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Exhibiting Creative Geographies

Bringing Research Findings to Life

Candice P. Boyd

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Dedicated to Elisa Trifunoski and Raymond Wholohan
(and regional artist-curators like them)
who bring art to community and community to art

Preface and Acknowledgements

Like most, I never expected to live through a pandemic. And while I am grateful for having lived, I am mindful that several of those who read this book will have lost family and friends to COVID-19. My heart goes out to those living with long COVID whose lives may never be the same again.

I was awarded an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) in 2018 to conduct the Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study from 2019 to 2021. An ARC DECRA includes a full-time salary and generous research funds for a large-scale research project. However, the project I envisaged was not the one I was able to complete. As a geographer in Australia, limits were put on fieldwork due to international and state border closures during the pandemic. Several lockdowns in the State of Victoria, where I live, made travel to each of the case study sites impossible during that time. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the towns involved and hold a series of stakeholder roundtable discussions during 2019, but 2020 forced a shift to remote and online methods for the remainder of the project. This was possible for the interview phase but presented enormous challenges for the project's creative component. My sincere thanks to the ten young people who rose to the challenge and engaged in creative co-production from afar. All of them have given informed consent to be identified by name; they are Rebekah Danzic, Tijana Franco, Jasmine Hair, Carla de Valentin, Vicki McCrae, Roger McDonald, Jack Neylon, Kody Oborne, Jacinda Violi and Claire Window. They applied thought and feeling to their participation. Savings from the planned fieldwork also enabled the commissioning of four artworks—three pieces by Dr Tal Fitzpatrick

and a collaboration between mother and daughter Lorna Dawson and Kimberley McKie. I thank them, too, for their openness to collaborate across vast distances.

Together, we created the 'Finding Home' exhibition during 2020 which toured Australia during 2021, travelling over 10,000 km across the breadth of the continent, and witnessed by over 1000 visitors. This was 'no mean feat' given that rolling lockdowns and snap border closures continued until November 2021 between most states except Western Australia (WA), which did not officially reopen until 3 March 2022. Still, the exhibition happened, and there are so many people to thank for it, many of whom are acknowledged at the end of the chapters to come. I will, however, single out Elisa Trifunoski, coordinator at the Courthouse Gallery+Studio in Port Hedland at that time, and Ray Wholohan, coordinator at the Griffith Regional Art Gallery, for going 'above and beyond' what I could have ever expected of them. For all their efforts, faith and commitment, this book is dedicated to them.

Drs Theresa Harada and Elizabeth Straughan made significant contributions to the EYRA Study. It was a pleasure working with them and co-authoring journal articles together based on our joint research efforts. I'd like to thank them, too, for putting up with my frequent obstinacy! Associate Professor David Bissell, Dr Rachel Hughes and Professor Hester Parr have been my mentors on this intellectual journey, and I have the utmost respect and admiration for each of them. Dean of Science at the University of Melbourne, Professor Moira O'Bryan, agreed to pay the open access charges for this book as part of a generous scheme to reward scholarship during the pandemic. I thank her for that but most of all for her vision towards a more diverse and inclusive academy.

My final thanks to Joshua Pitt, the commissioning editor I have worked with across four books with Palgrave Macmillan. He moved on to new territories before this short monograph was completed. It is people like him, including his successor Marion Duval, who help make academic publishing in this domain truly rewarding.

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Parkville, VIC, Australia — Candice P. Boyd
12 March 2022

A Note on Pronouns

I use she, he or they throughout this book where I know how the person refers to themselves, and where I don't know, I use 'they' as the gender neutral, singular pronoun.

My pronouns are they or she.

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CHAPTER 1

Art as Knowledge Translation

Abstract Beginning with the discipline of geography and its intersections with the humanities, Boyd explores how art has made its way across the academy to the social sciences and health and into science itself. Maintaining a focus on how art has become a vehicle for knowledge translation and exchange, the chapter builds a case for art as geography, especially in the realm of affective knowledge translation.

Keywords GeoHumanities • Arts in health • Art-science collaborations • Affective knowledge translation • Social and cultural geography

Introduction: 'How Is That Geography?'

My fellow creative geographers would likely read the above question and let out an audible sigh for the number of times it's been asked of them. I've certainly lost count. I think it's because most people I've met think that geography is about places—the 'stuff' of places (physical geography) and the 'people' who live in those places (human geography)—or worse, they conflate geography and cartography. But literally, geography is about writing: *geo* from Latin and Greek means 'relating to the earth' and *graphy* from French means 'a system of writing' (OED, 2022a, 2022b). People and places, and how they are distributed across space and time, are what we mostly write about as geographers, but geography is also (perhaps more so) about *how* we write those things. It is for this very reason that

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geography is so diverse, not just in its subject matter but in the way that it's done. It is the broadest of academic disciplines in that it embraces the full spectrum of programmatic research and its methods, from sclerochronology (Prendergast et al., 2016) to community theatre (Raynor, 2019) and everything in between. It is in this context that art as geography makes sense—as one of the multitude of ways geographers 'write the earth'.

