PART THREE

Current Body of Work
In this chapter I will chronologically outline the individual 'stories' of each of the artworks created between 1995-1997 and 1999-2000. These stories help to reveal my way of encountering and reworking aspects of historical narratives.

In following chapters I will discuss approaches used in making them, and the overlaps in concerns between works; questions raised, problems and challenges encountered and resolved.

Brown Sugar

This is a work based on the two-year journey of my ancestor, Woretemoeteyerner, who travelled from Bass Strait to mainland Australia and across to Rodriguez and Mauritius from 1825 – 1827.

![Image](image_url)

**Fig.17**

The elements of chance and fragmentation are integral to the work due to the information about the journey accidentally surviving within the diary musings of Quaker Missionaries, Backhouse and Walker who, in 1831, recorded that she '... could speak a little French

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9 Between mid 1997 and the end of 1998 I travelled to London and completed an MFA, Goldsmiths College, University of London with the assistance of a Samstag Scholarship, University of South Australia.

10 All works included in the examination exhibition are indicated in this exegesis by *
having been taken by a whaling vessel to the Isle of France.\textsuperscript{11}

Further archival research revealed a little more; including that Mauritius provides Australia with sugar to this day: once all types - today only demerara. 'Brown Sugar' has been utilised as a descriptive term for Black women throughout White history.

*Brown Sugar* developed from the realisation that knowing a complete and unabridged version of the past is an impossibility. Notions of journeying and discovery provided the structure for the piece and allowed for a mirroring thematic axis to exist in this work. This fluctuation is between the unplanned lives and chance encounters of the adventurers (which the story revolves around) and the similar accidental nature determining which facts and names will be retained for the future - which stories become History.

Differing perspectives between the historical record and my own notions (at this stage) of my ancestor's journey, resulted in a work that suggests an unfinished puzzle – with which the viewer can interact and visualise on a personal level.

In *Brown Sugar* the elements are the physical, intuitive acts of collection and placement of familiar objects which blur, modify and question the initial archival research process of a factual-historical event; familiar object versus the cognitive word.

The incongruous nature of familiar items from circa 1950 to represent a particular whaling/sealing voyage is intended to draw in and yet unsettle the viewer.

The use of Aboriginal kitsch female face-plaques within the work is intended to evoke uncomfortable interaction. Twenty calico demerara-sugar filled bags are intended to be thrown by the viewer through the port-holes, whilst old rope quoits are provided to throw onto protruding dowels. Chance as a major factor of life informs and links the work both in its physical game structure and data-based areas, where sea-shanties provide as much information as diaries and maps.

The Tasmanian Archives hold correspondence about the voyage; due to poor weather, the sealers and the four Aboriginal women and one child were stranded on Rodriguez Island for five months. Van Diemen’s Land, Mauritius and New South Wales debated which Government was going to pay for their deportation back to Australia. They arrived in Launceston two years after the original departure; several people having died or jumped ship.

One aim of this work is to provide an opportunity for viewers to read between the lines of history that is represented in a non-linear assemblage of objects scattered across the panel. I cannot envisage the original event as it was, and have chosen to attempt an understanding of the voyage as a pictorial chain of thought - a picture puzzle.

mOTHER

Fig.18

Julie Gough, mOTHER, 1995. Vanity case, mixed media. 27 x 17 x 30cm

mOTHER is a work that incorporates a photograph of Aboriginal children taken in 1966. In 1995 during a visit to Sydney, I chanced upon hundreds of portraits of children held on computer in the Mitchell Library.

There were many dozens of images 'taken' on National Aborigines Day 1966 in Georges Square, Sydney,
where Aboriginal children were photographed with their non-Aboriginal foster parents. This particular photograph was striking for the obvious lack of empathy between girl and woman. I placed the image in a vanity case of bleakly institutional appearance along with 'White Shoulders' (actual name) perfume, a caucasian pink coloured lady shaver, and a pink plaster Aboriginal girl wall ornament reconfigured as a soap-on-a-rop e. These are the ingredients I envisaged packaged in this case by the woman in the photo; imagined provisions for the teenage girl, received as her coming-of-age tools to become a 'pink' Australian; emblematic of the products and processes intended to erase her Aboriginality. The black towel, with embroidered mOTHER, was intended to suggest how sinister this undertaking was, especially as this cultural experiment was set in the guise of 'home' and 'mother'.

*She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not...*

![Image of slippers and roses](image)

**Fig.19** Julie Gough, *She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not...*. 1996. Thirteen plastic roses, thirteen synthetic slippers, thirteen Government images of non-Aboriginal foster/adoptive mothers holding Aboriginal children with no happy expressions. Variable dimensions.

This work is based upon the Australian Government’s former policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families. This virtually indiscriminate action resulted in the dislocation of many thousands of people. During the 1950’s and 1960’s fostered and adopted Aboriginal children were photographed for Public Record as evidence of the success of these nationwide assimilation strategies.

