-maker, we'll start with a dramaturgy capturing this Site of Practice.

Figure 16: North West Tasmania, 2021. Photo: Monica Higgins (Big hART).

Figure 17: Sisters Beach Coastline, 2021. Photo: Angela Prior (Big hART).

3.2 — AN IMAGINED THEATRE - A PORTRAIT OF DISRUPTION

A ONE-ACT, ONE-PERSON PLAY FOR A TALL, BALD ROCKER AND SPIRITUAL GREENIE

With thanks to Midnight Oil.

Staring from a fifth-floor window,
Sea-spray salted and smudged
Morning after the gig the night before,
Picture the sticky Boags soaked carpet of that Menai band room, Mr X playing support. A crowd of flannies and mullets, thongs and crutch-huggin' stubbies, middle of winter. (One day in the future, in July 2021, the local, pretty boy Mr X lead singer, Chris Lynch, will announce in The Advocate that he is standing (like you did) for Federal Parliament as the Labour member for Braddon… oh dear god save us – but that's another imagined story).

Next morning, awake, looking out over South Burnie's, lichen-tinged, asbestos rooftops, pure povo.
Pulp 'n Paper chimney stacks belch that addictive smell of slightly off sweet meats,
An Easterly whips up the Bass Strait surf,
A wall of chlorine foam the colour of mucus, dumped by pulp into surf, blows back,
off the beach and across the highway in front of the mill,
Kids in family Commodore whoop with delight, disappearing into mucus, wipers whooshing, kids squealing, seatbelt-free in the back.

5th floor Menai, looking through your misty window breath, you see dank surfers,
Riding steep ashen faced dumpers, clawed up out of sodden woodchip shallows,

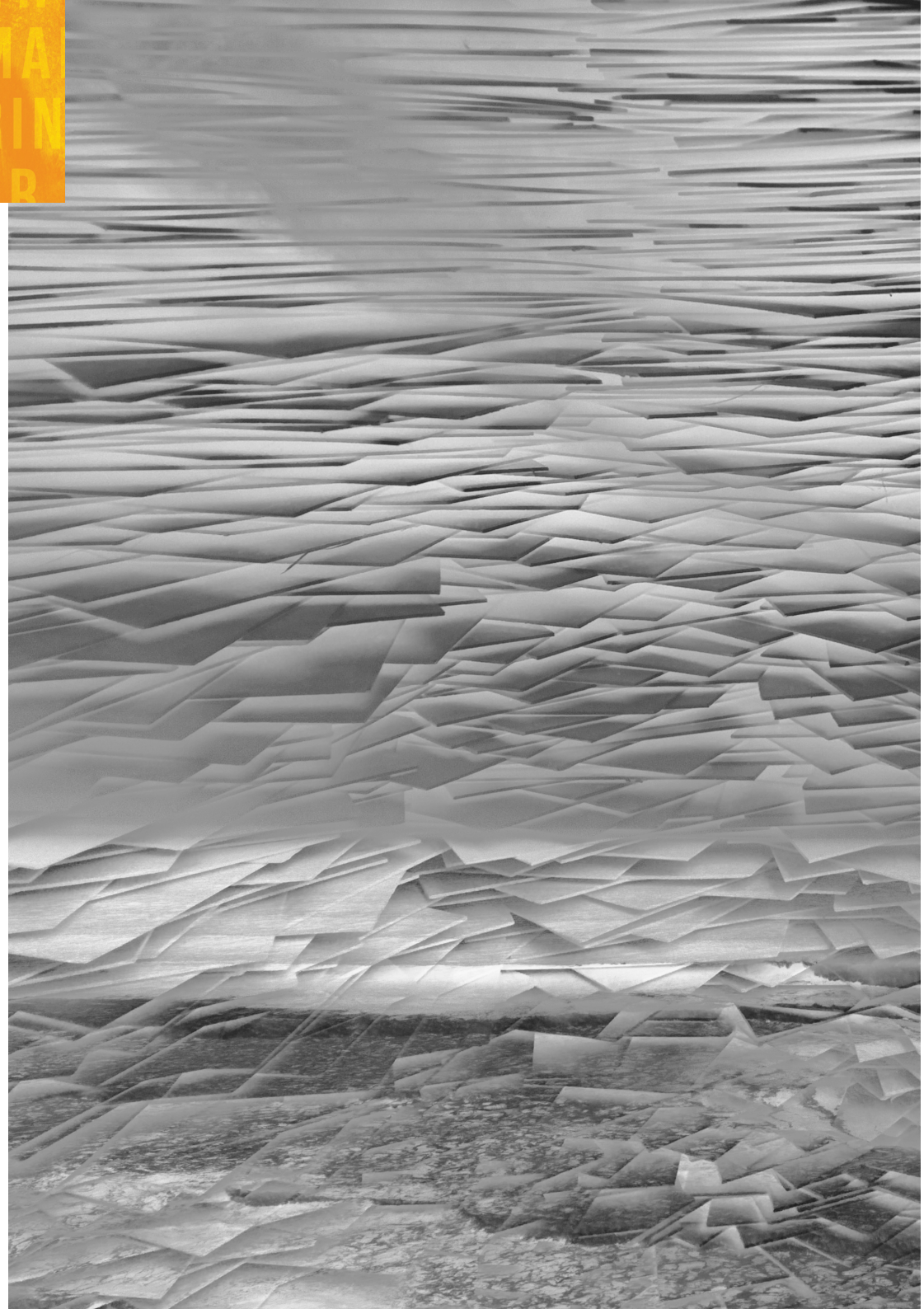
Figure 18: The Menai Hotel Motel in South Burnie, 2015. Photo: Gary Houston (Wikimedia Commons).

Dumpers slap grey beach sand,
Washing up ancient forest chips and spiky blowies, impervious to poisons
Slapping sand where three skanky kids play, near a storm water drain.

Rub that foggy Menai window, with your stooping tall man, pyjama sleeve,
And there see it, across the road,
A picket line outside the Pulp mill gates,
Who is that, a young Brian Green – an also-ran-Labour-State opposition-leader,
In brown vinyl jacket, collars wide enough to trigger op-shop-hipster-insta-glee,
Barking slogans circa Chiffley, to high-viz acolytes, cupping winter cup-a-soups.

And here you are, tall and hungover and haven't touched a drop - passive smoking under the lights, PA-ears still ringing,
Trying to build a career in this god forsaken place,
You, with your Sydney Northern Beaches birthright, born of the fortunate, people,
Where every day the fortunate surf is caressed by warm, NE sea breeze Zephyrs.
Here you are, magnanimous povo Burnie, povo State, povo Menai…
One bar radiator, guitar case full of shoulder chips, and big dreams,
With of Green, locals sneer, falling from pop-grace, into keg-beer,
You can't believe this fogged window picture…
So you pen these scan-less words…
Because you can…

Figure 19: The Menai Hotel Motel in South Burnie, 2015. Photo: Gary Houston (Wikimedia Commons).



Brought up in a world of changes
Part time cleaner in a holiday flat
Stare out to sea at the ships at night
No anaesthesia, I'm gonna work on it day to day
No zephyr no light relief it seems
But maybe it's a dream

This is my home
This is my sea
Don't paint it with the future, of factories
I want to stay, I feel okay
There's nothing else as perfect
I'll have my way
Brought up in a world of changes

Two children in the harbour
They play their game storm-water drain
Write their contract in the sand, it'll be grey for life
But you can't stop the sun
From shining on and on and getting you there
Tide forever beckons you to leave
But something holds you back
It's not the promise of the swell or a girl
Just a hope that someday someway it'll be okay
So you stop and say

This is my home
This is my sea
Don't paint it with the future of factories
This is my life
this is my right
I'll make it what I want to
I'll stay and I'll fight

BURNIE – MIDNIGHT OIL (1981)

Figure 20: Shattered Strait, 2021. Image: Monica Higgins (Big hART).

City of Burnie, love child of disruption.
And disruption implicitly says,
Come on people, the fault is yours,
You didn't see change coming, and make a sea-change, and buy a second shack by the sea, with spare change.
It's your fault this 'disruption' means your kids won't able to afford to own a home; it's your fault… this creeping rot of silent inequality;
It's your fault this global shift, and yes,
The truth of it is, so perfectly pristine, that 17 people control 80% of the world's wealth – says the World Bank's Christine Legarde - it is just a disruption
Nobody's pulling policy levers; wake up.
It's your fault you didn't see it coming… stop this politics of envy people!

It's your fault the Pulp Mill closes and you take the package,
And your son will never have that apprenticeship, the missus was hoping for,
And your drinking spikes, self-medicated,
And she leaves, self-medicating-lovers,
And you get punchy with the Menai bouncer,
And you can't get in to see that bald cunt Garrett,
And get locked up a night or two,
And your boy doesn't come home – surfing grey waves by day and sofa by night,
And you're a man-dad, you don't ask for help,
And you worry for him, and self-medicate – and kick his bongs,
But you're a man and you don't say nothin,
But you look… you give him that punt-cunt-outa-ya look,
And look, he's almost a man, supposed to be,
And you know it and you don't know it, but you hear it,
On the poisoned smoke stack winter-winds of pulp
He's trading blow jobs for six packs in the Burnie Council car parks… wake up buddy, and hangin' out at that fuckin' big art place, it's just a disruption, this fall from grace.

And 'you have nothing to be envious of… didn't see it coming you, loser… bit of agility people please…' Brought up in a world of changes… Fuck the theatre… The toothless arts, playing to status-junky festival crowds. Let's have another song:

Brought up in a world of changes…
This is my life - this is my right
I'll make it what I want to
I'll stay and I'll fight

This is my home
This is my sea
Don't paint it with the future of fucking factories.

I'm a playwright by trade, and like Wainwrights and Shipwrights, in this modern world Playwrights are pretty useless. It is a dying art. Seriously disrupted.

Where I live on the North West Coast… Country of the Tommeginne people. Disrupted.
But actually…

This is their home,
This is their sea.

Disruption - from the Latin Disrupto – to split apart, break into pieces, to shatter.

END

3.3 — MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH BURNIE (BEFORE IT BECAME THE SITE OF PRACTICE)

The idea of an Australian touring rock and roll band from the 80s (Midnight Oil) being affected by this place and writing a song about it is understandable to me.

I arrived in Burnie in 1981, almost the same time as the song. The mini-dystopian city had its own potent, despairing, wonderful makers' energy. It was alive with a knockabout – can do, but couldn't be bothered - independent creativity. At the time, I was standing at a post-adolescence crossroads, and traveling to Burnie was an impulsive adventure laced with escape. Although art and justice were personal motivators, I didn't have many organising principles or producer training with which to begin. It was Burnie as a place and an opportunity that taught, mentored and shaped me - until I collaborated more closely with founding Producer John Bakes to establish the organisation.

Fertile, place-based opportunities provided the chance to experiment i.e. run clubs, put on bands, art, one person show and fan the flames of confidences which became the nucleus of Big hART practice. Working and living in the community seeded new ways of thinking and doing: participation increasing visibility in the community; experiencing connection; identity and place; mutuality; workshop skills; using the media. It was a small tight easy practice, as though everything was in miniature. Burnie taught me and as it has turned out, this learning from place, this exchange, became critical to Big hART's approach to changemaking, and perhaps what kept it from being a one-way exchange and naively doing harm.

Figures 21: Burnie Paper Mill: Rise and Fall of an Industrial Cathedral, 2020. Photos: Thomas Ryan (Thomas Ryan Photography).

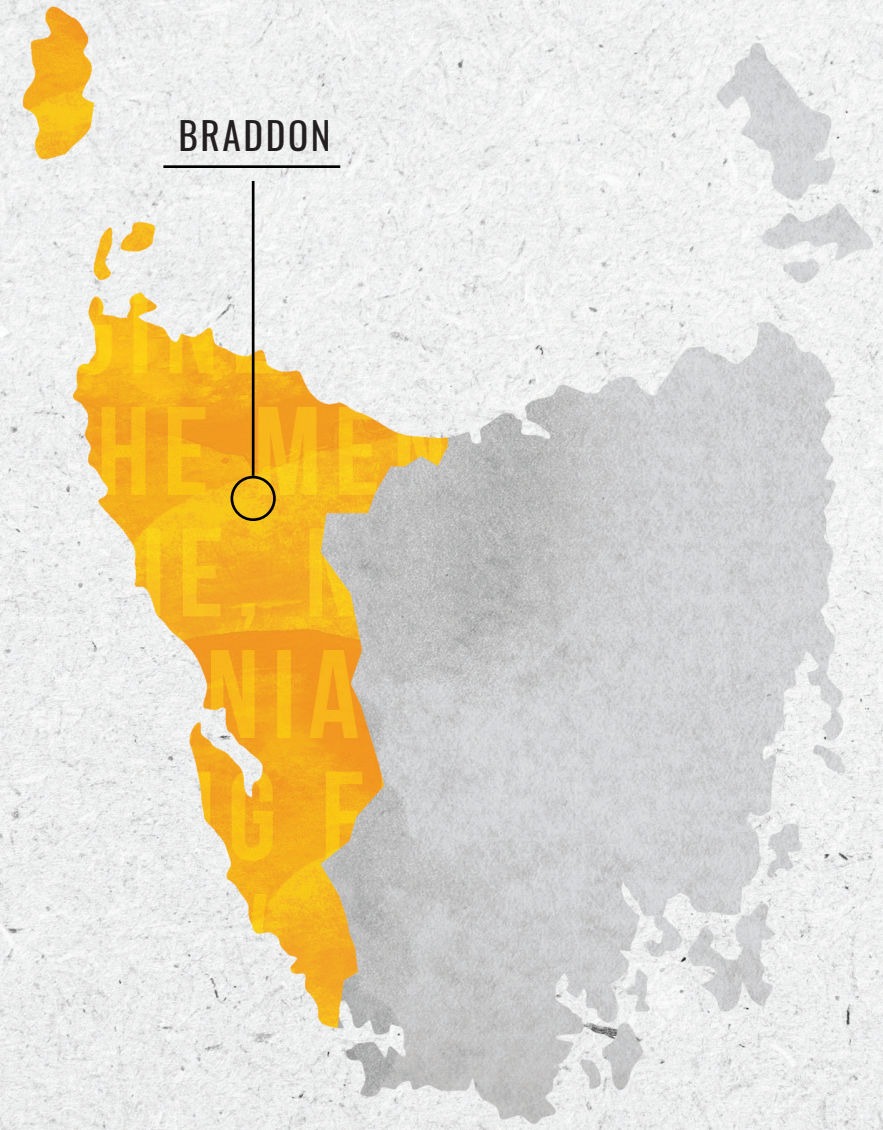
Figures 22-26: Burnie Paper Mill: Rise and Fall of an Industrial Cathedral, 2020. Photos: Thomas Ryan (Thomas Ryan Photography).

3.4 — SITE OF PRACTICE - AN ASSET NARRATIVE

The City of Burnie sits in the electorate of Braddon. The electorate encompasses some of the most exquisite environments in the country, some, like the Tarkine/takanya, worthy of world heritage listing (Brown (n.d.)). It boasts the cleanest air and the cleanest rainfall in the world, and some of the most fertile soils in the country. Braddon includes the North West and the West Coast, with its impenetrable wildernesses where few people have been, unique horizontal forests and the Gordon and Franklin Rivers.

There is also a strange unseen geological romance in this place, which provides an accompanying poetic/geological narrative. The North West Coast springs from the same geology as Alaska and Siberia, the same tectonic battles which forced the landmass of Tasmania into migrating south over millions of Millennia. I'm no scientist, however, the strange jagged rocks, layered vertically and jutting out of the sea, literally at the bottom of the block where I live, have the same crystalline signatures as those in Alaska and Siberia (Peck, 2015). As if in response to a deep call, every year the magical Shearwater (Muttonbird) flies from its burrows along the coasts of Tasmania and travels across the world to these same Siberian rocky coasts to feed and then back again as if its avian culture is still beholden to this ancient geological relationship.

Figure 27: Bass Strait, 2021. Photo: Matt Palmer (Unsplash).



This awe-inspiring mythic North West also falls within another prosaic electoral narrative of the seat of Braddon (named after Sir Edward Braddon, who rose from minor civil servant to become Premier of Tasmania). Braddon is a marginal electorate. It is also the pack horse of the State, doing the industrial hard yards, and is ignored by most other regions as sub-par. However, during elections, it becomes the centre of attention because its mainly working-class voters remain perpetually ambivalent, yet it is critical to both State and Federal elections, and the pork barrels start rolling. Braddon's story of place and people is often framed as fiercely independent, wild rather than beautiful, an economic basket case, the whipping child, ignorant and ignored - which doesn't worry the locals overly.

As the initiating Site of Practice, it was not good planning that got Big hART building its foundations in a marginal electorate, with multiple intersecting levels of disadvantage and high needs. However, it did create a hunger for changemaking, and it provided the freedom to think differently in regards to funding, how to pitch, diverse funding sources to meet diverse needs, the barrel full of pork. It gave us a path other than the scarcity culture that comes with funding from the arts. This became a cornerstone to Big hART's survival across 30 years, representing, at the time of writing, around $75 million in funding success and $225 million in total applications.

Figure 28: Map of Braddon, 2021. Image: Monica Higgins (Big hART).

3.5 — SITE OF PRACTICE - A DEFICIT NARRATIVE

There is another way of narrating the Braddon and the North West Coast as a site of practice, which government and service providers are fond of using. Generally, 'the people of Braddon are poorer, older, more welfare-dependent, more subject to family violence, and less diverse than almost all other electorates Nationally.' Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) are often used like chapter headings in a story when pitching for votes or dollars for projects in Braddon:

Poverty:

- The average weekly income in Braddon is $990, compared to $1143 nationally (ABS, 2016).
- There are more people with pensioner concession cards: 27.21% compared to 17.01% nationally (ABS, 2016).
- The West Coast and Circular Head local government areas are both in the 1st (lowest) decile of social need in Australia (ABS, 2016).
- The Eastern parts of Braddon lift the overall electorate into the 2nd decile. 26.9% of family households, have no employed family members (ABS, 2016).

Diversity:

- 8.6% of people in Braddon were born overseas, compared to 25.30% nationally (ABS, 2016).

Education:

- Higher proportion of constituents who did not complete Year 12 than any other electorate (ABS, 2016).
- From 2011 to 2016, the share of students aged 15 and above completing Year 12 on the North West Coast increased from 24.6% to 27.3% (compared to Hobart, 43.1% lifting to 46.4%) (ABS, 2016).
- For 13.1% of Braddon residents, their highest educational attainment is Year 9 or below, compared to 8% nationally (ABS, 2016).
- Only 9.5% have a Bachelor degree or above compared to 22% nationally (ABS, 2016a).
- Of people 15 years of age and over, only 9.4% have Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment (ABS, 2016).
- For 34.5% of residents 15 years and older, Year 10 is their highest level of education compared to 19.6% nationally (ABS, 2016).
- Northern Tasmania as a whole, the retention rate for Years 10-12 is 47.6%, compared to state average of 60% (ABS, 2016).
- 49% of Tasmanians aged 15-74 lack the basic literacy skills to cope with the demands of everyday life and a knowledge-based economy (ABS, 2016).

Digital (from the Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII)):

- Tasmania ranks lowest in digital inclusion at 49.7. The North West is the lowest scoring region at 44.1. The national average is 56.6 (ADII, 2021).
- Tertiary educated Tasmanians scored 56.0 while those who did not complete secondary school scored 42.7 – a gap of 13.3 points (by education) (ADII, 2021).
- The difference in digital ability scores between those who completed tertiary and those who did not complete secondary school are more disastrous - at 21 points (ADII, 2021).

3.6 — SITE OF PRACTICE - A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA NARRATIVE

Statistics are beloved by those peddling service delivery, key performance indicators (KPIs), interventions and intermediations - Big hART among them. Walk into the local IGA on pension day and the stats become friends juggling addictions, morbidities and conspiracy theories. When young people were asked to describe their hometown of Wynyard for a song in a Big hART workshop, quick as a flash a hand went up – 'op shops and bottle shops'. We need to look beyond the figures. It is easy to hurt communities with numbers, but it's harder if you know their story.

Wynyard Waratah LGA:

- Population 13,578; 23.7% are under 19 years of age (ABSa, 2016).
- 28% of children and young people in Waratah/Wynyard live in low-income households (ABSa, 2016).
- Over a third depend on government allowances for their primary source of income (Regional Australia Index (RAI), 2019).
- 7.6% of people identify as First Nations (ABSa, 2016) - 17% of young people in our school programs (such as Project O) identify as First Nations.
- 26.7% of the population in Waratah/Wynyard have completed year 12 (ABSa, 2016).
- 8.1% of the population have a university qualification (RAI, 2019).
- The median age in the electorate is 46 years, with people aged 65 years and over making up 22.2% of the population (ABSa, 2016) - our population is aging.
- Of those employed in Waratah/Wynyard - 3.8% worked in supermarket and grocery stores; 3.4% in primary education; 3.0% other social assistance services; 2.9% aged care residential services; 2.6% hospitals (except psychiatric hospitals) (ABSa, 2016).

Circular Head LGA:

- Population 7,926; 26.6% are under 19 years of age (ABSb, 2016).
- 15.7% of people identify as First Nations (ABSb, 2016) - 17% of young people in our school programs (such as Project O) identify as First Nations.
- Median age is 41 years, with people aged 65 years and over making up 16.6% of the population (ABSb, 2016).
- 23.8% of the population have completed Year 12; 4.8% of the population have a university qualification (RAIa, 2019).
- 65% of students at Smithton High School are ranked in the bottom quarter of the Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage; 90% are in the bottom half (ABSb, 2016).
- 25.5% of Smithton residents do not access the internet from home (including mobile only) vs 14.1% nationally (ABSb, 2016).
- Of those employed in Circular Head - dairy cattle farming 14.8%, meat processing 5.4%; beef cattle farming (specialised) 3.4%, cheese and other dairy product manufacturing 2.8% and primary education 2.8% (ABSb, 2016).

Using this kind of data is one way to try to understand our Site of Practice, and perhaps this is useful in some contexts. It is however reductive and prescriptive, and misses the beauty and the poetic, the life and independence of this place. In the kind of work we do, with the people we work with, it can easily generate deficit thinking and problematising, and encourages panicked pork barrelling, coupled to siloed, linear, dangerous, 'solution' based approaches to change.

That is not to say the issues are not real. The North West Coast may seem like picturesque rural idle of rolling hills, small cute valleys and iridescent green farms with mountains or the sea in the background. And this is the kind of rural narrative which often motivates people to buy properties sight-unseen online, and aspire to a new idyllic life. However, dig deeper into the rich loam of these place narratives, and there are nuanced rural stories, which have been unfolding for generations.

Figure 29: Site-specific music Acoustic Life of Farmsheds project, 2021. Photo: Anna Cadden (Big hART).

3.7 — SITE OF PRACTICE - A RURAL NARRATIVE

Since the 1950s, the introduction of new technologies, the globalisation of commodity markets, and the removal of protective tariffs have contributed to the restructuring of the agricultural industry nationally. Efficiencies and economies of scale and higher rates of return, make larger farms more economically viable than small farms, resulting in an increase in average farm sizes. At the same time, reduction in the number of farms and farming families has been one contributor to the population declines in the small towns that service the farming sector on the North West Coast.

- The most important commodities based on gross value of agricultural production are milk ($193 million), cattle ($143 million) and potatoes ($60 million) per annum (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), 2021).
- The local agricultural sector accounts for 36% of all people employed in the Tasmanian agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, but only 20% of total employment in Tasmania (ABARES, 2021).
- The average age of farmers in Australia is 56 compared with average Australian worker at 39 (ABARES, 2021).
- The average farmer has been farming for 35 years (ABARES, 2021).
- 23% of Australian farmers are 65 or older, compared to 3% in other occupations (ABARES, 2021).
- 99% of Australian farms are still family owned but between 1986 and 2001 the number of farming families decreased by 22% (RAI, 2019).

And so you start to see the hidden stories of bigger farms, fewer families, fewer children in country schools, a lack of digital and lost craft, skill and culture. It becomes clearer that things aren't quite as romantic as they seem, and easily fall victim to the indignities of poor policy and change. Without proper government investment, communities and families are sacrificed on the altar of agility, and on and on, with deeply disruptive hidden issues bubbling to the surface across Big hART's Research and Development (R&D) Site of Practice.

Figure 30: Site-specific music Acoustic Life of Farmsheds project, 2021. Photo: Anna Cadden (Big hART).

3.8 — BIG hART'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - A FERTILE SITE OF PRACTICE

The narratives above are the kinds of a popular deficit based assumptions about the North West Coast, which lead jumpy FIFO politicians to arrive for photo ops and announce-ables as elections loom. However, it also provides Big hART, with fertile ground for creating and testing intermediations. 'Place' influences our work as we create and test projects and social designs.

This Tommeginne Country, where there has always been a narrative of hidden genocide and Indigeneity, still surprises. In one of our most successful initiatives (Project O), 19% of participants disclose their Aboriginality in the town of Wynyard and 30% in Smithton. This may not surprise in other parts of Australia, but in the North West of Tasmania it begs questions: What are the nuances of narrative in this site of practice? Is the naming of genocide a truth-telling? Or is the use of the word genocide an attempt to bury the truth of survival on Tommeginne country? The nuances of narrative and dilemmas of co-creation in this place have been good teachers for Big hART, with research developing us, and telling us to let go of the arrogance of Western, linear approaches to changemaking.

Tommeginne Country is deeply compelling. It gets in your soul. Many of our staff trial aspects of the work here and decide to stay and raise families. Our producers' meetings and creative developments are often held on Tommeginne country, and it speaks and inspires with a luminosity. Rehearsal rooms face the sea and the bright northern sun bring clarity, silence and traction for Ideas. This is part of the reason why we have remained relatively quiet here. We have never had a shopfront or signage. The practice is more like the movement of wind in the forest than the trees themselves. There is freedom of practice in this, away from the homogenising-arts eyes and the scarcity/territorial battles.

Big hART's R&D Lab stretches from Smithton to Sheffield shapeshifting at different times along this 200-kilometre coastline, skirting the edge of the Bass Strait, including Wynyard, Burnie and Sheffield. This stretch of Country creates a fascinating touch-point for us, and, even though we work across the nation, it often feels like the beating of our heart, inspiring many works, from large scale to petite lyric and song.

Figure 31: Learning in the landscape workshop - Cape Grim and the Waterbird, 2019. Photo: Rachel Small (Big hART)

3.9 — SITE OF PRACTICE - A WORKER NARRATIVE IN TWO SONGS

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 6 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, OCTOBER 2021 (AND WINTER 1982)

Andrew Viney works for Big hART. I first met him in my earliest encounter with the North West, grew up in Grandview Cres Burnie, now lives far away surrounded by every opportunity and hipster luxury of our big interstate cities. Yet he still longs for home in this shabby industrial city and the hinterlands of his mother's family – the melancholy of place is captured in his song 'South-westerly':

Houses cling to hillsides
Watching over shipping lanes
A thousand widow's walks
South-westerly… always the same

Bricks and mortar, a mantelpiece
Mementos from a distant past
Good crockery we never use
A silence… thick enough to grasp

The Inglis and the Emu
The Forth at Devils Gate
Always headed northward
To escape… into the strait
Runways, wharves, and twin lanes
Beside the rusting railway lines
Only the left and the leaving know
The secrets of… the ties that bind

The Inglis and the Emu
The Forth at Devils Gate
Always headed northward
To escape… into the Strait

Figure 32: Through a door, 2020. Photo: Beth MacDonald (Big hART).

Figure 33: Gloves on chair, 2020. Photo: Matt Seymour (Big hART).

This melancholy is in the soil of our Site of Practice. We met in the 1980s a few years before Andrew left for the mainland. What is the nature of this longing after 30 years? A longing for people and place? For connection maybe, or its rarity, and simplicity, as if it is a more special life? On arrival in 1981 I too wrote about living in Burnie - a strange lyric, published in a poetry competition. It is odd to look back on that lyric as it seems to be about my predicament, and also the young people I'd begun working with. Although there was a kind of poverty in my life, I'd never really felt or seen the thin meanness, the sense of being emotionally parched, of nothing in the tank to call on, of being passed over, as was evident when the pulp and paper mills downsized towards closure and this North West town lost its sense of purpose and the economic teat it had suckled on for so long. And yet these two songs grew from creativity inspired by place.

In come the ships and out go the trains
Those cranes look big by those men
They're better than me at driving forklifts
I'm not fond of living in this town.

I've got a pocket I keep my treasures in
I've got a jacket I keep my warmth in
I've got a notebook I keep my sayings in
I've got a head I keep my thoughts in

This park bench needs a coat of paint
You'd think more birds would eat my crumbs
I've got a tattoo and I don't like it
I'm sorry I'm not a desperate character

I don't want your sympathy
I don't want your sincerity
I don't want your company
Don't look at me so seriously

Put on a cardigan and go for a walk
Very nice weather with the sky clear blue
I mustn't trip over or I'll graze my knee
Ambulances sound like very loud birds.

IN COME THE SHIPS BY SCOTT RANKIN

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 7- BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, OCTOBER 2021 (AND 1981)

'In come the Ships' captures the desolation of this port town in mid-winter. It was written soon after arriving in the early 1980s. I was only a few years out of the police driven disruption in my own life, not that words like trauma or trigger were really heard. There are key words amongst this lyric that place me within the alienated picture created by the song. Yet others are clearly observations of the young people I noticed and worked with in Burnie. The sense of place and the feelings are palpable as I write out the lyric here. And it returns me to wonder how much of this work, how much of this 30 years is based on deeply personal quests, and how much on civic values, ethics and much more considered and strategic reasons. Sufficient to say, my 40-year experience with the sense of place that is Tommeginne Country, is Burnie, and has driven my longing to pursue Cultural Justice and the flourishing that can come with it.

Even though Andrew's and my experience of the North West Coast were different, it was also in some ways similar in the reverse. It is one of magnetism and desire and a sense of having found a home and a place, just as my friend was leaving. I wrote about my first encounter with Burnie and the North West Coast, a decade ago for the Griffith Review, under the title Tasmanian Utopias. I was trying to capture the lightness and sense of wonder, and the impact of place. The resonances, feelings of coming home that first time, the visceral sensations of Tommeginne Country, which helped form Big hART - hence this in-depth study of site of practice.

Figure 34: Burnie TAS, 2020. Photos: Thomas Ryan (Thomas Ryan Photography).

3.10 — UNDERSTANDING THE SITE OF PRACTICE - A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF PLACE

The following is not from my current Reflective Journal as it was written more than a decade ago for a Griffith Review piece titled *Tasmanian Utopias: Island thinking from surviving to thriving* however, I'm including it because it is reflective and a kind of journaling of place.

> *...it often starts with a holiday in Tasmania. Campervan windscreens become a romantic panorama while circumnavigating the island's coast, or crisscrossing its backcountry, down narrow lanes with side mirrors brushing unkempt hedgerows leftover from a less practical era. The desire deepens from staring agog in real estate windows, making favourable price comparisons between a two-bedroom wage-slave terrace under the city flightpath, and ridiculously picturesque allotments with lovely stone houses, where chickens, children and dreams hatch and frolic free, down lush green paddocks to the sea...*
>
> *For me, in the early '80s, stepping off the ship in Devonport with a borrowed pushbike and a backpack, I cycled west along the coast road. It seemed the further I peddled, the more frequently motorists used their horns – and fruity vocabulary – and the closer the logging trucks insisted on using my small slither of gravel, weed and broken stubbies at the side of the road. They'd honk. I'd wave naively. They'd swear and then yell something about being green, gay, pink and brown.*
>
> *That ride west, away from civilisation, took me to Burnie, the stronghold of the Christian Brethren tradition. Gospel Hall-ers – conservative dark suited evangelists preached on street corners in black-pointed-polished shoes, stovepipe trousers with perfect creases, and white shirts with thin black ties. They seemed hip to me and kind of sexy: shy 1960s pop stars straight off the cover of a vinyl LP in Burnie's one record store. I'd cycle by and they'd fall silent, mouths agape as this lanky unsaved pestilence peddled past on a pink Malvern Star, the inspired word of God reduced to a dribble, tongue hanging out, wintery icicle drool on the tip...*

Figure 35: Burnie TAS, 2020. Photos: Thomas Ryan (Thomas Ryan Photography).

…Burnie was such a surprise after travelling through the hyper-real-lush-green of perfect pasture sweeping down to the sea, past contented cud-chewing bovines, who couldn't believe their luck to be gorging on the sheer bounty of it all. They'd blink with innocent ashtray eyes, without an inkling they'd soon be slaughtered and slapped on fine china, in the best restaurants and fed to long-lunching business cowboys, quaffing Grange while hardening their arteries and their hearts in one foul boozy-business-swoop while negotiating mill closures, downsizing, and redundancies in this post-manufacturing Australia, where paper mills are as anachronistic as compassion.

Finally, around the last headland, my pulse quickened and nostrils twitched. I could smell Burnie before I saw her. That cauldron of industry, throbbing, belching and rumbling, nestled at the foot of her protective industrial gully, perched on the edge of Australia's second deepest port.

It was an addictive, beautiful, austere and strangely forgiving community. Of all the Tasmania tiny towns proudly calling themselves cities, Burnie, although the smallest seemed the most city-like and cosmopolitan. Busloads of Latvians and Poles would head for the backcountry and the cold Central Highlands to help build Hydro Dams.

Some settled in the North West and kind of disappeared, after all, they'd only be here a few generations, so it's not like they're locals.

Not that long ago, when the roads were poor, Bass Strait was the highway along the coast. Every inlet and river was a small one jetty port. Farmers would transport their produce down from the dynamic soils of the hills and fill the holds of coastal sailing vessels. Small ships would load up with rocks in Port Phillip Bay for ballast, cross the treacherous Bass Strait, dump the rocks at the mouth of places like the Inglis River in Wynyard, then filled to the gunwales with sacks of delicious Tasmanian spuds and onions sail back to the Melbourne markets.

Travel by hard working locals was limited and small towns dotted the sparsely populated coastline. Isolation gave rise to strident localism. From church parish to football club, tribalism and loyalty was rampant, tolerance for outsiders was low, and new futures and horizons restricted.

As a consequence, scattered along a short stretch of picturesque coastal rind are tiny towns at every turn, quaint and quiet – Penguin, Preservation Bay, Sulphur Creek, Blythe Heads, Burnie, Cooee, Cam River, Somerset, Doctors Rocks, Boat Harbour, Sister's Beach.

This mix of northern gaze, isolation, independence and relationship with the sea could be what gives the North West coast its distinctive feel and culture…

Figure 36: Burnie TAS, 2020. Photos: Thomas Ryan (Thomas Ryan Photography).

3.11 — SITE OF PRACTICE CONCLUSION - RECAPPING THE STRUCTURE

As this study progresses, it traces the Cultural Justice trajectory of Big hART from the beginnings on this site of practice, with a naïve desire for change, through initial steps to implement and act on that desire, a growing understanding of the implications and responsibilities of changemaking, to the commitment to CCD and later the development of a more nuanced Cultural Justice practice. The beginnings and steps on this journey are described and reflected upon so as to trace the development and sharpen our focus. The scaffold for this overview and the deeper dive into the rich data of particular projects is laid out further in the methodology (Chapter 5). However, in brief, the shape of what's to come follows these steps.

Context and method: The Literature Review situates Big hART's work both internationally and contextually and then the methodology lays out the approach to the research. This is followed by a section to help us understand the arts and funding environments in which our Cultural Justice endeavours operate. The study then opens out to explore Big hART's practice in an interconnected loose chronology, in conjunction with the Big hART timeline.

Big hART early years: We take an extensive dive into the early years of Big hART, with its establishment, first projects, its incorporation in 1996, and the relationship here with the tragedy at Port Arthur. This is followed by the phase of experimentation and trial and error as a learning organisation. We trace the establishment of using Lines of Provenance to define how the organisation developed across time, and what were the key attributes and drivers which led Big hART through CCD practice and on towards the Cultural Justice practice, which features in the organisations work today.

Exemplars: The five exemplar projects are then chosen for detailed examination and reflection, so as to refine the clarity of thinking around these Lines of Provenance e.g. where they came from; how we became aware of them; what kinds of ways were they revealed and developed; and other inquiries. This is entwined in narrative form with a portrait of what the Cultural Justice issues were, what actions were taken, how we reflected on them and what they achieved or didn't achieve.

The Fifth Exemplar project: Yijala Yala is extracted for a more detailed exploration of how Lines of Provenance become the Flows of Consequences. These positive consequences are examined across the Domains of Change and through the lens the legacy projects which remain in action today. Importantly, these Flows of Consequences are shown through media rich materials which allow the community to speak in their own voice so as to illustrate examples of flourishing that result from Cultural Justice intermediations.

Concluding Extractions: Epistemic extractions are then pursued, learning from the five exemplars. These are roughly themed along the lines of: individuals, communities, content, influence and ways of knowing, and are combined with reflective journaling. Conclusions are drawn regarding Cultural Justice and how intermediations can better produce the preconditions for individuals and communities to flourish.

Literature Review

> The community arts movement which began in the late 1960s was concerned with the 'cultural democratisation' which, in the context of the times, meant more than access by the working class to arts and cultural opportunities – it meant enabling people to create their own cultures
>
> (Mills, 1993, p.6).

> CCD is naturally anti-establishment, anti-canon and anti-academy
>
> (Evans, 2003, p. 37).

4.1 — INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to advance an examination of Cultural Justice intermediation, by examining the practices, disciplines and labels that are used to define and describe the varied arts and cultural practices used in the Cultural Justice field.

The Australia Council describes CCD as "a specific type of arts practice where as a group, community members and professional artists collaborate to create art that is reflective of that place and community." (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020 p. 21). In contrast, as part of it's 10-year strategy 'Let's Create', the Arts Council England place participation, inclusion and other elements of justice at the centre of their service delivery:

> 1. We will ensure a more equitable distribution of our investment to improve opportunities for everyone, especially those with under-represented protected characteristics and from disadvantaged socio-economic groups.
>
> 2. We will invest in inclusive cultural organisations whose leadership, governance and workforce – and the independent creative practitioners they support – represent the diversity of contemporary England.
>
> 3. We will invest in a cultural sector that is more relevant to all of England's communities, especially those that have been historically underserved by public investment in culture.
>
> 4. We will become a more inclusive and relevant national development agency for creativity and culture that models good practice (Arts Council England, 2020, p. 42)

In Australia, Cultural Justice and the other multi-label practices could benefit greatly from a similar centrality in cultural policy. If this were the case, the context for work in the pursuit of Cultural Justice would involve very different funding structures, imprimatur and a clearer definition for what is a confused practice.

> **… the complex, contextual and multi-layered nature of the arts makes it difficult to identify single aims that are easily measured or evaluated through traditional research methods**
> (Reason & Rowe, 2017, p. 22).

This chapter recognises this difficulty. The multiple descriptors for these practices are contested, as are the terms Culture and Justice themselves. It is not within the scope of this chapter to investigate the intricacies of these arguments. I will however acknowledge them with a light touch exploration, and then spend more time reflectively exploring Big hART's approach and defining why Cultural Justice intermediations have become more and more important for the organisation as a frame of practice.

There are many other contemporary organisations in Australia working in these varied and linked spaces, such as FORM, DADAA, Marrugeku and Back to Back, as well as traditional workers theatres, circuses and institutions such as Footscray Community Arts Centre. This long list of practice also includes many individual artists, community producers and sole traders, all of which argue cogently for their particular 'brand' of practice, even when the outcomes and impacts may be similar.

Additionally, we all stand on the shoulders of foundational

elders, their training, their texts and their iterative work i.e. Augusto Boal, Paolo Friere, Arlene Goldbard, Owen Kelly, Ian Cameron, David Watt, Brad Haseman, Jon Hawkes, Anne Dunn AO, Deidre Williams, Deborah Mills and many others. These seminal exponents need to be acknowledged, and (to some degree) allowed to rest having been recognised for the powerful contributions they have described and left for us. However, because of the emergent nature of the practice, we also need to recognise that contemporary practice is developing at an accelerating pace, in the context of a digital world and global urgencies, which are existential and threaten the planet. It is a different world now and innovative approaches to social designs and content creation, dissemination and impact are needed. Thanks to these shoulders on which we stand, what is emerging is a more sophisticated, interconnected, interdisciplinary practice, which avoids silos and reductionist agitation in favour of more responsive layers of changemaking. Now more than ever, these accelerating urgencies of the 21st Century are demanding an urgent Cultural Justice response.

Much analysis of these disciplines and their histories, has occurred extensively elsewhere e.g. Van Erven (2001), Schaefer and Watt (2006), Spurgeon and Burgess (2015), Comte (2016), Thurow (2019), Gilbert, Pigram and Swain (2021). While acknowledging this deep well of data, this chapter sharpens its focus on Big hART's intermediation practices and Cultural Justice. It builds on what others have previously done in the field, and then seeks to understand the literature and ideas which illuminate how we can improve precision Cultural Justice intermediations, and better deliver the preconditions for flourishing. In this way, we need to begin by asking why Cultural Justice at all?

4.2 — WHY CULTURAL JUSTICE?

When introducing his book, The Ecological Thought, Morton states:

> **The ecological crisis we face is so obvious that it becomes easy… to join the dots and see that everything is interconnected'. He calls this 'the ecological thought,' and says, 'the more we consider it, the more our world opens up**
>
> (Morton, 2010, p. 1).

Morton is suggesting that in these urgent times the interconnectedness of the ecological thought is critical to understanding coexistence so as to open up other worlds to us. By extension, a sophisticated Cultural Justice practice depends on this opening up to be able to move beyond coexistence towards flourishing.