This book makes a case for art as geography. In doing so, it situates itself at a certain juncture—the translation of geographical knowledge through art. This juncture is blurry, because in the making of art to translate knowledge, new knowledge is created. For this very reason, this book won't perpetuate a false distinction between knowledge creation and knowledge translation, especially where art making is concerned, but rather it seeks to bring knowledge translation efforts to the foreground of art-geography engagements and critique. Just as art itself is a valid and powerful means of knowledge making, it is also an equally valid and powerful tool for translating knowledge—whether that knowledge be originally created through arts-based practices or by other means. As such, this book is intended to be not only relevant for the discipline of geography, but any academic discipline concerned with 'bringing research findings to life'.

As a background to the empirical chapters to come, this introductory chapter is grounded in the field of GeoHumanities—a field devoted to art-geography collaborations and explorations that draw on the humanities as a group of disciplines. It then shifts into the field of arts in health—perhaps the most prolific, multidisciplinary arena for art as knowledge translation. The chapter moves on to consider the challenges and successes of art-science collaborations, and then cycles back to the GeoHumanities, and affective geographies, to consider how they are uniquely suited to artistic forms of communication.

The GeoHumanities

The GeoHumanities came to prominence in the twenty-first century when it was defined by the editors of the first book on the subject as 'the fortuitous convergence of intellectual traffic [between geography, the humanities, and art, which] outlines a distinctive scholarly terrain and emerging zone of practice' (Richardson et al., 2011, p. 1). This dual aspect of the GeoHumanities as both arts practice and scholarship persists. However, the GeoHumanities is also about the synergies between geography and the

humanities and their natural tendencies to cross disciplinary borders. Dear (2011) describes this as a certain epistemological openness that is common to both domains of scholarship, and which makes the GeoHumanities inherently transdisciplinary.

Harriet Hawkins' (2014) *For Creative Geographies* is a landmark text in cultural geography, summarising over a decade of work at the intersection of cultural geography and art but also providing a threefold analytic framework for understanding geography-art relations. Her framework involves asking three questions: 'What work does art do in the world?', 'What are the geographies of the artwork's production and consumption?' and 'How is it that we encounter artworks?' (Hawkins, 2014, p. 237). Regarding the first question, Hawkins suggests that art is a way of 'knowing otherwise'—not just as visual representation but as knowledge production. For the second question, she argues that art practice has become an 'expanded field' that grapples with ideas that are distinctly geographical such as space, place and site. Finally, Hawkins urges creative geographers to explore how artworks are encountered, what leads viewers back to artworks and what it means to be an active viewer. Hawkins' last question is of special relevance to the empirical chapters to come as she points towards the 'force of art to stage lived experiences for us' (2014, p. 242).

Hawkins takes her argument a step further in *Geography, Art, Research* (Hawkins, 2021). It is here that she lauds the humanities for 'holding back' the positivist tendencies of social science to assess creative research and practice in terms of its rigour, critique and scalability. Instead, she acknowledges the humanities for valorising the subjective, the individual, the liveliness of matter and the agency of materials. This has implications for understanding the 'research-exhibition' as not merely a vehicle for communicating knowledge or 'putting things on display' but a 'tool for mediation' and a 'work of transformation'. By this, she is referring to the capacity of the art exhibition to exert an affective force, especially in relation to emotionally and politically powerful issues. She also sees the exhibition as a 'research action' that creates a thinking-space *for* audiences, rather than telling them what to think. It is the open-endedness of the art exhibition which enables audiences to interpret research findings for themselves as part of an ongoing research process. As Hawkins (2014) asserts, these processes have a special affinity with the humanities.

The GeoHumanities, and Hawkins' work in particular, are central to the empirical chapters in this book, because while visitor surveys and the metrics derived from them can provide insights into how research

exhibitions are received, they barely scratch the surface of what art exhibitions do. Much of what they do is ineffable, can't be represented, and, as some scholars argue, is 'immanent' (cannot be separated from) the exhibition itself (see Williams, 2021). As this chapter temporarily veers away from a GeoHumanities perspective to explore art as knowledge translation in more positivist territory, this is not meant as a permanent departure. The chapter will return to the GeoHumanities before its conclusion to draw further attention to its role in this book's wider project.

Arts-Based Knowledge Translation in Health

There is a compelling rationale for arts-based knowledge translation in health and that is the gap between research and clinical practice (Hall et al., 2019). Dew and Boydell (2017) estimate that it takes 17 years for health research to reach practice settings and even then, only 14% of all health research influences clinical practice from day-to-day. As such, health researchers are now encouraged to think in advance about what knowledge translation strategies they will employ in any given project, and art-based knowledge translation is one of them (Hodgins, 2017). Barwick's (2019) knowledge translation planning template enables researchers to plan across the course of their research project by identifying partners, knowledge translation expertise, knowledge users, main messages and knowledge translation goals. In identifying appropriate strategies, Barwick (2019) sees art-based knowledge translation as useful for generating awareness, interest and buy-in as well as sharing knowledge and informing decision making (see Section 8 of the template; Barwick, 2019). There is also a matching 'knowledge translation plan appraisal tool' for assessing the comprehensiveness, alignment and feasibility of knowledge translation plans in health grant applications (Barwick, 2018).