The photographs were taken at Martin Place, Sydney, during 'Aboriginal Day' in the mid 1960’s. My suggestion within this piece is that random placement
of children resulted in chance levels of love and happiness occurring between people involved. Thus, *She loves me, She loves me not...* is reflecting such stories and their individual possibilities. The usage of the synthetic slippers and plastic roses inferring that these relationships were ‘unnatural’ from their very inception.

**Fig.20**


**Boxing Boys**

**Fig.21**


This work physically consists of a roll-call towel naming eighty-six Aboriginal boxers; public record photos of Aboriginal boys training in a George Street gym in Sydney in the 1960’s; and three separately discovered boxing puppets.
Based on research of names, dates, titles, bouts, injuries – this work considers the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal boxers in Australian boxing history.

Aboriginal people number less than two percent of the Australian population yet at one stage were estimated to constitute eleven percent of the Australian boxing community. I question what this means, and how it came to be. This piece is a reflection-by-naming of their important place in boxing lore, and within Australian history.

**Pedagogical (Inner Soul) Pressure**

This piece developed from my realisation that sinister and long-term manipulative state-approved exercises were directing and representing children. This work investigates ways in which child development has been essentially controlled by the institutions they must negotiate (including schools and various media - television and print) to produce safe and banal citizens.

Fig.22

*Julie Gough, *Pedagogical (Inner Soul) Pressure*, 1996. Forty pairs of used-school shoes (Twenty black/Twenty brown), old stilts, shoe shine box, Government photographs of Aboriginal children on Sydney’s Luna Park Rotor Ride in the 1960’s, simulated (Education Department USA) typical child behaviour slides, internal lights.*

The physical body of the work focuses on images from a U.S. education set of 1970 Child Behaviour Kit slides - which depict children in various states of fakery - imitating fear, happiness, play, parental interaction and pain. These images are placed within forty internally-lit worn pairs of school-shoes - forty black/forty brown.
The sheer multitude of staged enactments of what are supposed to be the real experiences of childhood, actually negates any possibilities of the factual by the repetitious usage of the same children in different configurations. Thus, by a type of historical investigation I have underlined that the photographic image is not necessarily the truth.

Within the shoe alignment at the centre of this installation is fixed a shoe-shine-box, above which runs a vertical row of black and white images of Aboriginal children from a NSW Children’s Home.

During 1966, these children had a day-out to visit Luna Park, Sydney, where they were photographically documented 'having a good time' by the Home’s Administration. This particular set of images shows the children in the ROTOR ride where the uncanny (unintentional?) use of time-lapse photography records the children as pasted to the wall from the centrifugal-force of the ride. These children are as manipulated in play by a scientific principle ('The Rotor') as is their mirrored life-experience of being controlled by the Government.12

The two sets of images - one from United States records, the other from NSW - utilise institutionally developed documentary formats to convince the public that the invented (or partial) moment is the absolute and the actual; my placement of both sets of

12 The ROTOR is a fun-fair ride where people walk inside a huge washing machine like 'drum' and the door is closed. The drum begins to slowly spin and those people inside find themselves through the centrifugal motion held fast against the wall of the ride. As the ROTOR picks up speed the floor of the ride drops away and those inside are held splayed to the sides of the walls by gravity; affixed until the ROTOR begins to slow down and the ride is over. One feature of this ride is that spectators are allowed to climb an exterior platform to look down upon those inside, and watch them rise and fall; a position from which these photographs were taken.
images in conjunction questions ideas of time, space, reality and conclusions.

Lying with the Land – 1

Fig. 24 Julie Gough, Lying with the Land – 1, 1996. Sixteen photographs, mantelpiece, fire guard, preserving jars containing flour, tea, salt, tobacco, sugar. Variable dimensions.

This work is composed of sixteen photographs of long-term Midlands (Tasmania) land-holders from mid 1810’s to the present-day. I took these images myself at 1995-96 Tasmanian agricultural shows, where I found the landowners with the produce/livestock of ‘their’ lands.

Index cards beneath each photo consecutively list researched data of original interactions between the Aboriginal people of those lands (circa 1820), with the forebears of current land-occupiers, along with the prize-winning agricultural entrant’s details. The pickling jars contain five main trade/bribe items: tobacco, flour, tea, salt and sugar.

The documented history of Aboriginal/Settler contact is written from the perspective of the latter and is inflammatory and accusatory towards the Aborigines. One-sided fiction rather than truth. ‘Lying’ in this instance represents deception rather than ‘burial’.

23
Lying with the Land – 2

This work is the ‘companion’ piece to Lying with the Land – 1. It focusses on the removal of indigenous people from this land and their transportation to Wybalenna on Flinders Island.