Clammer (2019, p. 66) calls culture "the medium in which we swim as humans" and "the inescapable framework of our identities as individuals and members of one or more communities". He suggests that culture is as varied and multifaceted as all human beings, all of which need to be included in the "elastic category of culture" (Clammer, 2019, p. 66). He points to a cascade of rights i.e. the right to beauty, silence and many others; and justices i.e. environmental racism, sensory violence, food justice (the right to nutrition), which strongly resemble the context in which Big hART finds itself working. He concludes this thought by saying:

> **Cultural justice is consequently a very inclusive term, and one which strongly suggests that the notion of human rights be extended far beyond its narrow legalistic definition. This then has two outcomes – to protect a wider range of rights… and to encourage creative work in pursuit of social transformation**
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 104).

This concept of Cultural Justice as "creative work in the pursuit of social transformation" (Clammer, 2019 p. 104). resonates deeply with Big hART's approach in project design and delivery. It describes elegantly our focus on both the process of making, and the content made as communal areas where identity and culture can shift social trajectories i.e. social transformation.

Cultural Justice then, when framed in this way, is a form of primary prevention, and primary prevention is exceptionally valuable (Anderson et al., 2019). More and more, Big hART brings these concepts together as 'creative work in pursuit of primary prevention'. At its basis, this prevention involves inclusivity in the processes of this creative work and in the emergent process of imagining the future that we, as communities and a society, decide we want.

In this way, Cultural Justice is a form of inclusive *pre-figurative research* as defined by Max Haiven and Dr Alex Khasnabish. It is research that is aimed not at discovering facts about the past, or even data about the present, but which is "a research methodology that is borrowed from the future that we wish to create" (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 22).

Big hART's Cultural Justice work leans into these kinds of approaches with individuals and communities experiencing the effects of disadvantage, and a disabling stasis, born of multiple lateral traumas. Through this Cultural Justice approach, we invite participants into intermediated spaces where these pre-figurative (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014) tools for imagining new futures are not hopelessly utopian, rather they are practical, and therefore necessarily utopian. In practice, the door is held open (inclusivity) through wrap-around mentoring and long-term supportive relationships which equip the utopian with the more utilitarian skills of resilience in the everyday life. This is a core way in which Big hART manifests Cultural Justice - in practice, in the field - and this pluralism and inclusivity have become more and more critical to our work, so much so that it has started to change the labelling of our praxis from CCD to Cultural Justice, over time.

Traditionally, definitions of Cultural Justice have often been restricted to pluralism only e.g.

> **the authenticity and epistemological and ontological validity of different cultures is fully acknowledged and celebrated, various paths toward liberation accepted as real alternatives, and practical (cultural and political) steps to achieve cultural justice contextualized in the framework of cultural pluralism**
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 169).

However, as Clammer indicates above, many diverse issues cascade into Cultural Justice, with pluralism being only one important dimension or attribute of change. For Big hART, this does not mean loading up aesthetic and poetic content with didacticism. Rather, the pursuit of Cultural Justice needs to be layered into our making processes, and also in arts and culture generally i.e. in structures, legislation, funding and institutions, so they are actively and vigorously enhancing and defending cultural rights. In this way, in Big hART's practice, Cultural Justice has become woven into our organisation's DNA. Accordingly, it is central to this study, and we will examine the genesis of Big hART's Cultural Justice activism across five exemplar projects, investigating for both successes and the ways it has failed.

4.3 — CULTURAL JUSTICE AND THE URGENCIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Social transformation can no longer be business as usual in the 21st century. "Nature as we knew it is gone – there is no pristine wilderness left untouched to some degree by human activities" (McKibben, 1989). It is now 30 years since McKibben's observation, and the urgencies are accelerating across oceans, soil, climate, agriculture, ecologies etc. The Amazon is a broken lung - emitting carbon, rather than absorbing. The rights to beauty, silence, clean air etc. are diminishing. These cascading urgencies beg the question, how can we, as a community, identify "the as yet unnameable which begins to proclaim itself" (Derrida, 1978, p. 293)? Morton (2010) talks of 'hyper objects' so large we can't see them. When we do glimpse them, impression, without room for expression, leads to depression and inaction, numbness and denial. Morton's solastalgia (2010) is perhaps both a symptom and a cause.

In the context of these urgencies, Ernst Bloch (1995) highlights the 'principle of hope' – we are a forward-looking primate which can anticipate as well as remember. We are interconnected and can anticipate the futures we choose – hopeful or otherwise – and so these anticipatory narratives, which come in many forms, are critical tools for imagining and constructing hopeful and co-existent futures. O'Sullivan's 'Ecozoic futures' (Clammer, 2019 p. 150) are possible i.e. futures based on justice, culture and care are possible.

In this study I am using 'culture' in the context of these narrative cosmologies of interconnected future imaginings, and how they become the basis of the lives we live. Similar to Said's (1994) broad discussion of ideas, which can, using narratives of hope, bring interconnectedness, awareness, creativity and justice to the foundations of how and why we imagine, learn and live. These are just as possible as the destructive imagining of our future which contribute to the urgencies Morton (2010) is warning us of.

In the context of these urgencies, there is an intersection between flourishing, sustainability, healing and justice - or 'an abundant life' as Clammer (2019) puts it - in the development of communities. This idea has a long history, captured in descriptors for Big hART's work such as community cultural development, which we have more recently replaced with Cultural Justice.

This study acknowledges historical practices in the field and in its own DNA, however, it is more concerned with the ways in which Big hART's Cultural Justice approaches act as a funnel, drawing a range of interconnected concerns into one. And in doing so, avoiding siloing the experiences of participants and delivering intermediations which help establish more abundant futures where communities flourish. Seen against the criticality of responses to 21st-century urgencies, the relevance of this praxis (grown out of CCD) is rapidly increasing.

> **Storytellers thrive at the margins of power, casting a sceptical eye on contemporary culture. And their somewhat independent status permits them to offer impassioned critiques, visionary alternatives, and an outsider's objectivity**
>
> (Morris, 1998, as cited by Clammer, 2019, p. 89).

In the face of the urgencies, our Cultural Justice praxis brings social transformation to the task of our social imagining, not just as an act of empathy, but rather as an essential breeding ground for this outsider objectivity. This praxis also recognises that both the content made and the process of making are dramaturgically rich, productive and highly rewarding arenas for serious creative endeavour and building careers.

4.4 — INTERMEDIATION AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

> **Power elites privilege certain life stories over others. At the same time, people may resist dominant cultural narratives, give voice to suppressed discourses, and struggle to bring marginalized ways of imagining and telling lives to the cultural fore**
>
> (Gjerde, 2004, cited in McAdams, 2008, p. 247).

To deliver Cultural Justice, Big hART works through narrative and deep story, deep ecologies, deep process, making authentic content, based on the intimacy of lived experience. Within these narrations, this deep, rich story bubbles up as an unexpected, authentic and intimate voice, and is held visible by Cultural Justice intermediations.

Voices from the fringes - invisible voices - can then become part of this narration of the future. However, these voices from the edge are often unskilled. They are profound yet mostly silenced through a lack of concern, structural injustice, lack of access or interest, or by demonising and clumsy policy. Yet these voices often contain the most powerful original and arresting story. Stories for which, in fact, there is strong consumer hunger, because of their intimacy, immediacy and authenticity. They can open the door to 'narratives of hopeful futures'.

> **I prefer to be a hope rather than talk about hope. Being a hope is being in motion, on the move with body on the line, mind set on freedom, soul full of courage, and heart shot through with love**
>
> (West, 2017, p. xxiv).

Such stories create room for expression rather than depression. Room for authentic action, rather than the one dimensional and the woke. However, to achieve this narrative power, they require careful intermediation. Perhaps ironically in the context of Big hART's work, intermediation is a term borrowed from the world of finance and entrepreneurs. It is a combination of intervention and mediation. In the community sector it takes on a form of cultural and community diplomacy, a service, in the liminal spaces which make up the complex layers of communities (Berson, 2018). The term is useful in Cultural Justice work, because of its flexible qualities - the flow of change - rather than problematising and providing fixed solutions.

In the Cultural Justice context, intermediation can create the space to allow Outsider voices from those excluded from society, to be heard and have influence, and even act like a 'canary in a coalmine.' To be heard and valued is to begin to experience agency. In this way, intermediation provides the pathways by which participants can enter the narration that

helps imagine our futures with authenticity and transformative power, instead of being held back or ignored and rendered audience-less by a lack of opportunity, access, literacy, survival, support and safety. Languages can "lose their power if not renewed, as the tired language of much of the old Left or traditional religion has experienced when they find that people are simply no longer listening" (Clammer, 2019 p. 145). The authentic story of lived experience, when provided with these intermediated spaces can "be powerful in a way that no other medium is when they touch the deep wellsprings of emotion and spirit" (Clammer, 2019 p. 145).

Big hART is specific in aligning our intermediation work with Cultural Justice and applying virtuosity to these processes. Virtuosic intermediations assist inclusive cultural imaginings to be powerful, creative and hopeful. Our inclusive cultural imaginings can and should be powerful, creative and hopeful. Clammer cites Roberto Unger:

> **…while social structures do indeed constrain, they are not set in concrete, that society is in a constant state of becoming, and can be changed. And that alternatives arise from the imagination**
>
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 152).

Inclusive, virtuosic intermediation, in this collective imagining to shape the future, is critical to Cultural Justice and finding better forms of intermediations within creative practice is central to this study.

Virtuosity is a simple idea with etymological roots in the combination of virtuous and skilled. Virtuosity is what results when people follow their passions to know something well and to perform skillfully. Researchers W. Barnett Pearce and Kimberly A. Pearce began using 'virtuosity' in a community context while reflecting on a city-based, multiyear action research project, however the term has since been hijacked by one arcane sector of the arts. While it is typically associated with the performing arts, there are virtuosos in every form of human endeavor (Pearce & Pearce, 2000).

> **Virtuosity in any field combines at least three things: (a) a "grand passion" for what you are doing…; (b) an ability to make perspicacious distinctions…; and (c) the ability to engage in skilled performance…We became interested in the metaphor of virtuosity as practitioners… to deal more effectively with sensitive and controversial issues… we began to use the term "dialogic virtuosity" as a way of naming what these facilitators and the community had now that they did not have three years previously.**
>
> (Pearce & Pearce, 2000, pp. 161-162)

Similarly, Big hART has come to use virtuosity to sharpen the focus of our co-creation work with communities. When applied widely, virtuosity helps us reach beyond valuing the content only towards the inclusive processes of making, including a grand passion for intermediation, an acute and insightful understanding of nuanced community life and skill in delivering in community settings. This idea is sharpened by examples found further into this study.

4.5 — CREATIVITY

Definitions of creativity can be vexed. Maslow distinguished between what he termed Primary Creativity (for the purposes of self-actualisation), and Secondary Creativity (recognised by the field) (Sternberg et al, 2002, cited in Reason & Rowe, 2017 p. 115). Big hART re-draws something of this in its Domains of Change – Individual (self-actualising), Community (developing), Content (aesthetic value) - however it takes this a step further through co-creation, inviting all parties into both the process and content, and ignoring 'small c' versus 'capital C' definitions of creativity (Simonton, 1994). Instead Big hART introduces flows of mutual validation between aesthetic virtuosities and lived experience, held in creative tension.

Creativity sounds benign, however, it can be a powerful tool, and we must steward it well in our intermediations. As arts workers, we are often seeking drama, encouraging the imagining of trauma and truth-telling, rather than flourishing and truth-telling. Imagining trauma through intermediations in response to crisis, tragedy, conflict or deprivation can be important work; it can also be addictive and problematic. Lived experience can be approached through either an asset or deficit lens. Deficit narratives can often become the default position when co-creating in community settings. We rise up creatively and rally around those who are suffering so as to co-create for social transformation out of crisis or conflict. Cleveland (2008) examines community art from this point of view, covering many seminal projects globally, including Big hART's Ngapartji Ngapartji. He lists projects in the context of child soldiers, the homeless and hunted, gangsters and terrorism all of which are important projects, focused on healing and reparations. However, there is room for caution here. Try as we might with an experienced and sensitive team, not everything in Ngapartji Ngapartji avoided doing harm, partly because of the lens we brought to the project.

When encountering trauma and healing, this specialist, 'emergency work' is best situated not as 'the work', but as an exception within the work.

> **…the understandable emphasis on memory, and keeping memories alive, among survivors or relatives of victims of violence can also perpetuate cycles of revenge, hatred and almost permanent conflict**
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 147).

Later in the study we look further at this issue reflectively in relation to John Pat, the Pat family and the Yijala Yala project.

In the shadows of these concepts, which initially seem true and clear, lurks the potential for a kind of deficit othering (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010), which is one step away from abandonment and genocides. Poor intermediations can exacerbate these consequences, hence this study is in search of better Cultural Justice intermediations in our work.

4.6 — CREATIVITY AND VIRTUOSITY IN CULTURAL JUSTICE

Cultural Justice practice is unlikely to benefit from 'art ambulances' arriving in times of crisis and conflict as a default intermediation (although that will most certainly be the case at times). Rather 'creativity in community' should be one of abundance and flourishing (as a default) as this delivers preventative and responsive primary protections instead of reactive and secondary protections. With this in mind, Big hART's Cultural Justice practice intermediates within a 'Flow of Change', supporting and mentoring creativity, which influences, but does not push change (activism) or try to control the flow. To help define the way creativity influences this Flow of Change in the field, we consider the Lines of Provenance feeding into a new project design and the Flow of Consequences which continue on into legacies.

The literature above suggests that in relation to these Cultural Justice intermediations, we need to bring a new rigour to our practices in similar ways to how other arts practices think of rigour in terms of virtuosity. Reimagining and destigmatising how we perceive virtuosity could bring a discipline to this Flow of Change, amplifying the potentialities of an urgent project to also be more transformative in legacy.

4.7 — LABELS FOR COMMUNITY PRACTICES

A Culture Justice approach will use many different kinds of creativity and many different labels within its intermediations e.g. applied arts, CCD, community dramaturgies, intercultural and transcultural, co-creation, participatory arts. On the whole, the practices are concerned with flourishing ecologies which build and develop community life. They are imaginative, regenerative, hopeful and inclusive future-making intermediations, entwined with the foundations of care (Jones, 2017).

It is not the purpose of this study to trace the origins of them all. That work has been done comprehensively elsewhere, for instance in the work of Kerrie Shaefer, Eugene van Erven, Sonja Kuftinec, Martin Comte, Jan Cohen-Cruz and many others. The important point is that these labels themselves have tended to allow broad institutionalised cultural practices off the hook, and in doing so have ghettoised a critical set of practices and ignored equitable processes in favour of commodity and content. Because of the urgencies of the 21st century, this study suggests that instead of leaving these practices to one small underfunded subset, all arts practice, all cultural institutions, all cultural policy and all cultural

funding must be developed and delivered with a Cultural Justice lens in mind so as to meet the urgencies of the 21st Century.

Practices such as CCD, which can be exceptionally effective in social transformation, often unfold amongst a small group of committed friends (Mead, 2005). Additionally, the concept of 'community' is illusive and contested, and inclusion can be messy and not necessarily aesthetically resolved, further compounding the way the work is judged and pushed into the shadows and borders.

However, when seen clearly, community is profoundly life supporting and desirable. It can perhaps best be brought into focus by defining the value propositions that sit behind the word community by naming what would be missing from our lives were community not present. Community arises from the presence of: mutuality, safety, geography, place, a common ground, an aspiration, amongst other personalised non-prescriptive attributes. When we are not in our community we struggle to flourish. Therefore, in the context of this study community is a part of flourishing. Further, behind the framing of the research question is the declaration that you can't have a whole and abundant community without the underlying support of active Cultural Justice.

In this way, the definitions used by this sector such as CCD, Community Art and Cultural Development (CACD), co-creation, participatory arts, intentional practice and even applied theatre etc., start to make new sense when we open up the practice to a Cultural Justice frame that takes an abundant, asset-based, whole of life approach. They become ways of defining a conduit of practice that has room for virtuosity and professional thinking, and yet is not dependent on commodity/box office and traditional critique as its primary method of validation. Rather these validations sit within a larger Eudamonian schema, the preconditions of which are assisted by Cultural Justice.

This whole of life approach becomes clearer when we start to look at the etymologies of art as part of creativity and community practices, and the way it has been hijacked by Western hegemonies e.g. *Ars* – practical skills, a business, craft; Sanskrit *rtih* - manner; *artzein* - to prepare; *arma* - weapons; and from 1610, *'skill in creative arts'*.

The expression *'l'art pour l'art,' (art for art's sake)* was first observed in 1824, and 23 years later the first use of 'art critic' was recorded. In his journal of 1909, W.B. Yeats refers to "supreme art as a traditional statement of certain heroic and religious truths, passed on from age to age, modified by individual genius, but never abandoned" (Yeats, 1926). He then notes the revolt of individualism that follows. This very particular Western view of art is not the epistemic meaning Big hART has been taught by being on Country – from Tommeginne in the South East to Ngarluma in the North West - by the cultures where we have developed. The above Western 'go to' assumptions about art as a binary and its place in communities has become a dry rot for the expansive ideas of creativity, community and Cultural Justice.
On our continent, where we are learning to observe and become grounded, individual words for art are not privileged highly amongst Aboriginal languages. The concepts of country, language, family and story are interwoven, rather than singular, linear and heroic. When brought together in this indigenous way, creativity, community and art point us to ways of being, rather

than ways of things being made. And perhaps it is pointing us towards flourishing.

In the context of this study then, the practices outlined above become the most urgent and thrilling praxis, rather than the poor cousins of 'the Arts' proper. They are approaches and 'tools' within a broader practice that require virtuosities and rigour and which can benefit from multiple definitions rather than being siloed and homogenised. In this study, and for the purpose of Big hART's work they are all tools for various intermediations in the pursuit of Cultural Justice.

Clammer (2019) points out, in relation to Haven and Chesnais and their future-focused idea, that no research is neutral but should be a vital part of the process of social transformation:

> …that many of the most interesting and original ideas about culture come not from the cultural mainstream, but from the 'borders,' the areas or thinkers outside the canon, but fertile in their imaginative approaches
>
> (Clammer, J., 2019, p. 167).

Big hART's Cultural Justice intermediation work is often categorised as outsider artmaking (Boyce, 2021), which is captured by festival director and cultural commentator Robyn Archer's letter to the organisation. Outsider art is often full of rich lived experience and authenticity and new languages, which Big hART supports by trying to co-deliver virtuosic intermediations. When successful, this work creates new community epistemologies and re-activates hidden and neglected ideas, leaning into new futures and building new inclusions to better cater for the cascading issues Clammer (2019) identified, as outlined above. This is inclusive practice. It amplifies the voices from *'the borders'* (Clammer, 2019). This is outsider truth-telling and it is one of the hallmarks of Big hART's Cultural Justice work as well as one of the reasons for defining the organisation in this new way. Cultural Justice is high stakes, requires virtuosity and strongly motivates the organisation's work in the field.

> What is at stake in culture—as it has always been, though we frequently forget it—are the great questions of ultimate value: of how we can live together and what the quality of our collective experience should be. These have not disappeared in an age of cultural abundance. They are even more urgent, as the possibility of a truly human creative society is in one way more realisable, in another as far away as it has ever been
>
> (O'Connor, 2016, p. 57-58).

4.8 — CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has advanced an examination of the trajectory of Cultural Justice and related intermediations in Big hART's work, including how these are built on the traditions of community arts, CCD and the great forerunners of these traditions; Baol, Friere etc. By examining the practices, disciplines and previous labels that have been used to define and describe these varied practices, the study suggests there is a strengthening of the centrality of Cultural Justice in the field. I acknowledge leaning into the work of John Clammer in defining Cultural Justice, its importance and the shift towards it.

I have highlighted the ways Cultural Justice, and other related practices, could benefit greatly from the centralisation of these urgently needed approaches in cultural policy, and how this would result in fairer funding structures and an increased imprimatur, which is currently held back by splintered definitions and contested terms. Cultural Justice aligns with the urgencies of the 21st century, the need for inclusivity and the place of creativity in 'the pursuit of social transformation' to shape the future we want to create. In this definitional way, Big hART is aligning itself with Cultural Justice and the principles of hope and abundance of which Clammer (2019) speaks of.

The chapter positions Big hART, and our precise practice, as an outlier in the field. Despite the size and longevity of Big hART's organisational contribution, Cultural Justice requires the organisation to be an outlier because critical and emergent issues of Cultural Justice inherently start out as invisible. Morris is used as a backdrop to situate Big hART's approach in the field, as offering impassioned critiques, visionary alternatives and an outsider's objectivity (Morris, 1998, cited in Clammer, 2019 p. 89), bringing voices from the fringe to contribute to social transformation.

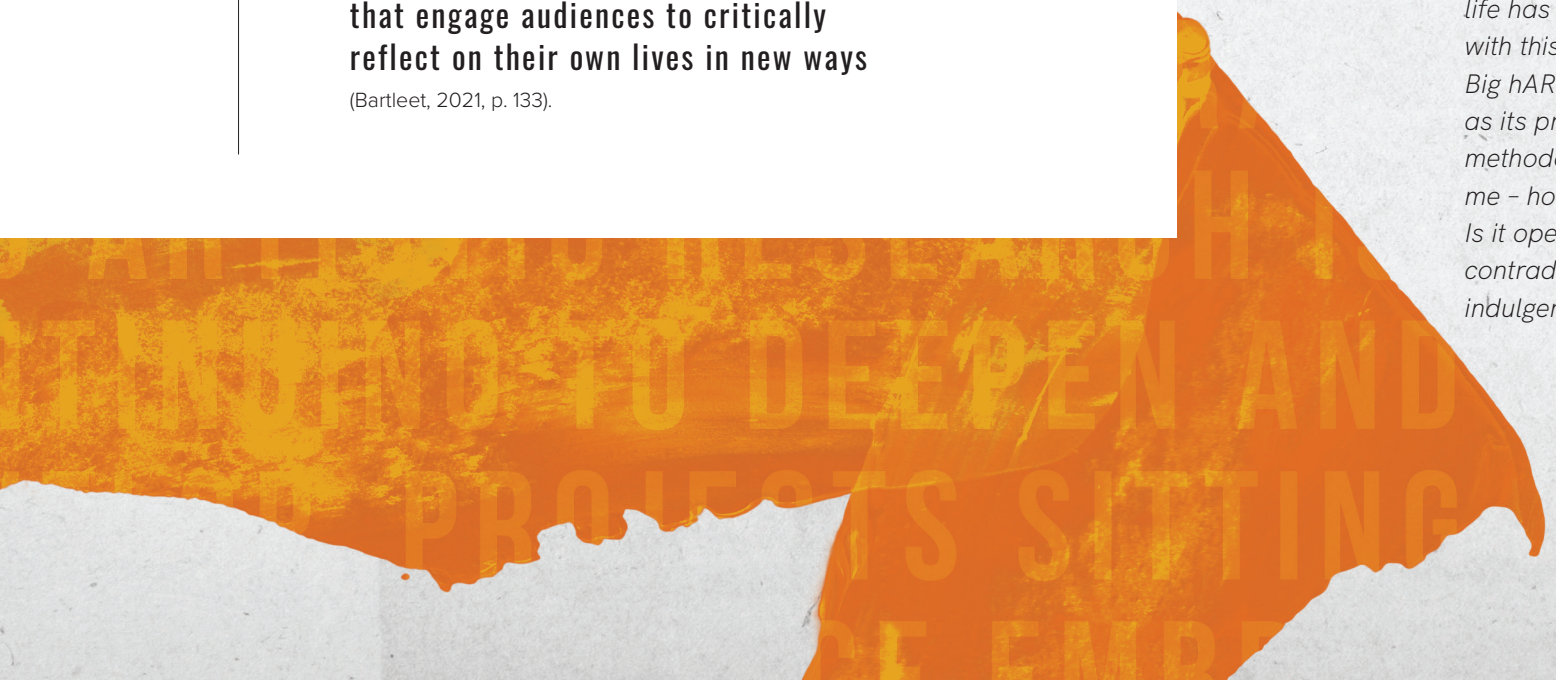
The next chapter seeks to define the methodological approaches the study uses to explore Big hART's practise over 30 years, how we moved from CCD definitions to a Cultural Justice practice, and which intermediations have been effective and how they can be improved for better, more iterative and scalable outcomes and impacts.

Methodology

5.1 — INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays out in detail the research methodology for exploring Big hART's 30 years of practice and my 40 years of experience in the field.

> **…the dynamic interface between autoethnography and artistic research is continuing to deepen and develop. Projects sitting at this interface embrace and embody deeply creative and personal forms of communication that engage audiences to critically reflect on their own lives in new ways**
> (Bartleet, 2021, p. 133).



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Feelings of fraudulence and self-deprecation have been common during the construction of this study. PhDs are rare on Tommeginne Country and when questioned in the pub by incredulous friends, I refer to this study as my 'PhME' - to deflect I guess. Perhaps these feelings are natural given the deeply personal nature of the methodology and the serious intent and urgency of the study.

The reflective journaling has meant my own life has become more and more entwined with this research and the examination of Big hART's journey into Cultural Justice as its practice. Even thinking through the methodology raises some disquiet for me – how much is too much journaling? Is it opening new insights to the creative contradictions and compromises, or is it self-indulgent?

5.2 — THE STUDY ENVIRONMENT

When considering the contexts in which my field contributes to social change, obvious questions arise:

- Is it in fact a field?
- Is it a sector?
- Is it a movement?
- Is it a practice, or a collection of practices?

This study is not attempting to define 'field' or 'sector', however, these questions have an impact on important aspects of the work, such as:

- the outputs and outcomes
- professionalism
- quality control
- safety of participants
- leadership development
- burnout of arts and community workers
- reliable evaluation
- the ability to argue for the practice, to name it and for it to be taken seriously, and therefore,
- funding and impact on urgent change.

The rhizomic fluidity and change-capacity of this broad church of practices is a critical part of the complex contexts in which the work is delivered, and therefore the methodology for this study.

We have foundational texts, radical elders, romanticised project examples etc., but where is the professionalism, the career pathways and the deep corporate memory? Where is the rigorous training, the ongoing analysis, critique, evaluation and effective lobbying for the practice which lead most to credibility, appropriate funding and responsible leadership across decades?

Ideally, the many critical contexts in which the sector works would see many government departments, funding agencies and philanthropists eager to back the CCD and Cultural Justice practices helping achieve the urgently needed impact the sector could deliver. Instead, we mostly work in closeted and nearly invisible ways in a largely defensive scarcity culture, which inhibits growth, impact and knowledge sharing and leads to a cobbled together field perpetually reinventing the wheel.

5.3 — THE STUDY APPROACH

This study sets out by exploring the data-rich original site of practice for the origins of the organisation's emergent interest in Cultural Justice. It then traces this interest over the subsequent three decades across the new sites of practice around the country focusing on five long-term exemplar projects. Across this temporal trajectory, what is of particular interest is how and when Big hART's work became so intensely anchored in Cultural Justice across the many emergent sites of its practice, and how that practice manifests.

The study explores not only what Big hART did at these sites of practice, but also where, when and what the experience was as they were doing it? Through reflective journaling, it also explores how I, as researcher, was involved in shaping it and being shaped by it. It also looks at who else has done it and how they have done it successfully. In other words, internal and external contexts. Building out of this, I explore the provenance of Big hART's approach i.e. what has worked and manifested in longer-term consequences and legacies; how these are linked consequentially; and lastly, what are the iterative extractions that anchor our intermediations to Cultural Justice as a precondition of flourishing and what attributes in the work produce these preconditions.

Figure 37: Project O Producer Fallon Te Paa with Project O young women doing Mau Rakau, 2020. Photo: Pia Johnson (Big hART).

The aim is for these inquiries to flow freely between reflective journaling and more theoretical explorations, including sections of previously published works, scripts, talks, poetics and provocations in the arts (and other public domains) that explore or highlight Cultural Justice.

The overall research question which frames this reflective investigation can be described as:

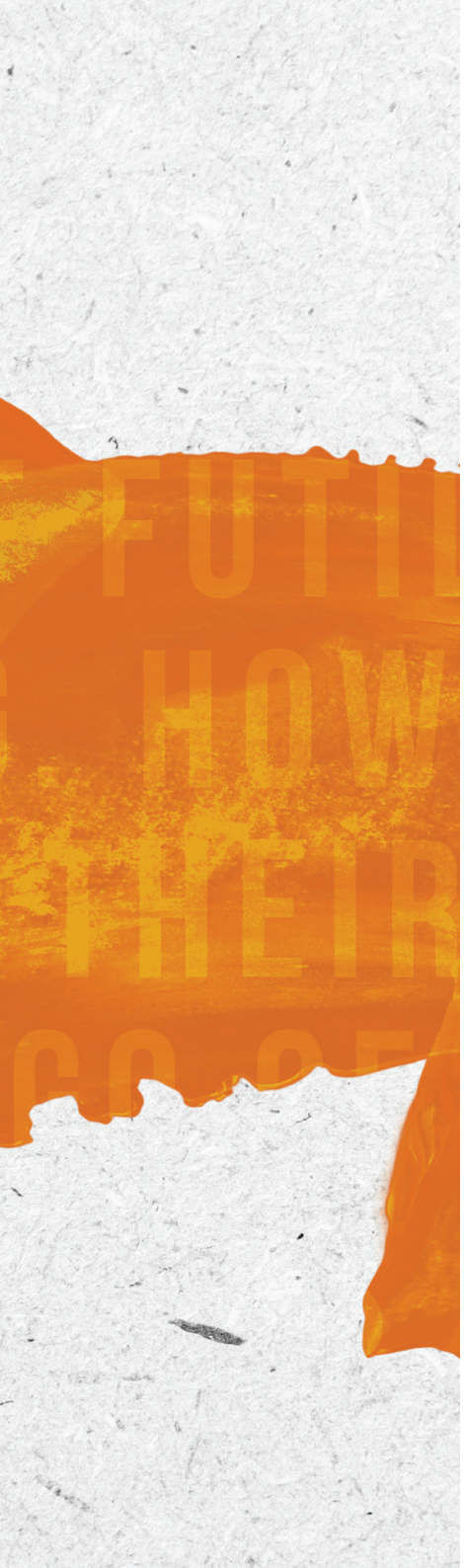
> **How can Cultural Justice intermediations better produce the preconditions for communities to flourish?**

To help investigate this question, this study calls on 30 years of Big hART as a learning organisation, previous evaluation into intermediation practice and outcomes and impacts that highlight the preconditions for flourishing. The layered complexities of these intermediations and outcomes flowing from them have continued to influence emergent Big hART practice across 55 communities and over 8000 co-creators and participants in the process. This potential for reflexivity and learning has helped create relational designs between previous projects and new projects. To build a methodological scaffold, these are examined in this research through two concepts: project-provenance and project-consequence, expressed in the phrases Lines of Provenance and Flows of Consequence. These two concepts help explore the organisation's layered complexities and extract from it key attributes of Cultural Justice which create the preconditions of Eudemonian flourishing.

To achieve this with a sense of integrity within this living practice with living witnesses, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet's chapter in the Handbook of Autoethnography (2nd Edition) has proved useful in quelling any disquiet (Bartleet, 2021). In the conclusion, Barleet lands the methodological basis needed for this study so lightly and elegantly on the page, I've chosen to include an extended quote:

> Emerging approaches in both fields are also looking at ways in which autoethnography and artistic research can become vehicles for tacking ambitious creative and social agendas. As both fields have matured, they have increasingly engaged with questions about justice, activism, and power-imbalances (Östersjö & Nguyễn, 2013; Crispin, 2018). Here scholars and artists enhance access to and engagement with research, promote and evoke the voices and experiential worlds of the marginalised and dispossessed, and facilitate broader social change (Harris & Holman Jones, 2019a; Mackinlay, 2019). As artistic autoethnography becomes more commonplace, I believe we will see the inclusion of many voices that customarily have not been heard…(Bartleet, 2021, p. 142).

The ideas Bartleet brings together feel exactly right to frame and guide the methodology of this study, mirroring the Cultural Justice themes and drawing in witnesses e.g. reflect on their own lives in new ways; ambitious creative and social agendas; questions about justice, activism and power imbalances; voices and experiential



worlds of the marginalised and dispossessed; and the inclusion of many voices that customarily have not been heard (Bartleet, 2021).

With Bartleet's words ringing in my ear, I've had to let go of a false style and tone in the writing, as I would with a play or performance work, and allow the voice of this study to emerge and work in tandem with the other artefacts and videos. Finding this creative researcher's voice has also removed other discomforts. For instance, because the practice is 'live', the research has living witnesses – individuals, communities and multiple audiences with many different literacies - who hold an experiential and mostly warm relationship with the projects now being studied.

5.4 — WITNESSES

Out of respect for these witness relationships and their different life-literacies, methodologically this study is written with a dramatist's ear to try and capture the places and peoples which underpin the subject "to bring 'readers into the scene' – particularly into the thoughts, emotions and actions" (Ellis, 2004, p. 142), but also into what is at stake - the drama of everyday survival. Therefore, this text combines with video material and the imagery and descriptions found in Big hART 25 Years Volume 1 and Volume 2.

Additionally, the work of Big hART has aesthetic, form and dramaturgical roots in the writer's unconventional, yet in some ways seminal, career as a theatre-maker and the intention is to include and explore the dramatic potential of the unconventionality, personal/creative fallibility, success and trial and error of this creative practice through the reflective journaling included in this real world study. As well as bringing transparency, it is hoped this will assist in fuelling the readability of the research. Therefore, it is important to declare my positionality as researcher in relation to those who are witnesses to it as insiders within the narrative.

5.5 — POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

Positionality of the researcher in autoethnographic research does not always require the acknowledgement of observer/participant within the narrative, however they are positioned regardless. Addressing my position within both the work being researched and the research itself will help "…reveal what the researcher was positioned to see, to know, and to understand" (Chiseri-Strater, 1996, p. 123).

As Lønsmann (2015, p.14) says, "researcher positionality should be seen not only in terms of macro-sociological categories such as age and gender, but also in terms of local situated identities and transitory interactional roles." Big hART's work is deeply, but not solely, driven by place. Invited intermediation is central to the approach, over long timeframes. And so, over time, as researcher, I have also changed significantly – in terms of skills and knowledge and learning from projects, but also in

terms of burn out, mental and physical health, resilience and eldership. Over these long timeframes experience, energy, relationship, technology, platform, fashion and genre also change. The unfamiliar becomes the familiar, the current becomes legacy, the legacy generates new consequences, the researcher as outsider becomes an insider in the community, and the intimacy of the research is transformed and revealed in new ways. Across these decades, the work of the organisation has unfolded almost as if projects are 'scenes within the acts' of a dramaturgical work, with Big hART both mirrored by and mirroring a career.

5.6 — COMPLEXITY OF ROLES

The study acknowledges issues of identity, culture, coloniality, privilege and centrality and the added complexities, overlays and assets of the researcher's combined roles in Big hART i.e. co-founder, creative director, board member, playwright, director, cultural commentator and (arguably) executive producer. These interwoven roles have grown up organically as Big hART has expanded, which adds rich personal data ripe for the reflection this study affords. The study also expands beyond these formal roles to explore the personae of the researcher in the Australian literary landscape and the associated seminal theatre works, as well as a sometimes-perceived outsider status as a cultural figure and commentator.

5.7 — CAREER(S)

Career phases - from emerging artist to mid-career confidences; established artist to the contributions of an elder in CCD and now Cultural Justice practice - form organisers for reflection. The autoethnographic gaze will tease out, shape, structure, fill in and make sense of the outputs from these career phases. They will also be used to "compare and contrast personal experience against existing research" (Ronai, 1995, p. 96) and bring organisational and poetic systematising to what has been a prolific and varied career, spanning a wide range of multi-genre, multi-platform and multi-place processes and artmaking.

To this end, beyond the projects and the organisation itself, the study also touches on the dichotomy of the researcher's career as an artist as well as CEO, and how these divergent paths have affected Big hART's work in the field. By understanding "the entire context, at both the macro and micro environmental level" (Pickard, 2007, p. 13) and the nature of what has occurred over the 30 years, the study looks at Big hART's work as an expression of 'self' as well as a responsive movement that is constantly changing and flowing.

5.8 — GENESIS AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Having established this personal trajectory, the body of the research seeks to locate the genesis of the organisation and practice in the location of its first projects and the significance of place in its growth and organisational impact. Having defined the positional and locational, clarity is then sought as to the internal dramaturgies of five major Big hART projects – both

the instrumental dramaturgical value of the project (process) and the intrinsic aesthetic value (content). In doing so, the research utilises some examples of conventional external critique, complementing the internality of this reflective practice. These project dramaturgies include individual consequences, community consequences, aesthetic consequences, influence and organisational knowledge, described in Big hART's work by Wright et al. (2016) as Domains of Change.

5.9 — STRUCTURE

The success (or otherwise) of five Big hART's exemplar projects will be described and examined in relation to these five Domains. The intention is to highlight the provenance of design thinking that led to each of these projects i.e. the Lines of Provenance followed by describing and examining the Flow of Consequences from each project over time. To provide a structure through which to illuminate the emergence of the Yijala Yala project and the legacies flowing from it with the community of Roebourne. These are then described and explored through the voice of the community through an extensive bank of co-creative materials, to add authentic weight to the data and illustrate flourishing in action. For this reason, it is these provenance, consequence and extractive sections that are likely to have the most relevance to witnesses and workers.

5.10 — MARKERS AND ARTEFACTS

Many of these processes and the content created, although large in scale, duration and significance at the time, have dimmed and shapeshifted in the recall. However, Big hART's frequent reporting to multiple funders and strong use of digital and mixed media means documentation of ephemeral, remote projects with no review or critique, has delivered a strong set of markers to draw on.

To this end, a variety of records, diaries, artefacts, external and internal evaluation, participant documentation, creative development notes, staff reflections, funders reflections, scripts, video, recordings, unsuccessful social designs, rejected/deflected ambitions and award-winning content, are all available and may be used as markers. These help to reconstruct the flow of career and self-expression across the decades. Drawn together and curated using dramaturgical and Cultural Justice relevance as a key organising principle, they can be discovered through links on the website, helping to understand the flow and development of practice over time. However, it is important to note that this study is not interested in reminiscence. The reflexive deep dive into rich data is designed to be forward-looking and channelled into the extractions, consequences and conclusion.

5.11 — EPIPHANIES AND LANGUAGE

The study utilises autoethnographic and reflective modes of research to dramaturgically spring-load and personalise the text. Thus, it draws on the poetic and the aesthetic, as well as data, archive, artefact, evaluations and project/narrative markers from the field (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). This will bring the personal, the relational, the community, the particularity of place and the temporal experiences of the writer into the frame. These will be highlighted, not so much by focusing on data concerning Big hART projects and evaluations, but rather through the epiphanies discovered at multiple project sites over this time (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Couser, 1997; Denzin, 1989). Additionally, the languages will be varied: reflective, poetic, dramatic, polemical, agitprop, allegorical, and at times, analytical and self-critical.

5.12 — RESEARCH AIMS AND ACCESS

The methodology takes into account the complexity of Big hART's approach to changemaking i.e. projects that are multi-layered and interwoven, long-term (3 to 10 years) and with multiple linked micro-initiatives. They involve different geographies, kinship complexities, communities experiencing lateral traumas, cultural settings, rural, regional and remote peoples and places and sometimes including on country responsibilities and diverse socio-demographic groups. In turn, as a learning organisation, these complexities influence emergent Big hART practice. This creates relational designs between previous projects and new projects, examined in this research through the two concepts 'project-provenance' and 'project-consequence'. Or, expressed as linage in social design - Lines of Provenance and Flows of Consequence - to explore the organisation's practice and complexities, and extract from it the key attributes of Cultural Justice which create Eudemonian preconditions.

5.13 — THE FIELD AND EXEMPLARS

It is important, in the context of international practice, to avoid being just another 'nice story' (Allan, 2006) and to frame this study against previous literature. The characteristics of Big hART's practice are drawn out to make the particular familiar in comparison with other practices.

Given Big hART's passion for Cultural Justice, it is important that should project participants wish to read, listen or watch parts of this study, the language of the research springs (at least to some extent) from the language and culture of the place, people and purpose of these projects. In this way, alongside some narrative rich written word, artefacts and markers need to be clear and illustrative, offering an accessible and immersive experience for those who have been 'witnesses' on the projects. This is particularly important in Chapter 9 with the links to co-created content used as a marker of the community's flourishing.

Figure 38: Artist Maggie Abrahams performing in *When Water Falls* in Sheffield Tasmania, 2021. Photo: Anna Cadden (Big hART).

5.14 — VOICES

As co-creators may at times speak in their own voice (in text and/or video artefact) and express their lived experiences, the voice of this study is not solely from the researcher's experiences across time, published in hindsight, with retro-filtering and conformity (Bruner, 1993; Denzin, 1989; Freeman, 2004). These voices include participants, community members, staff, producers, artists, funders, policymakers etc. and are contained within a wide net thrown by this practice and the content created and are built-in through additional linked material (Didion, 2005; Goodall, 2006; Herrmann, 2005). Again, this is useful at the end of the study as video material of the Flow of Consequences from the Yijala Yala project are voiced by participants and communities.

5.15 — PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

This multi-dimensional and socially conscious study stems from how participants inhabit multiple systems - individuals, community members and content makers expressing lived experience - which can influence others in power and transfer the asset of lived experience as new knowledge (the five Domains in action). The research responds to this layered practice in deeply relational ways, steeped in shared practices, values, beliefs and experiences. The socially conscious autoethnographic approach is critical here, observing and absorbing over multiple, simultaneous projects, across time, in which I've been a 'participant-observer' (Geertz, 1973; Goodall, 2001).