Katherine Boydell is the leading figure in art-based knowledge translation in health, having collaborated with patients and artists on projects relating to mental health, physical disability and drug and alcohol issues over many years (see Boydell, 2019). Parsons and Boydell (2012) argue that arts-based knowledge translation in health offers alternative ways to promote dialogue, share stories and communicate lived experience compared to more traditional ways like public presentations, policy briefs or media releases. Specifically, they argue that arts-based methods engage health practitioners, consumers and carers on an emotional and cognitive level, and that they make research findings more accessible to audiences

outside of academic circles. This claim is supported by empirical evaluations which reveal that health-care practitioners can develop new awareness of an issue due to arts-based knowledge translation, that practitioners report adapting or changing their practice because of arts-based translation efforts, that patients who engage in arts-based translation projects report 'meaningful and lasting differences in their lives and relationships' and that some patients report actual behavioural change (Parsons & Boydell, 2012, p. 171).

Arts-based knowledge translation in health takes a variety of forms including theatre (Hall et al., 2019), photovoice (MacDonald et al., 2020), body mapping (Boydell, 2021), dance (Boydell, 2011) and poetry (Lapum et al., 2012). While tensions inevitably exist between art and scientific evidence, many arts-based researchers in health see their translation work as contextualising objective knowledge—that is, placing scientifically generated knowledge into a social, sensorial and/or embodied form (Rieger & Schultz, 2014). For that to happen, the knowledge needs to be subjectively interpreted and reconstructed to give it personal meaning (Boydell et al., 2012). It is here that health researchers, in sympathy with the GeoHumanities and performative research in the creative arts, recognise arts-based knowledge translation as not just dissemination but also knowledge creation (Archibald & Blines, 2021; see also Haseman, 2010, on the performative research paradigm). Importantly, this new knowledge is often co-created with research participants who are themselves patients and then translated again through public exhibition and display, which may include work that has been reinterpreted by practising artists (see Boydell, 2019). Essentially, arts-based knowledge translators in health 'convert' passive knowledge into active knowledge—knowledge in action and in its social context—through processes that are non-linear and iterative, and with the ultimate goal to improve patients' lives.

While arts-based knowledge translation in health has distinct overlaps with art-science collaborations (Wellbery, 2021), the 'end-users' of the knowledge are different. Rather than patients and clinicians, art-science collaborations have the much wider remit of educating publics and, in many cases, driving social change. At the heart of this activity is the recognition that both cognition and emotion influence decision making, and that people acquire knowledge in various ways (Paterson et al., 2020). It is to this aspect of art as knowledge translation that this chapter now turns.

Art-Science Collaborations

A recent poll in the journal *Nature* found that 40% of the 350 scientists who responded had collaborated with artists in the past, and they would do it again ('Art-science alliances', 2021). Commentators note that although art-science collaborations are not new, there is a recent appreciation of the processes of collaboration and their value, instead of the dominant focus being on the product or outcome of the collaboration (Baker & Gilchrist, 2021). Part of this is a recognition that a successful *alliance* is at the core of successful art-science collaborations, and that artists and scientists share a common goal to 'describe the world around us' (Paterson et al., 2020).

Over 200 papers on art-science collaborations have been published in the journal *Leonardo* since 2010 (JSTOR search 'art-science collaborations', 25 March 2022) and while it is not possible to consider them all here, there are notable examples. In a project called *Ten Trenches* designed to promote a wider understanding of the consequences of global warming, a team of scientists and archaeologists worked alongside a team of artists and historians over three years (Cohen et al., 2013). While the science team carried out excavation works on a rural property in New South Wales, Australia, the arts team conducted a creative exploration of the site which included responses in the form of Indigenous dance, music and light projections. The authors emphasise that the project was 'development driven and not public-outcome focussed', despite it attracting significant media attention (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 75). As an expression of environmental change, the project was able to draw public attention to the issue across a range of contexts and audiences including significant stakeholder groups. Interestingly, the authors suggest that the 'rolling' nature of events and activities and their associated publicity over time was a key feature of the project's success.

Art-science collaborations don't have to confine themselves to their obvious duality. In a project called TRACKS (TRAnsforming Climate Knowledge with and for Society), an interdisciplinary team of social and natural scientists worked with a local community and a local artist to co-produce knowledge about the conditions of the local environment (Stiller-Reeve & Naznin, 2018). In what the authors call an art-science-citizen project, a series of artist-led creative workshops took place with citizen scientist groups in Bangladesh. Members of the citizen scientist groups who were already actively involved in collecting weather data in climate

'hotspots' were asked to produce drawings of how the weather was impacting on the local community, landscape, plants and animals over time. The artist who led the workshops took the participants drawings and produced a painting from them, over three canvases, which represented the participants' stories. The final version of the painting was displayed across different sites and countries, and prints were produced and donated to schools and government offices. The citizen scientists reported being inspired by the project, which they felt was personally motivating as well as nurturing of a sense of community.

Art-science collaborations can take place over a significant period of time. In a project called 6&6, six artists were paired with six scientists to co-produce work that was intentionally transdisciplinary in contrast to interdisciplinary (which is interactive and the nature of most art-science collaborations) or multidisciplinary (an additive approach where, usually, the artist contributes something extra to an already existing scientific project; Clark et al., 2020). In the 6&6 project, each artist-scientist pair developed their own project over four years, starting and finishing the project together. Artists and scientists in this project were committed to the bidirectionality, or what they described as 'the dash in art-science'. Outputs of both the artistic and scientific kind were produced as well as a set of recommendations on how artists and scientists can work together in a truly transdisciplinary way (see Clark et al., 2020).