Fig.25 Julie Gough, Lying with the Land – 2, 1996. Sixteen ‘maps’ of Wybalenna cemetary printed onto hospital sheet, mantelpiece, fire guard, lights with flickering cross flame bulbs. Variable dimensions.

Sixteen fabric maps of Wybalenna cemetary are buttoned on to a pale green sheet. One hundred and five early deaths and burials of people far from their homeland. Both pieces work together – they are before and after. Without one the other would not have occurred.

Genetic Pool – Moree

The disparate materials in Genetic Pool – Moree, jigsaw together to offer some of the ingredients of encounter in a story of racial discrimination. The domestic familiarity of the objects in this piece contrasts with the serious reality of the story and yet simultaneously these items ironically serve to reflect how ludicrously unfounded were the fears of white residents.

These elements offer a way of viewing the colour bar policy enforced in swimming pools of some rural townships in Australia until the 1960’s.
In the mid-1960's, Sydney University students joined Dr Kumantji Perkins on a bus journey through rural NSW to protest this blatant form of racial discrimination. The event which brought world attention to Australian inequities was named the 'Freedom Ride'. Although it focused on swimming pools, the journey was a metaphor for discrimination at every level of Australian society. The target was Moree where heated conflict took place between activists and locals. The activists finally obtained entry for Aboriginal children to the town pool after initial false promises of access were revoked.

![Image](image.png)

Fig.26 Julie Gough, *Genetic Pool – Moree*, 1996. Washing machine, hospital strength disinfectant, 1960's men's bathers, thirteen test tubes containing milky substance, thirteen postcards showing swimming pools as central scenic highlight of rural townships. Variable dimensions.

This piece gained real momentum and inspiration after I viewed a documentary about the Freedom Ride. One local protester, a Moree resident, recounted a story explaining the town's fear of allowing Aborigines to swim amongst whites in the pool; it was believed that white women could become pregnant from bathing where Aboriginal men or youths had swum!

The work touches upon subconscious waters – water as a mirroring pool of fear and desire, birthing waters, difficult waters, the basic element of water, the universality of water, the essential uncontrollability of

13 Dr Kumantji Perkins is recently deceased and he is referred to here in the customary way.
water and yet also water as a commodity and tool of power and control in urban NSW.

I collected thirteen fold-out postcards which showed that swimming pools are considered a scenic highlight of rural townships. This piece, with its test-tubes filled with a white milky semen-like substance and a dozen pairs of bathers spinning in a pseudo-scientific centrifugal disinfecting motion, suggests the bizarre notions and dangerous beliefs which start at home and spread between towns and beyond.

**Bad Language**

The work addresses 'Blackness-as-sexual-proficiency' and the 'Plantation as a hot-bed of desire'. Two continuing myths where language and words are the spreaders of dis-ease. Fifty-six paperback books are about coloured women and men as objects of captive desire.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Fig. 27** Julie Gough, _Bad Language_, 1996. Books, Tasmanian oak frame, pine, ply. 800 x 1700 mm

The main impetus for this work was my numerous encounters with these books, over some years, on op-shop shelves; evidence of the fascination with the black body that I believe is a carefully hidden aspect of our society. The taboo nature of this desire has meant that the books are rarely seen displayed in anyone's home, and yet are deposited in copious amounts in an establishment where people anonymously leave anything from the home that they do not want. The resulting collection of detritus is a telling overview of Australian society.
The Trouble with Rolf

This work developed from the fourth verse of *Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport* by Rolf Harris (1966).

The 4th verse apparently refers to a dying (white) pastoralist's last words; his will and testament whereby he is giving away his 'property'. He mutters: 'Let me Abo's go loose, Lew, let me Abo's go loose.... They're of no further use, Lew, so let me Abo's go loose, Altogether now...'

![Image of musical notation]


I represented one meaning behind the words by introducing plaster cast Aboriginal stockmen heads, in a musical notation formation spelling-out the fencing-in or -out that has been enforced onto many outback Aboriginal people.

Rolf is probably also referring to the 'freeing' of Aboriginal stockmen/musterers during the mid 1960's when the Equal Wages Bill was passed in Australia. Previously, Aboriginal workers were paid a pittance, or with food/tobacco rations.

Paradoxically, the legislation resulted in thousands of rural Aboriginal people facing unemployment and being forced off their traditional lands (where they had often managed to continue living due to white 'landowners' allowing them to work on these properties). It led to large numbers of Aboriginal people living as displaced persons on the outskirts of townships, many up to the present-day.

The song *Tie me Kangaroo Down, Sport* is a troublesome lyrical arrangement because each verse except for the
fourth has Australian fauna as its focus - kangaroos, koalas, platypus, etc. The fourth verse includes Aborigines as part of the 'wildlife' of the Australian landscape, and even goes so far as to suggest that they can be 'let loose' - released at the whim of a stockman/bushman - inferring that Aboriginal people were under the control of others.

