

## *Murruwaygu: Following in the footsteps of our ancestors*

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This research considers one particular element of Koori artistic practice in south-east Australia — the unique and continuing use of the line by the region's male artists. Line-work is evident in a range of imagery, in various mediums, and throughout different generations. This study reveals the cultural importance and unbroken use of the line through changing social, political and cultural climates. The recognition of a continuing south-east aesthetic is significant, as the region has experienced prolonged colonisation, leading to a fragmentation of visual expressions and lack of art-historical research. In this context, the line represents the continuation of culture and the unbroken lineage of Koori knowledge.

This research is titled *Murruwaygu: following in the footsteps of our ancestors*. The Wiradjuri word “murruwaygu” refers to the designs carved onto trees and other cultural material unique to the south-east region: repeating lines, patterned chevrons and concentric squares, diamonds and rhomboids, with the inclusion of an occasional figure. Widely recognised as central to south-east identity, murruwaygu can be seen in artistic practices from pre-contact until today, establishing a clear cultural tradition that has endured massive change. This research charts this constant practice by investigating four distinct periods or generations. Referencing south-east kinship systems, each generation is represented by two artforms or artists.

Representing Mumala (grandfather) or first generation is pre-contact material — the carved and designed marga (parrying shield) and girran.girran (broad shield). The second or Babiin (father) generation features 19<sup>th</sup>-century Koori artists William Barak, a Wurundjeri man from the current Melbourne area, and Tommy McRae, from the upper Murray River near the contemporary border of NSW and Victoria. These artists documented their changing worlds with introduced materials like paper, pen and pencil, continuing line-work as a leading visual principle. The third or Wurrumany (son) generation focuses on self-taught senior Wiradjuri mission artists Uncle Roy Kennedy and the late HJ Wedge. Both use painting and printmaking that features line-work to document their life experiences of growing up on missions in NSW under segregation policies. Finally, the Warunarrung (grandson) generation is represented by professional and tertiary-educated contemporary Melbourne-based artists Reko Rennie (Kamilaroi) and Steaphan Paton (Gunai/Monero), who both work with new mediums while continuing line traditions.

Like these Koori artists, this thesis uses the line as its organising principle, both practically and metaphorically, to follow in the footsteps of our forefathers. Focusing on continuity and change, this research provides the first art-historical account of Koori men's art from pre-contact to today.

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## A creative study on data portraits: the visualisation process of self-surveillance as an indicator of datafication of social life

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This research is a practice-based speculative design enquiry into the emerging field of data portraiture. Humans' use of the networked digital environments that are now so much a part of life leaves a massive data trail of individuals' everyday interactions with these environments. An increasing quantity of this data trail remains invisible. Although we spend a significant amount of time participating in digital network activities, we have just started to discover the potential of visualising personal data as a graphical representation. The term "data portraiture" was developed by Donath (2014) to describe the practice of "artists" turning these data "pictures" into visible "portraits:" "Data portraits are depictions of people made by visualising data by and about them" and "their aim is to humanize the online experience" (187). Data portraits can reveal individuals' preferences, skills and talent, yet also record their mistakes, failure and history.

As a consequence, data portraits can indicate society's collective engagement in

self-surveillance and empower the public to debate the current datafication of social life. Data portraits can appear in different forms; some are graphs, while others are typographic displays that reveal recorded conversations, and some even take a sculptural figurative shape. These data trails can shape depictions of online behaviour, experiences and interests. Traditionally, "pictures" that depict individuals' physical likeness and infer their behaviour, experiences and interests are labelled "portraits" and created by artists. Network technology enables humans to share personal data on a large scale, thereby facilitating a global dialogue in a telematic society. This research into the emerging field of data portraiture seeks to understand the role of the "artist" as creative practitioner in interpreting qualitative data into image experiences, and to offer insights into the behaviour and interests of individuals engaging with such work. Through a number design iterations, this research investigates a potential visual format by initially using manually collected