5.16 — RESEARCH DESIGN AND STRATEGY

Utilising creative practice as research, the study begins by examining the genesis from which Big hART originated – personally, organisationally and geographically. Using artefacts, diaries and early works, it examines the way in which place has spring-loaded the organisation with particular modes of working: for justice, with outsiders, tackling narrative invisibility and from this, how its vision, mission, modes of working and deliverables coalesced i.e. multiple outcomes across sectors, portfolios and government, which is a signature of Big hART's practice.

To achieve this, the five interlinked, intercultural exemplar projects are critical: the first four - Drive in Holiday, Northcott Narratives, Ngapartji Ngapartji and Namatjira - provide the provenance for Big hART's Cultural Justice practice. Then, through Yijala Yala's ongoing legacy project called New Roebourne, the multiple Flows of Consequence provide evidence of flourishing as a result of this practice. The digital artefacts from this project define its multiple layers and outputs in detail so as to illuminate Cultural Justice in action as primary prevention, thus helping to establish the preconditions where individuals and communities flourish.

5.17 — APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

To shape the data, these five exemplar projects have been drawn from work in 55 communities. The relationality of these five projects is examined to illustrate the progression from one project to the next. This relationality is part of how the research is organised and these five marker projects become the scaffold of the study allowing the reader to find a dramaturgically accessible way through – scene by scene - this content-rich material.

The methodology uses video and occasional video interviews (Berry, 2005) e.g. the Coda video, reflective and biographical material from the life of a community and other markers from being an embedded artist, across cultural divides. The writing is sharpened to bring this cultural exchange alive and place it in healthy tension with the autobiographical approaches in the reflectivity of the research (Goodall, 2006; Neuman, 1999). To balance this, my experiences will be compared with and explored against existing research into similar project literature and research (Ronai, 1995).

5.18 — RESEARCH ETHICS

This research acknowledges the inherently collaborative, co-creative processes in these participatory projects. Big hART projects begin as invitations from communities, which give rise to emergent social designs. These designs draw on a mix of techniques from co-creation, intermediation, participation to artist-led and artist in residence, and are intercultural, multi-faceted and multi-genre. Across all projects referred to in this research, written permissions and release forms have been gathered for initial project manifestations as well as subsequent involvement in video content.

The social designs referred to and examined are based on the Big hART model, of which I am the originator and holder of Intellectual Property. Big hART creatives across the 30 years of practice (refer to list of over 300 longer-term artists and arts workers) have signed contracts and/or release forms for the reproduction of work, images, text, designs etc. Similarly, participants on projects sign release forms before and/or during co-creating outputs, including evaluations.

5.19 — LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research is highly specific in its ambitions and is not attempting to cover all theoretical aspects of the disciplines mentioned. Rather, it utilises reflective practice, autoethnographic approaches and creative practice to situate the research in the temporality of projects, and data is then harnessed in personalised ways, dramaturgically. The material is then linked across time so as to examine the flow of change across projects. In this way, the research is not

Figure 39: Konrad Park, Scott Rankin, Andrew Viney and Lucky Oceans, Shearing Shed at Table Cape Tulip Farm for *Acoustic Life of Sheds*, 2015. Photo: Chris Gosfield (Big hART).

attempting to explore beyond the autoethnographic, rather it brings a dramatist's lens to curating, amplifying and limiting the data to highlight the observations of provenance and consequence. It examines the 30 years of practice from the inside so as to draw out the preconditions and primary preventions that, when delivered through the rigour of Cultural Justice in action, help communities to flourish.

5.20 — CONCLUSIONS

Given the social contexts in which Big hART works and the quest for Cultural Justice, this research itself must remain socially conscious. Big hART's desire to be part of a flow of positive change in the communities examined here requires that the research be part of this flow, rather than hovering above the practice. This embeds the research as an extension of the practice, available and accessible to communities and participants. The practice itself is the data and the research is conceived as another tool, which through a set of extractions could be available to communities, artists, arts workers and change-agents in the field.

The next chapter sets out key aspects of this environment in which Big hART's Cultural Justice work takes place and how it is developing and changing, at times inhibiting and at others enhancing Cultural Justice and the practices which lead to it. If we are to take the urgent need for Cultural Justice seriously, we have to understand the Australian arts and funding environments in which this long-term and expensive work is being pursued.

Understanding the Australian arts and funding environment for cultural justice

6.1 — INTRODUCTION

Although Cultural Justice touches all our lives, positively or negatively, it is an obscure or invisible field. This invisibility affects the delivery of organisations such as Big hART, as well as the funding, impact, amplification and scalability of the work. However, it is important to note that this environment has been shifting slowly across the 30 years of practice and there are now more frequent and louder voices calling for change.

Figure 40: Pitjantjatjara Elder Pantjiti McKenzie performing in Ngapartji Ngapartji at Belvoir Street Theatre, 2008. Photo: Jeff Busby (Big hART).

A 2021 report from the Australian arts and culture think tank A New Approach (ANA) has called for a national arts, culture and creativity plan and clearer policy direction (Fielding & Trembath, 2021). The report suggests the public is far in advance of governments in accepting a shift in focus towards access, inclusion and other aspects of Cultural Justice. ANA has "identified 8 emerging trends… in 21st century Australian arts and culture; 6 foundations… that reflect the fundamentals of Australia's public policy in arts and culture; and 7 priorities for change…" (Fielding & Trembath, 2021, p. 4), all of which, to my reading, are foundational to Cultural Justice. This provides reason for hope for Big hART and corroborates our reason for being.

Big hART's work has never flowed with linearity and has always been vulnerable to a lack of resources and funding. The approach to surviving chronic underfunding emerged as a rhizomic model of delivery, unfolding over years. It was not a franchise or a satellite model for driving Cultural Justice, nor was it short term, rather it took a 'funding tide raises all boats' approach to its rhizome of concurrent projects. The organisation always backed talent and integrity to leave maximum room for individual ability and used high levels of well-placed trust to cut middle management costs. Infrastructure is kept to a minimum and partnerships are financially critical. This rhizome approach emerged as values-driven and highly productive. Surprisingly perhaps, it has mostly maintained high levels of quality and aesthetics, delivered with small amounts of insecure funding. As a result, a lean structure with limited middle management emerged (although this is now changing to some extent in these more complex times). In other words, the dire nature of the Australian arts and funding environment shaped Big hART's structure and approach.

Big hART's name (as described in Chapter 2) set in train an uphill battle in terms of the arts and cultural environments in which we began our work, even if at the same time it opened doors to other, much more powerful government portfolios and their funding streams. The Australia Council, arguably what should be the peak body for Cultural Justice, was and remains emblematic of this fractured and culturally unjust environment for the practice. What follows is a snapshot of the Australia Council: their stated priorities, questions around their capacity to meet them, cost-shifting and the impacts on the environments in which Cultural Justice intermediations are delivered.

6.2 — AUSTRALIA COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The Australian Council was established in 1968 and became the Australia Council for the Arts in 1974. The Whitlam Labour Government, advocating for the rights of ordinary people to participate in the arts, instituted the Australia Council's Community Arts Program in 1973 as a means of encouraging engagement in culture and supporting creative expressions of Australian national identity.

The Australia Council wanted to ensure a sustainable future for the existing performing arts status quo however, the establishment of the Crafts, Aboriginal Arts and Community Arts boards allowed for applications from artists to work in communities. This was a direct challenge to the old order and one that extended beyond its definition of art into the government's social responsibility for preserving traditional practice, cultural continuity and community good (Brisbane, 2015). In 1986 a report commissioned by the Federal Government's expenditure committee recommended that Commonwealth Government arts policy should aim to democratise culture by ensuring wide and steady community access to a diversity of cultural experiences (Brisbane, 2015).

This plan included putting a Community Cultural Development Unit between the Councillors and the five Boards through which to filter applications. Of course, by this time the now-established arts sector was all on the side of high art and saw democracy as a threat to their share of funding (Brisbane, 2015).

The Community Arts Board was converted to the Community Cultural Development Committee (CCDC) in July 1987 in the wake of radical welfare rhetoric that continued to underpin community arts policy (MacNeill, Lye & Caulfield, 2013). Community arts has always been the problem child for government, continually banging its leftist drum.

Within this struggle there have been decades of truly remarkable, dedicated and important work in the field and "the Community Cultural Development sector has been incredibly effective at building sustained partnerships around complex Australian communities [but now] 40 years of CACD practice in Australia is at serious risk" (Doyle, 2015, p. 2).

It is instructive to compare the Australia Council's commitment of funds to its mandated priority areas of regional and remote, youth, First Nations and people living with a disability with the actual focus of the spend. Each of these priority areas relies largely on CCD practices for key deliverables. The least amount of funding to the highest areas of need (Australia Council, 2020a) while the companies that receive the highest levels of funding do the least in these priority areas.

For all their rhetoric, the Australia Council does not have the ability to meet their commitment to high-needs communities because it does not have the funding capacity to match their ambition to reach the priority groups in their strategic plan, or for scalable and responsive funding or policy. The Australia Council is dabbling in this vital area of CACD, and doing so dangerously

(Rankin, 2018b, p. 50).

Figure 41: Frankston VIC participant Kyah during a Project O workshop, holding up her self-reflection of the personal attributes she is proud of, 2019. Photo: Nicole Reed (Big hART).

6.3 — AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP: PRIME MINISTERIAL POVERTY

Nations are emergent narrations. "To create a just, sustainable, and peaceful future is to first imagine it, then embody it in what we hear and teach, and then to realise it in practice" (Clammer, 2019, p. 155). The future is an idea in the present. "Our whole world is constructed through narratives … Stories structure our experience… the nature and quality of those stories is consequently crucial" (Clammer, 2019, p. 145).

Communities like countries are constantly developing and changing in response to this jostling, multi-voiced narration. Big hART's specialist approach is an act of inclusive intermediation and illumination of story in order to champion Cultural Justice. However, some voices in the narration speak louder than others.

> **Economics and culture are clearly intimately linked, and so cultural justice and economic justice are really inseparable … economic values are largely allowed to trump cultural ones, (just think of funding for the arts, or the proportion of international aid budgets that are devoted to culture) whereas, in a really sane society, it would be, and should be, exactly the other way around**
> (Clammer, 2019, p. 163).

In this context, Prime Ministers have powerful narrative voices, making and unmaking the environments in which Arts and Culture are delivered.

In 1942, in a very different Australia, Prime Minister Menzies delivered these words:

> Consider the case of literature and art. Could these survive as a department of State? Are we to publish our poets according to their political colour? Is the State to decree surrealism because surrealism gets a heavy vote in a key electorate? The truth is that no great book was ever written and no great picture ever painted by the clock or according to civil service rules. These are the things done by man, not men. You cannot regiment them. They require opportunity, and sometimes leisure.
>
> The artist, if he is to live, must have a buyer; the writer an audience. He finds them among frugal people to whom the margin above bare living means a chance to reach out a little towards that heaven which is just beyond our grasp. It has always seemed to me, for example, that an artist is better helped by the man who sacrifices something to buy a picture he loves than by a rich patron who follows the fashion (Menzies, 1942).

It is instructive to contrast the attitudes towards arts and culture of the forefather of the conservative Liberal Party in Australia with the sentiments of our current conservative Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, who in 2019 abolished the Department of Communications and the Arts and folded it in with the Department of 'Cars, Trains and Concrete Things'.

Arts and culture are now seen as more a means to an end e.g. branding, tourism and events rather than communal, civic or social value. It is hard to imagine any contemporary Prime Minister stepping up to champion arts or culture, let alone Cultural Justice or the power and importance of the imagination the way Prime Minister Keating did utilising Don Watson's speech writing in 1992:

> Imagine if ours was the oldest culture in the world and we were told that it was worthless.
>
> Imagine if we had resisted this settlement, suffered and died in the defence of our land, and then were told in history books that we had given up without a fight.
>
> Imagine if non-Aboriginal Australians had served their country in peace and war and were then ignored in history books.
>
> Imagine if our feats on sporting fields had inspired admiration and patriotism and yet did nothing to diminish prejudice.
>
> Imagine if our spiritual life was denied and ridiculed.
>
> Imagine if we had suffered the injustice and then were blamed for it.
>
> It seems to me that if we can imagine the injustice we can imagine its opposite. And we can have justice (Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet, 1992).

This brave speech was made the year Big hART started. Keating was imploring us as a nation to imagine a better future by invoking a powerful mechanism for hope, justice and change. In so doing, the highest office in the land was enriching the soil of Cultural Justice with possibility and credibility through the imprimatur to imagine, listen, observe, learn and be changed by people with different backgrounds, literacies, cultures and lived experiences. His call to imagine created a context where Cultural Justice could be taken seriously enough to assist in fashioning new futures where culture is fair, just and inclusive and where flourishing is possible. This now seems far from our contemporary context in Australia.

Figure 42: Ngurin River, Roebourne, 2018. Photo: Telen Rodwell (Big hART).

6.4 — AUSTRALIAN ARTS AND CULTURE LEADERSHIP

To further understand the hidden context in the Australian arts environment, the work of Ruth Rentschler is instructive. Ruth, who shared the following graphs with me in 2018, has analysed the relationship between the number of images of First Nations art, creativity and people used in Australia Council publications (such as Annual Reports 1973 to 2017) compared to funding for Aboriginal art and artists over the same period.

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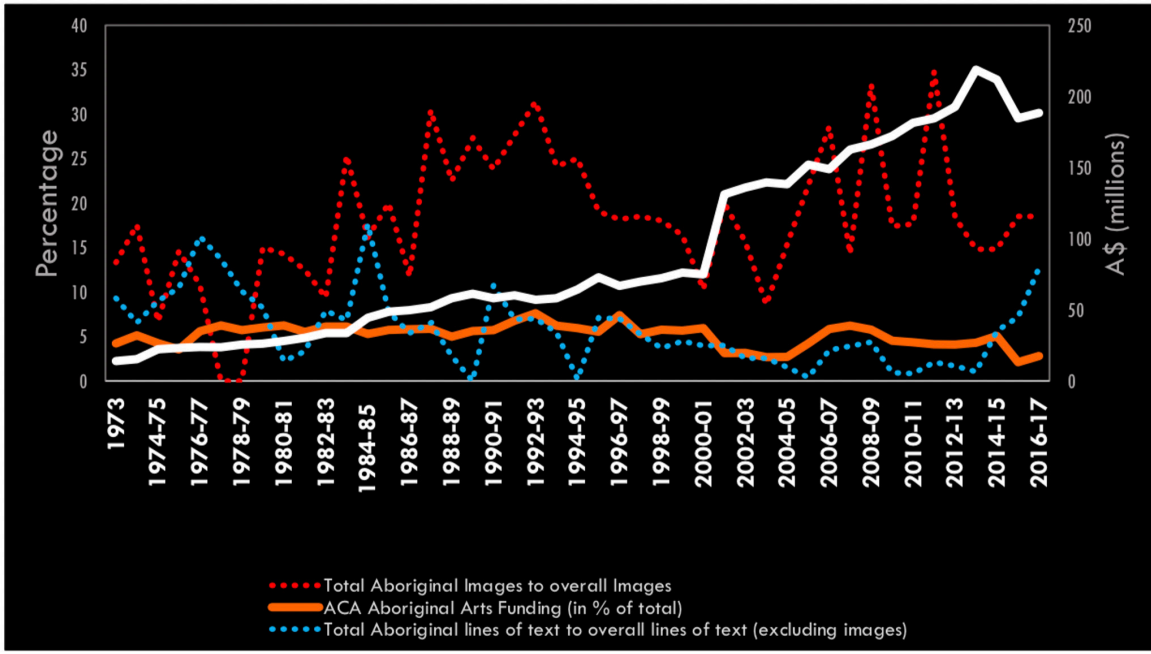
Image 8: Aboriginal text, images and funding 1973-2017



Prepared by Professor Ruth Rentschler 2018

Figure 43: Graphs by University of South Australia researcher Ruth Rentschler, 2018.

Figure 44: Graphs by University of South Australia researcher Ruth Rentschler, 2018.

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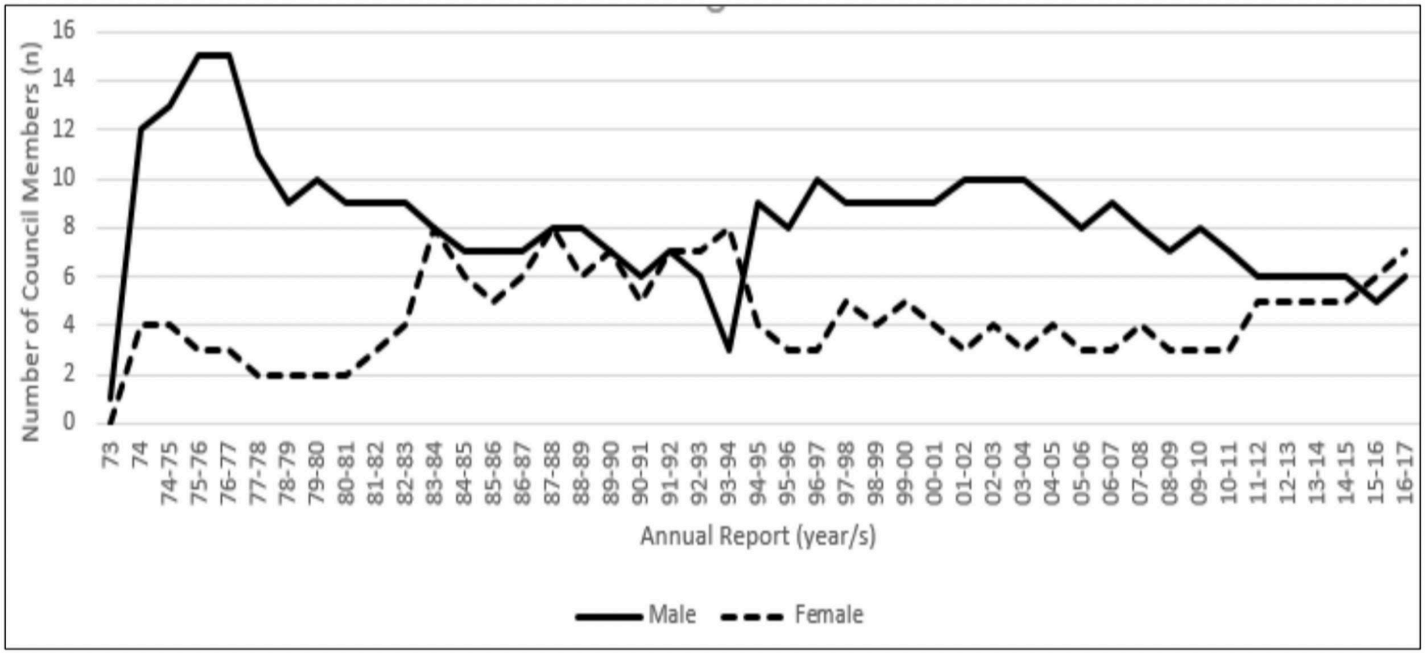
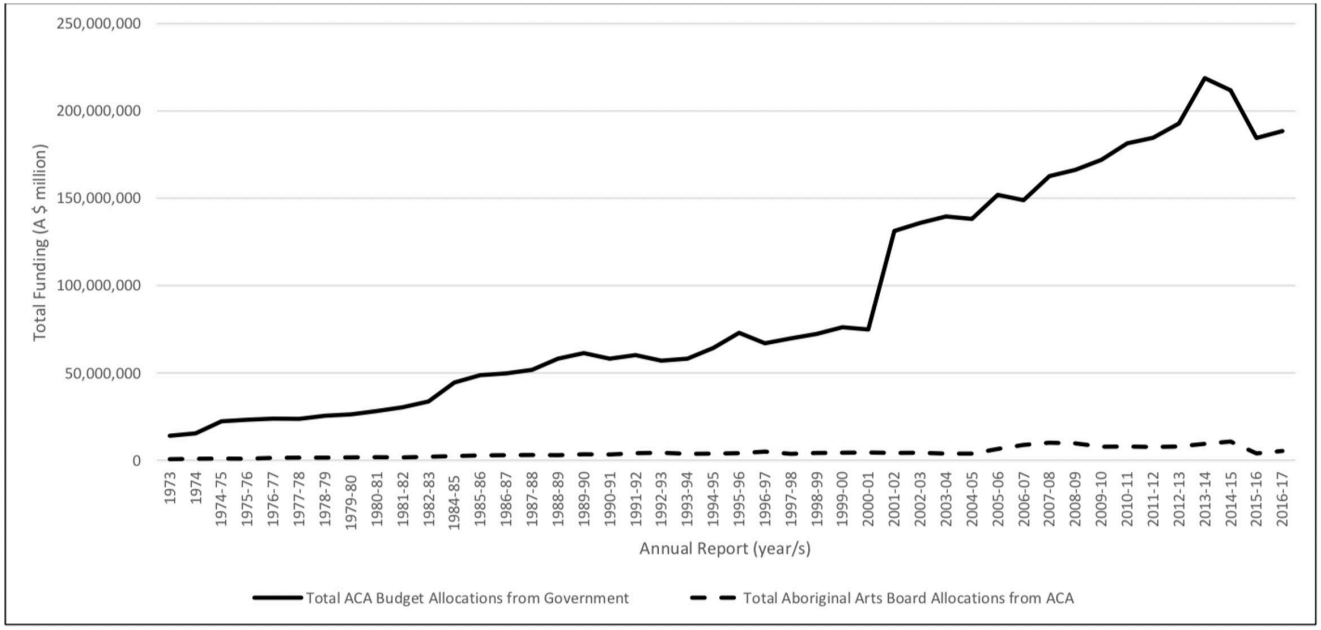
Image 6: Gender on the board over time



Prepared by Professor Ruth Rentschler 2018

University of South Australia | School of Management

Image 7: ACA funding and ATSIA Board funding 1973-2017



Prepared by Professor Ruth Rentschler 2018

Figure 45: Graphs by University of South Australia researcher Ruth Rentschler, 2018.

The graphs above chronicle one facet of our Cultural Justice emergency across the last four decades. This is robbery by neglect and disrespect. It is cost-shifting and cultural appropriation. However, beyond this, Rentschler's work throws the Cultural Justice emergency into high relief.

The staff I know at the Australia Council are people of goodwill and including images of First Nations art in publications no doubt feels like the right thing to do. However, even taking into account that there are other funding streams available to First Nations peoples, to be so committed to using First Nations images to showcase its work while allowing funding to flatline smacks of systemic racism and cultural injustice which can't be ignored.

Much of the First Nations art used proudly in these publications is produced through the 80 or so remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres and support organisations across the country (Office for the Arts, 2020). Each centre is vital to Cultural Justice and serves multiple community purposes while also creating the art e.g. social and emotional wellbeing, health, primary prevention, transport, financial literacy, nutrition, mental health and most importantly, non-welfare household income through art sales. The Office for the Arts, through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program, provides $21 million in grant funding each year to about 80 art centres with 8000 artists and 500 arts workers between them (Office for the Arts, 2020), equating to less than $263,000 per organisation. This chronic underfunding is an even bigger injustice when considering the government uses images of the art and artists as the face of Australia globally to entice billions of dollars in tourism. Meanwhile, each art centre is trying to support an average of 107 artists and art workers (who in turn support extended families) in remote communities with very few employment opportunities and extremely high costs, resulting in a high-pressure environment that endangers the lives of staff, volunteers and artists.

6.5 — THE FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

> **What governments choose to do or not to do in relation to government spending on culture reflects value choices that are politically determined, and these choices will produce discernible societal outcomes. Public funding of culture can reproduce the social hierarchy and preserve or even strengthen inequality between social groups**
> (Rankin, 2018b, p. 43).

Of the Australian context, Justin O'Connor says:

> **The rationale for arts funding has been reduced to a bare stump of 'excellence' and the remit of the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Commission] to the politicians' cry for 'balance'. However, the real problem lies in the erosion of a shared language of public value, one that has had a more direct impact on culture than on almost anything else**
> (O'Connor, 2016, p. 48).

Artists such as Isabella Manfredi know that "you can't have excellence at the top of any field without a grassroots community" (The Music, 2018). Arts ministers and government budgets create an atmosphere in which the arts can flourish or die says Tamara Winikoff [then executive director of the National Association for the Visual Arts]: "All the experimentation, all the exploratory work takes place at a small-to-medium level, and yet its importance is not so well recognised, particularly by Coalition governments" (Dow, 2014).

6.6 — CCD FUNDING DURING THE MIDDLE YEARS OF BIG hART'S YIJALA YALA PROJECT

From the Australia Council for the Arts Annual Report 2015-2016 (2016):

- In 2015–16, the CCD allocation was $15.5m (.3%) from the Federal Government and $34.8 (.6%) from state and territory governments.
- Number of artists working in the CCD sector has decreased from 3,000 in 1993 to 1,200 in 2016.
- $6.2 million in Australia Council project grants to individual artists, arts organisations and communities in regional areas in 2015–16.
- In 2015–16 the total funding for Council grants and initiatives was $28 million, and $2.5 million (8.8%) of this went to the CCD sector.
- $37.6 million in grants program and strategic development activity to support small-to-medium organisations. This includes $22.6 million for multi-year funding (Key Organisations Program supporting 124 organisations) and $15.1 million in project grants and initiatives.
- A mere $375,000 was invested in dedicated funding for artists with disability (there are 4.3 million people in Australia with a disability (ABS, 2015) and 8% of artists in Australia identify as having a disability (Australia Council for the Arts, 2015).

Please view Platform Paper 57: Cultural Justice and the Right to Thrive.

These figures reflect the part of the fiscal context in which Big hART's Cultural Justice work is delivered, and indicate the way in which constraints and failings within the Australia Council and at a board level, support cultural injustices.

6.7 — FUNDING ENVIRONMENTS

The small to medium sector is where most activity occurs in terms of cultural equity, inclusion and access, and it is also important to note there is very little by way of peak body leadership in this space. For instance, there is no real pathway for a successful CCD organisation to be able to migrate across from the small to medium sector to Major Performing Arts funding (now known as the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework). The Australia Council has virtually abandoned CCD practice to small-scale impact and mediocre outcomes, even though CCD organisations do the heavy lifting in terms of the Australia Council's stated priority areas. This is the nub of the problem: it is only the sheer tenacity, values and commitment of the sector that sees it deliver, almost despite its peak arts body. It is not that there is no money; it is a question of priorities and values amongst state and federal government arts agencies. At present, there is a pretence of addressing issues of disadvantage and therefore Cultural Justice through 'priority areas', when they are actually starving of funding those that do the work for the sake of other commitments. The major heritage arts companies are prioritised and everything else is minor, including Cultural Justice.

In Platform Paper 57 I argued that these issues are on the minds of many in Australia's arts community and have even been on the radar of the New York Times. In an article published on 2 September 2018, Yaron Lifschitz, the Artistic Director of Brisbane-based circus and physical theatre company Circa, said that the government is entrenching a culture in the Australian performing arts of "overfunding mediocrity" and that

many of the majors are "arteriosclerotic — playing heritage works to aging audiences". In the same article, Wesley Enoch, then Artistic Director of the Sydney Festival said: "We can sometimes have a very narrow bandwidth for cultural expression" and that funding should go to a broader range of companies to allow groups to "explore new and interesting stories" (Sebag-Montefiore, 2018). When highly respected and well-funded artists are speaking up in this way, Government agencies should start paying attention, unless they want to be known as part of the structural injustice occurring on their watch (Rankin, 2018b, p. 46).

I also made the point:

> **For organisations like Big hART in the small–to-medium sector, doing complex long-term work, and applying for multi-year or project-based funding (where project funding can be limited to $100,000 per project), capped funding disadvantages the more successful CCD organisations who are delivering more, with more excellence, at more expense. If you are turning over $200,000 a year and you get a $100,000 grant, you are in clover. If you are turning over $250,000 a month and get a $100,000 grant because that is all you can apply for, you are in tears**
> (Rankin, 2018b, pp. 50-51).

In this context, it makes more sense to stay small rather than try and meet the huge needs in critical priority areas such as Cultural Justice. The Australia Council is at best performing poorly as a peak body, funding to lock the sector into small scale work, mediocrity and sector burnout, or perhaps worse, secretly cost-shifting across government departments, to avoid spending the required funding to achieve the stated priorities of their board. Contextually, small to medium companies working in these priority areas, are forced to reduce their budgets and increase their deliverables so as to 'win' funding. It sets up a toxic culture of exploiting arts workers by underfunding projects. The more you promise to do, in these higher-risk priority areas, the more likely you are to be funded, thus establishing the culture of funded burnout alluded to above. "Arts Ministers need to be mindful of these duty-of-care issues which flow from a focus on high-need cohorts combined with hopelessly unreliable funding" (Rankin, 2018b, p. 51).

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Am I still an artist, or have I become part of a fundraising machine? Is rejection by the State a good thing for outlier organisations working with outsiders in the cultural hinterland so we can confront unpopular and invisible issues? Perhaps we shouldn't expect to be embraced by mainstream funding agencies. However, it is also easy to engage in us-against-them triumphalism and self-righteousness. Sometimes it is insulting, and I worry about the discouragement for younger artists and arts workers who have not learned to move beyond the cultural drip-feed which only funds around 20% of applicants. Why would you keep going with your passion around these critical issues of Cultural Justice?

Big hART has raised more than $70 million over its 30-year history to pursue Cultural Justice through projects co-created with communities experiencing disadvantage. This seems like a reasonable amount. However, we are the richest people, in the richest generation in human history. Given this context, and the opportunities we have to access funding, sometimes, when sitting in the urgency of work in a community, I wonder if our record is actually a funding failure?

6.8 — FAILURE AND COURAGE TO CONTINUE

The Australia Council's stated priorities, which Big hART frames within our Cultural Justice work, are urgent, complex and expensive. Clammer notes two levels of this work: "…the stories that individuals tell to make sense of experience as (damaged) social actors, and the cultural soil out of which they arise" (Clammer, 2019, p. 146). In a similar way, Big hART's Cultural Justice projects work, amongst this interplay of identity and culture, as "the nature of stories themselves varies with culture and with the historical experience…" (Clammer, 2019, p. 146). This complexity requires duty of care from funding agencies, and this is clearly missing missing from the Australia Council in general, and in the CCD sector in particular. It is this dangerous context in which Big hART delivers its Cultural Justice work.

This funding environment also creates dangers for intermediaries, with simpler, short term, linear solutions encouraged through lack of resources. Intermediaries begin to stand outside the flow of change as if directing it for faster results to match limited budgets rather than standing within it, by invitation, learning from it over longer timeframes. It is important to have the funding and courage to continue from within it, to bring skills, virtuosities, community dramaturgies, best attempts and even failures to influence the flows of positive change. However, good practice is costly and largely impossible with current cultural funding.

In conclusion, reflecting on where Big hART failed (in funding and delivery) as well as succeeded requires honesty, and this can be difficult from within the practice. Yet these failures are an important influence on the provenance of project design: "Our sense of knowledge must certainly change in response to changing evidence, but as evidence is always contextual that change cannot be absolute" (Reason, 2017, p. 29). And so there needs to be humility in the work we do. We can push back and complain about the funding environments and the art making environments in which we have to deliver, but it is more transformative if we direct this desire for change to the pursuit of Cultural Justice and allow it to shape our models and approaches.

Before we begin to explore the chronology of how Big hART's work began and developed and the exemplar projects in Chapters 7 and 8, it is worth pausing and reflecting on Big hART's model (or theory of change), which has been generated out of and influenced by, the environments in which we are working in the exemplar projects (see 6.9).

Following on from the Theory of Change, Chapter 7 describes the provenance and circumstances that helped it develop. This description of Big hART's beginnings informs the selection of five key exemplar projects and helps us locate specific intermediations which contribute to the pre-conditions of flourishing. Just as these are described forming Lines of Provenance, so too the reflective journaling increases as we examine these projects to illuminate the personal doubts and dilemmas inherent in trying to ensure the Flow of Consequences are positive and the impacts are strong. By investing significant time in drawing out these provenances, the study seeks to establish the change across the life of the organisation from more traditional CCD beginnings to having more and more of a focus on Cultural Justice practice, and how this is driven by attempts to deliver more effective intermediations within an arts and culture funding environment skewed towards maintaining and enhancing injustice, instead of backing the pre-conditions for flourishing.

6.9 — BIG hART'S THEORY OF CHANGE

The following figure has been developed to capture the layered complexities of Big hART's Domains of Change in action on a Cultural Justice intermediation.

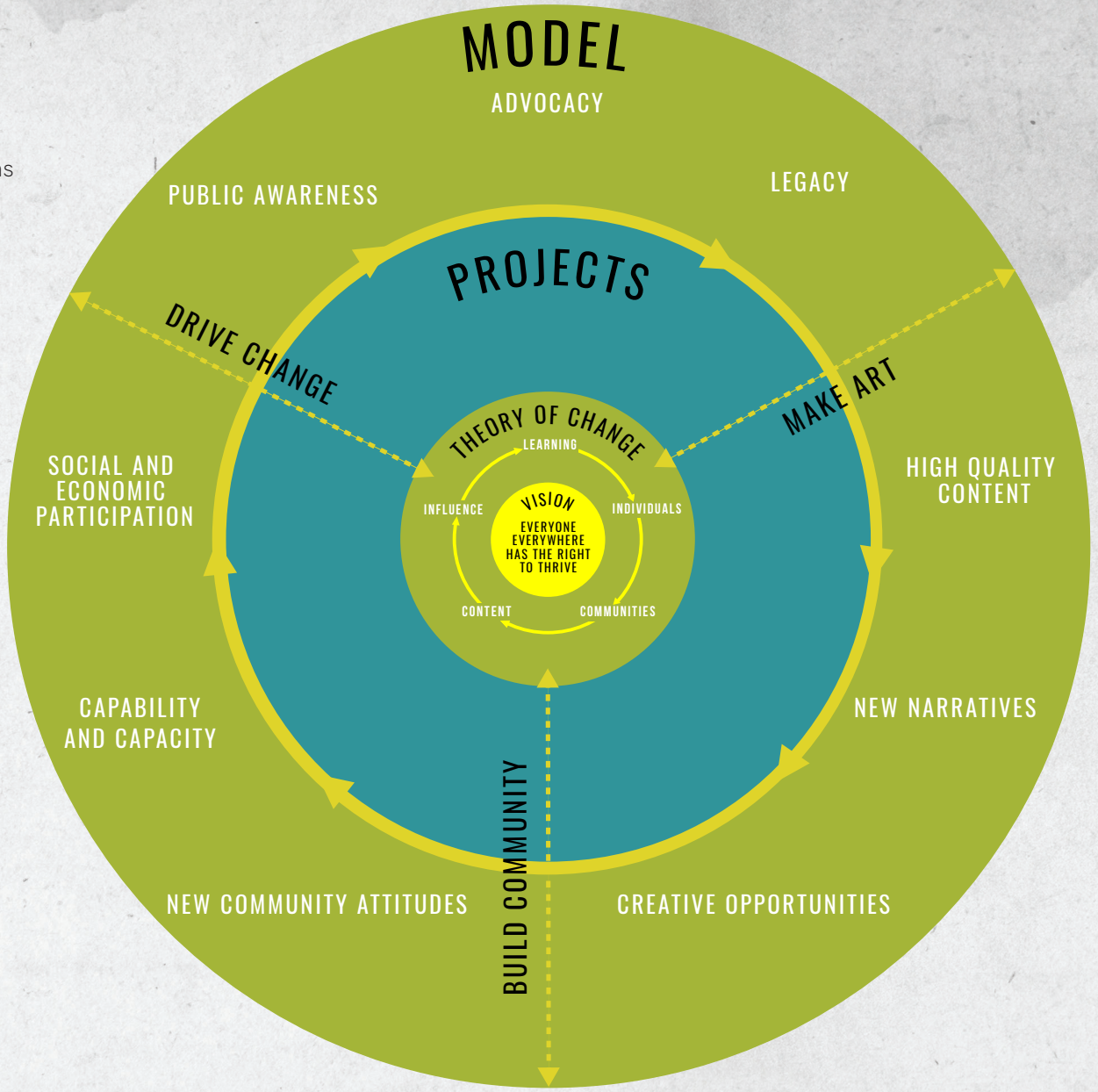

Figure 46: Big hART's Theory of Change Diagram, 2021.
Image: Genevieve Dugard (Big hART).

CHAPTER 07

Establishing Big hART: Developing Lines of Provenance

7.1 — INTRODUCTION

What follows in this chapter is a description of the Lines of Provenance in Big hART's work, how they began, how they developed into a cogent practice, an organisational identity and then a legal entity, and how they shaped our trajectory. The chapter highlights the initial naïve thinking, vague attempts, and the random sparks of opportunity, as well as tragic circumstances such as how the Port Arthur massacre shaped and established Big hART's incorporation and early success.

Figure 47: Pitjantjatjara young people in Ernabella during Ngapartji Ngapartji project, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

The chapter seeks to capture how Big hART progressed as an arts organisation from an initial focus on projects to an urgent advocate for Cultural Justice. By reflecting on Big hART's trajectory from fledgling beginnings, it is hoped to define these curatorial principles which were instinctively at work, and which accelerated the direction the organisation took.

The intention is to describe these foundations in dramaturgical terms, and the reader is advised to make use of video material and the Volumes (noting that video content begins post-1990s when we began using digital).

There is not the space to examine all Big hART's creative outputs since 1992. However, the timeline above captures the flow of projects over time and the way they overlapped, feeding the Lines of Provenance into each other, and forming a non-linear rhizome.

The reader will also benefit from linking back to the dramaturgical continuum described in earlier chapters: the outsider childhood; an interest in justice; the CCD field that has gone before; the effect of place e.g. the asset/deficit narratives of the North West Coast; and the contextual funding environments, within the arts in which Big hART's Cultural Justice practice is delivered. The intention is to provide a clear context for understanding the genesis of the organisation and the exemplar projects which follow, so as to be able to draw conclusions regarding the iterative and scalable attributes of Big hART's Cultural Justice practice in relation to flourishing.

VIEW FULL TIMELINE →

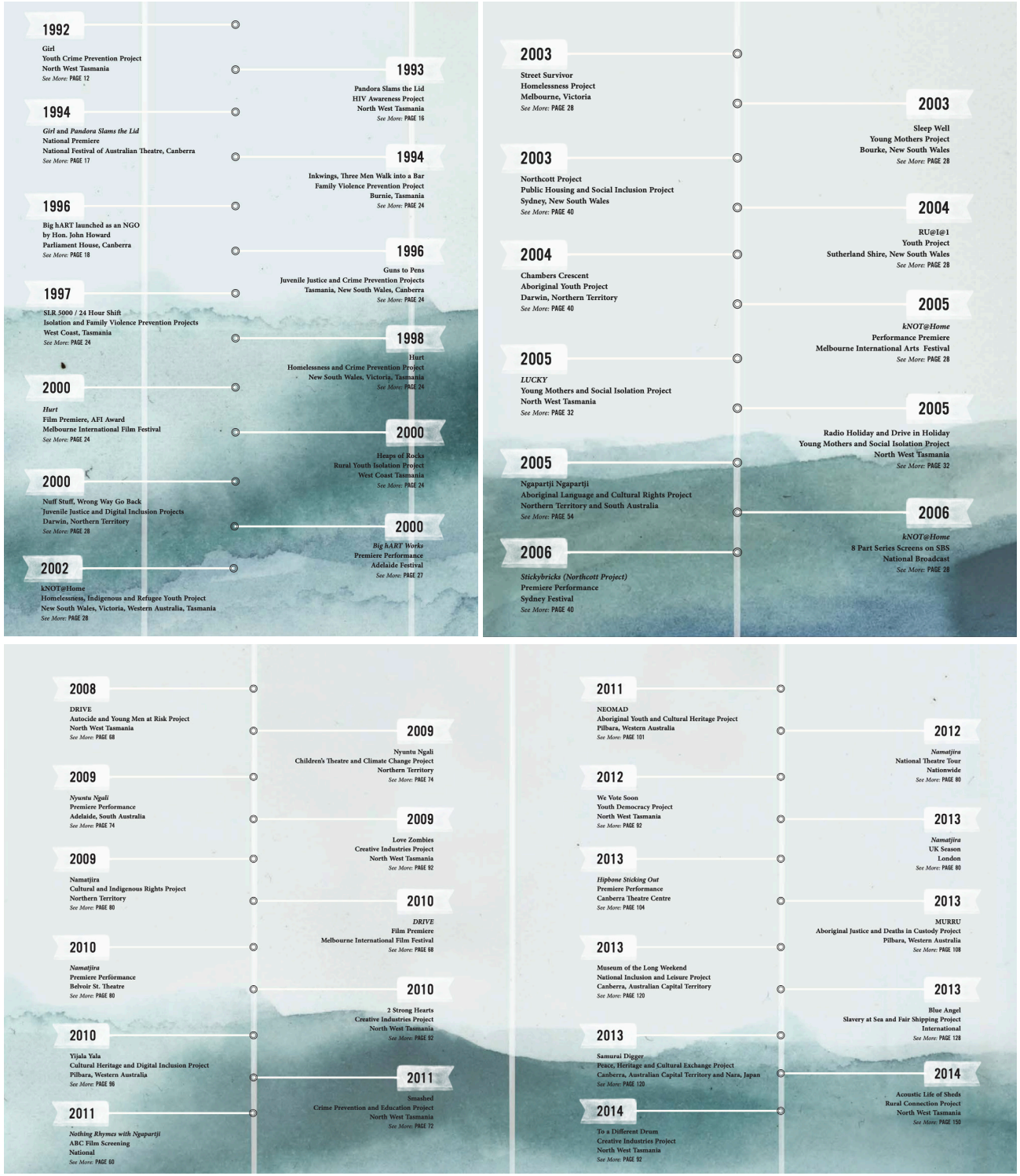

Figure 48: Big hART 25 Year Timeline. Image: Racket.