Whereas most articles on art-science collaborations focus on the positive aspects of these interactions, there is also something to be said for embracing differences and disagreements. Ellison and Borden (2022) argue that art-science collaborations are not about finding common ground but about creating new spaces for thinking and exploring. For them, constructive friction and debate are essential. There is also something to be said for embracing 'sameness' in that scientists may bring artistic skills with them to a collaboration, and artists may have relevant scientific backgrounds. In these situations, it is possible for artists and scientists to co-create by contributing skills as well as knowledge (see Rock & McKinlay, 2018, e.g. and Boyd & Barry, 2020 for caveats). Finally, there are several instances in art-geography, where the artist and geographer are the same person, whose geographical knowledge informs their arts practice or arts-based research (e.g. Barry, 2016; Cresswell, 2013; De Leeuw 2012; Gorman-Murray, 2018; Zebracki, 2017).

Affective Knowledge Translation

So far in this chapter, we have seen how art is enrolled in knowledge translation efforts across health and science to communicate lived experience and/or urgent social messages. We have also seen how art-based knowledge translation and art-science collaborations create spaces of knowledge creation and provide new perspectives on existing problems or issues. In most cases, these approaches to knowledge translation start with what is intellectually perceived to be objective knowledge (Parsons & Boydell, 2012)—biological processes, medical phenomena, scientific or social facts—to give it personal meaning or social gravitas. In this section, we return to the GeoHumanities to consider different types of knowledge and why we might want to translate them to wider audiences. In particular, the focus of this section is on 'affective knowledge translation'.

If the main goal of arts-based knowledge translation in health is better clinical practice and improved treatment outcomes for patients, and the main goal of art-science collaboration is to translate scientific knowledge about issues of social importance, then the main goal of affective knowledge translation is to promote empathy. Unlike other forms of knowledge translation, translating affective knowledge starts with the body—that is, the embodied-affective experiences of researchers and/or research participants. Affective knowledge translation is about enabling 'felt' knowledges to be 'transmitted' so that they might be 'felt again' (Boyd, 2017).

There are multiple meanings and conceptualisations of 'affect' in the social sciences and humanities (see Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). However, Wetherall (2012) argues that human affect is always linked to meaning-making. Affective practice, as the author understands it, folds together the body's capacity to feel and practices of meaning-making. As Wetherall (2012) argues: '[i]t is the participation of the emoting body that makes an assemblage an example of affect rather than an example of some other kind of social practice' (p. 159). For affective knowledge translation to happen, something needs to be felt by the researcher, that 'something' then needs to be put into a form which foregrounds that 'felt knowledge', and that form must be presented to others so that they might gain something from that affective knowledge for themselves (Arboleda, 2021; Boyd, 2017). However, any affective knowledge that is communicated cannot be the same as what the researcher felt or heard, because it is mediated by the disposition of the 'receiver' (or audience), who then makes their own meaning which is in no way guaranteed to correspond to what

the researcher intended. Furthermore, 'the message consciously received may be of less import to the receiver of that message than his or her non-conscious affective resonance with the source of the message' (Shouse, 2005, para. 10).

Communicating affective knowledge often means putting it in a representational form or providing a framework to assist the audience in the process of translation, which arguably has its own affective force (see Anderson, 2019), but it may also involve the use of arts-based methods to create an atmosphere, produce an ambiance, or incite the body in other ways such as the use of non-diegetic sounds or imagery (Hawkins, 2014). Either way, communicating affective knowledge relies on notions of affective transmission (Brennan, 2015) and affective practice (Wetherall, 2012)—the circulation of affect, its (re)embodiment and the processes of meaning-making enrolled by the audience.

In an example from social and cultural geography, Parr and Stevenson (2014) conducted a research project which responded to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of people who go missing in Scotland. The main aims of the project were to change police attitudes to missing people, which positioned them as a 'time-resource problem', to encourage empathy with missing people, and provide insights into their emotional experience. Parr and Stevenson (2014) conducted 45 in-depth interviews with people who had gone missing and used these to write a set of stories or 'creative re-constructions'. The stories, ten in total, were either constructed from a single interview transcript or created as 'composite stories' that brought together experiences from across the interviews. These narratives have been presented at conferences and in academic journals (Parr & Stevenson, 2014) but were also included in a police training package. Chief Constable Pat Geenty, UK Police Lead for Missing Persons, on hearing these stories, said: '[The project's] findings have made a huge impact on me and gave me a greater insight into the psyche of those who go missing than anything I had experienced in the past 30 years' (see Parr, 2013).

Parr and Stevenson's (2014) research demonstrates that arts-based knowledge translation can be applied across the spectrum of academic disciplines regardless of the type of knowledge being translated. This matters, because arts-based knowledge translation is not simply about giving objective knowledge aesthetic form (Boydell et al., 2017). It is a process of 'communicating research with the goal of catalysing dialogue, awareness, engagement, and advocacy to provide a foundation for social change

on important societal issues' (Kukkonen & Cooper, 2017, p. 293). The communication of emotions, feelings, desires, anxieties, hopes and aspirations can be relevant in fulfilling knowledge translation goals, and it is here that the GeoHumanities comes into its own.