Yet this song is of its own time, as was Rolf in the mid 1960's - can Rolf be entirely castigated for proposing a pseudo freedom for the 'captives'? My aim in utilising the song and 'found' Aboriginalia - kitsch plaster wall ornament of an Aboriginal stockman, which I then reproduced in multiple, is to reclaim representations of Aboriginal people for ourselves. I believe that the only way to work with imagery, text, inferences that are 'out there' already performing their intended roles in society, is to claim these representations, and reuse them subversively outside their original context.

The redirection into new performative roles of their power to damage and undermine can question and redefine our understanding of that past in our country's present and future.14

My Tools Today

Fig.29 Julie Gough, My Tools Today, 1996. Inkjet print on fabric, 173 kitchen tools, nails. 3.3 x 2.2 m. *

14 Interestingly, Rolf has changed this fourth verse in recent sheet-music reprints of this song, and he no longer sings the fourth verse as he originally intended either. The trouble is, that like Eeny meeny miny mo... music and verse are one of the most pervasive ways to enter into the popular unconscious, and it will be some time before those familiar with the song can replace the original version with the new. I think Rolf was reflecting his times, and the mind-frame of most non-Aboriginal Australian's in the mid-sixties - where I think he is still ensconced today. I believe that it is crucial that this history hidden amidst the popular is not forgotten.
My Tools Today is a large inkjet print on fabric which depicts the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart. (TMAG). The image is reproduced from a 1970's black and white postcard. One hundred and seventy-three kitchen tools are suspended on four inch nails piercing the fabric through eyelets.

This piece originated from reading that my Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors had only twenty-two tools in their entire subsistence kit.

Original historical writing regarded this information as evidence of the primitive evolutionary level of my people, while more recent writing recognises that this reveals a deliberate attitude that less is more than enough. I decided to include one institution which presented such 'knowledge' and today re-presents corrections of former perceptions about such data - the TMAG.

Fig.30  Julie Gough, My Tools Today, 1996. Inkjet print on fabric, 173 kitchen tools, nails. 3.3 x 2.2 m. *

I have covered the image with such a multiple of tools because they represent both my overwhelming ongoing, repeated compulsion to ascertain what is happening within historical depictions, and also to illustrate my own recognition that I have lost the ability to survive with a minimal toolkit. Perhaps this work is me trying to obliterate the institutions which are reputed to identify and construct us. Optically the work invites the viewer to see the fore-grounded tools or the black and white back-ground image – but together these two elements animate each other and so the work refuses to sit still.
Pogography 2000 - The Sub-Dividing Games...Tool For Land Reclamation vs Tools For Land Degradation

This work subversively renders the colonial construct of Australian land and spatiality as divisible, nameable thus knowable, manageable and ownable by relative newcomers.

I made the regions of Australia into packages, or land parcels, to challenge the notion of statehood and fixed borders by which eight states and territories purportedly define the country. These 'states' are represented as commodities reflecting the 'vision' and interests of the mining, pastoralist and Government fraternities which are covered by the imperialist Australian flag that supposedly defines and encompasses the people and place.

I employed the pogo stick and acrylic paint to make my own mark as a communicative act of my contemporary urban desperation. The resulting dots are my attempt to re-join these lands by registering a unifying print across the parcels; they look malleable, easily removed, plundered, swapped, lost. The indoor misplacement of these bundles and tools and their vertical positioning off the floor/ground-level is suggestive of the land power games, structures and debates undertaken entirely behind doors.

Aboriginal people are in one corner with one tool, whilst other contenders have an entire army of tools at their disposal. A tool for jumping about the land vs
tools for cutting, twisting, puncturing and removing the land: Australia.

Re-Collection

Fig.32  
Julie Gough, Re-Collection, 1997. Six 28 x 35 cm framed photographs, one 28 x 35 plaster bas-relief portrait.

The piece Re-Collection is based upon the plaster representations of the faces of unnamed Aboriginal people whom colonial Tasmanian artist Benjamin Dutterau also rendered in paint. Paintings and reliefs are held in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. These people were the so-called 'Sable companions' from 1830-1835 of the missionary George Augustus Robinson.

Dutterau 'named' these portraits, (but not after their sitters) Attention, Cheerfulness, Surprise, Incredulity, Suspicion, Anger...

Upon seeing these anonymous portraits I initially felt certain that Dutterau was collecting and depicting the emotional states of Tasmanian Aborigines at the very time that popular Tasmanian myth envisioned them 'dying out'. I believed that Dutterau was desperately trying to pseudo-scientifically record any possible aspects of my ancestors for posterity.

Subsequently, I realised that Dutterau's work was part of a contemporaneous global movement in the arts whereby the passions, the emotions, the general spirit of humankind was underpinning much artistic endeavour. My theory was blown. Dutterau was not reducing indigenous Tasmanians to a set of peculiar emotions. No, he was bestowing the same pseudo-romantic classificatory modes as he would onto people of his own culture!