7.2 — FIRST ATTEMPTS

Big hART came to exist as a series of rolling youth projects, initiated through a producer/artist relationship between myself and co-founder John Bakes, who grew up on a mixed cropping farm (potatoes) out the back of Burnie. Although he was older and more conservative, we shared outsider experiences and complementary values.

Big hART began with no board, no infrastructure and no policies - just a set of passions for justice. We could've stopped the organisation as easily as we started it. John and I had a sense of dread about the plethora of emerging not for profit organisations with similar trajectories i.e. becoming a charity, problematising an issue, making oneself indispensable, paying the mortgage. This sentiment may have been, in part, the beginnings of Big hART's Cultural Justice radicalism i.e. pitting ourselves against the very things that would have flagged our success in the sector (infrastructure, sustainability, over-governance). The idea of 30 years of practice was unthinkable. However, in hindsight some of this passion to avoid the traps and snout in trough, was also a mixture of fear and immaturity, manifesting as a kind of philosophical stance.

When digging deep into the beginnings, the reflective journaling brings to the surface healthy confrontations with who I was then i.e. if I was applying for a job now with Big hART, I probably would not be able to see beyond the zeal and would not hire me. This is not idle commentary, but rather it points to how different contemporary times are with so much values creep and aversion to risk and radicalism, which is worth a watchful eye in any study examining Cultural Justice.

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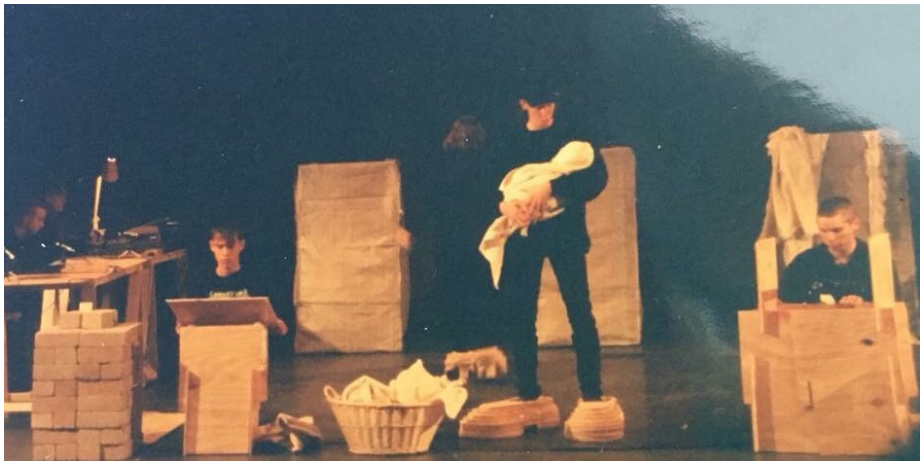
I find it all too easy to romanticise Big hART's beginnings and reconstruct it as though everything was elegantly designed based on considered ideas and principles. However, in reality Big hART was unplanned. Perhaps it was always going to happen. It just seemed to grow out of childhood - the delight in poetics, the passion for justice - it was naïve but it was there, a bit like the way my peers liked sport. Big hART evolved audaciously, initially combined with a need to earn and an opportunity and later through successes, learning from mistakes and pig-headed tenaciousness. The sector was basically flying blind. In the 90s anyone could try anything. This wasn't all bad. Now the processes are perhaps better, safer. But in this space between identity and culture, so much intermediation work is best attempts and do no harm. You know what to do, but you don't know, because the participants are doing the work, not the arts worker or community worker – all you can do it set up and co-create the intermediations. And the mistakes were important. They formed the compost from which our approaches and models grew. Through ad-hoc reflections, projects were formed and curated, community dramaturgies documented, other people trained, and it began to settle into a practice, with templates, markers and key principles refined. And all in the midst of a scramble to survive in the scarcity culture, where the ability to write a good grant application and network dictated who could take up emerging opportunities. Integrity and impact were rarely evaluated and didn't really count. This was not good practice. There was good practice elsewhere, but no way into it from the North West Coast of Tasmania.

7.3 — FIRST PROJECT

The sweep across these early Big hART establishment projects in this chapter is tightly curated around the journey towards Cultural Justice. A more detailed narrative of the first projects can be found in Volume 1.

In 1992, with the pulp mill downsizing, Burnie was in freefall and youth crime had spiked. At risk young people were victim-blamed; Braddon was and is a marginal electorate (refer to statistics on pages 63-64). The Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training's Youth Bureau offered funding. It was some kind of big deal; national money to address youth crime. The project however was run by someone else and it was going bad. The funding was about to be pulled when a contact in Canberra suggested to John Bakes if he could call me into it, the remaining money was ours, but we had to get results. Initially, it was a set of workshops for "40 young people, with 22 in the core group – more than a third were under the jurisdiction of the courts at the time of intake, and three had been in detention" (Walters, 1997, p. 22). Essentially, the workshops allowed young people to voice the issues they face: police, juvenile justice, bullying, homelessness, disengaged education, predation, isolation. They began to experience tasks, skills, teamwork and later recognition, pride, employment trust.



REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 11 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, 2021

There is almost no money. It is embarrassing. It is good youth work and youth arts. However, expectations are not high. I love Burnie and its narrative. Something about the place clicks. Something about paper materials and design fits. I sense, John and I could do something here.

I've got nothing else on. I'm writing comedy and theatre. I'm talented, apparently, plays tour, get into festivals, people applaud - it feels... not enough. I feel like a fraud. Royalty and commissions don't last. It's precarious. We get pregnant. My parents had nothing, I don't want that. I am triggered by landlords. I panic. I throw myself into this Burnie thing, this gamble. I wrestle with myself, with fear. With wanting to contribute. To be less ordinary. It feels like a creative compulsion, and Burnie seems like a place where you can do it with no eyes on you.

Besides, there is no institutional way into this CCD work, this Justice. There is only John and his escape from the drudgery of the post-war potato farming. We'll do it ourselves. Entrepreneur it. Didn't know what that word meant then.

Figure 49: Big hART's first theatre work, *Pandora Slams* the Lid, 1994. Photo: Big hART.

The result of the workshops is *GIRL*. A theatre work. It shines a light on young lives, issues and injustices hidden to the broader community. Through workshop processes, young people learned skills and agency. The sold-out show gave them voice, pride, recognition and all the staples of youth theatre. Nothing that amazing to see here.

The cast had little literacy in the arts, however, we recognised the 'art' of expressing their anger on the streets of Burnie – a kind of 'dark creativity' or 'dark play' (Hunter & McDonald, 2017). We began to identify new expressive gestures, damaging things on stage. Task focused, skills-based damage, requiring concentration and these young people excelled at complex tasks, skills and new self-management – doing it for each other, their family. We were watching the spring buds of altruism.

This was re-purposing negative behaviours for the stage. As a consequence of workshop activities and performance, I saw these young people inhabiting their bodies and peopling the performance, making sophisticated dramaturgical enquiries and negotiating group devised curatorial decisions. They got attention with gonzo publicity stunts and intrigued the media. They gained agency – voice, power, visibility – tentative Cultural Justice.

GIRL generated new ways for performance making to encompass low literacies and training, obsessive behaviours, and we developed new aesthetic approaches which did not look amateurish or stigmatise young participants. Literacies they were weak in were replaced by languages and forms they were naturally strong in. Authenticity had a new currency on stage and no one was allowed to act or perform. The language was raw and contemporary, and the community was shocked and thrilled on opening night. Funders in Canberra were enthusiastic given the engagement, behavioural shift and results.

Although we didn't have the language for it at that time, some Cultural Justice connections were made. We reflected on interlinked journeys: individual participants, their community's positive reaction to them, the art they were making

Figure 50: Get Outside bushwalk project participant, 2019. Photo: Jobi Starrick (Big hART).

and the beginnings Big hART's intermediation approach formed.

Aesthetically, primary sources came to the fore as a motivating design concept: paper from the pulp mill for the stage design and build. Place as a way of setting creative decisions and restricting the palate became a hallmark of Big hART's early works. Primary sources in narrative i.e. 'say the first thing that comes into your head' improv techniques and permissions, allowed first ideas to drive the imagination and the dramaturgical conceits of GIRL. A young person with inner anger became a creature full of rage in the form of giant paper dogs on stage - punched, torn, beaten and destroyed.

The success of the project was captured in a useful evaluation follow up 12 months later - 'only 1 of the 22 young people involved in the pilot project had reoffended. More than half reported they had ceased taking drugs and abusing alcohol (O'Malley et al., 1993). La Trobe University's evaluation showed that: after 12 months all young people were living in stable accommodation; others had obtained employment or enrolled in TAFE; young people under court orders were complying; and others were demonstrating more stable social networks (O'Malley et al., 1993). These and other outcomes gained attention from Federal funding bodies, especially a few years later in the context of the Port Arthur massacre.

GIRL had a fractured, episodic, hallucinogenic quality, coupled with an authenticity as these young people enacted their own stories in front of their community. The fragile construction materials had to be remade every night for the next performance. The feeling of these supposed under-achieving young people defying expectations and working tirelessly each day was palpable to the local audience who knew them. And this task focus approach became foundational for Big hART's non-welfare approach.

Additionally, the resonant and dissociative narrative of *GIRL*, performed authentically, formed the beginnings of Big hART's creative language – local literacies, place-based, primary source materials, authentic 'non-theatre' touchstones, no acting, dismantling of audience power and transferring agency. The provenance of these languages and their refinement played out in future productions such as: *Stickybricks* (2005), *Ngapartji Ngapartji* (2006), *Blue Angel* (2015) and *When Water Falls* (2021) amongst others

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 12 – BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, 2017

A young woman in the cast of GIRL*, who suffered from debilitating agoraphobia, obesity, hair loss and dysmorphia, was also very flexible physically. When she first attended workshops, she would enter the room after the others had left and help with the washing up. After some time she began to attend earlier, but sit under the table. When she finally joined the cast, to cope with the audience gaze she decided to begin the performance in a small road case, centre stage for 15 minutes as the public took their seats. Later during the show, to the shock of the audience, the case burst open and this young woman rolled out of that impossibly small space. I saw her for decades afterwards around Burnie until she passed away, and that was our connection. She taught me to look and relook for who people are and what their contribution already is. And to see that finding the right intermediation and method is my responsibility as a creative. And sometimes that means stripping away all the preoccupations and literacies and going with the moment that already is for creative impact. As a professional, I learned from her. Here was Cultural Justice in action. Here was an intermediation, which she triggered, and she was seen. It created an anchor of community validation for her, which lasted her lifetime. And by this work, she helped design Big hART's practice. This was, I guess, the first manifestation of Domain 5 – knowledge transfer, two-way learning, new ways of knowing in practice.*

By making *GIRL* in Burnie, away from the sometimes acute stare of metropolitan arts communities, there was more room (even if less resource) for this initial naïve dramaturgical inquiry into making content from community processes. As a result, Big hART got going quickly and convincingly with a practice steeped in place and wrestling with the tension between aesthetics and social justice, and so our Cultural Justice beginnings began to flourish.

7.4 — FLOURISHING 1993 - 1994

It is hard to express how unlikely it seemed for the North West Coast to generate success, and so perhaps because of that GIRL garnered considerable interest and new funding. The next project was even more unlikely. The Tasmanian Health Department, Arts Council and the HIV and AIDS Council backed us to create a show focusing on HIV awareness to "demystify homosexuality as an AIDS problem in a State which, at the time, continued to outlaw same sex relationships" (Walters, 1997, p. 25). It looked at the hidden issue of HIV and injecting drug use in rural Tasmania. Even then, tackling hidden issues was becoming central to our purpose as we began to emerge as a new organisation. *Pandora Slams the Lid* can be found in Volume 1 (pp. 16-17).

In 1993 the programs jointly received a Prime Minister's Heads of Government Award for the Prevention of Violence, which was accepted by one of the recidivist performers who had a reputation for being the only woman to have escaped from Risdon Prison. Senator Robert Bell acknowledged the outstanding success of the program, the very low number of recidivists and the "level of commitment and enthusiasm which challenge(s) the mood of fatalism so often noticeable in many young unemployed people" (Bell, as cited in Walters, 1997, p. 25).

Burnie seemed so far away from the rest of the world. We weren't overtly influenced by work made in mainland Australia or reliant on arts funding or peer review, and the isolation somehow encouraged early aesthetic experimentation. *Pandora* used a precarious plywood set that had to be rebuilt delicately during every performance like a giant house of cards. Some of the young cast had attention deficiencies and building it required absolute concentration, which focused the cast creating a strange stillness. Inevitably, when the set collapsed the disruption and the rebuild during the show reinforced the dynamics of the cast's everyday lives. Together with *GIRL*, these works stamped a strong design aesthetic on the company, which in and of itself spoke of Cultural Justice.

Figure 51: Scott Rankin in the rehearsal room for *Hipbone Sticking Out*, 2013 Photo: Big hART.

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I don't know how really, but in those early years we had the audacity to just cold call people with a public profile such as Lex Marinos, who was strong on television, and the highly acclaimed Robyn Archer, the director of the 1994 National Festival of Australian Theatre in Canberra. I remember plucking up the courage to ask Lex to join the cast as we remounted the show, and then Robyn invited us to her festival. She had no money for us, but we didn't care. We didn't really know about arts funding. This was about justice and hidden voices, and getting them into the national conversation. This was Cultural Justice (although we didn't have the label for it) and agency and influence. Funding didn't really figure. Again, looking back, the provenance of this shaped our organisational future. The shows sold out to good reviews and Robyn described the shows as having a "profound effect on a great many in the audiences, who were moved to examine issues of enormous importance to young people and the community at large" (Archer, 1994, as cited in Walters, 1997, p. 25). Without knowing at the time, this was the earliest example of Domain 4 (influence) in action.

It is worth dwelling a little longer on the audacity of these early clumsy attempts and successes, because of their formative influence and how it spring-loaded the practice. At the same time as these performative successes, we were being championed in Canberra for alternative funding sources to the arts by public servants who wanted traction on the ground and could see results. This marked our future approach to finding funding from obscure places and multiple sources. We are rarely in the position where being knocked back from one source will mean we have to drop a community and potentially do harm. This was accidental mentoring in organisational resilience from the Australian Public Service.

We received another sizable Commonwealth Government grant in 1993-94 through the Youth Bureau for a project targeting family violence experienced by teenage mothers in transient relationships. *Three Men Walk into a Bar* (under the project banner of Inkwings) was performed in a warehouse on the docks to strong support. It set in train a 25-year passion and commitment to family violence prevention through new intermediations which has remain embedded in Big hART's DNA. In the context of this research, these projects were critically formative. We had stumbled upon our organisational identity, and yet it was fragile, hard to name and had no structure beyond the audacity.

What Big hART urgently needed in 1994 were organisational structures to support this acceleration of success and vision for a CCD company delivering Cultural Justice outcomes. We couldn't even articulate this. We were nothing. Just a collection of projects. We had to become an entity. But what was the process? There seemed to be no regional leadership programs and nothing to provide a focus. But then, in 1996 something terrible happened - the Port Arthur massacre.

Out of contemporary Tasmania's worst horror, a way forward was thrust upon us. A way of doing something beyond the arts echo chamber - something lasting, impactful and justice-focused. A fledgling arts organisation in the poorest electorate in the poorest state in the country was working with young offenders. So what? In its first few months, the Howard government was confronted with Port Arthur and people needed leadership. The same public servants in Canberra who had been informally mentoring Big hART - in how to find funding sources, how to lobby, how to write Ministerial briefs, understanding the quirks of Canberra, which portfolios were powerful, helping us see the power of Braddon as a marginal electorate - knew the implications of this tragedy for the Prime Minister's office.

These mentors put Big hART's work in front of the PM's office and suggested the Prime Minister could launch Big hART as a newly incorporated not for profit inside Parliament House in response to the raw wound of the massacre. It sounds callous to say, but the optics were good for the PM. He agreed. For the rest of the Howard decade, it was very useful for us to be able to say 'launched by Prime Minister John Howard'. This opportunity shaped the dramaturgy of the company, as we learned to ask who are the crucial audiences for our work, even before we knew this work was Cultural Justice. Again, this was Domain 4 emerging in our practice.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 14 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, NOVEMBER 2021

What were we even doing in Canberra? How lucky were we to end up knowing how to knock on these doors? There was no arts leadership in this, which would've diverted us to a ghetto of compliance, performing to the usual suspects – dance monkey dance. This was political dramaturgy training us. However, this makes the process sound more strategic than it was. What it was really like: no funding, no staff and a struggle to feed our family of toddlers, we would visit the supermarket and Mrs Kons would slip packets of out of date pasta into our family shopping trolley. It was entrepreneurial by necessity, combined with a little luck.

This time, this attitude and this opportunity is captured in an article for the Griffith Review titled *Soggy Biscuit: Invisible lives – or the Emperor's new social work*. In hindsight, it was almost like a reflective journal entry…

> *In the first month of John Howard's government, my then toddler son offered the new prime minister a soggy biscuit… Without realising at the time, the soggy encounter was a turning point in Big hART's approach to Community Cultural Development.*
>
> *There we were in the hallowed halls of Parliament House, about to introduce the PM to his best worst nightmare – a bunch of ex-juvenile offenders, reformed recidivists from Tasmania. Mr Howard came striding across the marble, media-scum stumbling and cursing behind him like some multi-limbed pot-bellied animatronic political spore, as he power-walked his way to the theatrette deep in the bowels of the building. History was working in our favour that day. Tasmania in early 1996 was momentarily flavour of the month, especially when it came to young offenders, and so the PM had agreed to meet us.*
>
> *My young son in his blue, polka-dot-onesy, brandishing a rusk, sucked to a dangerous point, stopped the whole posse. The security contingent blinked at the half-chewed weapon. Mr Howard's eyebrows twitched like instinctual 'bad-photo-op-antennae', men in black talked into their cufflinks… if it were just a baby that needed kissing, easy done, but this disarming offer of soggy communion, this subversive snack, the toddler table manners. Nobody was sure what to do. Cameras shifted their Cyclops gaze back and forth. Then, out of the mouth of a babe, a tremendous biscuit burp. Saved. The PM, laughed, pinched Locky's Rubenesque cheek and swept triumphantly into the theatrette to meet the ex-recalcitrants, who apparently, had been 'reformed by art'. Not the sort of gig a PM from the political right would normally say yes to, but these were dark and desperate days as the spectre of US-style gun barrel criminality threatened the peaceful backwater of Australia…(Rankin, 2014, pp. 11-12).*

Read in full.

Figure 52: Genevieve Dugard and Scott Rankin in Ernabella during Ngaparti Ngaparti project, 2008. Photo: Big hART.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 15 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, OCTOBER 2021

The launch was powerful, and the PM knew from the pin-drop silence he was witnessing something unusual. He couldn't deny the stats we presented after the performance – one offence a week from the target group at the beginning of the project, one offence in ten months at the conclusion.

This continued to fuel the beginnings of our political dramaturgy. Converting theatrical languages into political. Understanding the audience. Being mentored by public servants who wanted best practice. The PM's people were calculating the cost per unit/kid; what was in it for the PM - a good-news story from Tasmania; reinforce strong leadership after Port Arthur…

For Big hART it was formative. It is a direct line of provenance – speaking truth to power. As highlighted earlier, lived experience intermediated with applied dramaturgies driving influence became a way of defining our fourth Domain of Change. At the time, it was perhaps the necessity of survival generating a kernel of future thinking.

A strange yet important reflection, coming back into focus now in 2021. Even at the beginning, with no money, John Bakes and I would save the last of our project reserves at the end of a project, and we'd take our motley cast and crew out for a posh dinner to Ottoman's in Canberra, when it used to be above the shops in Manuka. Most of these young people had never been to a restaurant. It could sound trivial and perhaps snobbish, however, this too was dramaturgical, and a kind of justice – the right to beauty and nutrition that Clammer discusses. And it still resonates in Big hART today. The balance that feasting can bring to the astringency of the work. Sometimes new staff struggle with this, yet it is critical to our Cultural Justice practice - you can't build flourishing if you don't know how to accept flourishing. Over the years, it is usually those staff - the ones who struggle with joy or who self-flagellate about small missed details, exhibit a self-righteousness, risk trying to rescue and struggle with the idea of 'do no harm' - who burn out. Perhaps it is an obscure reference, but in Cultural Justice terms, some changemakers don't want to leave the comfort of the catacombs.

7.5 — EXPERIMENTATION: 1996 - 2000

This iconic Canberra moment consolidated the imaginative audacity that was becoming a characteristic of our work and Big hART's experimentation surged. However, in many ways it is not a period to be proud of. It was an exciting, but fraught time, with our rapid organisational growth being unsupported while also generating elements of over-reach and triumphalism.

We expanded the range of invisible issues and community settings we were working with, piloting new approaches through contiguous sets of one-off funding cobbled together into three-year projects. This was not co-creation or Cultural Justice, the scales were tipped too far towards survival. At that time, funding cycles for 'miracle-fix 26-week projects' were the norm and three years was considered very long-term for a project. By default, the cultural sector 'norm' was essentially funding for harm. By our 15th year, Big hART projects were lasting six years. By our 30th year, Yijala Yala - the last of the exemplars in the study – is running at 10 years and counting. Such are the complexities of working in communities experiencing the effects of deep community lateral trauma.

However, out of this difficult period, with a number of projects beginning to run concurrently in different states, came a better understanding of the criticality of distilling corporate knowledge and becoming a learning organisation. Decades later, the necessity of this meant we added this learning – or knowledge transfer - as another Domain of Change. In this way, this period was the start of a growing awareness of the Lines of Provenance explored in this study – projects influencing

each other; developing arts workers; developing the practice; learning internally; trying to do no harm; sharing IP.

During this period of experimentation, Big hART also honed one key approach that, as it turns out, would ensure its survival and growth for 30 years - looking beyond the 'content' of the arts to focus also on the 'processes' used to create the arts. This then led to delivering projects which held value across multiple government departments. With the government arts agencies chronically underfunding their own priority areas (Chapter 6) - priorities which are the focus of our Cultural Justice work - we were forced to look beyond the arts silo and the scarcity culture that current arts funding structures perpetuate. This proved a watershed as we discovered new networks of funding at higher and more appropriate levels, with partners who were not averse to cultural approaches provided we were careful with our choice of language. It would be a different study to look at why, after 30 years of award-winning projects, Big hART and its Cultural Justice work remains relatively unsupported by arts funding bodies in comparison to other less socially engaged and less successful organisations. I suspect it would show up the pitfalls of relying too heavily on peer review only (when other forms of funded leadership are also important), as well as an inbuilt bias away from funding for Cultural Justice and perhaps an aversion to Big hART's outlier values which can appear to others as 'not toeing the line'.

A key point is, that without an overarching, whole of government 'Arts, Culture and Creativity policy' (Fielding & Trembath, 2021) powerful government departments barely consider the arts as relevant in creating cultural shifts or Cultural Justice. Importantly, during this period of growth, our mentoring public servants pointed us to departments of influence in Cabinet with funding heft that were willing to look at new approaches to Cultural Justice, but under different names i.e. social participation; regional, rural and remote; thriving communities; cost-saving for the taxpayer. For instance, government may not be particularly interested in the wellbeing of young offenders, however they are very interested in 'tough on crime' optics as a vote-winner. Or the difficulties faced by single teenage mothers may lack visibility, but their children garner sympathy. Listening and aligning our projects to non-arts funding became something of a dramaturgy and a question of language and networking, which we learned during this period. (If governments were actually interested in outcomes and worked out how to maintain corporate memory, none of this time-wasting activity would be necessary and we could spend more energy in the field).

The figures below indicate how, even 20 years later, this mentoring diversified our funding away from arts funding bodies and transformed Big hART's survival, allowing us to pursue Cultural Justice. It also shows the resulting fluctuations in funding year to year.

	2017	2018	2020	2021
COMMONWEALTH GRANTS	44%	22%	2%	53%
DONATIONS	1%	4%	8%	8%
PHILANTHROPIC	8%	16%	14%	4%
STATE GOVT	13%	11%	23%	8%
CORPORATE	7%	9%	22%	7%
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL	19%	9%	8%	0%
PRESENTATION FEES	1%	1%	7%	1%
ARTS TASMANIA	4%	4%	8%	0%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	1%	0%	0%	13%
COMMUNITY GROUPS	1%	21%	0%	0%
ALL OTHER	1%	3%	8%	6%

Figure 53: Big hART Funding 2017-2021.

We also learned to rarely mention the art in Big hART, instead we'd emphasise the heart in our messaging, centring this around Domains 1 (individual) and 2 (community). Then we'd co-create, orchestrating opportunities to show the work in forums of policy and funding influence – Domain 3 (content) and Domain 4 (influence). It was in some ways a subversive, underground approach, to championing the voice of the Outsider.

In the period between 1996-2000, we hadn't completely defined all these domains, but we had identified the beginnings of a dramaturgical approach to amplifying the voice of lived experience to precision audiences. The articulation of the Domains of Change came later when Murdoch University research gave name to what we were doing.

The funding freedom in this approach also served to free up our aesthetic and response to place, and increased our interdisciplinarity, which in turn acted as a kind of honey pot, attracting stronger optics for the invisible issues we were championing.

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When caught up in the empathy, joy and struggle of these kinds of CCD projects, I found it easy in these early years to become so swept up in it, and overthink and overstate its importance and impact for long-term change beyond the participants and the immediate community. During these early years, public servants who funded and championed our work also gave us ongoing critique of impact and knocked some sense into us to be realistic, sharpen our messaging and data collection and align our work with government priorities if we wanted to have relevance. This was hard for me to hear. We could see the impacts on the ground and were sick of one-off project funding and reinventing the wheel.

We had no money, no arts industry backing and few other contacts, but we had impactful content with which to try and generate more influence for those going through the Cultural Justice issues we were dealing with. This saw us develop our Domain 4 thinking - how lived experience could have influence an applied aesthetics or political dramaturgy). It was hard then, and is now, to be realistic about impact and influence, to be smart and strategic in this arcane area of Cultural Justice, tackling invisible issues. In many ways we were discovering what we were doing, but then, governments were almost never on the ground, they relied on us at the grassroots and had little contact with actual good practice. What were we actually doing? Were we bullshitting? Were we pulling the wool? Were we educating? Were we carving out space, fleet of foot? We were, without knowing it, naively developing a layered intermediation dramaturgy. I guess so.

7.6 — EXAMPLES OF INFLUENCE DRAMATURGY IN CULTURAL JUSTICE

One of Prime Minister Howard's first policy commitments, when he formed Government in 1996, was family violence prevention. Based on the earlier success of Inkwings, and with the help of our public service mentors, we submitted two more projects exploring precise aspects of family violence: 'How could young people in isolated communities seek help safely, online,' (West Coast of Tasmania) and 'Young people witnessing extreme violence' (Illawarra, New South Wales).

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Funding for these projects was substantial, and took us a long way from just the Arts. The funding carried much more government heft. It taught us to lean into the seriousness of Government priorities, without losing sight of our purpose. It also brought with it a new emphasis on evaluation and evidence, as opposed to the simple acquittal required by the arts. These two projects, running simultaneously, consolidated our expansion across state boundaries, created new organisational complexities and also taught us that if we were serious about justice, we had to be in conversations that fed into policy; we'd have to do more and better, and we'd have to rely on our unfair advantage, the voice of lived experience, bringing authenticity and embracing aesthetics and emotion. In a sense we had to lean away from the issue of family violence and safety, and into the telling of story. The work became task-focused as well as altruistic. Participants benefited from the agency that comes from changing your community, rather than relying on service provision and deficit models. The results were unexpectedly positive and shaped the dramaturgy of our Cultural Justice intermediations. These changes still resonate today. However, it is important to acknowledge how little we knew. Yet good results can happen naively, without knowing the 'why' of everything you try. How differently we treat gender in this space on programs now. How lucky we were that when participants were making choices and changes in their lives in these projects, they achieved change despite what we did not know and did not do well. In hindsight, however, there was something strong in this lack of expertise, which is missing from our work now. Mistakes can lead to good things in the intermediated space, even where it concerns critical issues. What perhaps made the work strong was that we never drifted into core family violence prevention, which is not our remit; we were telling stories – holding the space for the voice of lived experience to speak to their own community. These were in their own way, remarkable projects. The intention, structure and staffing of these projects would never get through stage one of a funding round now. This is right and proper but also points to a loss of agency in communities being able to take action.

The two projects portraits below are illustrative of these formative years.

Tasmania's West Coast seems very isolated unless you live there. In the towns of Zeehan, Queenstown, Strahan and Rosebury everyone knows everyone, and in the '90s it was difficult for young people to seek help and disclose their experiences when feeling unsafe. To deliver this project, Big hART partnered with local councils, schools and organisations to raise awareness and train young people as peer educators. Perhaps audaciously, with digital in its infancy, we also pioneered online disclosure, demonstrating it could be done safely, before elite charities such as Lifeline had moved in this direction.

These drier achievements were complemented by performances and installations involving young people - *SLR 5000, Three men walk into a bar, 24 Hour Shift* and *Heaps of Rocks* - with new performance pieces developed in schools, pubs and halls involving a range of disciplines and linking the communities together across the West Coast. Success triggered word of mouth and interstate invitations began to flow in. The City of Wagga Wagga wanted a project with young people in the Eastern Riverina Juvenile Justice Centre. Western Sydney wanted project designs. Rural communities in Northern NSW got in touch.

In this phase, Big hART was expanding too rapidly, and we had to develop new approaches such as template scripts to move quick enough. Although flawed, this created ways to achieve more participation and harness local content. These became labelled as 'quick win' projects, used to build engagement. With the uptake of digital, this engagement is now achieved through the immediacy of emergent platforms, however digital at times threatens to become the panacea for engagement.

Examples of projects from this phase can be found in Volume 1 (pp. 22-27), including the Port Arthur inspired *Guns to Pens*, *Happy Water Sad Water* and our Australian Film Industry award-winning film *Hurt*. *Hurt* attracted the attention of New South Wales Premier Bob Carr, which helped us secure a cross-portfolio funding model, running in three-year cycles lasting nine years in total, through a de-siloed government approach. At the time this kind of core funding from a Premier's department was unheard of. It sent positive shock waves through our work, changing our capacity to tackle outsider art at scale. Inevitably, over the nine years, Arts NSW managed to rope the funding back into their fold and extinguished this line of Cultural Justice resource for Big hART, even though we were delivering strong outcomes. Classic public service.

Figure 54: Big hART project participant, 2000.
Photo: Randy Larcombe (Big hART).

7.7 — EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIC DRAMATURGIES

These approaches, which combined dramaturgical thinking and strategy, became a hallmark of Big hART's work leading into the exemplar projects which follow in this study. Beginning by harnessing the clout of Prime Minister John Howard by performing for him in Parliament House after the Port Arthur massacre, and leading to the engagement of NSW Premier Bob Carr. It is instructive to explore this in more detail as an illustration of a Domain 4 intermediation that delivered influence and specialist core funding and allowed us to survive, thrive and deliver impact.

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INTERMEDIATION – THE DRAMATURGY OF INFLUENCE:

In the late 1990s, Premier Carr's arts advisor Bret Johnson became aware of Big hART's work through the prison performances of Guns to Pens *inside the Eastern Riverina Juvenile Justice Centre. Following this, in preparation for the making of our film HURT, Bret acted as an intermediator for Big hART with the Premier and we approached him to launch the broader* Hurt *project in Armadale. As an add on to the event, Carr was asked to be filmed as an extra in a scene in a pub with acclaimed Bidjara actor Deborah Mailman pouring beers behind the bar.*

Bob Carr famously didn't drink and he loved acting with Deborah and at-risk young people through multiple takes, before jetting off to his next event. Hurt went on to win an Australian Film Industry Award and was part of Big hART Works - invited to the Adelaide Festival, with Bret again intermediating to ensure Premier Carr attended. He was interested to watch acclaimed pianist Roger Woodward and portrait artist Robert Hannaford perform with at-risk young people. Admittedly Bob fell asleep during the show, but it was an impactful intermediation for opening up discussions with government.

This sequence of creative events led to the opportunity to pitch to the Premier and his staff, the idea of cross-portfolio support and better outcomes. Staring down a large board room table surrounded by advisors from various departments, there was a nervous moment for me as the Premier and his Chief of Staff Roger Wilkins discussed Mahler speaking in fluent German. It was very intimidating. Our pitch was strong on saving public dollars, hardly spoke about the arts. We referred to Autocide and rural young people and issues the Premier and his team hardly knew about, and now that the Premier had met with, and watched these young people in action, they were real to him and the benefits felt visceral, as well as being backed by data from our evaluations. After 10 minutes of an allotted 30, the Premier waved his hand, said something more in German and his people went off to find the money from different portfolios where the outcomes and cost savings would occur.

While in the field, we talk about stories of survival and resilience in the face of trauma, it was instructive to hear public servants only asking questions concerning 'unit cost and target groups'. Young people as 'units' was hard to swallow, yet it was a language and a literacy for us to learn for a particular audience in this intermediation. The resulting cross-portfolio funding still remains our most innovative funding structure for delivering Cultural Justice intermediations in 30 years.

7.8 — ADELAIDE FESTIVAL: A WATERSHED

To cap off this early phase of Big hART's developing Cultural Justice approach, the company was invited to Robyn Archer's Adelaide Festival in 2000. The result of half a decade's work was a large combined performance piece called *Big hART Works*, co-created with communities across three states and performed in an underground carpark with at-risk young people travelling across the country. It became a festival hit with directors, politicians, funders and elders in the audience.

Even though we were not yet using the phrase, the Lines of Provenance of Big hART's first eight years of experimentation could be seen in this Adelaide presentation: dramaturgical rule-breaking; how the work was situated as an outlier within the festival itself; the use of high profile artists and public figures in cameos; and an uncompromising approach to Cultural Justice issues and content. In this context, Festival director Robyn Archer's letter to Big hART is worth reading if you haven't already.

7.9 — LINES OF PROVENANCE - CULTURAL JUSTICE DRAMATURGIES 2000 - 2005

After the 2000 Adelaide Festival, pursuing hybridity in geographically diverse communities seeded a series of large-scale, complex projects, including GOLD (looking at water shortages, young people and farmer suicides in the Murray Darling Basin); Radio Holiday which gave rise to Drive in Holiday (examined later as the first exemplar) and *kNOT@Home* (exploring homelessness and statelessness), an eight-part documentary series for SBS television and accompanying performance piece that toured to the Melbourne International Arts Festival and Sydney Opera House. *kNOT@Home* featured participants from East Timor, Afghanistan, Pitjantjatjara Country and the streets of Australian rural towns and cities.

This work saw Big hART return to perform in Parliament House in 2004, with the performance addressing Federal Ministers and the staff of Centrelink directly regarding these Cultural Justice issues. This continues the direct line of finding narrative approaches to generate influence - from Prime Minister Howard to Premier Carr, and then later, Minister Garrett, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, Prime Minister Turnbull, Opposition Leader Shorten, Attorney-Generals, Prime Ministers' committees, Governors-General and multiple State Governors. Big hART has also pursued similar approaches in the corporate and philanthropic sectors, which in some ways can be more powerful. In terms of Cultural Justice, this Line of Provenance can be seen at work across all five exemplar projects examined in coming chapters.

Figure 55: Participants, 2000.
Photo: Big hART.

The Centrelink portrait below is placed here as it shows the working parts of a Cultural Justice intermediation in action i.e. placing at-risk young people in a place of influence; the interface with a powerful Federal Minister; senior advisors; Centrelink staff being honoured; artists quietly at work; and how we were again mentored by backroom public servants who wanted change; the Minister hearing the voices of lived experience. Further examples will be pulled out through the reflective journal entries as we progress.

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Big hART were asked to deliver a performance by young people from the program in the Great Hall of Parliament House as part of an awards ceremony for Centrelink staff around the country who were to be acknowledged for 'good work' such as breaching Centrelink recipients (such as our participants) and removing them from welfare payments. These young people were in the performance we were to present that evening, which involved stories of survival and showed the different ways in which they ended up as clients of Centrelink.

The awards ceremony was staged with great fanfare and production values we never have access to. The young people performed with strong commitment and literacy during the dinner. What began as noisy chatter and clattering cutlery, ended with silence and tears from the audience, and a standing ovation as the young people delivered their stories with strong video and music. Central to the narrative was the story of one young man experiencing severe family violence, breached by Centrelink, fleeing home with a plastic back of belongings, stopped by the police who emptied his backpack on the footpath, searched his belongings on the ground and then arrested him for littering when he wouldn't clean them up.

Minister Patterson (Community Services) arrived late during the performance and clearly hadn't been briefed as to what she was watching. After the applause, we had negotiated eight minutes to make our key points regarding our approach to seemingly intractable problems with unique intermediations. The points were concise and aimed to hit home. The Minister huddled with an advisor trying to catch up as the awards evening went in this unexpected direction. What they didn't realise was that we had been rigorously coached by public servants on how to hone key points into short sharp APS language to accompany the voice of lived experience.

This event didn't specifically achieve any policy shifts towards Cultural Justice however, it was a priceless learning experience to know we could speak directly to senior public servants and Ministers about better practice and push for them to take it seriously.

7.10 — CULTURAL JUSTICE, URGENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Throughout this period, Big hART began delivering supporting satellite projects in sites of critical Cultural Justice importance such as: Don Dale Juvenile Justice Centre, Groote Eylandt, Tennant Creek and the Tiwi Islands (all in the Northern Territory). Lines of Consequences emerged beyond our work as spin-off projects and shaped our approach to legacy i.e. knowledge sharing, building local capacity, funding and project designs. *Sleep Well, Handle with Care, Stepping Stones* and *RU&I@1* are examples of this kind of partnership-based legacy. For further reading, refer Volume 1 (pp. 28-31).

Big hART's vision shifted to larger-scale, longer-term projects based on diversified funding sources which came from working with government departments and obtaining funding for the high need, invisible issues of Cultural Justice. As we move into looking at the exemplar projects, it is important to note that a rhizome management approach emerged alongside the outlier projects we were running in isolated places, resulting in large anarchic projects entwined and overlapping, some aesthetically good and some less effective, yet still yielding strong learning experiences. The consequences of this rhizome approach are still felt in the work Big hART delivers now i.e. a structural elasticity; combined funding and partners; place-inspired aesthetics; working at scale; site-specific; long timeframes; and mobility in touring and independent presenting. These are all significant Lines of Provenance regarding organisational attributes that have generated Big hART's hallmark Cultural Justice works of scale which will be examined in the five exemplar Cultural Justice projects. This approach is captured by François Matarasso's Foreword to Youth Participatory Arts, Learning and Social Transformation (Wright & Down, 2021) examining Big hART's Work:

> Scott Rankin… [has built] … a network more than an organisation, and a body of work that stands as a defiant challenge to that same art establishment that still maintains high quality art can only be created by people it has accredited using methods it has approved. More than anything Big hART's truth grows from a refusal to lower its expectations – of itself, of the art it creates, of its audiences, and, always of the people it invites to make work together. Precisely because they are among those of whom much of Australian society expects nothing, Big hART expects everything, and in doing so empowers them to prove to anyone who cares to see exactly what they are capable of achieving, for themselves, for each other, for their community (Matarasso, 2020, p. ix).

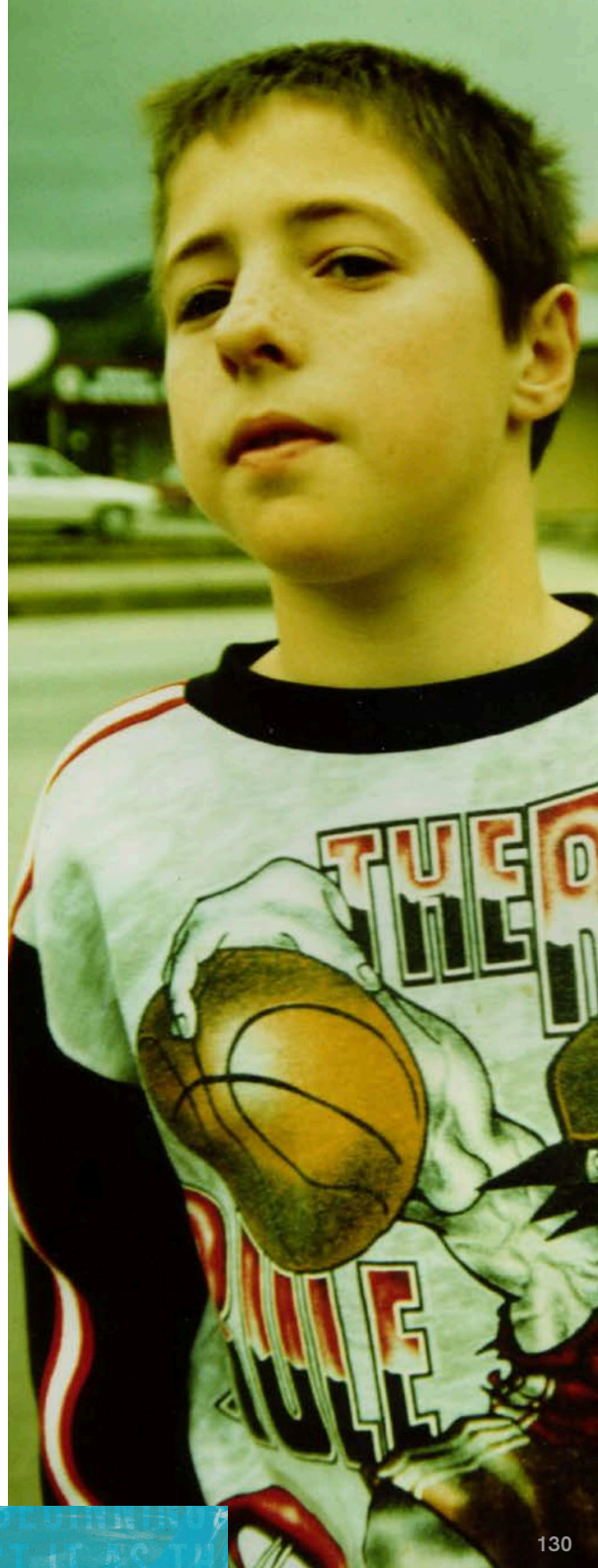

Figure 56: Big hART project participant, 2000. Photo: Randy Larcombe (Big hART).