Overview of the Empirical Chapters to Come

The chapters that follow present a singular example of arts-based knowledge translation 'from start to finish'. Chapter 2 forms the foundation while Chap. 3 describes the creation of artwork based on research findings. The 'short monograph' format of this book allows for a much more detailed and process-based account of these efforts than a journal article might afford. As much as we learn from our own mistakes, another aim of using this format is to provide sufficient detail that anyone wanting to embark on a similar project for the first time might gain something from the advice and recommendations offered.

Another further aim of this book, also afforded by its format, is to provide an evaluation of the work undertaken. To this end, Chap. 4 not only relays what was involved in bringing the art exhibition to the public but also public responses to the exhibition based on visitor surveys and phone interviews. The book concludes by considering the strengths and limitations of the approaches taken and lessons learned.

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CHAPTER 2

The Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study

Abstract In this chapter, Boyd summarises the Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study whose findings formed the basis of the touring art exhibition called 'Finding Home'. Rooted in placed-based understandings of youth belonging and well-being, the study sought to challenge some of the long-standing assumptions about young people's internal migration decisions in regional Australia. Specifically, the study's findings support an enhanced understanding of regional youth engagement that takes into account the affective and material dimensions of young people's relationships with regional places.

Keywords Youth outmigration • Regional youth engagement • Internal migration decisions • Rural geography • Affect and materiality

Introduction: Regional Youth Outmigration

Youth outmigration has been a serious dilemma for regional Australian communities for decades, as it is throughout the world (Argent & Walmsley, 2008). Sometimes referred to as 'the rural exodus', approximately 50% of regional Australian youth leave their hometowns with those remaining likening the phenomenon to 'a town losing its heart' (Coffey et al., 2018). Complex reasons for regional youth outmigration exist. Contextual factors, such as access to higher education and more diverse

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employment options, are relevant but so are symbolic factors such as the lure of urban lifestyles that are seen to embody youth culture (Alston, 2004; Farrugia, 2016; Stratford, 2015). Past research has highlighted the negative consequences of prolonged youth outmigration for regional communities—the loss of social capital, the structural ageing of the regional work force, and the effects on the sustainability of community services and businesses (e.g. Dufty-Jones et al., 2013; Luck et al., 2011). However, and considering our increasingly mobile world, regional communities realise that simply stemming the flow of outmigration is not the solution to the problem. Return migration of educated and experienced young people can be of great benefit to regional areas (Bourne et al., 2020).

Researchers have traditionally regarded rural–urban migration as a push–pull phenomenon, characterised by a rural push towards the urban created by a 'pull' based on the potential for higher earnings (Alvarez-Cuadrado & Poschke, 2011). As such, 'upward mobility', or a desire for wealth and prosperity, is thought to be the main driver of young people's decisions to move to the city (O'Shea et al., 2019). However, Schewel (2019) argues that an emphasis on why young people move creates a mobility bias which acts against those who stay by equating their decisions with a lack of agency or aspiration (see also Brown et al., 2017). Schewel (2019) challenges this mobility bias by suggesting that immobility is frequently desired. Moreover, a greater appreciation of the reasons behind immobility opens up migration research to factors other than economic ones such as the affective, embodied and material dimensions of internal migration decision making (McLaughlin et al., 2014; Thompson, 2017) as well as the role of more-than-human assemblages and agencies in migration decisions (Zhang, 2018).

The Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study focussed on three case study locations across Australia with strong local economies and associated educational and employment opportunities. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, each of these areas has a similar rate of youth outmigration as other regional areas of the country despite the ability for young people to work and study locally and develop careers (ABS, 2017). By focussing specifically on areas with these characteristics, the study was able to examine what factors other than the need to leave for education and employment might be influencing regional youth to 'stay or go'. The study also included young people who had left but decided to return, either to their own town or to another regional location.

Method

Case Study Locations

The regional areas included in the EYRA Study had each recorded a steadily declining youth population in the 15–21-year-old age group each year from 2011 to 2015 (ABS, 2017), and they each play an important role in Australia's food, energy and/or resources sectors. Figure 2.1 marks each of the case study locations on a map.

The first town, Port Hedland, is on the traditional lands of the Kariyarra people who call the place Marapikurrinya to reflect the hand-shaped formation of the tidal creeks that branch out from the harbour (The Town of Port Hedland, 2022). The town is regarded as the gateway to the Pilbara region in Western Australia, which has become increasingly important

Fig. 2.1 Port Hedland (orange pin), Port Lincoln (blue pin) and Griffith (green pin) on a map of Australia. Image Credit: ciloart

economically for lithium mining (required for solar batteries) and tourism in the Far North (Finance News Network, 2017; Business News WA, 2016). It has also been described as an energy and resources boomtown and is home to Australia's largest bulk export port recording an average of 460 million tonnes throughput each year (The Town of Port Hedland, 2022). Hedland, as it is known locally, is a twin town comprising Port Hedland and South Hedland, which are separated by approximately 15 km. Port Hedland is mostly 'home' to itinerant workers or permanent residents who work in the mining industry. South Hedland is home to a local population including a substantial Aboriginal population of around 20% (ABS, 2017), and contains most of the twin town's social infrastructure, for example, shops, community hubs, services and sports centres.