Regardless, I made the work. I believed that Dutterau was still collecting indigenous people, and that I could punctuate the passage - of time and portraits - by looking back and re-collecting. I cast myself in plaster
and inserted my portrait at the end of the row; I am re-
collection. That is my name in the work. I recollect and
I think of actions of collection that have impacted on
my culture and how this is perceived and perversely
has directed my own art-practice into existence.

Black Beauty and Snow White

![Black Beauty and Snow White](image)

Fig.33 – Fig.34 Julie Gough, Black Beauty and Snow White, 1997. Mixed media. Variable
dimensions.

*Black Beauty and Snow White* are two handbags which
are about the carrying of culture and preconceptions
and secrets on the person. They were both ‘found’
bags which I pulled apart and then reversed. I took the
original exterior outdoor landscape images from the
bags and placed them on the insides of the side and
back panels. The front panels were replaced by clear
plastic leaving windows into a landscape, in front of
which stood ‘found’ dolls. This was another of my
simulations; two reconstructions of interior worlds
within the everyday.

*Operation Aloha!* *Magnum-as-Cook in the
Time/Space continuum*

This installation comprises a triptych photo-study of
my family in 1970 - mirroring the triptych painting of
Magnum P.I. on the adjacent wall, and a number of
found objects. The photo-triptych of my family is

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15 A Hawaiian-based American detective from the 1980s TV series: *Magnum P.I.*
framed by seafaring curtains whilst floral dresses surround Magnum.

Fig.35  Julie Gough, Operation Aloha! Magnum-as-Cook in the Time/Space continuum. 1997. Acrylic on board, photographs on board, vinyl, shells, shell necklaces, curtains, dresses, coral lamps, the 1970 Melbourne Captain Cook commemorative telephone book. Magnum triptych, 1625 x 775 x 55 mm, my family in 1970 triptych, 1735 x 805 x 55 mm

Beneath the images of myself and family are three shelves. Two family photographs have coral lamps beneath them, centred below us in a biblical tome-like manner is the 1970 Melbourne Captain Cook Bicentenary telephone book.

Fig.36  Julie Gough, Operation Aloha! Magnum-as-Cook in the Time/Space continuum. 1997.

We are contained, captured and thus we exist within the framework of this identificatory and locatory device. I regard text and cover of this phone book as a fine example of colonialist propaganda; a volume falsely indicative of a national and united agreement with Captain Cook's hallowed position as Australian history - when it can only be celebrated in non-indigenous histories.
In the space between Magnum and the Pacifica elements is a 'confessional corner' - a curtained-off area in which one can contemplate the exploration and possession of the New World.

There are two plates hung in this intimate space - one an authentic Wedgwood commemorating Matthew Flinders in portrait with vessel and birth and death dates, the other a plain 'white' ceramic plate decaled with a 1940's Children's Annual illustration depicting two British schoolchildren in a tropical hut asking an indigenous woman:

Luluna, why are your people so sullen and antagonistic all of a sudden?

This one-way exchange optimises the complete misunderstanding of travellers and explorers for the customs and culture of other people. Hence Captain Cook's own demise.
The triptych paintings of Magnum-as-Cook began with the discovery of the found-and-signed painting of Magnum P.I. at Glenorchy market, Hobart for $5.00. I painted two accompanying works which copy the scenic surrounds of the original image. In the second and third painting I have eliminated Magnum from the reading offering alternative perspectives of a historical moment within the space which Magnum's form inhabits in the original painting.

![Image](image.png)

Fig. 39 Julie Gough, Operation Aloha! Magnum-as-Cook in the Time/Space continuum. 1997.

In the second painting, I have painted the shark from the movie *Jaws* rising-up to devour Magnum and, in the third representation, Pacific Islanders, of whom he is oblivious, paddle-out to greet (?) Magnum. 16

I am suggesting that through Magnum, TV viewers (i.e. a sizeable world-wide audience) in the 1980’s received most of their cultural knowledge of Hawaii and the Pacific and that, similarly, Captain Cook performed the same role of cultural purveyor and distortionist two centuries ago.

Magnum-as-Cook, in this instance covers the landscape, in a sense removing, by omniscient ommittance, the true images of the actual inhabitants.

My representation of the alternative viewing of this 'space within the frame' has been kept within the dubious kitsch tone of the original. Thus, the reduction in size actually follows the conceptual vision of the original untraced artist who placed Magnum at the forefront, therefore controlling the bias of the piece.

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In working within this vision my biting humour is treading a fine line appearing to support what I intend to question. I have Magnum fore-fronted and Islanders back-grounded. The work allows the indigenous inhabitants to be manifested only as objects of culture - characterised as unsatisfactory traces amidst shell necklaces and floral dresses produced for the tourist market: a dilemma of representation I wish to question.