Figure 57: Workshop program in the now notorious Don Dale Juvenile Justice Centre in the Northern Territory created a performance piece called *Wrong Way Go Back*, 2005. Photo: Big hART.

Lines of Provenance - Four Exemplar Projects

8.1 — INTRODUCTION

Descriptions of the exemplar projects included here follow on from the experimentation in what we have now come to know as Cultural Justice (as outlined in the previous chapter). The exemplars begin in the mid-2000s with Drive in Holiday, Northcott Narratives and Ngapartji Ngapartji all overlapping each other. Namatjira was delivered across the next decade from 2009 to 2017 alongside Yijala Yala which began in 2010 and then transitioned into the still-continuing legacy project New Roebourne. This project becomes the lens through which we examine the way the Lines of Provenance flow on into the future, beyond this research in 2021.

Figure 58: *Stickybricks* in the Northcott Public Housing Estate for Sydney Festival, Surry Hills, 2006. Photo: Keith Saunders (Big hART).

In choosing the defining terms Lines of Provenance and Flows of Consequence for this study, it is important to note that the concepts are not linear. Provenance and consequences emerge and overlap. They are rhizomic and networked. Various project teams work and learn concurrently in diverse parts of the country, tackling diverse hidden issues and utilising different aspects of previous learnings. Key artists worked across most of them, with producers and arts workers travelling at key moments of each project to support each other. One project may be in the design phase integrating new learnings, while another project is in a legacy phase, harnessing Flows of Consequence. However, all projects are now linked by the organisational purpose of Cultural Justice. The five exemplars are described in narrative form, with the reflective journaling attempting to capture the messiness of provenance. The purpose of this reflective tone is to continue to focus on sense-making, describe the continuity of thought and praxis and privilege the kinds of languages, doubts and explorations which are not easily time-permitted in the rush of work in the field. In other words what happened by design, by chance, by mistake and through co-creation. The choices, biases, circumstances, opportunism, defensiveness, ego, poetics, virtuosity in the wrestle with best attempts and good practice, that is this flowing work in community.

The reader is encouraged to dip into the sharper project portraits and images of the exemplar projects in the Volumes as these may be useful alongside the more reflective extractions which follow.

DRIVE IN HOLIDAY →
VOLUME 1, PP. 32-40

NORTHCOTT NARRATIVES →
VOLUME 1, PP. 40-47

NGAPARTJI NGAPARTJI →
VOLUME 1, PP. 54–61

NAMATJIRA →
VOLUME 1, PP. 80-91

8.2 — DRIVE IN HOLIDAY

2005 - 2009

8.2.1 — EXPERIMENT IN TOURING AND PLACE

2005 - 2007

Drive in Holiday has been chosen for this study from many potential first exemplars because of its unusual project design, geographic scale and moveable sense of place. Equally, Junk Theory provides another striking example of experiments with place and interestingly the Chinese junk we used weaves us back to the vessel described for its impact on the practice in the introduction.

The shack/architectural nature of the project and the narrative of Drive in Holiday unfolded around what seemed initially to be unrelated issues: young single mothers, precarious lives, early childhood, self-directed play, violence in transient relationships, and then place, isolation and community. However, the project design reflected the complexity of the systems in which the young participants live and the issues they face. The project worked in ways that were opposite to normal expectations if it were problem-facing. Drive in Holiday was a celebration. In the context of the Ten Days on the Island festival, it was an enigma (an expensive ticket, yet made with young single mums from the North West Coast). It sold out!

Drive in Holiday grew out of an initial smaller-scale festival piece called *Radio Holiday*, inspired by 'shack culture' and the ephemeral architecture found in tiny isolated places around Tasmania's coastal fringe. In a similar way to ephemeral shack architecture, both projects captured the vulnerability of hopes and dreams for these young mothers, easily swept away by circumstance, poor policy, invisibility, and, like the shacks themselves were, by tide and time. Implicitly,

Figure 59: Museum of the Long Weekend site-specific installation and performance, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

the performance asked What is community? We weren't aware of these questions as we set out on the road in a convoy of vintage caravans and generators. However, in shack locations working with local 'shackies', the caravans would form a ring on the commons surrounding the audience bringing community came into focus.

Working on Drive in Holiday provided opportunities for these young mothers to broaden their horizons, explore new skills and confidences and interact with people who may have accidentally othered them (or not seen at all) while being supported by mentors. The cultural fragility of these shack communities, endangered by encroaching planning laws on the one hand and the Roaring Forties on the other, became part of the narrative. Chefs created feasts, which the young women served as performance while actors rehearsed and shot scenes with them from a film in the circle of vans. This was a micro village and these young women were in charge of these high-paying festival audiences, inverting the power dynamic.

Drive in Holiday acts as a marker for this study into Cultural Justice, because of this power inversion and responsive design i.e. creating a village with those that don't have one and putting them in charge. It was a sophisticated and unusual work using multiple artforms in tune with place. This was not a series of neat sequential ideas (here is the problem and here is the solution) it arose responsive to place and had a genuine Tasmanian identity and feel. It also delivered Cultural Justice outcomes with this hidden group of often maligned, single young mothers and their children, their community and in the media.

Figure 60: Museum of the Long Weekend site-specific installation and performance, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

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In hindsight, it is easy to see how the interest in early childhood self-directed play and isolated small buildings relates back, to some degree, to the growing up in the shack-like boatshed described in the Introduction. Self-directed play was my mother's passion and we sat up many nights making simple toys for other children, even though we ourselves weren't really allowed to have friends over to play in case we made too much noise and we got thrown out, or they told someone about us living on a boat and in the shed, or friends fell overboard…. Here, these personal issues bubbled up into the project design amongst a strategy to build resilience in early childhood and skills in good quality play with young mothers. This wasn't strategic or solution-based; it was whimsy and poetry and co-creation, and yet there it was - the instinct for Cultural Justice. Isolation, young mothers, stigma, invisibility, resilience, community, power. The project embraced these young mothers and intermediated space for them to perform with their children, with all the everyday chaos that can entail. Here was art and messy life and festival consumer together. It was a work of scale and would never have got funded had we not funded it ourselves. Festivals can't afford this kind of work, however, Cultural Justice is a great motivator to find a way. And like almost every Ten Days on the Island festival over the past 20 years, Big hART's pursuit of Cultural Justice, intermediation and inclusive representation has ended up gifting a large scale work to the festival. It is perhaps questionable in some ways if it lets festivals off the funding hook, however, it is a powerful idea that Cultural Justice intermediation finds funds from across government and is consistently one of the biggest funders of this mainstream festival for a largely privileged audience. Perhaps that is a picture of structural injustice in arts funding in a nutshell.

In hindsight, they seem so unlikely as performance works, yet Drive in Holiday and Radio Holiday made for strong performance pieces and toured to the Melbourne International Arts Festival as an installation in Federation Square. Most of these young mothers had never travelled around the state, let alone to Melbourne. They did so proudly and with confidence, in the midst of this primary prevention intermediation. Primary Prevention was reinforced as a Line of Provenance within the organisation which still plays out a decade and a half later in the remarkable Project O.

In this way, organisational learning (Domain 5) combined with this Line of Provenance to reshape the way Family Violence and Primary Prevention projects are delivered. A big part of this learning is also personal. Male voices in the organisation learning to be quieter and to learn from gifted women artists, producers, thinkers and managers who now drive these Lines of Provenance and deliver the projects. There was much that was questionable in these projects, which has been reshaped in the field and at the desk, to take good intentions (and sometimes poor practice) and repurpose the provenance for contemporary times. As with all change, some good things may have been lost with many good things gained and this layered and emergent provenance process continues to evolve.

Reflecting on these ideas reminds me that with Domain 5 comes grief (and sometimes a challenge to ego) and the requirement for humility and questioning to be held in healthy tension. It is messy and crucial work. It is the place for creative stumbles, of listening, but also having the courage to point out the emperor's new 'woke' clothes. It is a place to be aware of the flow of change and how the pendulum needs to swing beyond the change required, and then to swing back. There is no stasis in change for a learning organisation in Domain 5.

Figure 61: Museum of the Long Weekend site-specific installation and performance, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

8.2.2 — CULTURAL JUSTICE INTERMEDIATION EXTRACTION

Drive in Holiday was a unique and early Cultural Justice intermediation for Big hART. We weren't yet using the term, just the idea. The statistics in the electorate of Braddon have been outlined in Chapter 3 as have the religious extremes of the region. For single young mothers (and their children) in transient relationships, experiencing violence, the community stigma and poverty drives invisibility on the one hand, while the acceptance of pathways to Centrelink payments is modelled across generations on the other. Drive in Holiday turned these stereotypes on their head. The performance was a sought after and sophisticated festival export. It was expensive and large-scale with high production and aesthetic values – exactly what was not expected.

The Cultural Justice intermediations demanded the audiences and media look at these young women differently. Importantly, these learnings regarding scale, power and aesthetic investment were carried through into the next four exemplars and beyond into our company languages. The more the opacity and invisibility of the issue, the more urgent the cultural injustice, the more important the investment and resourcing and scale and detail and virtuosity of process and content needed from the artists and producers involved.

High investment in Domain 3 (content) impacts strongly across Domains 1 (individual) and Domain 2 (community). This is the right to aesthetic and the right to beauty in action, which, in line with Morton's (2010) interconnectedness, is also Cultural Justice in action.

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It is hard to get this project, and the strategies linked to it, out of my mind. They are early touchstones for Cultural Justice intermediations and dramaturgies. In reflection it also holds a strong portrait of Domain 4 (influence) in action. We wanted to take the impact beyond festivals to the most important decision-makers in the state regarding vulnerable young families. We targeted the Premier and his Cabinet. To achieve this, we pursued a new dramaturgy. Drive in Holiday operated under a broader project named LUCKY which employed a jeweller to create wearable art co-created with the young women. Based on threaded pasta jewellery these young mothers made with their children, except this time in sterling silver - the results were exquisite. It was then negotiated to have these pieces presented to Premier David Bartlett and the whole Tasmanian Cabinet. They were asked to wear them (cufflinks, pendants, brooches) to work whenever they were making decisions regarding vulnerable young mothers and their children. This presentation was delivered by the participants - single mothers, with their kids and strollers and toys and chaos. It stopped the political business of the day. Cabinet found themselves standing in a circle of framed prints co-created with these young women, in front of TV news cameras - it created a poignant creative moment of political dramaturgy in terms of Domain 4. The optics were exceptionally strong, however, there was also a hard lesson to learn. Aside from reaching out to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and asking for care to be taken when drafting new policy and to resist victim-blaming with regards to young single mothers, there was no direct policy change, nothing that could influence legislations (which is all governments can really do) in terms of Cultural Justice. We had the feel good factor, we had the art, we managed to create the moment, but there was no real request. We missed the political moment. The achievements in Domains 1, 2 and 3 were strong, but we needed to ask ourselves, what did the Cultural Justice intermediation lead to? This reflective journaling makes me see that if we want to take Cultural Justice seriously, our intermediations need to be practiced and virtuosic. And we also have to learn to name our failures even on an exemplary project like Drive in Holiday. It helps us see that this Cultural Justice work is highly disciplined. We had not yet found our way from a CCD to Cultural Justice practice, however our awareness was in search of a language.

What follows in the next exemplar projects are descriptions of this pathway emerging and our Cultural Justice intermediations developing, defined in this study as the Lines of Provenance across the five Domains. Where the reflection above details a fail in terms of influence (Domain 4), successes in Domain 4 in the exemplars that follow include: advocating for better community-building in public housing on Northcott Narratives; increasing support for a National Indigenous Language policy through Ngapartji Ngapartji; and helping reclaim the copyright for the Namatjira family.

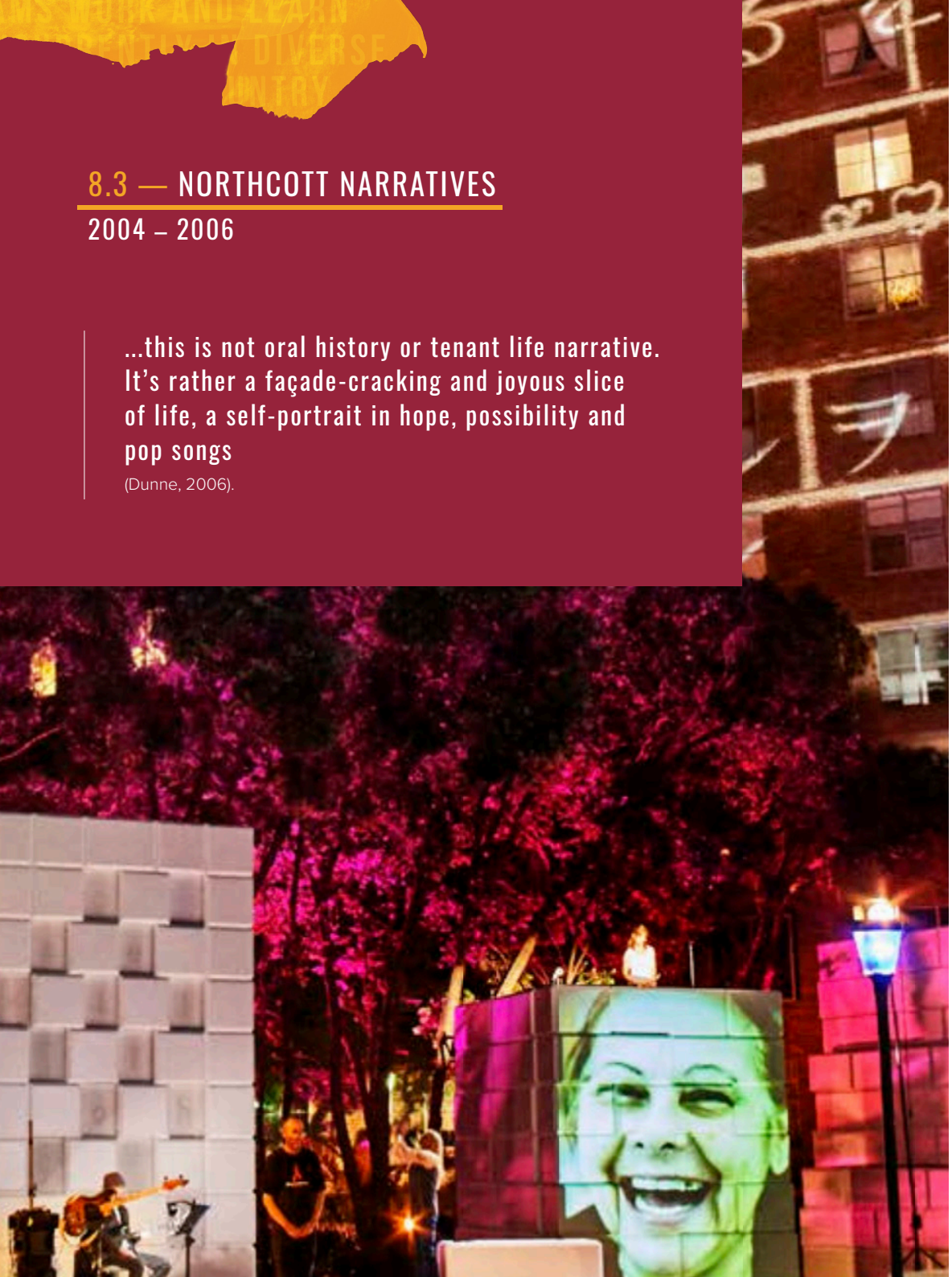
However, Cultural Justice intermediations shouldn't be seen only in relation to political influence and change, but rather, to avoid the pitfalls of linear change-making, importantly, they need to be seen and evaluated across all five Domains of Change. In other words, a shift to stronger agency for individuals (Domain 1), communities developing new capacities (Domain 2), art and content shifting the narrative (Domain 3) are all of equal value as indicators for better Cultural Justice intermediations as influences on power, and it is the layering and simultaneity which are important indicators of Big hART's model in action.

> **This process recognises the plurality and inclusiveness of cultural literacies, and consequently Cultural Justice (Rankin, 2018). Big hART's work therefore embodies Roerich's observation that 'Culture belongs to no one (person), group, nation, era. It is the mutual property of all (humankind) and the heritage of generations. It is the constructive creation of human endeavour**
>
> (Wright & Down, 2021, p. 38).

8.3 — NORTHCOTT NARRATIVES

2004 – 2006

> ...this is not oral history or tenant life narrative. It's rather a façade-cracking and joyous slice of life, a self-portrait in hope, possibility and pop songs
>
> (Dunne, 2006).



REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 22 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, NOVEMBER 2020

It's hard to explain how unlikely the review above was for anything coming from the Northcott Estate, but one that says 'a self-portrait of hope, possibility and pop songs' captures something of a successful Cultural Justice intermediation in action.

From a Cultural Justice perspective, the purpose of the Northcott Narratives project was clear. This was a fractured public housing estate in gentrified Surry Hills in the centre of Sydney. The Domain 4 purpose was to drive a change in public housing policy by increasing the visibility while at the same time provide this high-need community with resources to rebuild rather than blaming and stigmatising the people who lived there.

But was it strategically organised? No. How did we get started? Well, my good friend worked there. He was a highly regarded member of the Housing NSW staff on the estate. He was frustrated. We'd share a beer and discuss our work as a kind of mutual support and it drifted into working together. And by accident Big hART found itself cobbling together funding to begin. It is so easy to use hindsight to pretend it is all strategic when so often it's just Margaret Mead's 'small group of citizens' which drives change.

Figure 62: *Stickybricks* performance in the Northcott Public Housing Estate for Sydney Festival, 2006. Photo: Keith Saunders (Big hART).

8.3.1 — CULTURAL JUSTICE AND THE HIDDEN STORY

> The building of alternative is always a hopeful and educational act (Freire, 2014; hooks, 2003; Zournazi, 2002), and in order to better understand and make visible this process we note that Big hART employs a pedagogy of hope – that is, new ways of knowing in order to enrich lives anywhere where ideas can be exchanged. Big hART takes risks to achieve this, and transforms power relationships as both a process and product of its arts-based work (Wright & Down, 2021, p. 5).

The Northcott Estate had developed a notorious reputation for violence, multiple murders, suicides and dysfunction. It was dubbed suicide towers, and constantly demonised in the media. This Public Housing high-rise estate provides accommodation for 900 residents in a vertical suburb on prime real estate, on the highest point in desirable Surry Hills. Over time, the number of high-needs residents carrying addictions, trauma and survival issues had increased. Many residents were frightened, and the once resilient community now cowered. For their own survival, the community needed to reset and find a new story.

Although the project was not officially embraced by Housing NSW, a loose coalition of partners opened doors to Big hART's intermediation skills, in the hope we could perhaps help rebuild this fractured community. Here was a community surrounded by incredible wealth and talent and capacity, and yet it was on its own, and reliant on the goodwill of individual housing workers and members of the police service to make a breakthrough. This was the context in which Big hART began working.

Northcott Narratives was a large experiment in place-making. The project required a kind of emergency retrofitting to rebuild the community. The scale, speed and urgency of the work was baffling. We didn't understand the issues at play. We'd stumbled into that silent Sydney real estate obsession. We didn't understand the stonewalling by Housing NSW, their focus on land values and gentrification and lack of interest in high-needs tenants. These were hidden Cultural Justice issues in the heart of Sydney. It was hard to know how to respond. What kind of intermediation? A campaign, advocacy or perhaps a big place-making party on-site? We chose the party, to be staged during the Sydney Festival, inviting the city onto the estate rather than avoiding it. We would throw the building open to Sydney during the 2006 festival.

The timeframe was shorter, and the invitation into the festival created a fixed deadline. This energised the process. Every resident in Northcott was in a sense in the same boat, coming as a part of a diaspora to the estate, whether attracted by the glossy ideals of the slum clearance after World War Two, or forced there by Housing NSW in the decades that followed.

The themes that emerged from the community were intergenerational and touched on experiences e.g. Arriving at the Building; Love in the Building; Fear in the Building; Dance in the Building. These themes then provided a starting point for 3D mapping to locate these feelings within the building. Skeletal 3D maps/plans would then be used to project onto the 14-story façade during the performances.

The show *Stickybricks* sold out at the Sydney Festival and a documentary about it was produced. A second documentary called *900 Neighbours* captured the Northcott Narratives project more broadly. ABC TV picked it up and it played in film festivals and is still screened in various tertiary courses.

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This was about being seen. About not being forgotten by your government so you could be pushed out of your city to make room for privilege. This was about a partnership, an intermediation, which began in the run-down community centre in the centre of the housing estate, creating a story that could speak loudly to neighbours, to a city and a government.

The project felt a bit beyond us. However, the Stickybricks *narrative was big and utopian and it felt OK to be out of our depth – researching, listening, having BBQs. The script for the performance reflected the utopian dreams of the building's post WW2 origins. The show was designed to reclaim the space, from one of fear, violence and death, to something open and fresh and beautiful – it was a Cultural Right, the right to beauty (Clammer, 2019). To this end the central carpark was stripped of derelict cars, and the bitumen transformed with fresh turf into a peaceful park in the midst of the buildings, for picnics by day and performance by night.*

The set consisted of huge white pristine sculptural shapes, acting as towering stages, scattered amongst the buildings and gardens with projection mapping on the building forming a living breathing inhabited backdrop. These simple architectural choices transformed the building. The aesthetic language spoke implicitly of Cultural Justice – we were spending too much, doing too much, creating too much. What would be normal design and budgets down the road in the usual privileged festival spaces, was here, surrounded by poverty and prejudice, already a powerful statement. What I'm drawing out of this reflection is this notion of letting aesthetics speak. Cultural Justice was implicit and implied, before a word was said, through this design intermediation. Too often in our sector, incredible courage and endeavour can be wasted, because as artists we rob our co-creators of our skills and our privileged literacies, and the results are often shouty agit-pop, unwatchable and unreachable, promoting change-fatigue and an important moment of changemaking is gone.

Please pause here and explore the Northcott Narratives documentary

900 NEIGHBOURS →

Figure 63: *Stickybricks* performance in the Northcott Public Housing Estate for Sydney Festival, 2006. Photo: Keith Saunders (Big hART).

As described in the Volumes, the Sydney Festival audience entered the estate to be greeted by residents and asked to assist each other to build the outdoor theatre each night to reclaim the space so as to intermediate and wipe the stereotypical violent narratives away. And of course, just before the curtain went up on opening night there was an attempted stabbing in the performance space. The stakes were real.

The layered approach, years of community work and media liaison paid off, and Sydney came to build, feast together and watch. A sense of abundance was created and the gaze inverted, with the community looking back at festival-goers eating together on a new village green. The community welcomed greater Sydney in and in doing so the feared reputation of the building was disarmed. The evening pressed upon the audience (and also perhaps Housing NSW) the need for a reappraisal.

Place-based, dramatic in scale, a diverse cast and crew of 50, hybrid performance languages, a co-creation showcasing residents' narratives and their journeys through the building, *Stickybricks* was a confident festival work of scale.

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As successful as we thought we were, while we were rehearsing the show an elderly man lay dead right there in his apartment, for months, unfound. It was sobering amongst all our community building and intermediation rhetoric. And yet this tragic incident helped teach Big hART (Domain 5) to avoid over-reach and remember that all communities are changing all the time and to keep thinking in terms of the 'flow of change,' which enhances cultural safety and avoids fixed point solution-based approaches. This remembrance helps ground Cultural Justice work, away from the salvationist who lurks beside this approach.

Lines of Provenance can be seen across these next three exemplars. To assist the reader to hold a provenance lens to the exemplars, I'll draw out some here with provenance titles to indicate a way of thinking. However, there is some restriction in this device, therefore the Domains won't be highlighted when discussing the last three projects, leaving the reader more room for free flowing investigation.

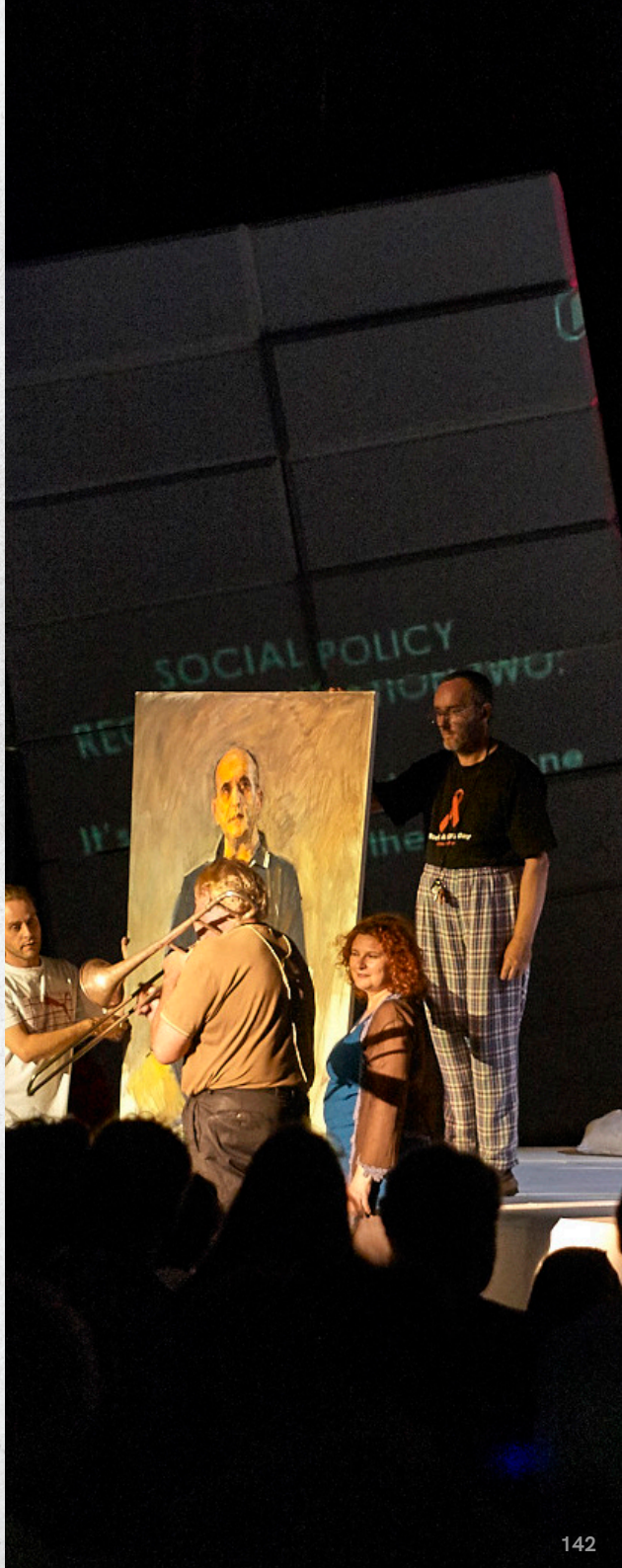
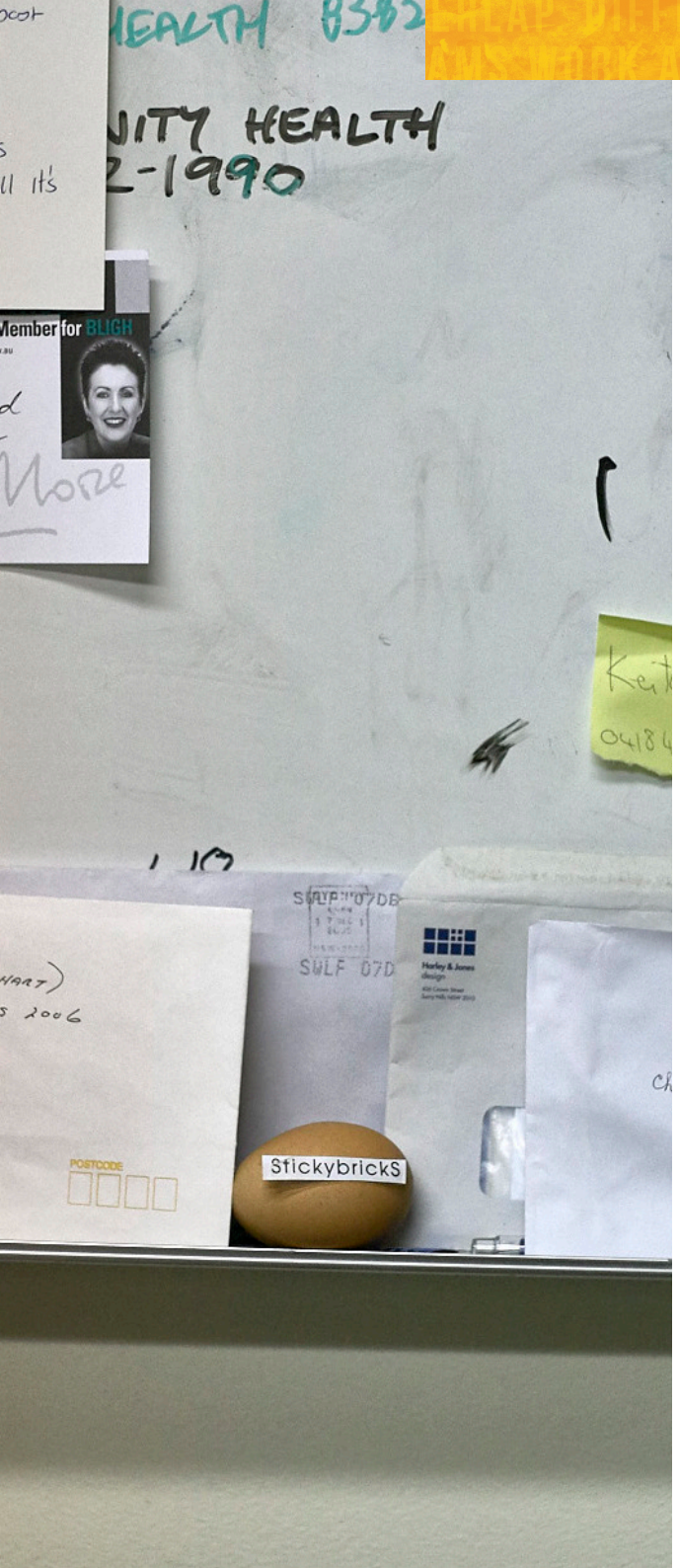


Figure 64: *Stickybricks* rehearsal in the Northcott Public Housing Estate for Sydney Festival, 2006. Photo: Keith Saunders (Big hART).



8.3.2 — THE PROVENANCE OF PERFORMANCE AND STIGMA (DOMAIN 2)

The provenance of *Stickybricks* reverberated across the following decades shaping our work i.e. place-based dramaturgies; grand gesture and performances with scale for impact; the dramaturgy of ritual enveloping an audience; abundance and hospitality; joyous 'event-telling'. These are now signature Big hART languages flowing through the next exemplars and on to the work in Roebourne, which is a town of similar population to the Northcott Estate and suffering similar stigmatisation. The proximity to violence and issues of cultural safety for staff and participants also played out and would resonate in Yijala Yala.

8.3.3 — THE PROVENANCE OF DOCUMENTARY FOR EXPANDED IMPACT (DOMAIN 3)

The project helped Big hART refine a new elegance in place-making and develop new narratives from geographic dramaturgies. The project also expanded our exploration of documentary platforms for projects that were long in process, while short-lived in the public domain. Broadcast, and later on-demand, could expand the reach, as well as influence tertiary teaching. For instance, Northcott Narratives became something of a shorthand tool for CCD courses at Murdoch University and NSW TAFE. Similarly, the documentary *Namatjira Project* (see below), played festivals, on the ABC and then on Qantas flights (anecdotally it was this setting that seemed to gain the strongest public recognition).

8.3.4 —PROVENANCE OF INFLUENCE (DOMAIN 4)

Northcott Narratives was very successful, yet it had little impact in terms of Public Housing policy. It confirmed the need for savvy multi-layered strategies beyond a convincing, high-profile performance. Undeclared government agendas (to move tenants off valuable inner-city land) were behind the stonewalling we experienced from Housing NSW. Despite the clear impact, it seemed they didn't really want life improvements for tenants in this community. When the gentleman was found dead in his apartment, the housing minister held a press conference and launched a brochure suggesting tenants 'say hello to your neighbours'. Housing NSW had studiously ignored the layered impact of Northcott Narratives until it won a World Health Organisation Safe Communities Award when they turned up for the photo opportunity. The project evaluation by Dr Peter Wright and Dr Dave Palmer provides further context.

Figure 65: *Stickybricks* rehearsal in the Northcott Public Housing Estate for Sydney Festival, 2006. Photo: Keith Saunders (Big hART).

8.3.5 — PROVENANCE OF COLLEGIATE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Across these busy years, projects were running simultaneously in different states. Team members who were working on other projects came to join the frenetic production weeks of Stickybricks, and this approach of downing tools and joining together from around the country became a regular feature of the work. From this grew regular national producers' meetings where all staff would come together to learn, support and develop stronger ways of working.

Overlapping with Northcott Narratives and its metro brand of isolation in the heart of the city, was the Ngapartji Ngapartji project in the Central Australian desert, which many people would think of as very isolated. Two very different projects, each based on Cultural Justice.

Figure 66: Audrey and Sasha during Northcott Project rehearsals for *Stickybricks* at Sydney Festival, 2006. Photo: Charmaine Tennant (Big hART).

8.4 —NGAPARTJI NGAPARTJI

2005 - 2008

Ngapartji Ngapartji is recognised in a number of forums and publications as a seminal piece of intercultural theatre in Australia however, there are very differing views of its worth (Palmer, 2010; Wright et al., 2016; Casey, 2009; Thurow, 2019; Waites, 2008; Sawada, 2012). For the most part, these are fine critiques. Some, as may be expected, focused on the theatre performance and content only (Domain 3 of Big hART's five Domains of Change) and are not particularly interesting for this research into Cultural Justice intermediations. Waites (2008) critiqued the spaces where the intercultural practice was occurring and Palmer (2010) examined the layered intermediations in more fruitful ways.

As an exemplar for this study, Ngapartji Ngapartji is also a seminal work within Big hART, teaching us as an organisation through strong provenance across the five Domains. Such was the potency of the new ways of knowing and being we discovered in the field while in the hands of Pitjantjatjara Elders who guided us - it sits in a kind of dream space in the life and learning of the organisation.

Ngapartji Ngapartji was Big hART learning Cultural Justice praxis before the subsequent layers of intermediation could find traction. The project descriptor below reflects that dream space in its mixture of narrative and reflective journaling. It is written in part as a short story reminiscence, a recollection of this life-changing time; and in part as a descriptor of the transfer of ways of knowing (Domain 5) seeping through the organisation.

Figure 67: Actor Trevor Jamieson performing in *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, 2008. Photo: Big hART.

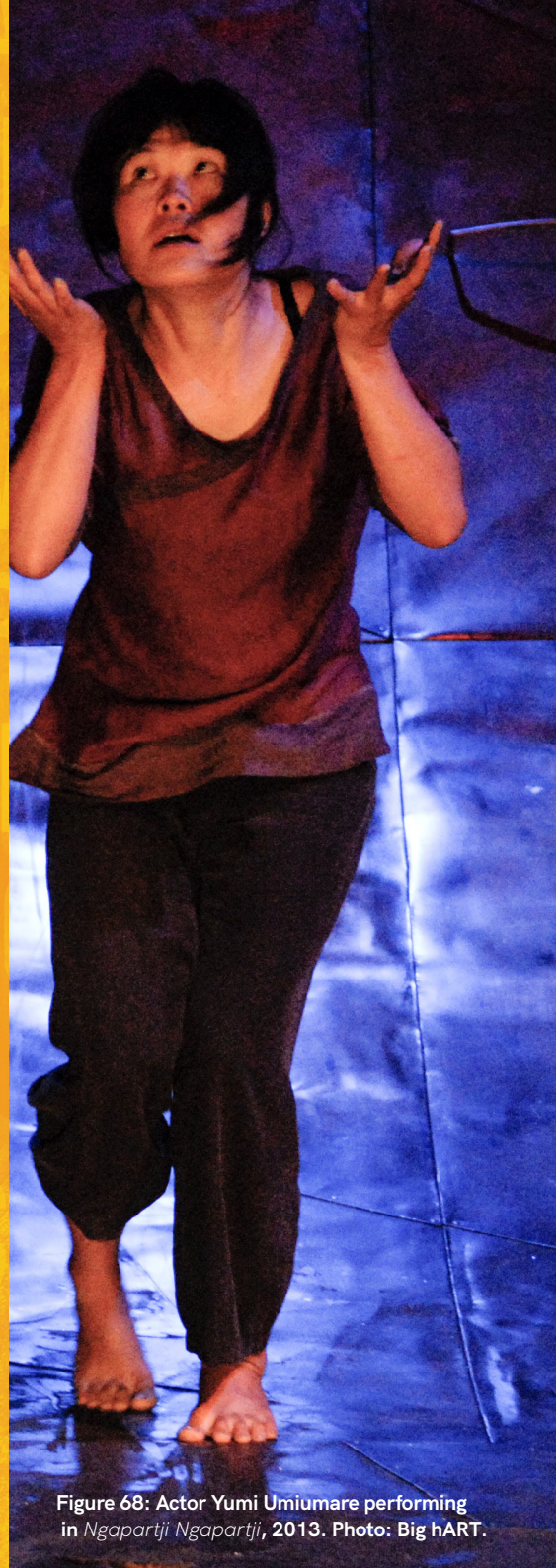


Figure 68: Actor Yumi Umiumare performing in *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

8.4.1 — EXTRACTING LINES OF PROVENANCE

As this project portrait unfolds, the study extracts and highlights the particular Lines of Provenance which strongly shaped the organisation and the next two projects, Namatjira and Yijala Yala. These extractions increase in frequency as the study collates the key ways in which we can deliver better Cultural Justice intermediation to help establish the preconditions of flourishing.

A comment that significantly shaped Big hART's work on this project was captured in the documentary *Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji.* A senior man in Pukatja (since passed) was speaking to Pitjantjatjara actor Trevor Jamieson. Trevor had sought him out, worried about bringing this true story back to Country, including mentioning his deceased father's name. He was seeking assurances for cultural safety, asking whether we were doing the right thing by the project. After five year's work, this senior man, Kunmanara (Kawaki) Thompson (dec. 2013), said "Trevor, you break the law." But then said, "Trevor, keep going and talking for a long time. Give the children life and show them the culture and the language. They have a lot to hold on to. Talk about the life. Talk about the good things to understand. So they can look after Country."

It was a heartbreaking and profound moment that still resonates deeply and continues to teach us much about the existential experience of Cultural Justice work and the asset lens of 'the life' in the midst of the settler lens of deficit. It is a moment worth returning to amidst other words written about this project.

> **This is searingly truthful, vital theatre that pierces the heart of glossed-over periods of Australia's indigenous history. It is wonderfully performed and told, and is certain to be remembered as one of the memorable productions of the year**
>
> (Smith, 2008).

Ngapartji Ngapartji is grounded in Trevor Jamieson's story and rose up as a kind of a guttural cry, a narrative plea, begging to be told properly. It grew out of missteps and attempts over years - offers, dramaturgies, histories, egos, gestalts and wild creative desire. It was initially based more on hunches than certainties. Hunches occurring between settler and First Nations collaborators, on what became an intercultural project. Guided by Elders, it grew to become planned and strategic, as well as fuelled by chance and circumstance.

It is this messiness that we'll dig deeper into here for sense-making as we try and find the Lines of Provenance and Flow of Consequence from this project. The starting point is by necessity reflective, tracing narrative connections across decades as this work emerged, almost died, and kept going, insisting it get told and told well.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 25 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, 2017 AND AUGUST 2021

A dream of provenance and chance… how did Ngapartji Ngapartji even happen? What were the chances? What were the chances of even being involved?

Step it out… what follows is an unlikely story of what it is like to try and make good intercultural work, using good process, in this bruising Australian arts ecology, where Cultural Justice is hardly on the radar of funders, producers and institutions.

Chronological dreaming, not teleological. Random and sometimes shocking: GIRL, staged 1992, triggered discussions in 1998 with playwright Hillary Bell who wrote Wolf Lullaby *with similar themes, set in Burnie – weird; Sydney Olympics approaching needs content for its Olympic Cultural program; Woka Woka woman Leah Purcell - raw, little theatre under her belt, no writing experience - has a story to tell; Performing Lines want her; Hillary, approached to write a one-woman show, declines; suggests me as co-creator and one-person show expert. An Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal; woman/man; older/younger collaboration. Interesting - wouldn't happen now. Process is not culturally safe; producers provide no Elders guidance. Time is short. We write.* Box The Pony *is a hit; festival directors grab it; solo, First Nations, cheap; programming quota ticks de-risk; sells out.*

Black Swan Theatre - Western Australia's state theatre company - know Trevor Jamieson from Bran Nue Day *by Jimmy Chi. Trevor's story is huge. His extended family moved off Maralinga during the 1950s and 60s. His Country bombed. Nuclear tests. Pitjantjatjara people become vulnerable, internal refugees.*

Black Swan, seeing Box the Pony's *success, approach me to write for Trevor. He has a gift - the ability to communicate across intercultural divides; an openness; presence and generosity. Body, movement, mimicry, recall, rather than acting. A kinetic performer, with charm and a desire for understanding, which could melt audiences; putty in his hands. However, he needed the material to be there.*

Black Swan, a flagship company, had few CCD skills. Focused on content, not the processes needed for this kind of work – cultural diplomacy, high needs, fragility and sensitivity and trauma in the narrative, the families involved, the acute needs. However, a new work - Career Highlights of the Mamu *- emerges on the page. It could be an important work. However, the dramaturgical supports were not there. Trevor became a victim to incompetent goodwill and is abandoned artistically. It seems as if this important story is being allowed to slip away into mediocrity.*

In a confrontation to rescue the process, I'm sacked. Trevor, ever-generous, continues. The show tours a little, then is buried - shambolic, with the deeper story largely untold. However, Trevor and I remained close and collaborative.