The second town, Port Lincoln, is a major commercial centre for the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia, a location that farms sardines, mussels and oysters (RDA, 2014). The Eyre Peninsula is the traditional home of three Aboriginal groups—the Barngarla, Nauo and Wirangu peoples. When British colonisers first arrived in the area, the Barngarla people showed them how to locate fresh water which saved their lives—the Barngarla name for the area is Kallinyalla, meaning 'place of sweet water' (City of Port Lincoln, n.d.). Now known as Australia's seafood capital, the area was recently 'selected' by Chinese investors for the production of seaweed and is a natural deep-water harbour, making it a gateway for international exports of the seafood from the region, which is sent to Southeast Asia and around Australia's seaboard (ABC Rural, 2015).

The third and final town involved in the study was Griffith in New South Wales. Griffith is on the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people, the largest Aboriginal group in Australia whose lands extend over 60,000 km. There is also a significant Wiradjuri population in Sydney, the state's capital (MLDRIN, n.d.). Griffith is part of the Murrumbidgee irrigation area referred to as Australia's Food Bowl. Appropriated in the mid-1900s by squatters from the mining areas around Broken Hill in New South Wales, the town attracted post-war (World War II) immigrants, particularly from Italy, who also brought agricultural farming practices with them (Griffith Genealogical and Historical Society, n.d.). At the centre of the Riverina district in New South Wales, Griffith is now the most diverse food-producing town in Australia (NSW Government, 2017). It has recently seen a burst of new investment to meet the demand for almonds, a need fuelled by the rising popularity of, and necessity for, gluten-free and dairy-free foods (ABC Rural, 2017).

While being important to Australia's economy, each of the case study locations has a distinctive landscape which is also a reflection of their industries (see Fig. 2.2). With its wide bay and shoreline, Port Lincoln is dominated by the blue of its ocean whereas Port Hedland is covered with rich, iron-red dirt. Griffith, with its fields of grapes, citrus and almond trees is predominately green. The colours of these landscapes were represented in the 'Finding Home' exhibition by one of its commissioned artists and were used throughout the study to 'colour-code' the different areas.

Participants and Recruitment

In the initial stages of the research in 2019, I visited each of the towns twice. On the first visit, I walked around town for a couple of days to familiarise myself with each place, visiting some local attractions but mostly staying in the areas where local people gathered. On the second day of these visits, I also took photographs as well as video footage using a tripod and digital camera. This made me very conspicuous in public, and made a few people curious, but for the most part my activities were ignored. Between the first and second visits, I also visited the capital city of each state and met with senior policy officers at their respective local government associations. This was the starting point for the development of a wider network of stakeholder organisations who were either interested in contributing to the project in some way or learning about the findings. This list of organisations would grow to over 200 by the end of the project, each of them receiving a copy of an industry report based on each of the study's four stages—stakeholder views, youth perspectives, the exhibition and policy recommendations.

Although a series of in-person stakeholder discussions took place during 2019, young people were not recruited to the study until 2020, after the stakeholder network was established. While this staged approach made sense at the beginning of the project, the sudden onset of the pandemic at the beginning of 2020 meant that none of the interviews could be conducted with young people face-to-face. Forced to 'take a back seat' when it came to the interviews, I took on what would become an arduous task of recruiting participants online from a pool of people who were the most affected by lockdowns—young people who are over-represented in the hospitality industry and other forms of insecure employment as well as older millennials burdened with new childcare and home-schooling activities alongside 'work from home' arrangements. All of this, in addition to

Fig. 2.2 Panoramas of Port Hedland (top), Port Lincoln (middle) and Griffith (bottom). Photo Credit: Author

mental health issues and general anxiety, made the recruitment process slow and lengthy as young people were understandably reluctant to add to their existing stresses and responsibilities at such a challenging time.

In the end, 50 young people from three regional towns aged 18–34 years—15 from Griffith NSW, 16 from Hedland (Port and South) and 19 from Port Lincoln—were recruited via targeted advertising through a dedicated social media page. A sample which encompassed the full range of the millennial age group was sought so that it might include young people who had chosen to stay, those who had left but also those who had returned to a regional area having left for a time. In all, the sample comprised 17 participants who had chosen to stay in their hometown, and 33 who had left with around two-thirds of those returning either to their hometown or a different regional location. Most participants identified as being of English or Scottish heritage with the remainder describing their heritage as Indian, Italian, Filipino, Polynesian or Slovenian. Two participants identified as Aboriginal Australians. Although not purposively sampled in this way, the cultural backgrounds of the participants were broadly representative of the youth populations in each area.