The installation is asking its viewers to question the truths and fictions of accounts of the past, and the remnant activities that surreptitiously invade the present to represent suspect and often racist colonialist beliefs and activities.

**Folklore**

![Folklore image](image)

*Fig.40 Julie Gough, *Folklore*, 1997. Inkjet print, pair of found curtains, Tasmanian oak light box. Approx 90 x 120 cm.*

This work physically consists of a large light-box illuminating an inkjet image and a set of long curtains. The light-box image is reproduced from an old colour postcard which illustrates a plaster diorama of an indigenous family in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart. Created in the 1930's from the donated life-savings of the former caretaker; it is still on display. Framing this light-box is a pair of 1950's curtains depicting European gnomes in their forest habitat.

The diorama is an inescapably bizarre and totally constructed fabrication of Tasmanian Aborigines. Intended as an education tool, it is a totally invented version; a kind of historic folklore. It tells much more about its makers than its purported subject. It portrays the myth of the Tasmanian Aboriginal nuclear family.
clustered around a solitary campfire, rather than typically within a large extended family or band of people. The figures are based on Truganini and Wooralgy with a child which Truganini, who was physically maltreated by Europeans, was unlikely to have ever had.  

The people represented were not from the region painted as their backdrop. The diorama invents its own time and place. Not only are other people missing from the picture, but by this time in their lives (in real time) Truganini and Wooralgy were familiar with and using European materials: axes, dogs and guns – none of which are depicted.

The scene freezes Aboriginal Tasmanians into ‘no-time’; into an unknowable distancing space. In this it both justifies and illustrates the story of genocide, rather than dispelling it as a myth.

**Shadow of the Spear**

As recounted in the introduction to this exegesis *Shadow of the Spear* is central to the body of work submitted.

The work exemplifies several crucial departures in my practice; the exploratory beginnings of making all the materials (ti-tree spears, slip-cast eggs, pyrographic calligraphy) for a piece - rather than my usual practice of finding objects and manoeuvring them into a new position.

I utilised pyrography; burning into wood is an empowering means of re-registering text. Scorching these words of George Augustus Robinson on pieces of Tasmanian oak timber was akin to *burning into memory*. This seemed both a natural and unnatural act, which corresponded to the casting of a spell.

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17 It was recorded that Truganini 'mourned for a lost child', and in Victoria some Koori families claim to be descendants of Truganini. My thanks to Greg Letman for pointing this out.
Julie Gough, *Shadow of the Spear*, 1997. Six ti-tree spears, six slip-cast ceramic swans' eggs, six rows of pyrographically (hand burnt) copperplate text on Tasmanian oak slats placed in the six shadows cast by the spears leaning on the wall. Dimensions 6 x 6 ft

The reliance of this work on shadow and light, placement and natural materials is a result of time spent at the place in north east Tasmania where the verbal exchange in 1831 occurred.

The six spears cast six shadows onto the rows of text. These shadows both obliterare and also simultaneously highlight the words. These shadows represent for me the concealed; the unresolved and the dormancy of time waiting for the words to reach the light again.

The original text provided the impetus for the work by relaying to me the knowledge of the unkept promise. Time spent outdoors and on-site, crucially encouraged me to follow through and make the essence of that occasion alive now by presenting these particular materials in this configuration awaiting a conclusion.

**Bad Aboriginal Art**

I carefully made six dolls precisely following the instructions in the Hamlyn Children's guide to making Aboriginal Art. (There was a sixth doll - but I exercised caution and refrained from making *The Witchdoctor*).
I hung the dolls in a row adjacent to their instruction book at the NAIDOC Show\textsuperscript{18}, Moonah Arts Centre in 1999. Text and objects make manifest the strangeness of each other. Although I found this book instructing children to make ‘a wandjina in applique’ and ‘burial posts and sacred objects’ offensive, I still went ahead and made these five dolls.

Placing them in this show produced various reactions. Enthusiastic schoolteachers approached the gallery co-ordinator asking whether they could have copies of the instructions so their students could make the dolls.

By hanging these dolls in an Aboriginal community exhibition I raised questions as to whether by inclusion they became endorsed cultural creations?

I was in one sense testing whether something potentially politically incorrect one minute suddenly became Aboriginal cultural property the next - due to the place, time and context of their display.

One Aboriginal person strongly communicated to the gallery co-ordinator (who then told me) that she found the dolls highly offensive. Other people in the Aboriginal community found them interesting and thought-provoking, and remembered the actual book from the 1970’s.

\textsuperscript{18} NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Commemoration) - a week in which annual nationwide indigenous events, celebrations, gatherings take place.
By leaving the dolls and book to speak for themselves, my intention was left disturbingly unclear. I was reassembling a historical moment twenty-five years out of its intended time and (primary school) audience; and people were unsure as to how they felt about the work.