The Mamu story gets picked up in Big hART's multi-platform project, Knot @ Home for SBS television, and in a large festival performance of the same name examining different kinds of homelessness, such as internal refugees forced off their homelands for 25,000 years by the atomic testing half-life.

This bought time to find collaborators to really tell Trevor's story. The fight against nuclear waste dumps in that area is making news. The bombing of Pitjantjatjara people at Maralinga and their struggle to survive trauma is related. After Knot @ Home, the themes of Trevor's story remains so compelling, and Trevor's desire that we work together to tell it palpable. It converged in urgent conversations on a car trip from Adelaide to Alice Springs via Cooper Pedy, bouncing ideas across the front seat between Trevor, activist/producer Alex Kelly and myself.

Alex Kelly indicated a tiredness for factionalised activism and hankered after deeper ecologies of change. There was a fascination with Big hART. It was mutual. Alex had offered help on Knot @ Home. Her task was to fold blankets used in the performance. The folds needed to be aesthetically precise. Amongst the urgency of the complex issues of homelessness she looked at us as though we were mad. Her folds were perfect, and her ability to hold aesthetics and advocacy as equally important was promising.

Questions hung in the air in that hot car to Coober Pedy: How would we tell Trevor's story in a way that non-Indigenous audiences could understand? How could we intermediate so an audience could enter such a hidden story without othering? It felt as if the entire audience may need to commit to learning Pitjantjatjara to begin to understand the layers of story… why not?

And so this strange, disarming, dream project began….

I'm deliberately taking my time with this reflection to try and provide the story almost as stream of memory. To bring to the foreground the way in which Lines of Provenance can happen both inside and outside the organisation. The genesis of Ngapartji Ngapartji began at a time when I was still accepting commissions outside of Big hART, and these lines ran on for years initially in random ways before they began to be produced as endpoints in each Domain that a producer could focus on and campaign for. With Ngapartji Ngapartji it was an Indigenous Languages policy.

Figure 68: *Ngapartji Ngapartji* rehearsals in Ernabella, 2013 (photo credit Big hART).

Figure 69: Young people in Ernabella during Ngapartji Ngapartji project, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

Pitjantjatjara, like all First Nations languages around the country, was being starved of financial support. Its teaching was essentially unfunded. Destroy a language, destroy a culture. Here was a critical, hidden Cultural Justice issue and it came into focus during our road trip - hidden narratives, invisible to the public, impossible to fund. Perfect. Organisations pushing for change without traction. Ngapartji Ngapartji found its inner drive - Domain 4.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 26 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

Now, looking back from here in Roebourne - wandering around, more of an observer of how Yijala Yala has become a large-scale, 10-year project - it is easy to weave these messy Lines of Provenance, neatly together and trace how they ran on through multiple projects to end up here in Roebourne. The provenance of Ngapartji Ngapartji also piggybacked, in more tenuous ways, on both Drive in Holiday and Northcott Narratives and embraced ambition, distance, diverse geographies and new dramaturgical forms. However, in the midst of the project this was harder to see. It was sheer survival.

Perhaps the Lines of Provenance are traceable back even further. Back to the threads of Cultural Justice in childhood. It is probably just the taint of imposter doubts, but this contemplation of childhood origins somehow feels like it robs the work and vision of legitimacy. Yet we can extract a consistency with Cultural Justice sitting with quiet centrality of personal story alongside the organisational – it's harder to hurt someone if you know their story – it is what it is, perhaps.

Ngapartji Ngapartji was like a new foundational moment. Our practice grew up on this project. Audaciousness and serious intent became a trademark. No more voyeuristic festival curiosity shows; our co-created Cultural Justice stories must demand more of audiences. We purposefully began to explore new intercultural ways of working. Jump in. Risk. Fail. We would trust audiences to come with us. We'd push for a National Indigenous Language Policy. This was an attempt at Cultural Justice; identifiable, in action. It gave us a focus to add to the layers of the project with Trevor and an urgent and passionate, even if naïve, entry point into the community in Pukatja/Ernabella. We began in earnest in Alice Springs.

Ngapartji Ngapartji would continue to deliver these Lines of Provenance across the next decade - projects of inconvenient scale and layering; projects beyond our financial scope, yet too urgent to ignore - shaping Big hART.

In contrast to our other projects, the content of the main performance piece was already known - Trevor's story. It was to be an agile, easily tourable one-person show. Somehow it became a 37-person touring one-person show, including members of the Ernabella choir. The spirit of it is captured here by critic James Waites:

> Nagapartji Ngapartji's writer director, Scott Rankin, worked with Leah Purcell on her excellent one-person show, *Box the Pony*, which premiered at the Festival of the Dreaming in 1997. A decade later he is one among a vast tribe of artists, volunteers, language teachers, activists, web specialists, and others, known as Big hART – who have brought the elusive dream of 'community art' practice to a level of artistic sophistication that rivals Vivaldi's The Four Seasons… You could say that the current production at Belvoir Street Theatre, is the above-surface component of the Big hART Ngapartji Ngapartji iceberg
>
> (Waites, 2008).

Strangely, theatre researchers and critics who have explored Ngapartji Ngapartji have generally been mesmerised by one part of the project. The focus is usually on the content only, through a European hegemonic lens, imposing a theatrical/anthropological glass case on Trevor as if all other shared modern concerns are not for him, maybe because it disturbs some pre-set pristine vision of his Pitjantjatjara story. Yes, Trevor was the lead however, his generosity identified with many stories and this was an intercultural work deliberately blurring boundaries with global stories - Afghan, Greek, Japanese, Anglo, Timorese and Pitjantjatjara diasporas.

Audiences, however, absorbed the range of invisible stories. It was an exchange of hope. The story and audience seemed to be held safely and authentically, grounded by the intergenerational cast and Elder witnesses on stage. The performances wooed audiences and decision-makers. This was performance as policy 'honey-pot,' with the voice of lived experience, opening doors to policy discussions – Domains 3 and 4.

> **It is at once a lament for the dead, a joyous celebration of survival, and an extraordinary expression of reconciliation**
>
> (Croggon, 2006).

> **Here I was, in the presence of a truly major work of art – brimming with ideas and emotions, and exquisitely realised…**
>
> (Waites, 2008).

Reviews are fine, however perhaps the words of key Pitjantjatjara cultural adviser and performer Pantjiti McKenzie speak loudest and puts the project in context:

> Palu nyura yaaltji-yaaltji? Tjukurpa nyangatja iritinguru kuwaringa ngulaku rawa ngarantjaku nyurampa culture kawalinkunytja wiya rawangkuya kanyinma. Ngapartji Ngapartji Ngapartjinya ini kutju palu tjukurpa pulka mulapa (McKenzie, 2010).
>
> (Translation: This is not just something that is happening now – it deals with significant history and matters that have been important for a long time. But what are you all thinking? These concepts are critical – from the past, to the present and into the future. Don't lose hold of your culture – keep it strong forever. Ngapartji Ngapartji is just one part of a crucial story.)

Here, Lines of Provenance are critical. In her essay published at the conclusion of the project, Jennifer Mills saw beyond performance only into the meat of the project and the layers of community process in the other Domains of Change:

> The post-colonial reality of shifting culture has its advantage: some stories can now be told in violation of ancient protocols. Participants are well aware of the cultural compromises involved; life consists of a series of such choices. Though this can appear to an outsider as a tragic irony, it is in reality a set of informed decisions. The interplay of tradition and modernity is constantly discussed and negotiated. In such discussions, children are always invoked, in language, in history, in culture, the next generation is the important one
>
> (Mills, 2010).

Jennifer is not discounting narrative in a binary, she is describing it as it works in the push and pull of Cultural Justice, the daily intermediations of Ngapartji Ngapartji and the Consequences that flowed from it.

> In linking the fragile threads of our pasts, stories can do more than bare government policies, go deeper than any compensation money. In the public domain of the arts, just as before a campfire, stories have a ceremonial power. A story can allow us to open ourselves to new ways of being, new constellations. It is with the imagination that we are able to make the leaps across cultural, racial, linguistic and geographical gaps to meet as equals. It is in learning one another's story that we begin to do the work of reconciliation
>
> (Mills, 2010).

Figure 70: *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

8.4.2 — THE PROVENANCE OF NARRATIVE AND THE FLOW OF CHANGE

Ngapartji Ngapartji remains a Cultural Justice exemplar for Big hART and seemingly with others as well. This does not mean it was without mistakes, rather, the compromises were linked with ethical strengths bending in towards an end point under the witness of Elders. The narrative drew on many messy stories, rather than the neat theatrical few. Trevor's Pitjantjatjara Spinifex people - bombed by their own government in peace time with nuclear weapons a thousand times more powerful than Hiroshima. In solidarity, the narrative drew in Japanese cast and story. Trevor's people were internal refugees in their own country, so the cast welcomed refugees and immigrants from East Timor, Greece, India and Afghanistan. Stories of place, country, stewardship, longing, prison, health and spirit wove together with global histories. And so the Cultural Justice themes were amplified through interconnection – 'the ecological thought' (Morton, 2010).

However, for true Provenance, it is important to see the beginnings of Ngapartji Ngapartji in the deeper, older, existential struggles for survival. The criticality of understanding that we are in the flow of change was humbling and reinforced. The provenance of this piece can be found in the best attempts of clumsy Native Title and the critically important Aboriginal paintings the Spinifex people (Trevor's kin) created to try and communicate to government officials in the late 1990s their fight to establish continuity of Country and Tjukurpa (story). Long cultural battles of lore against law place Big hART's contribution within a real, but less visible generational continuity and context. We were just one tool in this struggle as part of one of the world's longest-running civil rights movements. And, in relation to the opening words of this study, this needs to be part of our own observance so as to see our small contribution in this two-way learning, this flow of change that was and is Ngapartji Ngapartji.

Ian Baird (2012) captured this struggle in the foreword of the catalogue for 'Spinifex: People of the Sun and Shadow', an exhibition celebrating the Spinifex people's historic land agreement. He describes a powerful senior man (now passed) standing in front of the government people in suits and telling a compelling story of how his ancestors had held back the consequences of rising sea levels after the Ice Age, which were threatening to engulf his homelands on the coastal plains of the Nullarbor. As the Dreaming reacted, thousands of spirit birds – Sun People - moved south carrying desert spears and faced the encroaching waters, blocking the valleys and gorges and holding back the sea. Their narrative, their paintings and their orations communicated their right to Native Title, a political act and great works of art entwined dramaturgically.

And so Ngapartji Ngapartji sits within a much longer, powerful flow of change within the interrelated Pitjantjatjara story, Maralinga story and Spinifex story that had gone before and will continue after. This is the important context of Big hART's Cultural Justice practice; it's part of a flow. A set of applied community dramaturgies make the excluded story more visible and allow new audiences in so as to drive change.

8.4.3 — THE PROVENANCE OF INTER-CULTURAL NARRATIVE

In this Cultural Justice intermediation, Ngapartji Ngapartji joined the dots between Spinifex reality, Maralinga story and First Nations language loss as an interconnected struggle. We co-created this intercultural work to be accessible to non-Indigenous audiences, invited in to also 'join the dots'. Theatre academics with best intentions, like Casey (2009) and Thurow (2019) may long for the work to fit a more 'glass case', Western anthropological purity, but one result of this lens is to rob the storytellers of agency in the urgency of these hidden issues. This accessible dramaturgy of the performance in tandem with Big hART's five Domains of Change pursued a bigger interconnected dramaturgy of change.

> Jamieson is a charming and persuasive storyteller. Through gesture as well as words, he is the tour guide on a voyage that veers between laugh-aloud humour and silence-inducing anguish. This is an inclusive plea for understanding (Cosic, n.d., as cited in Palmer, 2010).

8.4.4 — THE PROVENANCE OF SHIFTING THE AUDIENCE GAZE

Ngapartji Ngapartji's opening moments, with house lights still up as Trevor invited senior women to teach the audience some Pitjanjatjara words and music, shifted the gaze of the audience creating a warm vulnerable space for learning. It turned the Pitjanjtajara community's gaze onto the audience, creating both agency and generosity.

To support this moment, before the show toured Pitjantjatjara young people worked with their Elders to create digital content for online language lessons, beginning to become empowered teachers of their language and culture. Audiences were invited to an online platform to learn before they entered the theatre space. Giving an audience these multiple entry points to narrative relationships and this multi-purposing of the creative process became a new line of provenance across Namatjira and Yijala Yala over the next decade – a provenance of shifting the audience gaze and detoxing the (often naïve) othering, which is implicit in the way Western theatre and festival traditions are usually delivered.

8.4.5 —THE PROVENANCE OF BUDGETS AND AMBITION

Perhaps through naïve ambition or perhaps by design, we felt Ngapartji Ngapartji deserved the same kind of resources and scale afforded the traditional European, hegemonic work proliferating on our stages. If we are talking, someone else isn't. If a festival blockbuster is filling the stage, some other hidden story is excluded. This is an urgent 21st Century issue of cultural rights. Most major institutions and festivals prefer to program First Nations work with small casts and costs, think *The 7 stages of grieving* (Mailman et al., 1996). Although precariously funded, Ngapartji Ngapartji was operatic in the scale (cast and crew of 37) and depth of process. Half a decade later, on another critical Cultural Justice narrative, we would use this Line of Provenance and create a similarly large work, operatic in scale, because it too needed the voice and the power. The tour reached from the Sydney Opera House to a dry desert river bed hundreds of kilometres south east of Uluru. Ambition and budget is not everything, but it is important not to be reinforcing cultural injustice by aiming low. This Line of Provenance flowed into Namatjira and on into Yijala Yala.

8.4.6 —THE PROVENANCE OF INTERCULTURAL IDIOMS

The layers of the process and content used by Ngapartji Ngapartji to try and drive policy change forged new ways of working. The reinterpretation of Western iconography appropriated into Pitjantjatjara gave rise to sets of intercultural approaches to help make the unseen, seen i.e. Elders translating contemporary songs into Pitjantjatjara. "To hear the David Byrne/Talking Heads anthem, 'Once in a Lifetime' wash over you in Pitjantjatjara is a once-in-a-life-time experience. So is this show" (Waites, 2008).

These idiomatic intercultural moments helped give the performance a generous spirit of reciprocity and have been utilised in subsequent projects as a kind of language based on this Line of Provenance. This approach drew strong word of mouth and crowds for Ngapartji Ngapartji nationally and internationally in Rotterdam, London and Japan (for the first anniversary of Fukushima). The creative high point of the project however was the return of the show to the community in Pukatja, captured in *Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji*. It is recommended the reader take time to view this documentary for a glimpse into the contradictions and compromises in this project.

WATCH DOCUMENTARY →

8.4.7 — THE PROVENANCE OF POLITICAL DRAMATURGY

This approach of appropriation was also used off stage in relation to Domain 4. For instance, the significant occasion of Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts Peter Garrett sitting on the floor of the Ngapartji Ngapartji office in Alice Springs as senior women sang Midnight Oil's *Beds Are Burning* in Pitjantjatjara. Tears flowed as it was pointed out that soon singing like this wouldn't be possible unless a National Indigenous Language Policy was established. A year later Peter Garrett announced a new policy, which has so far survived changes in government.

These lobbying approaches were dramaturgical and intercultural. They confirmed Big hART's approach and because of this, we worked at a higher octane on future projects, driving campaigns. Ngapartji Ngapartji confirmed Big hART's use of intentional artmaking for advocacy. It helped develop collegiate approaches rather than adversarial, through this dramaturgical thinking. We started to use terms like 'arts for social change' and 'campaigning arts company' to define the relationship between our purpose and our commitment to aesthetic goals – the intrinsic and the instrumental - and the healthy tension between the two. This approach became subtle and muscular as part of the Flow of Consequences through Namatjira, Yijala Yala and into New Roebourne, as we shall explore below and into Chapter 9.

The Flow of Consequences from Ngapartji Ngapartji also reverberates internationally.

> Big hART's work has provided one of several model(s) of praxis not only in relation to our own processes but to refer to students, academic researchers, participants and stakeholders when we hoped to make a case for, or otherwise found it difficult to articulate, the possibilities of performance (beyond producing a 'play' with professional performers in a traditional 'theatre' space) (Schaefer, 2017).

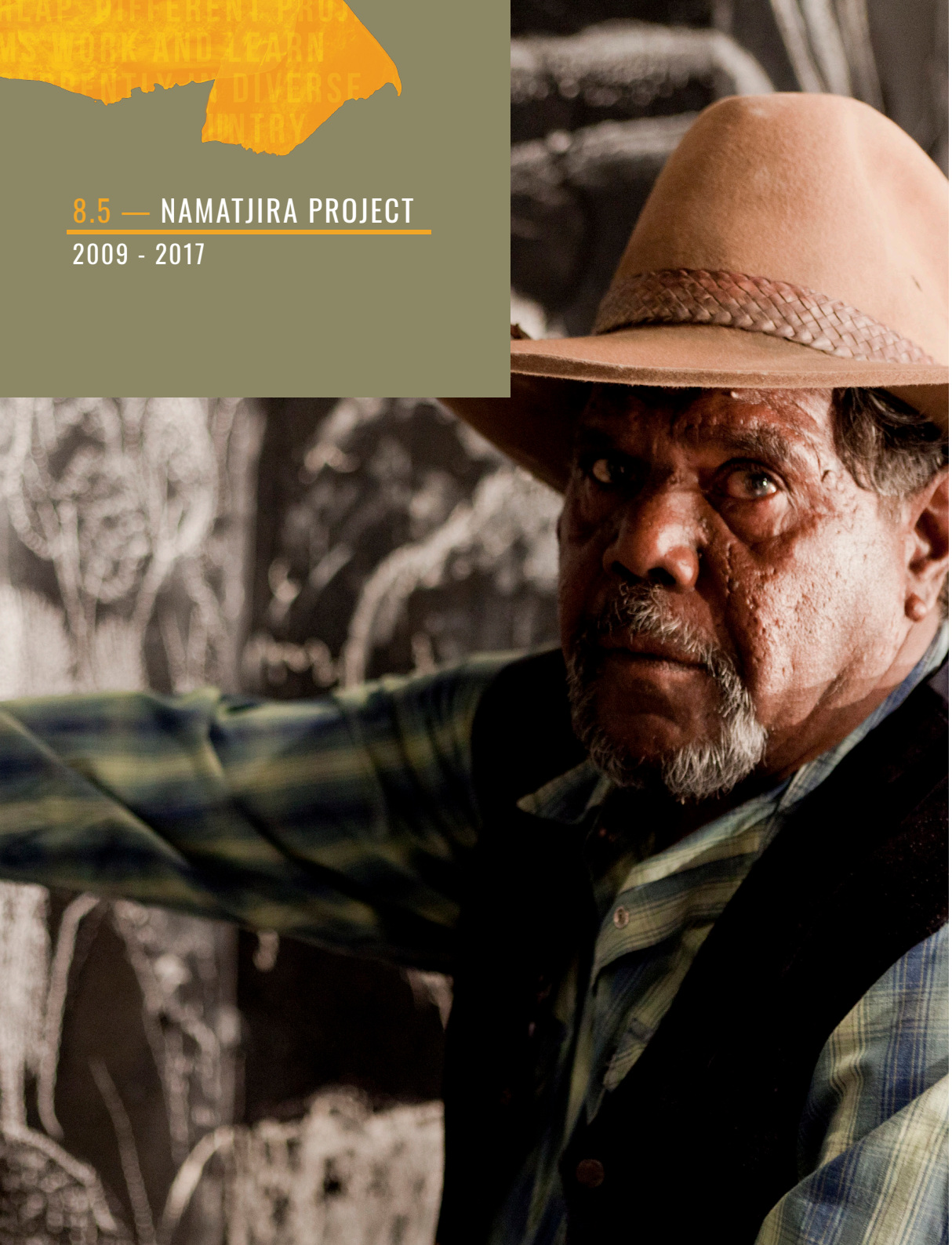
Flows of Provenance and Consequence are relational and interconnected, and as Ngapartji Ngapartji rolled out through the mid-2000s, other Big hART teams were also working on projects of scale. These projects are not covered in this research but can be found on the timeline and in Volume 1 (pp. 54-70). The Namatjira project, however, grew out of what we were witnessing on stage every night, and in turn overlapped with Yijala Yala.

The Namatjira project, the next exemplar, speaks to how one family's hidden issue of Cultural Justice can be emblematic of urgently needed societal change i.e. it examines the iconic struggle to return the copyright of Albert Namatjira's paintings to his family. This interconnection again draws us back to Morton's (2010) concept of 'ecological thought' and the Flow of Consequences and change.

Figure 71: Ngapartji Ngapartji project participant, 2010. Photo: Big hART.

8.5 — NAMATJIRA PROJECT

2009 - 2017



> **The word is never said, but Namatjira is an enactment of reconciliation ... a sudden generosity of possibility. And that's a rare thing to witness... a tribute to how artfully its makers step through the political minefield of this kind of community-based work**
>
> (Croggon, 2011).

8.5.1 — THE PROVENANCE OF GENEROSITY

Many observers seem to consider Namatjira project one of our best theatre works. What is perhaps most interesting is captured in fragments above: 'a sudden generosity of possibility'; 'the minefield of community-based work'; 'the word (reconciliation) is never said'.

These fragments are written about the content of the show as seen on stage, yet what is seeping through is the process, the co-creation and the eight years of community and political dramaturgy. The '*generosity*' belongs to the family, the performers and the intercultural positioning of the material. It is this co-creating that opened up the visceral feeling of the possibility of change for the audience. The '*minefield*' speaks to the sometimes implicit fear in more traditional arts praxis i.e. that working in community is usually problematic; that it is going to hold things up; that it has to be navigated to get to what is important - the story - and allow the real work of making art proceed. It is hard at times when Cultural Justice issues are urgent. Individuals carrying deep hurt as well as gifts; communities carrying lateral trauma; complex issues of failed policy; the exchange of knowledge – all

Figure 72: Kevin Namatjira on stage at Belvoir Street Theatre, 2016. Photo: Brett Boardman (Big hART).

these Domains of Change require time and energy so as to privilege the shift in power required to be able to co-create with those whose story it is. This power shift can be uncomfortable. A lift in skills for those with low literacies in Western traditions or professional expectations is hard. Finding new arts languages which aren't reliant on othering modalities requires a new kind of virtuosity from mentoring artists and producers. This is the Cultural Justice work.

Lastly, '*the word is never said*' refers back to taking the explicit off the stage and letting the process do the work. The way in which a creative and dramaturgical approach to the political - *the words* - is a critically important sensibility. In the dumb thrust of politics this is wedging. This work is about the poetic wedge, the aesthetic wedge.

Here, the writer is referring to '*reconciliation*', which takes us back to the beginning of this research and the '*Observance*'. Is reconciliation what we all mean and want? Is reconciliation too small a concept for this study into Cultural Justice? I'm not sure we only want reconciliation. Perhaps what we all want is the abundance that comes with flourishing. Flourishing in communities doesn't happen because governments legislate and drag us to a place of flourishing through specially funded reactive programs. Communities take care of themselves. It occurs when the pre-conditions for flourishing are present and this requires time, funding and hard work and virtuosities in intermediation. The Namatjira project helps us to see that Cultural Justice is one of the main pillars that set up these pre-conditions. In this sense, Cultural Justice is primary prevention and this too has become an extraction in our work - a Line of Provenance across the five Domains.

The Namatjira project is included in this study so as to see Cultural Justice (with all the imperfections) in action across the Domains. The Namatjira project started in 2009, following on from Ngapartji Ngapartji and overlapping with the Yijala Yala project, which began soon after in 2010. This interwoven context assists in understanding the Lines and Flows of Provenance and Consequence across Big hART.

The Namatjira project had many layers and outputs: an award-winning theatre performance; a watercolour app; animations; exhibitions; lobbying strategy; international media; meeting the Queen to create impact and end the invisibility; feature documentary; social media strategy; a family trust - all of which drove the return of the copyright to the family. But so what…?

> **Albert Namatjira left behind our most famous indigenous art estate, so why does his family have no say in how it is run?**
> (Neill, 2017).

Figure 73: Actor Trevor Jamieson performing in *Namatjira*, 2016. Photo: Heidrun Lohr (Big hART).

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Namatjira kicked social and artistic and political goals firstly for the family, as well as Big hART as collaborators. However, there was still a no-win feeling that even the best work is still part of the problem, yet it has to be done. It takes us back to: 'Trevor, you break the law... but keep going... talk about the life' (from Nothing Rhymes With Ngapartji *as above). When Kumantjai Mrs Namatjira passed away, I was privileged to be asked to write a eulogy. (in part below and in full here).*

> *And now she has left us. Like so many Traditional Owners across this continent, she has gone without being given the honour she so deserves for her tenacious efforts to strengthen and embolden her people culturally, as well as generously sharing her art with others beyond her Western Aranda country. Artist, entrepreneur, teacher, provider, cultural ambassador, gone.*
>
> *It is a reflection on our whole country that this great women, died with so much less recognition than she deserved. No offer of a State funeral for this cultural leader. No Traditional Owner Hall of Fame. No monument in Canberra alongside others who have fallen fighting for their country. Instead she died in near poverty - despite her prolific output and its art collector's value – died while supporting her family against the ravages of brutal policy neglect. Gone, worn down by the enormous task she carried on her shoulders all those years to help keep the Namatjira painting traditions alive, keep the debilitating forces of poverty at bay, and to keep fighting for the rightful return of the copyright in her Grandfather Albert's work. All this on her shoulders, while dealing with loss after loss from her children, her family and her community passing too soon. All this, while patiently waiting for Australia (which she loved) to understand the significance of the Namatjira tradition and to recognize the way we first heralded it, then exploited it, then trashed his name by wrongfully imprisoning him, then took his copyright, and exploited it further.*
>
> *The word 'shame' rarely rings as true as it does at this moment, right now in 2017. Rings out like a bell tolling for the lack of National acknowledgement and support this woman of courage, this warrior, this indomitable spirit, who passed away while the ink was still wet on the legal documents that gave the Namatjira family back their copyright. Signed just days before she passed on with a sigh, her work complete. What have we done Australia? Why do we keep doing this? And let's refrain from the self-satisfied contemporary tut-tutting about things 'done in the past'. Let us instead have ears and eyes for our own responsibility and individual contrition for our own negligence now, this year, in our country, on our watch.*

It may be strange to include a eulogy in this journal reflection. However, implicit in that piece is also a lament for the inadequacies of this way of working. And sometimes, in the face of tragedy, there is also a fear of the waste of doing this kind of intermediation work at all. It is worth carrying this forward into this and the next exemplar, as there is cost in this intermediation work, there is loss, as well as deep privilege. There is danger, there is the need for high accomplishment, and in the same way, this Cultural Justice work should receive the highest levels of funding, time, and commitment from cultural agencies, rather than languish at the very bottom of the priority list.

Figure 74: Lenie Namatjira portrait painted by Evert Ploeg, 2017. Photo: Big hART.

What is clear in this Cultural Justice context is you have to jump in and make mistakes. If the work is urgent - culturally, economically or socially - as artists, we have to respond in interconnected and risky ways. So you return to that co-creating space and ask 'what should we do?' And because it is an intermediated space, communities will ask similar questions, drawing us in not to make change, but rather to enter into the 'flow of change,' where mistakes are important, because they are part of being a community.

The Namatjira project grew from a hunch followed by discussions with the Namatjira family. The project was based on a request from the family to get the copyright back. To achieve this, the much loved award-winning show seen by 50,000 people was a tool to raise awareness. The poetics and aesthetics sat in positive tension with this political copyright dramaturgy. It took eight years.

8.5.2 — THE PROVENANCE OF 'HAVING A HUNCH'

The provenance from Ngapartji Ngapartji to Namatjira was felt during the bows for *Ngapartji Ngapartji* when cast member Elton Wiri was introduced as Albert Namatjira's kin grandson and we felt the ripple of audience recognition. Night after night, we'd wonder why this was so strong.

2009 was the 50th anniversary of Albert's passing, and building on Elton's role in the company we talked with the Namatjira family about their story. What emerged was the strong desire for justice; what we now recognise as Cultural Justice. For 12 months, Big hART ran workshops in the community. Many issues came into focus with the most vivid being that the family didn't own the copyright in Albert's paintings, and meanwhile they struggled in deep poverty to paint and sell their work.

Big hART partnered with Ngurra Tjuta Many Hands Art Centre in Alice Springs, and community workshops began in earnest to develop a new theatre show in co-production with Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre to premiere in their subscription season. The show was immediately embraced and sold out wherever it toured. There was a sense of being

witness to something special every night as members of the Namatjira family, drawing live on stage, brought their country into the theatre

> **Namatjira is confident, articulate and beautifully made theatre**
> (Varenti and O'Connell, 2011).

Exhibitions in partnership with Many Hands were organised to tour with the show and a feature-length documentary began filming. Watching the **documentary** is strongly recommended to explore the interplay between the macro and micro narratives, and the tension between campaigning and aesthetics in the pursuit of Cultural Justice, which is the focus of the next chapter.

The documentary provides a good way to get a sense of this complex project and the return of copyright. For the public, getting the copyright back appeared to take a few months when we'd spent eight years creating momentum in the media and building this community dramaturgy.

WATCH DOCUMENTARY →

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Perhaps the best way to conclude this short study of Namatjira as the fourth exemplar would be in journal reflection. Not one written or edited years or months ago, rather written now in the last days of this research, here at the pinch point of the unsaid and unsayable. As highlighted above, Big hART's large long-term projects are 20% content and 80% process. Some people fixate on critiquing the 20% process, oftentimes deeply. The tip of the iceberg often looks pretty. In contrast, what I think is particularly pertinent to this study is the last moments of the Namatjira project when the Cultural Justice outcomes were so powerfully delivered. In relative terms the spend to achieve this was minimal and fast and the positive Flow of Consequences powerful and far-reaching. The legal work was done pro bono by Arnold Bloch Leiber, the Copyright was bought back with a gift from Dick Smith and this iconic cultural injustice was put right. How quick and easy it seemed after the decades of struggle by the family. How small the cost.

The Big hART process wasn't perfect, it never is. However, it was part of the justice, not the injustice. The artistic process was as transparent as it could be - there was no commission or royalty - the team stayed the course. The benefits were focused on the Namatjira family. The performances and visual art were beautiful. What it seemed to show was how simple and inexpensive it would be for cultural ministers and their Agencies to work to lessen this problem of Cultural Justice and direct the focus and funds where they need to be. All it would need is a complete reversal of the way cultural business is currently done. However, we are all in part complicit in keeping the structures the same or changing as slowly as possible. So the work at the margins must go on. And the urgency of the work dictates that we refine and perfect and research and extract better intermediations, even while we deliver them from the margins.

> **[Responding to…] a deal perceived by many as a serious cultural injustice…the Namatjira Legacy Trust aims to set up a lasting legacy for the family**
>
> (Edwards, 2017).

8.5.3 — THE PROVENANCE OF ARTISTIC LANGUAGES

The language of each project somehow remains live in organisational memory. These provenances are like bankable ideas or creative values - languages that do more than just manifest in content, design or stage. When powerful, they inform the direction and shape of the company itself. They are resonances from Cultural Justice – intimacy, authenticity, use of place, narrative structure, community dramaturgy. These languages are responsive and non-didactic, are mindful of the Cultural Justice goal and are collected so as to better serve it. Cultural Justice flavours the visual languages, media and processes we choose, which in turn makes the work and the body of works distinct.

8.5.4 — THE PROVENANCE OF CHOOSING AND FUNDING CULTURAL JUSTICE ISSUES

How do we know what to work on? Hidden stories find us. There are always far more urgent places and stories than we can work with and tell. They come as invitations. Not necessarily invitations from communities, rather invitations from Cultural Justice itself. From a justice imagination. From research. From poetics and passion and the prosaic – funding survival, curated through likeminded discussions, through an eye on the future. The projects we choose are not easy to fund in their invisibility. Not funding magnets. Not set-and-forget. However, the provenance of 30 years of Cultural Justice practice, without core funding and not towing the commercial line, has honed Big hART's instincts. We utilise a series of interconnected Cultural Justice overlays across a single issue to make curatorial decisions, regardless of whether it is easy to fund: Does it lack visibility? Is it rural, regional or isolated? Are others tackling this issue better? How does it fit with the five Domains? And then sometimes, a project is triggered in the same way as the mentoring we received from public servants in our early years; ruthlessly knowing where to look for funding and what language to use, to fund an underlying Cultural Justice issue of which no one cares.

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The proof is in the field, and over time this powerful provenance has rewritten who the company is and thinks it is. It enriches the soil of future projects being nurtured. This provenance informs artistic careers within the company. Artists come and work and stay harboured in ensemble, shaping and being shaped and in turn attract others to this Cultural Justice work. The proof comes from success, but also the failures which inform new projects. When successful, there is a flourishing internally in this. The company itself is almost like a performance work, with its own dramaturgy. It is a community. It is the sweet point of like-mindedness. Except I guess, in the cut and thrust of projects, when it is not.

Figure 75: Derik Lynch performing in *Namatjira* at Belvoir Street Theatre, 2015. Photo: Big hART.

Figure 76: Rex Battarbee and Albert Namatjira holding the painting presented to the Queen, Alice Springs, 1954. Photo: Provided to Big hART by Gayle Quarmby (Rex Battarbee's daughter).

8.5.5 — THE PROVENANCE OF COMMUNITY PROCESS

The word community can be vexed. It can mean so many things. Extracted from our work in the field, the values behind participants experience of being in their community has strong provenance. Place is values, not kerbs and guttering. Communities, are changing all the time, like a kind of flow. The flow of change. Similarly, projects generate a flow of consequences. These can't be controlled. They are not all positive. However, they can be set in motion and influenced through intermediations. These processes unfold like story. Community processes (Domain 2) are one voice in the story. Unfolding that story though co-creation can lead to a stronger Flow of Consequences.

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For the Namatjira family, who lived with very complex intergenerational issues of survival and poverty, this copyright story was both an economic urgency and an iconic urgency. Without narrative traction they suffered from this unseen cultural injustice. Elton's work in Ngapartji Ngapartji acted as a kind of calling card to build trust. It made dialogue (Bohm, 1996). It provided permissions for story gathering, and processes for co-creation in a vexed intercultural space, which in turn led to trust building workshops in the community with young people, with the choir, then with political and media dramaturgies, the Trust, an unfolding community dramaturgy, and eventually the return of the copyright. At this point, the Flow of Consequences has no input from Big hART, instead the project, the community, the family, the content continues to generate a flow for Big hART in a Domain 5 exchange.

This intermediated trust needs to translate from community to content. With Namatjira, iconic narratives needed to speak to non-Aboriginal audiences, building generosity. Exchanges with the communities meant workshops with young people, and the community responding with the endorphins which the voice of the Ntaria choir could bring to a theatre audience. On and on these subtle trust exchanges grew to build – intercultural generosities, and narratives of hope. With Cultural Justice as the goal, intercultural narrative short-hands, arose to generate an accessible way of telling this Namatjira story, for predominantly non-Aboriginal metro audiences, in the pursuit of what the family longed for – the return of the copyright. What emerged was a co-created eight-year Cultural Justice project, and along with it, the inevitable criticism, some sweetly naïve, and some the usual detached Western, academic, content focused discourse. It sits even more so, as a quiet and brilliant place piece of co-creation.

Figure 77: Actor Derik Lynch performing in *Namatjira*, 2016. Photo: Heidrun Lohr (Big hART).

8.5.6 — THE PROVENANCE OF ENSEMBLE ARTISTS

Ever since Namatjira, Big hART has maintained an evolving ensemble of likeminded artists creating work together over decades, drawn from a pool of over 500 across the 30 years. As iterations of ideas, structures, strategies, narratives are explored and honed from project to project, so too teams of artists are developing together. It is easy to overlook the provenance of staff, however when developing Cultural Justice projects, artists and arts workers - with the values, wisdom, ability and willingness to forgo other forms of ambition - are rare and important to hold on to, support and mentor. This helps decrease the churn, supports 'doing no harm' and is part of the abundance and flourishing.

Namatjira created a turning point for Big hART in understanding the quiet power generated by embracing virtuosic artistry and the courage to ask the question: would you be involved? Although we had enjoyed a decade of bringing these artists in basically for cameos (because we always assumed they'd be too busy), Namatjira established a more rigorous commitment to aligning the importance of Cultural Justice to exceptionally talented co-creators. This approach continues to amplify impact across Domains 2, 3 and 4 and has become a core value and an ongoing Flow of Consequence across Big hART's work.

It is worth noting however that these relationships are on the whole not well served when generated from conventional audition processes. Instead, building relationships over time helps to ensure there is deep, two-way learning with the expert spending some time as the novice in community settings. This is not celebrity as bait; this is understanding the place of excellent artists, lawyers, digital experts, crew, mechanics, sound designers etc. in this Cultural Justice work. The opposite of this (which Big hART has suffered from) - fear of excellence in the sector and the lack of courage to ask talented, busy people to commit - is a Cultural Justice inhibitor. However, it is easy to ask the wrong talented person into the wrong creative commitment.

Figure 78: Trevor Jamieson and Scott Rankin during rehearsals for *Namatjira* at Belvoir Street Theatre, 2015. Photo: Big hART.

8.5.7 — NAMATJIRA CONCLUSION (OR THE PROVENANCE OF TWO-WAY LEARNING)

There was much to learn here. Initially, the power sat with Big hART and the project, in our capacity and privileged track record. Yet the quest for the return of the copyright had exhausted the family and they wanted assistance. And so Big hART's role became one of intermediation towards Cultural Justice. There was no path, only goodwill, some mistakes and guidance from the family. At the same time our campaigning skills, access to influence and creative project ideas were highly sought and respected by the family as they came to know us. Building trust and two-way sharing of knowledge were critical to this co-creation.

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We are an experienced company, and yet, with the Namatjira project, we had to begin with all our Western binaries and white, settler, self-loathing on show – in this new context. You bring all the provenance – the good and the bad – of what you don't know, about place and culture. You also have to begin knowing critics and others will be hovering with opinion and feeling threatened perhaps, or territorial, or naïve. There will often be an ideological, often non-Aboriginal, self-installed gatekeeping mentality watching and protecting a space they themselves are also new to, and disguising their own mission-based protectionism. They are often lone ideological leftist city wolves, sorting out their identity in the desert, in a funky 1980s Landcruiser. Good for them, it is still part of the community dynamic. However, maintaining the focus on listening and learning from lived experience, and on responsive Cultural Justice intermediations, helps prevent one's own self-rightiousness. Hold the space, with humility and confidence and intermediate.

We learned anew that this intermediated trust building needs, at some point, to translate from community to content. With the Namatjira project, to stay true to the famiy's desire to secure the return of the copyright, the iconic narratives we were exploring needed to speak to non-Aboriginal audiences, with the generosity from the stage returned from the audience. The voice of the Ntaria Choir was central to this alongside the accessibility of narrative structure. Exchanges of trust between the choir and the community grew out of grassroots workshops with young people with the community responding by offering the endorphins the voice of the Ntaria choir brought to a theatre audience as the community voiced its hidden story of Cultural Justice. On and on these subtle trust exchanges grew to build intercultural generosities, and narratives of hope. With Cultural Justice as the goal, intercultural narrative short-hands arose to generate an accessible way of telling this Namatjira story for predominantly non-Aboriginal metro audiences in the pursuit of what the family longed for – the copyright return. What emerged was a co-created eight-year Cultural Justice project and along with it, the inevitable criticism, some sweetly naïve and some the usual detached Western, academic, content-focused discourse. What the public responded to, academics were sometimes unable to see or articulate. Essentially the Western eyes and ears trained to be fixated on content only sometimes miss the deeper processes, dramaturgies and community transactions of Cultural Justice intermediations. In this context, for Big hART, Namatjira sits as a quiet and brilliant place-based piece of co-creation.

Figure 79: Actor Trevor Jamieson performing in *Namatjira*, 2016. Photo: Heidrun Lohr (Big hART).

8.6 — REPUTATIONAL PROVENANCE – FRONTIER DILEMMAS

CCD practice, when attempting to respond to the many emerging urgencies of the 21st Century, must, by necessity encounter "frontier dilemmas" – artistic, strategic, ethical, dramaturgical and reputational – when delivering projects in the field. Understanding the provenance of these continually emerging dilemmas is vital to improving practice and at least doing no harm.

Responses to an organisation's less than perfect attempts to deal with these dilemmas can damage reputations and demolish years of good quiet work in a community. They are not so much the simple café chatter and theoretical dilemmas, rather these reputational issues emerge from projects in real, daily, intense and multi-faceted ways capable of 'blind-siding' and testing the strategic, personal and ethical maturity of workers in the field. They often stem from the scarcity culture and dogmas of the CCD sector and involve real community dramaturgical consequences and mistakes. They can cause real harm to the community, the arts worker, the organisation and the long-term potential of the project to have positive consequences in the flow of change and Cultural Justice.