Data Collection and Analysis

Dr Theresa Harada was employed at the beginning of 2020 as a postdoctoral research assistant on the project because of her extensive experience as a qualitative research interviewer. I, instead, planned to conduct a series of postqualitative research interviews based on a walking method like the one I had used in the past and which was more closely aligned with my own theoretical orientation (see Boyd & Hughes, 2020; Springgay & Truman, 2018). However, due to state border closures, the walking interviews had to be abandoned and all interviews were formally conducted by Dr Harada online after potential participants had made initial contact with me via the chat function on the study's social media page. Participants were offered interviews by video meeting platforms or over the phone to accommodate those without internet access, but most interviews were completed via video call. This approach received ethical approval from the Human Ethics Research Committee at the University of Melbourne.

Interviews were recorded and then transcribed confidentially by professional transcribers before being independently analysed by Dr Harada and me. Dr Harada analysed the transcripts with the aid of qualitative software registered as NVivo12, and I adopted a more intuitive approach. This

dialectic was fruitful (see Swanwick, 1994 on intuition and analysis). Via a subsequent collaborative and iterative process, we identified and refined themes, interpreting them through a cultural geographic lens informed by contemporary feminism and non-representational theory (see Boyd & Harada, 2021). I won't be representing our analysis here, but rather will summarise the main findings in a style and format which is more descriptive and less theoretical than our journal article. It was in this plain language/thematic format that findings were communicated to stakeholder organisations and discussed and shared with participants and artists who contributed to the 'Finding Home' exhibition, and so the findings in this form best represent the foundation of the creative work.

Summary of Findings

Safety, Security, Belonging and Intimacy

By far, the young people who had chosen to stay in their hometowns after leaving school cited a sense of belonging, security, safety and community as their reasons for staying. Young people who had decided to stay in their hometowns said that they felt comfortable and secure in their surrounds and that others would 'look out for them'. For example:

> I love Griffith and that is why I have not left, and I have stayed here. I guess it's good growing up in a community where a lot of people know you, so, if you are out, or whatever, people will look out for you. Everyone always says if they walk down the street with me that I know everyone, I just stop and talk to people and whatever. So, it's just home, it's like a big extended family living in Griffith.

> I think country towns, they have more security, and more like a family feel. I think there's a level of intimacy in the relationships you develop in the community.

Feeling Unsafe or Uncomfortable in the City

Related to the first theme, participants who had chosen to stay described experiences of the city where they felt crowded or unsafe. Those in this category said that they didn't like the 'hustle and bustle' of the city and contrasted these with feelings of comfort and safety in their regional homes.

> I was not confident to go to the city and live by myself. I am a big fan of wider populations, not the city. I would go down for a holiday and to go shopping, but I am not a big fan of crowds.
>
> I like my peace and quiet, and I also like to have good space around me. I don't like hearing cars all the time. I am not big on change.

Regional Towns as Open and Accepting of Difference

Young people who had chosen to stay in these hometowns described them as open and tolerant, with many of them attributing this to the multicultural diversity (and the celebration of it) in their communities. Some indicated that visiting the city was their first exposure to overt racism.

> So, Hedland, I have always referred to it as a melting pot of people, because there are so many different cultures here, like, it is not the place to be a massive racist. In Hedland, if you threw a rock, you would hit people from different cultures.
>
> My hometown is very vibrant. It's a quite open and tolerant place to live.

Feelings of Stagnation or Suffocation in a Regional Town

Participants who had decided to leave described regional towns as stifling or restricting. They described not being able to breathe and felt that they were 'freer' in the city. These feelings were related to 'stuckness' or stagnation, as well as having a lack of anonymity in a regional town.

> I always tell people I loved growing up in Griffith, I just could not live in Griffith. I do not hate it, I like to go back and visit, but any more than three days I just get frustrated. I feel like I cannot breathe in Griffith.
>
> … it was my time to make a mark on myself. I didn't know anyone. Nobody knew me. I couldn't walk through the door, and they'd already know who all which family I was from, and who I am. It was just really invigorating to not be known when you walk down the street.

Exploring Identities and Finding Community

For some young people in the study, leaving their hometown for the city offered an opportunity to escape past lives or explore their identities as

adults with new people in a different environment. This was especially the case for LGBT young people whose move to the city was accompanied by a desire to connect and be part of the wider LGBT community.

> So I couldn't get out, basically I couldn't wait to get out of Griffith. That whole like, 'I want to get out of this small town. I'm sick of being the only gay in the village'.

Embodied Experiences of 'Otherness' in the City

Regardless of whether they wanted to stay or go, participants described an acute awareness of bodily differences in the city. This was mostly related to wearing different clothes and having a 'country accent'. While most of the young people who had left their regional area 'couldn't wait to get out of there', some didn't have the positive experience of the city they'd expected:

> I hadn't really thought about my image at all, or what I wore, or my weight until I went to Melbourne. Then I realised that how I looked and what I was wearing wasn't great, wasn't very trendy. I became aware of my figure, which was not a good thing.

> I felt all the people that I went to uni with, even just walking around in the city, they all wore different clothes to me. I didn't wear country boots or flannelette shirts or anything, but they all had the city style and they listened to city music … I don't know, I was just different. Even the way I spoke and everything was different.

Material Affordances of Rural Places

The main reason for wanting to return to a regional area was wanting to re-experience the 'material' (or physical) benefits of country places such as fresh air and open spaces. Participants who were also parents said that they wanted their children to have similar 'carefree' experiences during their childhoods as they had had.