Because I made these dolls, and because I am known to make controversial work, the question raised and half-answered was: Could these dolls sit comfortably in a group exhibition amongst untroubled celebrations of cultural traditions? Retrospectively, I think not.

These figures were conceptual art disguised as craft in a craft show. They were intricately detailed and made with care. But something besides that care renders them uncanny outcasts.

**HOME sweet HOME**

![Image](image.jpg)


*HOME sweet HOME* eventuated as a response to my visit to Liverpool in May 1999. When the former Bluecoat Hospital was suggested as a site for a work I began walking around Liverpool noticing references to the great wealth upon which the city was founded; the movement of people and materials – slavery, migration and trade.

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19 I was invited to participate in 'TRACE' The Liverpool Biennial (Various venues across Liverpool) UK, 23rd September – 7th November, 1999 by guest curator Tony Bond (Curator from the Art Gallery of New South Wales). The resulting work, *HOME sweet HOME* has remained in Liverpool, but because this installation is an integral component of my PhD submission I discuss the work with accompanying illustrations here.
Initially I became engrossed in researching the transportation of people to Australia – convicts, and the forced migration of children. However, I found myself drawn, somewhat unexpectedly, to the children in the Bluecoat Hospital (orphanage) who stayed behind.

The Liverpool Archives holds diverse references to the Bluecoat Hospital, and also to the Ragged Schools and the Kirkdale House of Correction that existed in this city; brief tantalising glimpses into a short life of hard work.

Children in the Ragged School in Soho Street, Liverpool 'sorted senna and pig bristles' whilst children in the Bluecoat late in the nineteenth century 'made pins'.

![BLUE](image)

**Fig.45**

Julie Gough *HOME sweet HOME*, 1999 (Detail). Cotton, pins, timber, soap, installation. Dimensions 6 x 6 m.

The orphan boys in the Bluecoat Hospital were expected to set sail on the Slave ships and Traders which were run by several members of the Bluecoat Board and Benefactors early in the nineteenth century. Girls were trained to be domestic servants; if they defied this expectation they were not provided street clothes to leave the premises.

Once, wandering the city, I stood searching the cityscape from the top of the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and saw the cemetery below. I walked down through the stone-tunnelled entrance into the underworld-like quarry burial-ground of selected inhabitants of the city. Stone after stone inscribed with the names of ship captain's and their ships, of dearly beloved and departed young children eulogised in terms of permanent angelic sleep. In the midst of repetitive notions of love and family I was stopped hard in my tracks by the sight of six stones in a row. Damp and nettle fringed they unemotionally named-as-lists one hundred and twenty-two dead.
children from four Liverpool Orphanages: The Bluecoat Hospital, The Liverpool Infant Orphan Asylum, The Liverpool Female Orphan Asylum, The Liverpool Boys’ Orphan Asylum.  

I felt that these stones were the answer, the reason for my extended walks in and around the city. I imagined them immediately as soft pillows, as mattresses, as a comfort that these children never had in reality. I returned to the headstones shortly after with a huge bundle of cotton fabric and a large graphite rock from the Liverpool Museum to rub and transfer the Bluecoat children to their former site, and the other children to a similar Orphanage site to that which they had experienced.

![Detail of orphan's tombstone in the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral Cemetery, UK](image)

This activity occurred over six wet and windy days – with accompanying unexpected vital meetings with cemetery locals and visitors.

I visited Port Sunlight and saw the influence of the Lever Company on the region. I then decided that soap should also be an element within the work. The unacknowledgment of palm oil as a major item within the cargo of Slave ships – a direct connection with

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20 The deaths of these children occurred at various times and the headstones indicate their ages and these dates.
21 A soap making village adjacent to Liverpool which was established by Lever.
Bluecoat (yet again), and this product’s transformation into household cleaning goods was a strangely repulsive and compulsive piece of information.

Lavender scented soap mix utilising Lever LUX and lavender oil was applied to the base of a plaster pillar in the installation. This represents both the lack of *mother* and home comforts in these children’s lives, and visually expresses the metaphorical bar of soap upon which this building’s foundation and framework was based.

Upon my return to Hobart in late May 1999, I constructed small ‘beds’ for these pillow/mattresses the size of the actual tombstones. I believed that these names must be filled-in with pins. They became pin cushions with only the pin-heads visible as an act of recognition and remembrance of the short lives of these children. The dots were a form of punctuation - full-stops. My mother, myself and three obsessively compulsive women worked continuously over two months to complete the intensive pin-work required.

![Colonial Australian pin-cushion, 1833. Powerhouse Museum, Sydney](image)

**Fig.47**

Making this work seemed to be an appropriately similar activity to the endlessly repetitive work which the children’s tiny hands endured as pin-makers, and as such perhaps a fitting acknowledgment.