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Perhaps the one guarantee in this work is that mistakes will be made, and indeed to presume they will not be made, is dangerous. In my own practice, mistakes I've made in the field have sometimes stayed with me for years, haunting my dreams and potentially white-anting my confidence on future projects, while also perhaps providing learning opportunities, if I'm mature enough to see them.

Mistakes and failures are the compost that provides the humbling fertile ground for exchange and the flow of change. However, reputational damage is still a real threat, and can be based on real failure, but equally on false hearsay and accusation - sometimes driven by lateral trauma, community self-sabotage and professional jealousies of others working in the same space. It is not often acknowledged, but this place-based work can be both exceptionally collegiate, and heartbreakingly divisive.

In a field susceptible to the toxicity of scarcity culture, burn out and territorial fears, reputational damage can often be quickly amplified as a method of self-preservation, rather than be discussed and resolved collegiately. Unfortunately, much of this is driven by dangerously competitive funding cultures, where excellence and experience are not necessarily rewarded, and around 75% of applications for urgent projects are discarded. A lack of sectoral leadership at times also feeds this toxicity. The repercussions of reputational damage can be far-reaching, running into the loss of funding and thwarting valuable long-term Cultural Justice projects and ending vital initiatives in high-needs communities.

Examples of these kinds of dilemmas, organisational failures and reputational issues can be found in all Big hART projects, even on exemplary projects much loved by the organisation such as Namatjira. The dilemmas and difficulties that the field faces in trying to meet the urgencies of the 21st Century creates pressure in the field and maintaining the courage to continue is difficult. These projects can span eight to 10 years, and maintaining commitment is challenging. For instance, as we will see with the fifth exemplar, the intensity on Yijala Yala has seen staff move through living, working and delivering in Iremugadu every three years. Not every staff member has come through this unscathed, and although there is usually a strong love for the community, sometimes there is reputational damage for the organisation as these staff express the hurt and anger which can be part of a burnout experience.

8.7 — CONCLUSION

This chapter built on the beginnings and formation of Big hART as a practice and traced its journey of learning from CCD to an organisation with a broad Cultural Justice focus and highlighted the multiple Lines of Provenance which drove this learning resulting in the shift. This shift was not board-driven or conceived and then executed through strategic planning, a business case or creative decree, rather it was part of the internal flow of change, based on the value propositions at the foundation of the organisation.

In the next chapter we examine the last of the exemplars Yijala Yala and the Flow of Consequences that run from it into legacy. We begin by describing how Yijala Yala came into being, the nature of the work on the ground and how the legacy project New Roebourne formed. Towards the end of the chapter, a large archive of video material is provided for the reader. This rich data is in the voice of the community co-creators and demonstrates the Flows of Consequences in action. They can be seen as indicative signs of the community flourishing and provide a sense of abundance/sustainability under the banner of New Roebourne. The reader is free to self-curate and find their own way through the material.

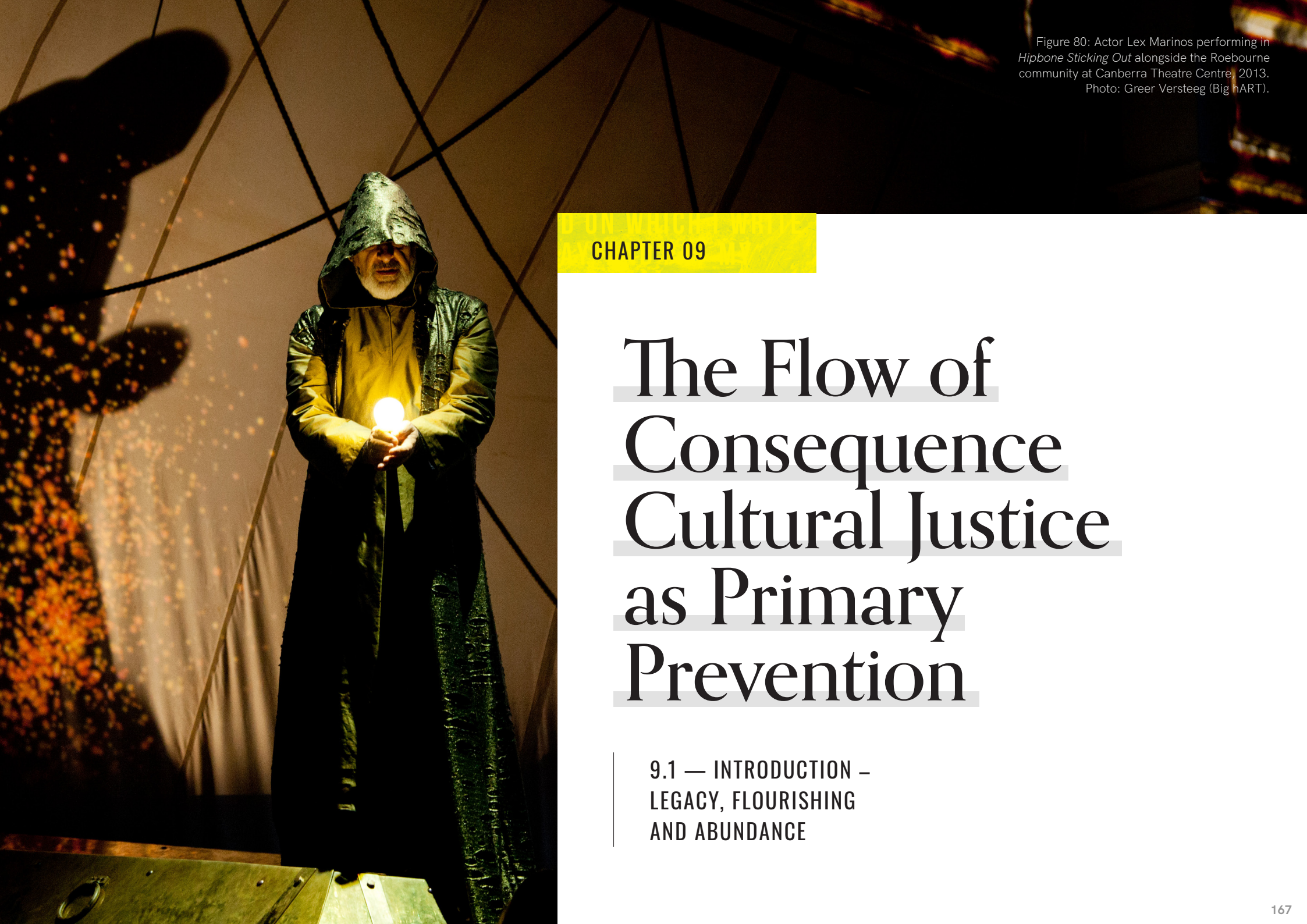


Figure 80: Actor Lex Marinos performing in *Hipbone Sticking Out* alongside the Roebourne community at Canberra Theatre Centre, 2013. Photo: Greer Versteeg (Big hART).

CHAPTER 09

The Flow of Consequence Cultural Justice as Primary Prevention

9.1 — INTRODUCTION – LEGACY, FLOURISHING AND ABUNDANCE

The projects described in the previous chapter indicate the interconnected multiple Lines of Provenance, generated in many multiples from each of the five Domains of Change, reinforced as an iterative and emergent set of dramaturgies. This Chapter utilises Yijala Yala and its legacy New Roebourne to examine the positive Flow of Consequences that run on beyond projects, sometimes independently from Big hART's work and sometimes supported by it. These Flows of Consequences can be observed across all five of the Domains of Change across all Big hART projects, whether successful or less successful. The examples that follow are drawn at random from several projects to illustrate Flows of Consequence:

DOMAIN 1 (INDIVIDUAL) - A young person shifts their trajectory. An at risk young women moves through Project O, becomes confident in her Palawa heritage, explores her leadership, first in family to complete year 12, goes to university and studies law, becomes the Premier's Young Achiever of the Year and Young Tasmanian of the Year, and as these words are being written, is in Glasgow at COP26 as a young leader.

DOMAIN 2 (COMMUNITY) - In far North West Tasmania a retired craftsman hears a violinist's composition about Kelp and begins independently building kelp violins, which inspires concerts, and mutuality enriches a micro-community through exchanges.

DOMAIN 3 (CONTENT) – Acoustic Life of Sheds creates exquisite, place-based music content, wins awards, is drawn into a ballooning array of festivals nationally.

DOMAIN 4 (INFLUENCE) – In Tasmania a young woman's experience of the foster system speaks directly to the relevant minister influencing his policy thinking.

DOMAIN 5 (WAYS OF KNOWING) – A photographer resident with Big hART increases her skills and ways of knowing and independently starts telling invisible shearer stories through photography and is a finalist in the National Portrait Prize.

As with the exemplars above, it may be useful for the reader to first explore Yijala Yala and the New Roebourne projects in the Volumes.

EXPLORE NOW →

The Yijala Yala project began in 2010 and is ongoing (in 2022) in exit and legacy with the new name of the New Roebourne project. The name New Roebourne grew out of the desires and instructions of senior women Elders who, having watched and guided the progress of the Yijala Yala project, didn't want the outcomes to fade away. Instead, they wanted to counteract the negative stories driven by media and government who use Roebourne as the whipping child of Western Australia.

Often the first instinct, when faced with project successes, is to assume it must be continued. 'Sustainability' assumes that 'ongoing' is always right. However, successful projects can also act as traps for dependency, and entrapment in past narratives. With all communities changing all the time, precision projects need to keep transitioning within this flow of change. A balance is needed between: a) the reinvention of the wheel for projects on the ground; and b) allowing projects to conclude or transition to new forms, so as to avoid ghettoising communities in deficit pasts.

There's has been a pattern for decades in CCD: problematise, suggest a solution, fund it, deliver and inadvertently build dependency so the funding continues. In this context, sustainability can be part of the problem. Therefore, where possible, thinking and planning for project exit and legacy needs to be built into the social design and Cultural Justice intermediations from the beginning. Importantly, legacy may well be more ephemeral, rather than some kind of permanent solution. It can be in participant's ideas, values, agency and changing social trajectories, as a Flow of Consequences - rather than in embedded and structured future projects.

It is also worth considering whether it actually is sustainability that we want, or is it closer to abundance (Clammer, 2019)? Or flourishing?

Abundance may sound softer than the seemingly tangible notion of sustainability, which governments crave, but perhaps abundance is broader and deeper, which can sometimes render sustainability rigid and redundant. This was true of Yijala Yala as we brought its initial strategies to a close in 2015 and allowed a series of legacy stepping stones to take its place with the New Roebourne project. Starting this chapter on Yijala Yala as the final exemplar with these thoughts concerning legacy is an important reflection on how to do no harm, how to move on from complex projects within the flow of consequences, based on assets of people and place, so as to encourage a natural legacy of flourishing.

9.2 — THE PROVENANCE OF BEGINNINGS

> *I have learnt a lot from Big hART. I have learnt about their love and compassion for people, and their role in bringing out untold stories about things that have happened, but have never been told. Big hART directs strong teams and has effective relationships with community groups. Big hART has lots of compassion and respect for Elders, I saw this all come about in the Roebourne Yijala Yala project, when we began working on* Hipbone Sticking Out. *When I saw the finished version of* Hipbone Sticking Out, *it hit me so powerfully that I was standing in tears, and I have never experienced that in my lifetime. Everyone hears and tells their story as an intercultural company, and it came out beautifully with the kids from Roebourne.*
>
> *Allery Sandy, Yindjibarndi Cultural Advisor for Yijala Yala*
>
> ***The full version is on page 118 of Volume 1***

Allery Sandy is a key cultural advisor for the Cultural Justice work in Roebourne. Her phrases above, 'untold stories about things that have happened but have never been told'... 'when I saw the finished version I was standing in tears'... 'everyone hears and tells their story' capture something of Yijala Yala as a long-term series of linked intermediations.

Through the Yijala Yala project, we examine how Lines of Provenance from the previous four exemplars flowed in and shaped this Cultural Justice intermediation in a complex new setting where Big hART were the beginners. These lines of provenance of many different forms - ideas, learning, new wisdoms, techniques and technologies – gain traction through Domain 5 (the exchange of new ways of knowing, being and doing). They then play out across all the Domains in the new project by shaping opportunities for individuals, communities, content, cultural shifts and influence, in non-linear ways as a Flow of consequences from the intermediations.

In this way, we begin with the provenance of Yijala Yala, from 2010 at a time when it ran concurrently with the Namatjira Project and others, and examine this last 11 years in a shorthand, storied way, laying out the chronology. Having been given the privilege of staying the course with this project across this time, the project portrait is interspersed with reflections on meanings, futilities and rich experiences so as to try and capture something useful of the complexities of this Cultural Justice work in the field.

Figure 81: Timeline of the history of the Pilbara region. Image: Wah Cheung (Big hART). View full version online HERE

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 33 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

It is evening, mid-September 2021. I'm sitting in my Roebourne house. A house that be-longs to me, in which I don't belong. There are twenty community members and team here, having a big cook up to say goodbye after another annual Songs for Peace *concert.*

This house is where the team - community producers and artists live and work from - here, and in the digital art centre/lab down the road. It is light and airy, plant-filled, with sounds of guitars drifting in from the deck outside where mentoring musicians and senior singers are having another impromptu song-writing session, composing a country tune about an unwanted visitor to the community called COVID. The health fragility of these Elders make the song extremely poignant.

Inside food prep and reminiscence flows. There are squeals from children continually stealing fruit from the fruit salad I'm preparing, meant for 20. I've been given this job by a team member to keep me out of the way – a perfect spot to listen and observe the privilege of this work. An emerging Elder who we've just heard is seriously ill has arrived with her new granddaughter. Another, who has been with the project since the beginning - at times very supportive and at others very critical, but always there – is here, this time in a wheelchair. She may not walk again. It seems like a kind of exhaus-tion rather than an illness. She wrote new tunes for Songs for Peace this year and sang one (below). Silently we wonder if she'll sing again.

There is joy here as well as watchful melancholy. One of our team, heading into their third year of work, is heavy with child. Another baby soon to be born into this Big hART company, this group of friends, this... what are we? They are the third team of leader-ship in 10 years on this Yijala Yala project, and soon we are to start looking for the next. I guess I'll sit beside the newcomers with Elders, and try and explain what has gone before, and allow them to make it their own with the community. At some point, we'll be leaving, we are in a long legacy phase already, watching the flow of change. The flourishing and the ongoing difficulties within that flourishing.

Later, I'm washing up and listening in. We've videoed a few conversations with Elders this evening, lo-fi recordings using whatever gear was at hand, hoping to use them as a kind of coda for this study. Digital technologies in the community fit like a glove these days, after years of community story-making. These senior women are thinking back through the project across the decade - It is a reflective and celebratory time.

In my heart, a quiet calm enfolds this 10-year work. There is both success and failure. I am older. And it is beautiful, and melancholy, like a gift to be sitting amongst it. These days I'm mainly observing the work done by the team, and thinking through the future, as well as writing and editing this journal. It is as if I'm sitting within a research narrative, of which I'm also a participant.

In a sense, it is both an evening of high-culture, and friendship with a spirit of place so different to other projects. The evening's intention, as with the project, is shaped by the natural community longings of these women and men, from whom the co-creation has sprung, and the intermediations of the project – an unspoken desire to debrief, to be culturally safe, to eat together (food, always food!) and to say goodbye.

By accident, I'm observing this, at the same time as reading Title Fight, *a new book about the community from respected journalist and provocateur Paul Cleary, the story of Yindjibarndi political leader Michael Woodley and settler leader Twiggy Forrest, FMG. Written in his muscular and populist*

style, he does what most Whitefulla observ-ers do - simplifies the complex narrative of Roebourne, in masculine, linear and West-ern binaries, with its clear cut winners and losers. Just another victor narrative. It is tir-ing to read and absorb his mistakes. There is no flow, just punch drunk journalism. I see my own failings from over the years in his self-assured words. If only it were that sim-ple.

Reading it casts a melancholy shadow, as the book itself hooks into these kinds of nar-ratives which so often claim good authors and drag them into becoming part of the problem with their airport top 10 reductionisms. And so the ambiguity and beauty and subtleties are lost, for the easily digestible good cop/ bad cop literary meme. I see my-self and my own naivety here. The book will come and go, like others before, with few local people reading and/or knowing. The gap between local and Western narratives widening. Here tonight though, Songs for Peace still hangs in the air…

Kankawa, an Elder from the Kimberley weeps as she talks. Soon the bus will take her home to Fitzroy Crossing. She has loved her time in the community again and is lonely for home, but she doesn't want to leave what she has found here. Kankawa wants something like this project where she lives, for there is trouble there, as well as so many good things. There is a mirror in her longing, of the start of Yijala Yala, as some of the same women in this room saw Ngapartji Ngapartji and wanted a project.

Listen to Kankawa sing

9.3 — THE PROVENANCE OF TITLES AND NAMING

The title Yijala Yala, chosen by Elders for the project, has been explained to us in a number of ways – 'the past and now' and 'what was then, is now' and also meaning 'now' in both Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma. It has been good to learn to keep these meanings transient in this way, reflective of the complexities.

And so, it is worth taking a moment here to reflect on these complexities, choices and circumstances which flowed together to form Yijala Yala. Part strategy and part its own momentum forming more and more around a quest for Cultural Justice expressed through a creative cascade of intermediations. It is a personal remembrance of the circumstances and choices that allowed Yijala Yala (Now, Now!) to come into being.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 34 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, 2021

It is 2009, Ngapartji Ngapartji is drawing to a close. I have three growing kids. There is no money, and now there is the mortgage. I've been taking commissions on the side. Finished a new commission, Riverland *for Wesley Enoch, based on artist Ian Abdulla's childhood. Commissioned by Windmill Children's Theatre. It's a festival piece. It's good. They want another, with Yidinji/Meriam director Rachel Maza. I don't know why they keep coming to me. It is fascinating. I feel inadequate. I say yes. To be writing in the remote community called Mimili, in Pitjantjatjara country again. Near Pukatja (Ernabella). Rachel is good. But Windmill have little understanding of community process or cultural justice. Rachel becomes unavailable. It is a mess, but the story is strong, and we've begun now. Called* Nyuntu Ngali*, it means You We Two. Mimili is culturally and geographically close to Ngapartji Ngapartji, with legacy potential. Big hART partners with Windmill. We'll deliver the community process, Elder consultation, create the work. Windmill can promote and present. Our team brings Trevor Jamieson and me together for another collaboration and introduces a new young performer, Derik Lynch who grew up close to this Country. (Subsequently, Derik is brilliant in* Namatjira*). Performers and advisors from Ngapartji Ngapartji work on* Nyuntu Ngali.

Figure 82: Project participant Maverick Eaton during a NEOMAD film workshop in Roebourne, 2013. Photo: Chynna Campbell (Big hART).

These background chronologies highlight the Lines of Provenance combined with the organisation saying yes to urgencies and opportunities and sometimes taking extra work to survive. However, *Nyuntu Ngali*, was also a response to unfolding community dramaturgies and the need to create legacies to Ngapartji Ngapartji.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 35 - BOAT HARBOUR, TOMMEGINNE COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

The Nyuntu Ngali *narrative is complex. Apocalyptic, set in the future, intercultural. Post Climate Change, after the petroleum wars. For survival, anyone still alive has from the city have moved now lives in the belly of the country. Pitjantjatjara way of life is the only way of life out here for the characters in the play. It is a radical theatre piece ahead of its time. The plot follows a wrong way love affair between a young Pitjantjatjara man and a non-Aboriginal young woman. She carries his child. They elope far into the desert to avoid being speared. Trevor Jamieson is the voice of the unborn child. This strange cross-cultural collaboration written for young people, shocked some audiences when it plays at the Adelaide Festival Centre and the Sydney Theatre Company. It attracts a little media: "The story and the production process itself speaks of the power of community influence, and the redefinition and the value of passing on and sharing culture" (Supple, 2010).*

In the Adelaide audience were two academics who were evaluating Big hART sitting with a representative from Woodside Petroleum; ironic given the post-oil narrative of Nyuntu Ngali. *They represent the Rock Art Foundation Committee (RAFC). They were watching intently and out of this watchfulness, the conversation with the Roebourne community was seeded.*

The RAFC was established as a result of Woodside building a $12 billion gas plant in the Murujuga (the Burrup Peninsula), a WA Government designated industrial site that is also home to a million petroglyphs. Murujuga is stewarded by Ngarluma people, who with others, act as the custodians on behalf of the Yaburara people who were decimated with the arrival of European settlers.

Under a Conservation Agreement with the Australian Government, Woodside set aside $34 million towards researching, monitoring, managing, presenting and transmitting the heritage values of Murujuga, and the RAFC administered these funds. Years into the program, the RAFC was concerned with a lack of progress and Big hART was suggested by the evaluators as a solution. *Nyuntu Ngali* was in effect a casting call and we were invited to speak to the committee. From the outside, the committee seemed dysfunctional. The federal Government representatives felt the money was theirs, although Woodside seemed to hold the purse strings. Inexperienced Federal public servants threw in paternalistic suggestions. It was fascinating to observe, as the First Nations chairperson wrangled the passive-aggressive functionaries, and it was clear that money and power is one thing, and wisdom another. We noted the need for agility and being able to sidestep the risk-averse and the unimaginative people, who with good intentions, could dictate a project in a place like the Pilbara and push intermediations out of shape. This was part of the project provenance, which quickly led us to diversify the funding sources of this project to survive a single stakeholder having too much power without knowing the work in the field. After three years of funding, even after Yijala Yala had achieved so much success, it was instructive to watch key employees at Woodside, express annoyance that they couldn't control the project and shut it down. Keeping funding streams diverse became an important Line of Provenance from that experience.

Figure 83: Young people play in the Ngurin River during a filmmaking workshop on Ngarluma Country, 2021. Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 37 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

I'm back on Ngarluma Country, working on the last pages this research. The musicians and crew from Songs for Peace have said their goodbyes. It is twelve years since the first encounters outlined above. I'm in a building in the main street of Roebourne, Roe street, named after Septimus Roe, a dark figure in the history of this place, who is mostly celebrated across 150 years of the towns settler history. The building I'm in was once owned by Woodside, and it is where the first establishment meeting for the project took place. Through Yijala Yala and its legacy, this same building has now been bought back by the royalty from the work of the young people of Roebourne (see NEOMAD below). The story of this purchase mirrors the full-circle journey of this project. It is also a tangible indication of flourishing.

Iremugadu is a strong and joyous community. And yet, writing reflectively, there are also so many everyday levels of sorrow, which creep in, as if the deficit lens is a magnet. Out the back window of that old Woodside office is the Ngurin river - stolen, dammed and renamed (Harding). Next to the river is a reserve.

A year before this Big hART project began, I'd been invited to Roebourne to write about this reserve in a piece called Kajarala (Three Trees)*. Throughout the 20th century, Aboriginal people from different language groups gravitated there from their homelands, as internal refugees, driven by trauma: settler-agriculture and industry, wages, comfort. For further background, Noel Olive's Enough is Enough provides a well-informed overview.*

You can just about see reserve out the back of Woodside's office. And this office is where senior Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi women gave their permission for what was to become Yijala Yala to commence. That day, sipping tea, and watching me warily as if thinking – would this meeting be any different to the usual repetition of discussions? Fortunately, as an example of our work, I let the documentary of the Ngapartji Ngapartji project Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji *speak for itself.*

There were questions, and then quite quickly these women Elders requested Woodsidefund a project similar to Ngaparjit Ngapartji for them and their grandchildren, so as to help develop skills and tell the stories of Roebourne – transmitting heritage values. And so it began. I was in my forties then, and sitting here now, penning this journal, I'm in my sixties. In this reflective mood, there is something of the words of W.B. Yeat's in love for this work, the harsh rewards and costs of it and the 'soft look' of the naïve early years:

> *When you are old and grey and full of sleep*
> *And nodding by the fire, take down this book*
> *And slowly read, and dream of the soft look*
> *Your eyes once had, and of their shadows deep.*

At that first meeting, in that building, there was passion for change and anger at the stigma levelled at Roebourne by the media. Elders wanted to talk about the 'new story of Roebourne,' which in time became the title of the legacy project - New Roebourne - and so the legacy of the project was built in from day one. This energy and desire became the fuel for a year of listening.

9.4 — THE PROVENANCE OF CONTEXT

The Ngarluma name for Roeborne, Iremugadu, means the rough edge of a leaf of a local tree. The town is situated in the West Pilbara, Western Australia where the desert meets the sea. Once the main town of the North West, it now has a population of around 1000, plus transient families. It has been taken over and neglected by the City of Karratha, enduring decades of structural racism. However, Iremugadu is the gateway to the Aboriginal world of the Pilbara.

In 2010, the establishment producer for Yijala Yala began living in the caravan park, mining was driving a crisis in accommodation. In 2021, Big hART remains the only non-Aboriginal organisation living and working in Roebourne, bar the police - who are surrounded by wire fences. Iremugadu is a powerful place, and Elders are always busy with competing agendas, across two cultures, and dealing with the 150 years of lateral trauma. See Timeline above.

The project began with listening, cups of tea, feeding hungry kids after school, quick engagement activities – games, music, dance, digital art. At the same time, we were beginning to co-design longer-term approaches. The temporal idea of 'now' arose in this first year. The name Yijala Yala is a time concept – it was chosen to represent the desire in the community to highlight the positives of Roebourne Now! Now and the future rather than the stigma of the past. Now also added a sense of urgency for change. Building on this, we took the RAFC goal 'presenting and transmitting the heritage values of Murujuga' to the Elders, who didn't want the anthropologist's 'glass case' approach to heritage. Instead they said, 'heritage is a future concept'. Their young people are walking heritage, connected to a continuity of Country and Culture.

This set in train how Yijala Yala could stay true to its RAFC brief and also fulfil the wishes of Elders by delivering workshops to develop young people's skills so they could present and transmit their creativity as heritage. Workshops therefore needed to involve digital literacy, intergenerational exchange, re-engagement in education, on country trips, traditional story, futuristic fiction, music, video, health, support in court, diversion from crime and community development.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL 38 - ROEBOURNE (IREMUGADU), NGARLUMA COUNTRY, SEPTEMBER 2021

Roebourne, 10 years later. I'm at Roebourne Regional Prison, as part of the annual songwriting project Songs for Peace, which results in a large concert designed to help build harmony in the community, which is staged every year around the anniversary of John Pat's death. The reader is encouraged to explore the following short videos:

Songs for Peace Rehearsals 2021

Songs for Peace 2020

Songs for Peace 2019, ABC TV NEWS

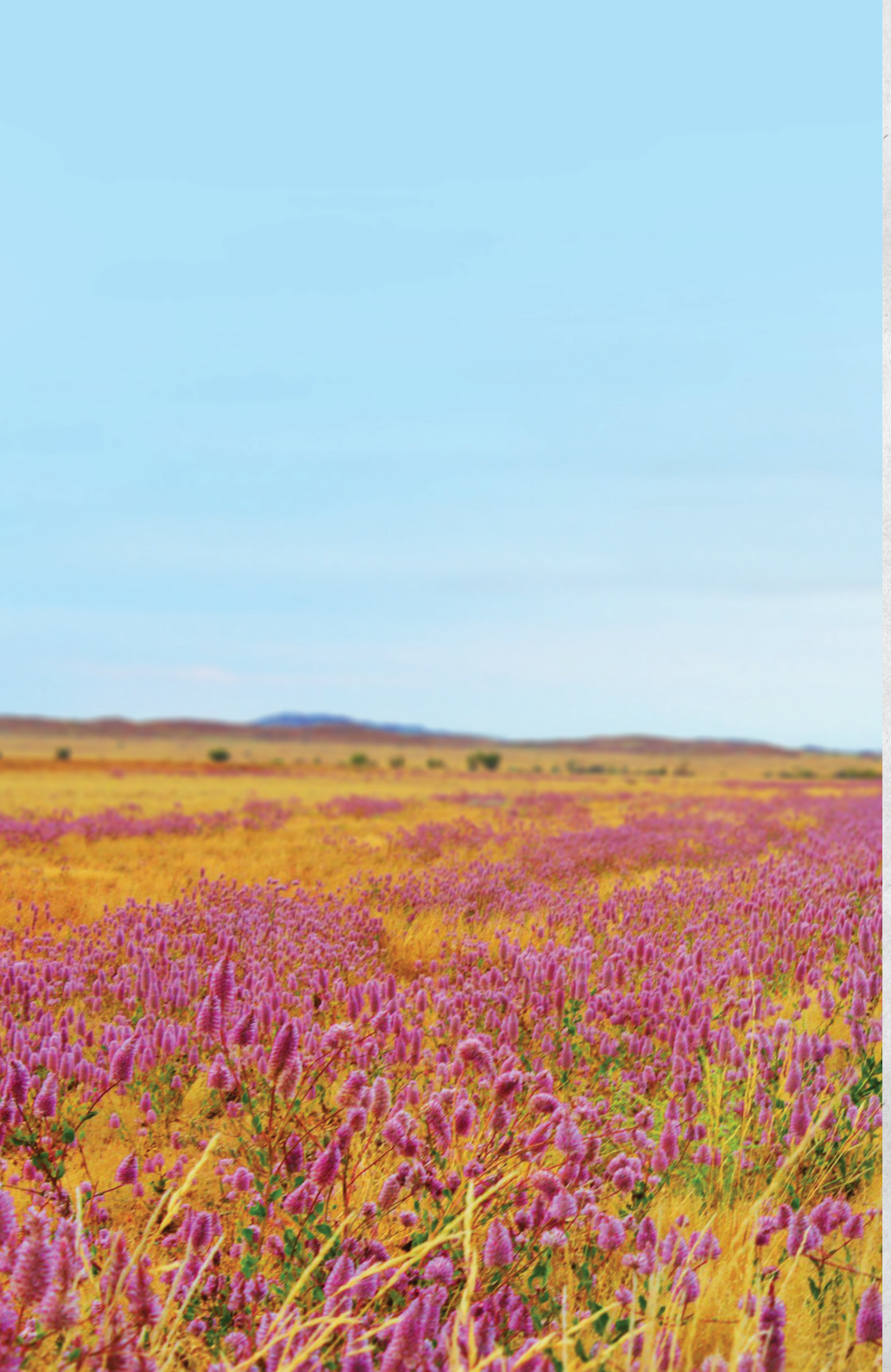
Songs for Peace 2018

Figure 84: Kankawa (Olive Knight) an Elder from Fitzroy Crossing during Songs for Peace rehearsals in Roebourne, 2021.
Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

This morning, senior women are here supporting the prison work - an inter-cultural band, about 70 inmates, 99% Aboriginal, staff. The prisoner's songs are about country, freedom, family and love - some in English, some in language from country across the Pilbara. Two talented, charismatic young men perform. Nervous. They receive an unguarded positive response from their peers. A few women prisoners join the room, sitting at the back. The air is thick with watchful testosterone. In the midst of this, two young women inmates decide to sing. They feel shame, but persevere, making their way to the front. The room stays quiet and supportive.

Roebourne is well known in the media. It is called the hottest prison in the world. Cells lack air conditioning. The compound temperature hovers in the high 40s. The running of this prison could be seen as criminal. The hall for the concert is at least cool. Perhaps this is why inmates have turned up. However, when Kankawa (Olive Knight), an Elder from Fitzroy Crossing sings, a hush of seniority falls on the room, all eyes are on this powerful lady, watchful. It is not possible for me to understand or decipher the web of cultural complexities for those in the room. Young men from up her way, tough, expressionless, listen when she speaks. Even for an outsider, in this room, with these men and women, some senior, some young, many talented, the overwhelming feeling is one of 'waste' - they could be on country employed in Ranger programs; engaged in cultural business; law business, Western business. 10 years ago, when this project started, these young men were still children. And here we are. Questions can stalk our work, locally and nationally. What are we doing as a country? As an organisation? What really has changed through this invitation to come and work with the community?

We've seen different phases of this prison project. Sometimes welcomed, sometimes not. Always, we pay for the programs, there's little resource for constructive programs inside. Today our programs are appreciated, but then senior staff will change, and another set of policies and approaches will come in. Reinvent the wheel. What are they doing? Inmates as fodder, for a prison industry. But what are we doing, is this just fodder for the arts industry? What actually changes with all this work?



Yet you can also see shifts, firstly in the individual Domain of Change, and the changes made as a result of workshops - skills, care, belief, agency. It is not just changed behaviour, it is more like, clearing a path, back to connection and culture and this 'future heritage.'

And then, if you stop and observe and let go of the need to control, actually the flow of change is everywhere: the new musicians in prison, inspired; the conversations with guards; the decade long campaign for better justice outcomes; the exchanges between relatives – the longing hugs between family on the outside and family inside - ordinary hope and joy. And on it goes, the work, unfathomable, yet usually evaluated in linear solution-based terms only.

Government like 'solutions'- a neat line in the sand. But that way of thinking drifts like a dune without foundation. The real work is steady integrity. Holding space - not naively, and only where possible. The real work requires the foundation of Cultural Justice first, from which solutions can spring. So that intermediations can follow, creating space for a natural community dramaturgy will assist a community to flourish.

Figure 86: Purple Mulla Mulla (Pilbara Wildflowers) on Ngarluma Country Roebourne, 2021. Photo: Aimee Kepa (Big hART).

Figure 85: New Roebourne project participant Lornara Walters, 2021. Photo: Aimee Kepa (Big hART).

9.5 — THE PROVENANCE OF FUNDING

In the beginning, the level of funding for Yijala Yala was sensible and enabling, because the costs of working in the Pilbara were high. The iron ore boom had two years to run. Housing was impossibly hard to find and rent for a staff house cost $2000 a week. Workspaces were rare. We moved around: a donga in an industrial estate; a shed; a house in Roebourne. It was ruthless on the ground competing with industry. Although essential, the level of funding for the project was in a different league to most of the CCD sector.

Woodside was watching the emerging project closely. There was remarkable creative energy in the community and output was high. Elders were proud of their young people, so it was hard for Woodside to dismiss what they were achieving on the project. The evaluators sensed and documented the moments of change flowing and were thrilled, but few others – government or Woodside - knew what they are looking at. Risk-averse and micro-managing content, they didn't know what to do with this emerging opportunity. However, Woodside is part of the community development (Domain 2) and it is important to keep them in. Ngarluma people have more than 50,000 years of experience in the Pilbara when Woodside will only have 50 or so years on Ngarluma Country before they'll be gone. It became clear that to get over the negative assumptions about Roebourne, we would need to over-achieve on the RAFC deliverables and our young workers would have to keep an open mind to bring Woodside on a developmental journey.

Figure 87: Red Air Project at Songs for Peace in Roebourne, 2021. Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

Figure 88: Tasmanian artist Jay Jerome performing at Songs for Peace at the Ngurin Pilbara Amphitheatre, 2021. Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

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I see a past self in new workers now: artists with ideas, invited in, short term; wide-eyed with the whitefulla look of combined fear, goodwill and paternalistic territorialism that many of us start with; the white 4x4s; the textbook solutions; the idealistic dreams of collective impact; the latest grant language; all awash in short-term thinking. And there is remarkable patience from older people in the community who, if they want and trust you, will take you in and shape you. And if you are willing, willing to fail and joke, laugh and live within it like any community, you learn and what you have to offer is drawn out. And if you listen, you start to see local politics and read more clearly when cultural business has nothing to do with you. And you learn not to be drawn to one side or the other. And there is hope here, because it is two-way learning, and much of the (ex) change is in awakening to deeper truths as settlers – Domain 5.

9.6 — THE PROVENANCE OF BUILDING TRUST

In those early years, Yijala Yala was working concurrently with the Namatjira project, half a continent away on Western Arrente Country (100 kilometres West of Alice Springs). This provided an opportunity to bring the two projects together and talk through their experiences of Big hART working with their community to build trust and learning. The Namatjira family came to paint on Ngarluma country and we staged a version of the Namatjira show for the community. In exchange, we took an Elder and her daughter to see *Namatjira* rehearsing for its premiere at Belvoir St Theatre in Sydney. They met Trevor Jamieson (Pitjantjatjara) and Derik Lynch (Yankunytjatjara) and discussed working together in Iremugadu. To further enhance trust and connectivity, we took Elders and an emerging Elder to an Arts festival in Rotterdam on an invitation to present the Yijala Yala project alongside Namatjira and Ngapartji Ngapartji, and gradually the trust grew in a natural way. It was Tootsie Daniels and her daughter who went to Sydney for *Namatjira*, and her senior influence has been important over the last decade in guiding the project and at times admonishing.

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It is the fourth Songs for Peace concert. The atmosphere is noticeably different this time. The choir and band have performed in Perth now to great success – an audience of 3000 at Point Walter on the banks of Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River), hosted by the City of Melville, Noongar Country. During COVID they came to listen and something new happened. Here, in Roebourne on the banks of the Ngurin (Harding River), the community is singing again. There is a still confidence. The crowd feel it. The Big hART team feel it. There is food and children having fun, but somehow the chaos and the sugar intake and food fights are way down compared to usual. Then, a few songs in, Nanna Tootsie comes on stage. These days in a wheelchair. Throughout her life, she has carried a lot, weighed down by circumstance and injustice, and recently she just sat down. There are whisperings from peers worried for her that this is not good, she needs to get up and walk. The audience is quiet as she introduces her song. It is a sad song. A country song. Sung in a very high slow voice. The women sing with her. The song is about her beautiful daughter who was one of the first young people we worked with and has since passed. Took her own life at the age of 20. I haven't heard Tootsie use her name during the past eight years. My heart is in my mouth. It seems that time has passed, and tonight she uses her name in a very public way on stage to introduce a song. Esther.

Esther was recently out of juvenile detention and started out painfully shy on Yijala Yala, but came out of herself. When she travelled with Tootsie to Belvoir St Theatre to meet the Namatjira family, she learnt digital skills and documented the process on camera, watching a deep commitment from this Western Arrente family, and the seriousness with which they told their story. Esther returned to Roebourne in a different space, and after a few years got a job with the Murujuga Junior Rangers. The last time I saw her she was in charge of the whiteboard in a room full of whitefullas in high-viz. Telling them to slow down while she wrote. Confident. Charismatic. And then, a few months later, Esther was dead. The funeral was large and cleft by sorrow. I observed other young people, watching as they noted the attention she was getting in this grief. The spoken love. The images. The music. The missing. There must be new ways for this love and praise to manifest in our project, while young people are still alive, even amidst the struggle to survive. Potent intermediations. And now this year, in this concert, something was different as Nanna Tootsie spoke about Esther and then sang. And, even though there were stronger songs in the concert, it was Esther's song that the audience spoke about afterwards, while holding back tears.

TOOTSIE'S DREAM (HEY GIRL)

In my dreams I see you smiling
Your beauty lifts up in my dreams
I'm with you walking, talking, laughing like we used to do
Even though you're not with me I have you in my dreams
We love you forever in my dreams

The night is long and darker
I reach out for you
All my fears are driven away
By the beauty of your love
I feel that we're in a world of our own
You're my angel my beautiful child
That shines so bright at night
Keep shining bright
Like a rainbow with many colours of beauty, it's all I see

Hey girl, I'm dreaming... I'm dreaming
I'm dreaming I'm Dreaming
I'm dreaming I'm Dreaming Hey Girl
I'm dreaming I'm Dreaming of You

Figure 89: Yindjibarndi Elder Tootsie Daniels performing her song 'Hey Girl' at Songs for Peace alongside artist Paul Kelly via video link, 2020. Photo: Marg Bertling (Big hART).

9.7 — THE PROVENANCE OF AUTHENTIC RESULTS

In communities that have seen many white people with good intentions come and go in white 4x4s, the window of time to show tangible results is narrow. The community is busy with cultural business and survival – health, justice, education. It is subtle, easy to miss and usually polite but Elders are looking for results, authenticity and a willingness to learn and collaborate. Quite quickly on Yijala Yala, the young people began to achieve striking results in digital, creativity, education and commitment that were well beyond community expectations. Elders were watching, looking for value and noting the progress of their grandchildren (the future heritage). Then these Elders began attending workshops themselves engaging, teaching, defending the work where needed and providing cultural safety. Soon they too were making digital material in story and song in an outpouring of creativity. For a more detailed outline of the individual projects flowing from Yijala Yala and New Roebourne - NEOMAD, Hipbone Sticking Out, Murru, Tjaabi, Smashed, How Do We Get to Space, John Pat Peace Place - refer Volume 1, Pg 96 – 117.

9.8 — THE PROVENANCE OF THE ASSET V THE DEFICIT LENS

Recurring through these initial years of work, through all the stages, mini-projects and workshops was the desire from the community to talk about the future, rather than dwell on the past i.e. the New Roebourne rather than the troubled town of Roebourne. The co-creators would often say 'Let's talk about the good things and the future; we want people to know about the New Roebourne', but in no time, in writing workshops and conversations the stories would circle back to the past, often to the story of John Pat's death in custody on September 28th 1983 and what the Pat family has endured. This was a touchstone story. A galvanising story. And it became clear that to get to the exit of the project (the Flow of Consequences) we would need to move beyond this story first. So we began documenting it, inviting the Pat family into the project and their story into the content.

Many families rallied around Yijala Yala and supported this approach, but by no means everyone. Given the different language groups, Native Title issues, local conflict and trauma, not all families worked together easily, however all were welcome in the Yijala Yala space. An asset based 'open crowd' approach was used and the team, at varying times numbering between four and nine, reinforced this positive approach across all workshops, content and transactions, including with the Pat family, their story, and the potential positive legacy which could be built from the tragedy of John's passing.

Figure 90: Yindjibarndi Elder Tootsie Daniels with two project participants creating a video clip for their song 'Sugar', 2015. Photo: Chynna Campbell (Big hART).

The journal entry below touches on the Pat family's relationship with Yijala Yala - their journey with us on the road, Murru, Songs for Peace and establishing the Peace Place as an exchange - as a series of Cultural Justice intermediations building community flourishing.

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As Nanna Tootsie sings tonight, under the stars at Songs for Peace, I'm standing up the back, leaning against the Ngurin Cultural Centre, looking over the stage and out over the Ngurin River, to the flat plain beyond. The full moon is rising against the dusky horizon. It is one week before the International Day of Peace – September 28th. The 28th is also the anniversary of John Pat's death in custody in 1983. This coincidence is starting to become part of the project.

Tonight many of John's relatives and community are scattered throughout this attentive audience. A song written by Rose Pat has been sung. Rose is in tears, perhaps joy and sadness combined. Josie, who went to school with John, sings bringing a powerful Ngarluma voice.

Looking left of stage under a eucalyptus with its smoky white trunk and shimmering green is the John Pat Peace Place. The fire pit alight. Older women sit on the curved wooden bench, sculpted around the fire, part infinity sign, part snake, curving around large rocks brought back from John's country by Elders. Nearby, Uncle Keith cooks a feast of stew, damper, roo tail, fish. Each song rings out, reclaiming the damage done by this thing.

She is gone now, the lady, John's mother. Resting in Peace, finally. When still alive, she requested Big hART create this Peace Place with her looking over the river, somewhere to sit quietly, by a fire, with friends. John would've been an important man now, in his late fifties like these singers who knew him. And so, his memory, and now his mother's memory also are celebrated every year with this Songs for Peace concert.

Every year, there are always differing views about which songs to include and why. Some want gospel in there, others want an agenda of change, while others want peace. Tonight, under this moon on Ngarluma country, change is being created by music. Music written with Elders or in the prison by those that crave freedom.

These days, I don't do any of this intermediation work. My role is different now. Perhaps I hold the space, in a broad sense, for the work a little. I was the first into the community from Big hART, and I'll probably be the last to leave. It is heart-warming, and also confusing. In the background, writing this reflective journal, observing the various ways the community is flourishing. I guess this is how it feels when the pre-conditions are in place, and Domains 1, 2, 3 and 4 are quietly working. There is also some grief though, from being on the outside.

And on it goes, the positive consequences of all that work that went before. It is the community's doing this Flow of Consequences from intermediations. And these flows look like things, or projects or events, but it is what flows through these events in the choices individuals and communities make, that is important. It may be political or strategic, but it is more like a set of healing moments - single, crafted moments linked together. And so it is clear, whatever role Big hART has in this is a dramaturgical role, and contains fallibilities in its flow. After the years of set-up, the community dramaturgy began to flow in tangible ways, seeded with the first music intermediation near the beginning of Yijala Yala, called Murru, blossoming and fanning out. It is in this music that the flourishing manifests the most strongly. And tonight, letting the music envelop me, I guess I'm standing in the flow. Is that what I'm feeling?

Figure 91: Roy Evans during a Songs for Peace community music workshop at the Ngurin Cultural Centre in Roebourne, 2021. Photo: Pat Wundke (Big hART).

'Murru' was John Pat's nickname and his family offered for us to use it to name the prison music program as something good to grow from the sorrow. The Murru program brought high profile artists to Roebourne, to celebrate and mentor and keep the memory of deaths in custody alive. The Murru band was formed, an album was produced and the first concert was staged. It is suggested the reader takes a moment to read and watch before continuing.

As a legacy to John Pat's passing, the power of his story and the success of Murru suggested it may be possible to build a campaign around the injustice of so many First Nations children being in juvenile detention. The statistic of *51% of young people in prison in Australia tonight are First Nations*[8] would be on the screen during the Murru concert, as well as a message to join the campaign to 'Unlock the Future,' (linked to the concept of young people being future heritage. The legacy ideas were strong, however, we weren't strategic or organised enough, we were over-committed, and, although Murru was strong, the campaign made little impression. We also tried *One in Two - every second child we lock up is Aboriginal*, which had a website with information and a template letter to send to MPs. It didn't work either. However, Murru as a live music experience had real power amongst audiences. And so in legacy, Murru became Songs for Peace when staged locally, before transitioning again to become Songs for Freedom – a more direct and targeted attempt at changing the issue through a touring concert series, working with Attorney Generals in each state with a call for a lowering of incarceration rates. It is ongoing and continues to build, this intermediation on a national scale flowing out of Roebourne (Domain 4 in action), as a legacy to the work with the Pat family.

[8] At the time of writing in 2021, this figure is 54%(Allam & Murphy-Oates, 2021).

9.9 — EXIT AND THE FLOW OF CONSEQUENCE

In the fourth year of Yijala Yala we began to move into exit, building a legacy project with the name change to New Roebourne. Exit is intricate and can be difficult to get right, and seven years later, we are still in the community delivering intermediations, each one a legacy to Yijala Yala. To do no harm, the legacy shifts have to be incremental. Building capacity and handing aspects of projects over to the community members, where capacity and capability has been built so as to avoid built in failure. However, this is not the only measure of legacy success, and it is important to keep in mind the many survival issues communities are managing, which can overwhelm capability. Yijala Yala is over, and New Roebourne, with its emergent project streams, channels much of the Flow of (positive) Consequences, which build the preconditions to flourish.

An example of this Flow of Consequences and these legacy steppingstone projects is the Tjaabi project with singer Patrick Churnside, who had begun working with Big hART when singing a series of tjaabi -Ngarluma songs handed down from his grandfathers - in the stage production *Hipbone Sticking Out.*

Tjaabi flowed on from *Hipbone*, pulling young people into workshops, as well as Elders to advise on song and dance. Over time tjaabi were sung less and less, so here was a hidden and fragile story designed to assist them to flourish. Our intermediation built a production titled Tjaabi around Patrick and his passion for this aspect of culture, and the workshops built a new narrative of hope as the songs came back into the community, connecting across the Pilbara.

Tjaabi are still flourishing as a result of Patrick's work. As a result, at the Songs for Peace concert in 2021, I wrote:

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>
> *I watch Mr Tim Douglas, the senior Ngarluma man in Roebourne, shuffling his way across the stage, supported by his daughter, insisting on singing the opening of the concert with the Ngurin River Tjaabi. It is a haunting fragile voice, the fragility of life in its timbre, and yet Patrick's voice continues the tradition, making it strong.*

In the Volumes, trying to describe how a Flow of Consequences resulted around this Tjaabi intermediation, I wrote the following:

> *The Tjaabi project is central to the legacy of this work in the Pilbara. There are around 1000 people living in Roebourne, and when we first performed Tjaabi in the amphitheatre, with Patrick's family sitting up close to support him, about 900 people turned up. It was one of the most powerful and intimate and privileged moments in 25 years of Big hART's work. Here was a wave of joy, relief and respect for the songs and a flowering of potential, as Patrick sang and young men and women danced, and senior men spontaneously joined him on stage, dancing in support (Rankin, 2017a, Vol. 1, p. 112).*

Tjaabi could tour Australia and South East Asia, talking of this new Roebourne and its strength of culture. Amplifying the consequences, backing Patrick. Patrick and I talk of these possibilities of strategic dramaturgy, beyond the community. The Pilbara has a natural relationship with South East Asia for instance. Karratha and Port Hedland have international airports. Pre-COVID, visitation was increasing (Uluru was receiving around 275,000 visitors a year). Yet audiences from our nearest neighbours know little about Aboriginal people and culture, and this invisibility could lead to harm. Here is a Cultural Justice threshold, deserving of intermediation. Perhaps Patrick could be creating a Flow of Consequences and a flourishing career doing what he loves, illuminating the hidden Pilbara. It is all here, Tjaabi working with young people, introducing them to new ways of being in two worlds. Yet, such is the layered complexities of Roebourne, the burden of responsibility and the pressure of expectation on Patrick from community to ensure he sings tjaabi the right way, with the right recognition, means this intermediation is being held in flux for years, for the right moment. Held by both Western constraints and perhaps private cultural reasons, of which we are not privy. Tjaabi remains a piece we are watching post-COVID, with its narrative even more relevant amidst the destruction of the Juukan Caves by Rio Tinto, and other contemporary controversies. This, all this ambiguity, is the flourishing:

> Pilbara songs are hanging in the air under a swollen moon, near a stony riverbed edged with spinifex grass… Indian prayer bowls brimming with salt, spinifex seeds, sand and water have been laid on pillows of red dirt… Earlier in the day, lead performer Patrick Churnside rehearsed his cherished songs, with a dozen local children behind him (Laurie, 2016).

And so the word NEW in New Roebourne, perhaps captures something of this sense of flourishing. Again, a thought captured in the Volumes:

> Before Big hART began to work in the Pilbara, the author Nicholas Rothwell, who writes passionately about his experiences of Aboriginal Australia, was writing a story on the Namatjira Project. When he heard we were also beginning work in the Pilbara, he said in conversation, it was his favourite part of the country, "but the Pilbara eats people." I don't think he expected us to last a year. And, 10 years on, the community has afforded the company a remarkable privilege, which continues under the broader banner of New Roebourne (Rankin, 2017a, Vol. 1, p. 113).

9.10 — CULTURAL JUSTICE AND FLOURISHING

Iremugadu is an enthralling and complex community, and for over 50,000 years has been flourishing. These timeframes are profound existential definitional indicators of flourishing and abundance and the ecological stewardship highlighted in the Observance on page 15. Local leaders continue this stewardship despite the lateral traumas of colonisation. Big hART's invitation into the community to work and co-create these intermediations, which weave together, is part of a Flow of Consequences, the flow of positive change. The request from the senior women for our work to come to the Pilbara was about building inclusive programs which engage the community's most disadvantaged young people (the future heritage) to ensure they are part of the flourishing that is both coming and continuing, and which the community is driving, against great odds. And this is the NEW in New Roebourne. NEW is a new narrative. Ensuring the real Roebourne is seen and known and heard.

Roebourne is the only town on the highway between Geraldton and Broome and this creates so much potential to become a centre of intercultural excellence. The resource industry will be gone in a generation or two, and the community is working hard to straddle different economies and secure its future. New Roebourne is a small part of this flow of change, which has continued over millennia.

Roebourne's population of around 1000, always expanding and contracting, includes around 400 young people. Big hART has worked with 80% of them across many layers of the project. Here in this group is the 'future heritage' senior women talked about at the beginning of the project. Here is potential. Here is the future of flourishing in two worlds.

What is laid out below could be easy to miss, however it is significant. It is a signpost to flourishing. There are 20 brief descriptions of separate, but interwoven Cultural Justice intermediations in digital form produced by the community in their voice. The reader is encouraged to scan the list and to dip into the archive, and while doing so, think of the talent it represents in this flourishing community paradoxically often described as amongst the most disadvantaged in Australia. Think of these creative digital expressions in Cultural Justice terms: a positive talent, a narrative that is suppressed, as representing a flourishing, a tip of the iceberg, the Flow of positive Consequences across the interwoven Domains of Change.

9.11 — POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES AS A FLOURISHING

The Flow of Consequences grow out of intermediations which form around the Domains of Change, which to gain traction require specific actions. These actions often begin as inspirations provided by Big hART (e.g. you can't be what you can't see) and then become co-designed and co-created, helping to establish or amplify the preconditions

Figure 92: Dr Tom Calma, Chair of Reconciliation Australia, and Roebourne young people Nelson, Maverick and Max launching the NEOMAD interactive comic for iPad in Parliament House, 2013. Photo: Big hART.

needed for community flourishing. This flourishing is expressed or captured in the voice of participants through the creative work on the project. The basis of this study, the identification of the ways in which Cultural Justice intermediations can better contribute to these preconditions, can be found in the results of these creative works.

The following list of links to works co-created with the community of Roebroune is not exhaustive, nor chronological. It is a combination of strategy, opportunity, ideas, conversations, co-creations and provocations. Some well-grounded, some based on a hunch, some imperfect in the intense push to achieve some form of Cultural Justice. The projects here that fulfilled their potential were co-created as part of the Flow of Consequences. There were others where, in hindsight, the process was not as solid or the structural injustice too strong or co-creation failed. Yet the broad intermediation continued and as stated at the beginning - failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts.

In these digital artefacts, the community of Roebourne, who continue (at the time of publishing) co-creating within the New Roebourne project, tell the story of this Flow of Consequences in their own voices. These gifts from the community of Roebourne/Iremugadu are the many results of Cultural Justice intermediations illustrative of flourishing.

The purpose of including these in this study is to demonstrate legacy, sustainability and abundance in real and illustrative ways, in the voice of community lived experience. It is not designed as data for an evaluation of legacy, rather it is rich data for the exploration of indicators that point to flourishing. Some, but not all, of the short descriptors below have links to digital content, others are just short paragraphs which indicate equally important legacy strategies designed to amplify flourishing. Some legacy strategies have reached strong potential, however others may not have come to full fruition or fulfilled their potential because of the many complex reasons this work can be thwarted.

It is important to note that these examples of legacy by no means covers everything in the Flow of Consequences, legacy and flourishing as much of this flow across the Domains needs to be intangible, private and yet to be revealed. However, it does provide examples from across the Domains, and by clicking on the links the reader has the opportunity to see and hear the community speak from within the flourishing so as to be able to draw conclusions regarding sustainability.

The reader is encouraged to self-curate through this content.

Smashed Films – Short films made with young people focused on health for peer to peer education and support. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 3)

Sunday Sessions – Music at dusk on Sundays. Roebourne is singing again. These loose, casual sessions, were remarkably important as an indicator of a longing for more music, more participation and the holding back community pressures. There was space for flourishing, driven by the community. There is not much digital documentation of these Sunday sessions, however their energy helped develop Songs for Freedom. (Flourishing in Domains 1 and 2)

Future Dreaming – A Virtual Reality project working with three young people who were in Hipbone Sticking Out, and alumni of many workshop programs, including the award-winning NEOMAD. These young people were the first in their family to complete Year 12, going on to attend Wesley College. Future Dreaming was not a Big hART project, and for this reason it is an important legacy and indicator of flourishing. (Flourishing in Domains 1 and 3)

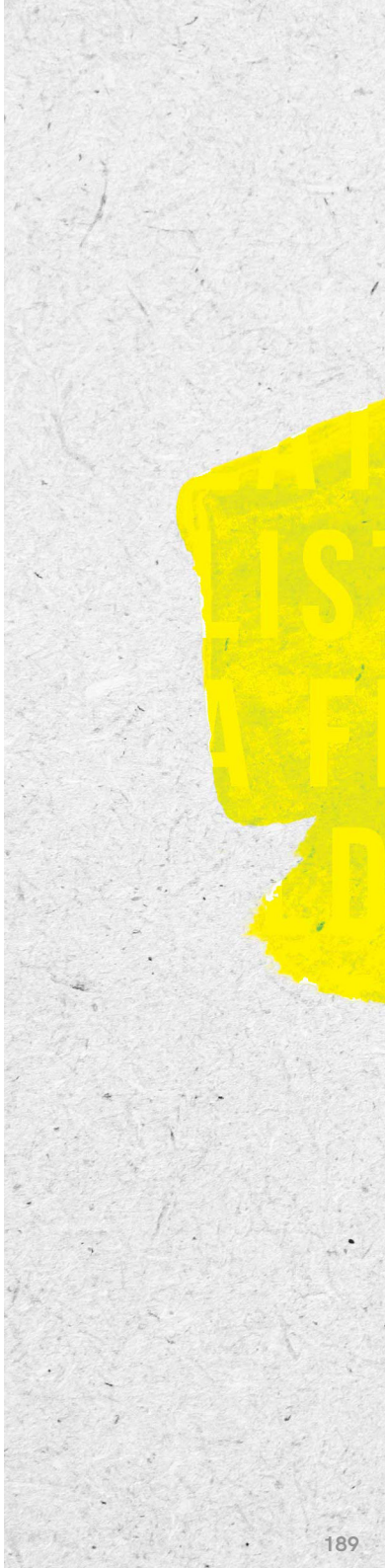
Dance in Peace - A dance video on country, co-created with young women aged nine to 13, who had watched their older peers working with Big hART on early projects such as Satellite Sisters and NEOMAD. It was a creative rite of passage for these young women, an early self-motivated engagement, and is a vivid example of abundance. (Flourishing in Domains 1 and 2)

Colourathon - Young women participated in a nationwide Big hART event called Colourathon, which saw them travel to the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra to raise money to help prevent family violence. This commitment to altruistic activities, even when facing survival issues in their own life, provided a clear indicator of flourishing and legacy. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

SWAGS - An immersive digital performance piece, staged by young women and emerging Elders, that created podcasts for the audience listened to in the comfort of a swag. The stories were profound, intense and moving and the voices of lived experience took the audience on a deep journey into hidden stories. SWAGS was performed once only for a select audience on country. The depth of talent to create highly finished work which could be performed in any festival, yet only seen in the privacy of the community, is an indicator of flourishing. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Traditional Heroes – A visual arts project honouring Elders who have led the struggle for civil rights and are deeply respected in their own communities, yet remain unrecognised by mainstream Australia. In this video, we hear from Mr Tim Douglas and his family, indicating flourishing and legacy in their voice. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 3)

New Roebourne Trainee Program – A platform for trainee opportunities across all the projects for young people. This is a structured legacy project, designed in small task-focused steps appropriate to community members at different stages. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3 and 5)



IWD, Roebourne Project O – Young women build agency and digital skills culminating at International Women's Day 2020 workshops & events in Roebourne & Perth. A strategy to build legacy specifically for young women, and building on Colourathon, IWD and Project O have now generated another legacy called All of Us in which young women are collaborating across the country to create a documentary which explores primary prevention. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Radio Diary project – A digital program for young women, creating audio pieces, of which the work of one young women from Roebourne was broadcast nationally. Again, a clear indication of legacy opportunities - promoting New Roebourne nationally – in the voice of lived experience. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Punkaliyarra (Sister in law story) - An intergenerational women's project in cultural transmission, with young women working alongside women Elders, artists and mentors. Punkaliyarra is a major new Big hART festival work, backing an emerging Elder who expressed a strong desire to create this major legacy work with Big hART's support. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Banthunguru Bura (The Next Generation) - Young people build leadership on country, combining digital image making and skills training. Driven by a local Ngarluma man, Big hART partnered with local organisations to assist in the delivery of this important leadership capability building project for young people to develop skills for a flourishing future - clear legacy in action. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3 and 5)

Turtle project – A partnership with Parks and Wildlife, whereby young women work with rangers to monitor turtles and their cultural and ecological significance. An important, independent legacy project, with Big hART providing support. The cultural business and intergenerational structure based in ecological stewardship indicates important growth in legacy capacity. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 5)

Our Ngurra – A photography exhibition staged on Country in the historic township of Cossack with digital imagery created by young people. Indicative of young people flourishing. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 3)

Figure 93: 3000 audience watching Roebourne artists perform Songs for Freedom in City of Melville Perth, 2021. Photo: Linda Dungey (Big hART).

Revealed - Young women from Roebourne showcase their photography in the Fremantle Arts Centre's Revealed Exhibition: New & Emerging WA Aboriginal Artists in Perth, providing legacy steppingstones for young people. Indicates the creative depth in this small community and its flourishing. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 3)

Ngaarda Media – Young people create and host their own radio shows based on their digital mentoring for Naarda Radio, the local Aboriginal broadcaster. Strong local legacy in action. (Flourishing in Domains 1 and 2)

Bangarra – A dance collaboration over two years in the lead up to Songs for Peace. To build legacy opportunities, Big hART intermediates to assist Bangarra to engage with local young people each year, and in 2021 helped to incorporate this work into Songs for Peace. This important legacy work is designed to increase sustainability by supporting other arts organisations to work in the community. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 3)

Flying Fox – An animation created for permanent exhibition at the WA Museum. This project worked with Elders and emerging Elders to generate content so as to be represented in the new WA Museum indigenous permanent exhibition space, expanding recognition for the Ngarluma community. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2 and 3)

Youth Agency and leadership – Young people participate in presentations to: the Attorney-General of Western Australia, Governor General of Australia, Commonwealth Minister for Women, WA Premier and Cabinet, local councils, philanthropists, corporate leaders, WA Children's Commissioner, National Council of Women Australia and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 4 and 5)

Tharlu and Red Dirt Riders – Spinoffs from NEOMAD created for SBS & NITV. Remarkably, in terms of tangible legacy, these projects generated royalty for the young people of Roebourne, which has been able to buy a digital art centre in the main street, ensuring the opportunity and space to work creatively and to catch up with digitial literacies. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3 and 5)

NEO-Learning – An online educational platform featuring material developed and created in Roebourne and based on NEOMAD. Created in conjunction with the community of Roebourne. NEO-Learning has been in development for four years and is designed to provide a new tool for Australian teachers to teach students to create digital content across the curriculum. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) ()

Digital Lab – As indicated above, the Digital Lab, is probably the country's first remote Aboriginal Digital Art Centre. It is a space for young people to meet, learn, create and experience digital catch up. This tangible legacy in the form of infrastructure is the kind of legacy governments and corporate funders love. Although important, and a remarkable story of what the community has achieved, the reader is encouraged to think beyond these kinds of legacies to the more intangible outcomes - the Flow of Consequences. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Songs for Freedom – A legacy project from Songs for Peace, this new concert based on songs created in the community and prison, has been invited to Perth two years running, taking Roebourne on the road with concerts for 3000 people. Attached to the concert tour is a campaign to raise awareness of the appalling incarceration rates of First Natioms children across all states. The current WA Attorney-General John Quiggly was the young barrister who defended the police officers charged in relation to John Pat's death, and as a result of this project the WA Attorney General has agreed to work to lower the incarceration rates of children and has spoken from stage at the two Perth concerts about the issue. There is a clear and strong legacy component to this large project, both tangible and intangible, designed to assist the community to move free from past narratives. (Flourishing in Domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

It may be hard to glimpse the significance of these combined co-created projects and to catch what led to them - the co-designs and discussions; the community investment from busy Elders; the networking and grant writing; the holding intermediated space; the mediating of community self-sabotage; the focus on asset and working with rather than for; the intensity of the work on the ground and working with staff to not burn out; the survival issues that community members are dealing with every day, in addition to project involvement - however, these examples serve to illustrate the Flow of Consequences building out of the Lines of Provenance which gave rise to Yijala Yala as a Cultural Justice intermediation, and helped set up the preconditions that make flourishing possible. In terms of Big hART's range of concurrent projects, this interwoven complexity of projects and legacy, is the nature of the work.

I am aware that as the reader dips in and out of the works above, they may feel like they are looking at glib outputs, however, when taken together and situated dramaturgically in the community visibly and inclusively, they are a narrative representation of primary prevention in action in the field, which can be invoked protectively through better intermediations when we take Cultural Justice seriously. This report on the New Roebourne project further provides a strong sense of this Flow of Consequences.

Figure 94: Yijala Yala project participant Stanley as his character 'Born Ready' holding the NEOMAD interactive comic for iPad created by Roebourne young people, Elders and Big hART, 2012. Photo: Chynna Campbell (Big hART).

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When re-reading, many of my reflections on this 30 years of praxis seem melancholy, and maybe this is right. Seen through a decade of work here in Roebourne - a third of the life of the company - it seems too short, and yet here we are trying to work out with the community how it should end. In most communities Big hART works closely with whoever wants to work closely with us. Here in Roebourne this includes many different Aboriginal corporations and foundations and individuals. As a consequence, there are many discussions of possible co-creation legacy projects. However, these requests for collaboration or intermediation or possible legacies are often projects that many other organisations could deliver, and not all these requests are necessarily about the Flow, but may be exploring the safety of reminiscence, or ego and personal ideas which prevent flourishing. In the end our work is curated across the five Domains and our theory of change model above. And as a precision not for profit, this curation remains driven by the three principles of Make Build Drive to address our originating provocation – it's harder to hurt someone if you know their story.

Alongside the community requests and big ideas, the pressure of everyday survival from personal or lateral trauma informs the daily activities and service delivery each project. These situations often involve powerful contradictions and ethical dilemmas, which push projects in new directions. A young woman involved with our program, comes in with her boyfriend, she is underage, and the boyfriend is heading to prison for things that leave her on edge and vulnerable. Yet a few days later she is back in school. What is the Flow of Change in this context? There is the change governments want, solutions, targets, performance indicators, and there is the actual ways in which change flows in complex communities. Participants may appear to be going backwards while in actual fact they are making real progress.

With regards to legacy and sustainability and flourishing, Big hART has tried to make sense of these complexities and contradictions by looking for markers across the five Domains of Change. And these Domains of Change are really ways of deconstructing the many, layered moments in Cultural Justice intermediations and being able to decipher different signs of progress, which in turn can lead to better ways of supporting and curating the conflicting demands of potential legacies.

This chapter concludes the exploration of the five exemplars that collectively describe based the way Big hART was established and developed its practice and the funding environment in which it did so. AS I have made clear, this practice was initially defined as CCD, however as the work progressed, new ways of describing the complexities of the practice were developed i.e. Lines of Provenance, Flows of Consequences and Domains of Change to describe the growing sophistication of work in the field and a shift in the organisation's focus. The trajectories of the five exemplars mirror the organisation's arc resulting in the use of the new descriptor of Big hART as a Cultural Justice organisation.

Conclusion

10.1 — SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

In this study, I have examined 30 years of Big hART's community and political dramaturgies and in doing so, have sought to understand how Cultural Justice intermediations can better produce the preconditions in which communities flourish. As indicated above, the study explores Big hART's beginnings when it looked much like other small CCD organisations, and traces the shifts to the present moment where the defining organisational focus has become Cultural Justice.

Figure 95: River Inglis in Braddon, Tasmania, 2019. Photo: Monica Higgins (Big hART).

21st Century urgencies have driven this growing Cultural Justice focus. For instance, Climate Justice and Cultural Justice are one urgency, inextricably linked by Morton's (2010) interconnectedness and ecological thought highlighted in the Literature Review. If you live in cultural invisibility in a Pacific nation such as Kiribati, the two issues manifest together. As Australian artists in our privilege, we must respond or remain part of the cultural injustice.

This study resolutely finds that just highlighting the urgency using a deficit lens is not good enough. Rather, as Clammer (2019) suggests, social transformation is in part, a cultural phenomenon, and we must utilise an asset lens to train our focus on narratives of hope and future-making. I've drawn on Big hART's practice to extract examples of better intermediations from exemplary projects to help illustrate the relationship between Cultural Justice and flourishing, and also provided examples of intermediations that create the spaces where flourishing is possible. The findings from investigating these exemplary projects reveal the criticality of excellence and multi-disciplinary agility to this responsive work, as captured by Mandy Stefanakis in her review of my Platform Paper 57 (Rankin, 2018b):

> The arts, all art forms, are central, but as described, it is a holistic approach where multi-disciplinary knowledge informs cultural understanding, content, process and expression. Rankin has astutely engaged the services of highly skilled arts practitioners for Big hART projects, understanding that to have the required social and political impact, virtuosity in process and product is essential. Building support for social change is part of the organisation's mantra. It is utterly unapologetic in seeking equality of opportunity, with cultural inclusiveness known to be central to this outcome (Stefanakis, 2019).

I emphasise this need for urgency, inclusiveness and quality in the pursuit of Cultural Justice. I've drawn on and expanded my previous arguments in published treaties and support my position with the addition of digital materials. Absorbed together, they show how Big hART's Cultural Justice intermediations are delivered in reciprocity (a definition associated with Ngapartji Ngapartji). This reciprocity is a critical dimension of Big hART's layered Cultural Justice practice. In this way, the study makes clear Cultural Justice is not a declamatory practice, rather it requires two-way learning, and results in new ways of knowing and being, in and with communities.

This leads to the conclusion that better Cultural Justice intermediations are layered and non-linear. To illustrate this, the study also harnesses previous definitional research into Big hART's work the - Domains of Change – defining the layers required in these Cultural Justice intermediations: individuals, communities, content, influence and ways of knowing.

The study establishes the complexity of this layering and the required virtuosities using reflective journaling to look intimately at the difficulties in this intermediation work. This journaling begs the question: how can we do it better? How can our Cultural Justice intermediations better produce the preconditions for flourishing? This reflective journaling also captures the imperfections of this work and as a result the research reveals that flourishing does not mean building a utopia, rather Cultural Justice practice is complex and difficult, and remains reflective of the positives and negatives of the human experience in community. The study does suggest that, in communities and lives who have experienced and are experiencing layers of trauma and injustice, intermediation, with a Cultural Justice focus can make a difference through primary prevention, and lead to an outpouring of flourishing.

Figure 96: SHEAR, 2021. Photo: Leith Alexander (Big hART).

The study makes use of five exemplar intermediations to establish Lines of Provenance and Flows of Consequences to highlight change across the Domains. The fifth exemplar Yijala Yala further highlights how these Lines of Provenance and Flows of Consequences funnel into legacies and reveal the preconditions for flourishing, as evidenced by the outcomes of the New Roebourne project.

10.1.1 — URGENCIES AND ACTIONS FROM THE RESEARCH

The study establishes that a change in the way we understand, structure and fund culture requires urgent attention. It suggests that Culture Justice intermediations can deliver vital forms of primary prevention such as inclusion and therefore culture needs to be re-calibrated as an essential service alongside health or education. This reveals that culture should sit firmly inside Cabinet, linked to outcomes across multiple portfolios in justice, wellbeing, literacy, Indigenous, community, education, climate, environment, digital infrastructure, regional affairs, tourism and economic growth. In other words, across the entire business of government. This critical new alignment must then determine how and why we spend our cultural funding and distribute capacities fairly across communities.

The research into the funding environment for Cultural Justice (Chapter 6), shows our state and Commonwealth cultural policy levers are currently calibrated to fund injustices. Further, although this is hard to hear, as artists and producers we need to remain vigilant that we are not contributing to the problem of cultural injustice by the ways we are funded and the work we produce.

This study suggests it is not good enough for us to say it is too hard to change the arts and culture funding system. Privilege demands more of us. Our actions must be decisive. If the Australia Council deliberately underfunds Cultural Justice so that doing harm is inevitable, send the money back.

The study reveals cultural injustice is structural and at the heart of our cultural funding agencies. Ruth Rentschler's graphs in Chapter 6 make this clear in a First Nations context. Disability, regional and young people are in a similar predicament. Do a search of Australia Council literature for mentions of youth or children and the underspend on young people becomes clear.

In regard to the cultural rights of young people, my paper titled Canary in a Coalmine: Entwining education, industry and community arts: A reflective coda from the field is instructive to show the criticality of this cultural spend:

> Just as play is the work of childhood, so too, young people's search for self, place and belonging is the work of the teenage years… When young people are well supported in this self-searching, if one set of choices fails, a healthy rhizomic web of other self-entrepreneuring experiments will hold a young person safely… through classroom antics, (the young person) may be signalling more than just destructive behaviours… they may be forging pathways through 'darker' expressions of self, in public space campuses on skateboards, through Picasso-esque tags, or withdrawal, body markings and dark play (Rankin, 2021b).

The study insists we must appropriately fund intermediations for these youth journeys and other Cultural Justice priorities. Why is there no kinetic skateboarding pathway to cultural destinations such as tertiary education? Because the cultural rights of young people with an interest in commerce is privileged over the cultural rights of young outsiders with an interest in kinetics.

> …meeting (young people) in the liminal spaces they inhabit… providing tailored, one on one, 'catch up' experiences for these young people through unique, mentored learning'. This is Cultural Rights in action. 'The 'catching up' …means invitations into multi-layered systems of being and discovering… providing opportunities for young people to cross paths with virtuosic artists, community builders, scientists and producers, who are 'already doing'… These projects do not target young people in conventional ways; rather, they are discoverable by young people (Rankin, 2021b).

The research draws upon the exemplar projects to illustrate that, for groups in our community lacking inclusion and visibility such as young people, providing these intermediations is critical and their cultural right. This is primary prevention. These intermediations save lives. Yet our cultural funding agencies privilege their funds away from these areas, which the Australia Council say are their priority, to instead deliver cultural product and opportunity mostly to tourists and the already wealthy.

This study suggests that Cultural Justice is not an obscure side issue. There is an epidemic of structural injustice, with tragic consequences for many people and communities. Faulty Cultural Policy poorly stewarded by the Meeting of Cultural Ministers (MCM), continues to fund for deep injustices. The figures highlighted in this study are emblematic of the way neglected cultural rights run through the belly of our country. It is the MCM who must show leadership. As Julianne Shultz pointed to in The Mandarin:

> Australia became a signatory to the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity a decade ago, but the import of this has also not been exercised or realised. This provides a legal rationale for a reorganisation. The starting point is to put all cultural activities into a single portfolio, or one linked by clear lines of accountability (Schultz, 2015).

Figure 97: Tasmanian Project O 24 hour Colourathon raising funds for young victims

This research builds on my suggestion that cultural rights can have a powerful voice (Rankin, 2018b), and that voice could speak across many government portfolios. Cultural Justice needs clear accountability, so that cultural agencies such as the Australia Council can no longer survive in a safe silo as part of the cultural injustice. The urgencies of the 21st Century demand leadership, courage and the cultural wisdoms indigenous to the lands in which we live and have our being. Mandy Stefanakis again:

> Rankin reinforces the need for a more holistic view of 'culture', an understanding of the realities of a 21st century world… and the channelling of an Indigenous perspective, where the significance of culture as life is paramount. Such changes in vision would provide effective insight into the defining features of our cultural policy – if we had one.'
>
> Although Rankin alludes to some ineffective action by the cultural sector, leading to the chronic and systemic crisis in which it finds itself, he sagely points out that 'What government chooses to do or not to do in relation to government spending on culture reflects value choices that are politically determined, and these choices will produce discernible societal outcomes.' Yup (Stefanakis, 2019).

10.2 — CULTURAL JUSTICE - LAST WORDS

In chapter 9 I call on the poetics of Yeats and his ageing lamentations of loss and love because I've woven such epistemic enquiries throughout the study via reflective journaling. This autoethnographic research captures this Yeats-ian melancholia from 30 years in the field, which has been full of sublime moments despite being plagued by inaction on cultural injustice. These poetics are where my heart longs to dwell, however this study demands action. It reinforces and extends the arguments I made in Platform Paper 57:

> We fight passionately for [Cultural Justice], with the powerful language of the law. We must amplify [intermediation] practices. We must combine its core values with other genres and virtuosities so as to subvert the mediocrity in our practice. We must offer up powerful [Cultural Justice intermediations] that can enhance and advance Cultural Rights, and by doing so contribute to a more equitable society… (Rankin, 2018b, p. 59).

All voices are needed for this contribution. First Nations people, statisticians, the wise and elderly, writers, historians, refugees, academics, disc jockeys, dancers, scientists, politicians, people living with a disability, media, diverse communities, inventors, young people, teachers etc. must all show leadership and ensure all stories are included, not just the articulate and privileged, because everyone, everywhere needs the protection of cultural rights to flourish. You cannot thrive if you are written out of your nation's ongoing narration. If you are not included, you will become invisible, and you will be easily damaged and hurt by your own nation. And hurt turns into anger. And anger makes our communities less safe. And so the cycle continues… This study establishes that Cultural Justice is possible, and in hopeful spaces, Cultural Justice intermediations can help generate narrative primary prevention, which sets up the preconditions required for communities to flourish.

Figure 98: Electric Aesthetic Dale on Ringwood Farm in Gnarojin WA, 2021 (photography by Leith Alexandar)

This study establishes that Cultural Justice is possible, and in hopeful spaces, Cultural Justice intermediations can help generate narrative primary prevention, which sets up the preconditions required for communities to flourish.

This study began in Chapter 1 by quoting my favourite review of any of my theatre works, "this is the kind of show that is ruining Australian theatre" and adding that there is so much that needs ruining. I wish to destroy it because I love and value this work, as I do all the arts, but not when it is part of the problem of cultural injustice. This research suggests that if we love our whole culture and the flow of art from it, then we must be on a quest to ruin the hegemonic, the othering and the unjust - not by force, but by the virtuosity of our intermediations, both in content and in process.

10.3 — REFLECTIVE JOURNAL – WHY?

Lastly, the study brings us to an epistemic coda through reflective journaling. It takes us back to Roebourne where we look back across the landscape at the scattered carrion of mistakes, as well as sublime moments of two-way learning. "We are in a new age [of] messy, uncertain, multivoiced texts…" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 15). As urgent as Cultural Justice through structural change may be, what is more important is taking responsibility for our failures in the field, as well as our best attempts. "The need to know and manage self is vital if we are to be available to the other person" (Loucks & Hall, 1981, p. 152). This availability to the other person, this holding space, this mutuality, this interconnection - is intermediation in action. This is how the research made use of reflective journaling.

"Journal writing can be viewed through many different lenses: as a form of self-expression, a record of events, or a form of therapy, it can be a combination of these and other purposes" (Boud, 2001, p. 9). In this research, this autoethnographic journaling sits in Big hART's fifth Domain - as knowledge transfer through new ways of knowing and being. In this way it brings home my responsibility for Cultural Justice through my honesty, my observance and my learning.

The conclusion of this study takes us back to my last trip to Roebourne and the last evening in September 2021 after Songs for Peace, sitting with Elders and team who are so often our teachers. It is written sitting within the flow of positive consequences from the project, as part of New Roebourne. There is a musical flourishing, an abundance, a musical generosity, similar to that reflected in the list of community voiced materials above. This research is illuminated by and perhaps made more authentic by this generosity. It is suggested that the reader view the CODA at the conclusion of their reading, which was recorded around this same time.

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I can feel it again, this flow swirling - it feels like a goodness of fortune, a place-full-ness, at peace. It's like standing in the flourishing, when mostly, building the preconditions of this flourishing is not like this. It is more like Sisyphus pushing a boulder up a hill, only for it to roll back down again. And then here it is, you are an observer within it, but more than an observer. A participant. A co-creator. It is an exchange. You are growing, it is a two-way intermediating, not a helping.

This work has to be fleet-footed in the face of what funders say they need: their addiction to solutions and risk-averse language – this cohort, this target group, this unit cost. This language is not present in the flourishing. And now, this sitting across from me, the great lady is weeping, this energetic 80-year old, matriarch and leader for her Fitzroy Crossing people - Kankawa (Olive). She is reflecting, journaling aloud, before her bus comes to take her. Talking quietly of Songs for Peace and Freedom, what she has been invited into in Roebourne by her women peers. She is weeping in the flourishing, hushing the room, speaking intensely. Even the sugar-high young ones stop, and their sticky mouths and fingers pause. She is weeping in the Flow. "I want this for my community. I want to invite you to come". The tears are for joy, as well as sorrow. For the luminosity, the fragility. For the flourishing. And in her longing and her invitation, we are at the birth of a new part of the Flow of Consequences, beyond our work, from community to community.

And now she is also teaching. She is showing the mistake – that this flourishing is not the absence of difficulty, the cruelty, the pain. It is not absence of the triggers of lived experience, or future trauma. The flourishing, which can and does come, is not a utopia. It is a resilience and mutuality and joy. It is a continuing. The truth-telling and the laughter and the lightness witnessed when the best intermediations bring Cultural Justice into a space, a place. It may not sit well in the worlds of elite charities and big government, and the need to feel secure through intervention, or control, but communities know what flourishing community feels like. The value propositions behind the word community are experienced as real – the mutuality, the belonging, the safety; Louck & Hall's 'being available to the other'; Clammer's 'abundance'; Morton's 'interconnected ecological thoughts'.

However, the preconditions for flourishing have to be allowed to be in place, for communities to be able to simply be in the flow of change. And this is an area for properly funded public policy – the intermediations which build Cultural Justice, and give rise to this narrative Primary Prevention. Rather than poor public policy of forcing secondary, reactive change and non-flourishing. These preconditions are purposeful when present, and this is the flow that I feel tonight in Roebourne, as this great lady weeps in joy and melancholy.

Perhaps in this last journaling, the Cultural Justice principles and the reflections weave together. The study is emboldened by epistemic results flowing from the autoethnographic approach. The journaling has illuminated the inner workings of the five exemplars and highlighted the hope, as well as melancholy, in the Flows of Consequences.

This emboldening indicates that not all can be known, however the key attributes of better and stronger Cultural Justice intermediations grow out of five endeavours (or layered approaches or domains) which can be described in the following way:

- The virtuosic self-limiting choices made by artists and producers in the process alongside the content making. These are tangible and nameable, as in this study, and can be seen and documented in the ways they enhance eudaimonian opportunities for project participants.
- The building of virtuosic community dramaturgies so as to allow participant's stories of lived experience to become visible, nuanced, powerfully authentic and valued, in which participants know in their bones this is a community narrative in which they belong.
- The making and refining of this co-created content, in virtuosic ways which the mechanics of the work are strong and help illuminate these hidden narratives through the unafraid excellence of the content.
- The producing of precise, virtuosic and strategic political dramaturgies, so as to cut through and amplify these narratives amongst influential publics, helping to build and sustain a civic hunger for justice.
- The pluralistic exchange of ways of knowing, learning and being between participants and intermediators so as to enhance these new virtuosities.

It is no mistake that the word virtuosity appears in all five of these points.

At the beginning of Big hART's 30 years, virtuosity was not a word often associated with community cultural development practice. However, its meaning in Latin suggests it couldn't be more important for this discipline – high character, strength, courage, and, excellence in the mechanical attributes of making the work. The urgency of Cultural Justice in the 21st century has transformed Big hART's practice, into one of Cultural Justice. If we are serious in our intent to deliver better Cultural Justice intermediations, virtuosity needs to be recalibrated away from content-only distortions, and embraced across our vocabulary, in all five Domains of Change.

PLEASE VIEW THE CODA →

to conclude your time with this study.

— END

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