Seventy kilograms of pins later, and with enough stuffing for ninety regular pillows – the children were brought back in from the cold to the *Home* that wasn’t so sweet for them.
Visitors to the room began speaking the names of the children aloud as they read the pillows, invoking their presence and return to the very site where they had dwelt over 100 years ago. They filled the gap of time with voice. This aspect of sound, of naming, amongst the former silencing of cold headstones was a most unsettling and generous act, beyond my intent, which unexpectedly occurred.

**how they got here**

This work commenced with the simultaneous arrival into my life of two resonating objects: an old cast-iron plaque which I found unexpectedly in a storeroom (a *temporary* or perhaps temporal loan) - and an image e-mailed to me, by my father, of my mother and my childhood self standing together in front of a faintly familiar wall. What held me was both the wording on the plaque *and* what *wasn’t* spoken by those in the photo until relatively recently.
The plaque is headed 'DORSET' – and was once set into an unknown bridge in Dorset, England. 'Dorset' is what the marauding English renamed my tribal territory - the country of my ancestors, the Trawlwoolway people of the far north east of Tasmania – traditionally called Prelooner.

According to the text of the plaque, people from Dorset, England were threatened with 'Transportation for Life' to Australia for 'Injuring this Bridge', yet, unaccountably, the bridge’s mission statement was removed and also transported here.

In this sense, the bridge cannot lose sight of its tormentors - they are eternally in this together.

The resulting work is a brick construction that moves between being a plaque-holder, a barbeque, an incinerator, an unwilling memorial. Threats are not usually memorialised, names and dates are. But in this case, the date and name of the place are lost.

The work physically lies as a point on the journey between three works as they stand in the gallery, and it is the basis for the existence of the others. For if

Fig.50  Julie Gough, how they got here, 2000. Bricks, mortar, cast iron plaque. 840 x 700 x 465 cm.

22 how they got here, and how its been and rain.
'they' (convicts, British, etc) had not come here – the other works, in fact all my works, and I, as I know me, would not be here either. This is not a pain-free realisation. This is a monument to that awful ambivalent dilemma of our inseparable pasts which makes up Australia today.

James Young speaks of Memorials emerging when forgetting threatens to engulf a group. 23 The series of three works how they got here..., and how it's been... and rail, are sombre institutionalised references to my own specific memories. Memories to which I have restricted access. I have situated them materially in objects of the public domain, railings, bricks, plaques. They reveal my own obstacles of encounter with the past, which are the free-floating fragments of specific moments and places I cannot quite locate, or hold, or return to.

and how it's been

Fig.51

Julie Gough, and how its been, 2000. (Detail). Bricks, crushed abalone shell and mortar, whole abalone shell, photograph. 815 x 1320 x 230 cm.

and how it's been is my personal revisiting of the site of childhood. I have remade a wall; a wall which my mother and I stood against and looked away from when I did not know what remembering was, let alone forgetting to remember.

23 'The further events recede the more prominent the memorials. National memory comprises many, often competing, recollections. Rather than embodying memory, the monument displaces it altogether. We encourage monuments and memorials to do our memory work for us, so we become much more forgetful. This may be a deliberate means of distancing the past from memory.' Young, James, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1993: 5
Remaking this wall today in the presence of my mother is about facing the past. It is about concealment and containment of culture, yet also about how culture seeps through the cracks and re-emerges scarred but strong. The stories are in the gaps, the traces, the silences and apparent absences.
Julie Gough, *and how it's been*, 2000. (Detail). Bricks, crushed abalone shell and mortar, whole abalone shell, photograph. 815 x 1320 x 230 cm.

*rail*²⁴

Julie Gough, *rail*, 2000, Paint, wood, aluminium. 2930 x 780 x 10 cm.

*rail* is another wall-piece, a representation of a public space with a private story. It is about Government

²⁴ *Rail, Stand* and *Rise* are nouns and verbs; words with several layers of meanings. They are objects which also can mean actions of encounter, defence and uprise. These are also words of action which I am interested in expressing through the visual means of a sculptural practice - a practice in which I am exploring my own personal history and simultaneously recognising alignments and intersections with people's stories across a broad expanse of temporal and geographical zones. *Stand* and *Rise* are outdoor works planned for 2001 and 2002.
buildings with their pale-green-to-waist-height walls. Walls which measure you as you walk along their symmetrical system of sameness. I hold this rail and green wall in my memory – but cannot for the life of me recall … Does it come from a school, a hospital, a public hall, where?

I have recreated it as a slice of time and place, a piece of my mind’s jigsaw waiting to fit back somewhere beyond its current trigger-zone.

This particular rail has been compressed, pushed into a ‘v’, mutated to fit into this 78 cm wide segment. It is me, in the endless working against conformity within the everyday elements of which I am impossibly made.

Fig.56

Julie Gough, Installation image of how they got here, and how its been, rail. From exhibition: Heart on your sleeve Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, 2000