> … we have got the pros of being surrounded by the most beautiful beaches and space, if you go to the beach someone is not right next to you. So, all that kind of stuff I think is very special.

> I always felt I was very lucky, especially here in Griffith. We had open spaces, fresh air, places to run around and get dirt under your fingernails, kick a ball, stuff like that.

> All my life I have always grown up seeing old people having a yard, and they have their roses and their chickens or have their dogs and their cats, and they seem more content, like they have more of a purpose in the country; they can grow their own vegetables here.

Solace of Serenity

In contrast to feelings of stagnation and suffocation, those who had returned to a regional area described atmospheres of stillness and slowness, compared to the city, that felt desirable and comforting. Some young people in this group had also experienced this as a shift, where the initial attraction of the 'fast pace' of the city had 'worn off' for them.

> When I first came back, I moaned, because everything was not at the tips of my fingers anymore. But then coming back and just realising the pace is so much slower here.

> It was horrible [in the city]. It was uncomfortable, I have never driven with heavy traffic before, it was big and scary and I just wanted to come home and I just missed being comfortable in my hometown, because that is all I knew.

Finding Home

Participants talked about 'finding home' as a journey they were still on. Some also uncoupled home from place, equating it with a sense of identity or belonging within themselves regardless of where they were living. Others had found it was only by leaving a regional town they realised where it was that they really belonged.

> At the time that I decided to leave, I remember I was just feeling really disconnected from Port Lincoln, like I could not wait to get out of here kind of thing, really could not wait. But what I have learned over the years is that I can make home wherever I am, I think, my whole journey has been about creating home in myself.

> That is something which, although our cities are quite good for it, I never felt satisfied, because there is a big portion of why I am that it just wasn't. What I really wanted and where I really feel happiest is being back home.

Conclusion: Affect and Materiality

There is not a lot in the findings from this second stage of the EYRA Study that would surprise human geographers or, in fact, any scholar in the social sciences or humanities. However, there is a stark divide between our academic understandings of people-place relations and public policy/discourse. Even within the academy, there is still a tendency to separate thinking from feeling, whereas Schaefer (2022) argues: 'knowledge-making is not just *entangled* with feeling, as some claim (*Feeling* can *shape how we think, under certain circumstances*), but encompassed by it (*Feeling is* necessary *for thinking; there is no thinking that is not feeling*)' (emphasis in the original; p. 5). This accords with the first key message from the EYRA Study, as far as it relates to its participants, and that is: *Regional Australian youth make internal migration decisions according to how they feel.*

Feeling, however, is not just a synonym for affect and emotion but also what we sense—what Dewsbury (2003) refers to as 'knowledge without contemplation'. The blue of the ocean, the green of the trees, the freshness of salty air, the feeling of dirt under fingernails, the rhythm of things, the excitement of things, the stillness of things, or just that peaceful, almost untouchable, feeling of being in a wide, open space. These 'material' qualities of place create desire as well as contentment, comfort and security. This dimension of 'liveability' affects internal migration back to regional Australia (Houghton & Vohra, 2021) and relates to the second key message from the EYRA study: *The material affordances of rural places draw some regional Australian youth back home.*

The third key message from the EYRA Study that emerged over time, partly in response to the stereotypes that seemed to fight against it, was: *Regional youth who choose to stay can experience stigma for that making that decision.* This third message would become central to the 'Finding Home' exhibition which asserted that young people should be able to make decisions about whether they stay, leave or return to a regional area (where they can) according to what works best for them and without prejudice.

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CHAPTER 3

Creating the 'Finding Home' Exhibition

Abstract After considering the nature and role of creative co-production in research contexts, Boyd describes the processes involved in producing artworks for the 'Finding Home' exhibition based on research findings from the Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study. Commencing with work produced by some of the study's participants, Boyd moves on to discuss the commissioning of a set of textile works and a contemporary Aboriginal artwork for the exhibition. The chapter is interwoven with a description of Boyd's own artworks as an artist-geographer, produced in response but also in sympathy with the rest of the exhibition as it emerged. The chapter concludes with some first-hand reflections on curating a research exhibition.

Keywords Creative co-production • Placed-based photography • Craftivism • Aboriginal art • Posthumanism • Research Exhibition

Introduction: Creative Co-production

The co-production of knowledge and its feminist underpinnings have a long history, not just in geography but throughout the social sciences and the humanities (Barry & Keane, 2019; Ersoy, 2017). When it comes to *creative* co-production, Conrad and Sinner (2015) suggest that it takes one of three main forms: participatory arts-based research,

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community-based arts research and collaborative arts. Participatory arts involve engaging and co-creating with research participants, whereas community-based arts research is much more directed at the needs of its 'end users'. Collaborative arts involve bringing diverse perspectives together, usually under the direction of a practising artist. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EYRA Study couldn't include community-based arts research as was originally intended; however, the 'Finding Home' exhibition was made possible through a combination of participatory and collaborative arts, alongside researcher-led creative practice.

There is a plethora of examples of creative co-production within and beyond human geography (see Hawkins, 2018 for a review). In reference to the 'Finding Home' exhibition, however, two recently published examples are particularly relevant as each employed *participatory dissemination* as a strategy. In the first example, Valli (2021) describes participatory dissemination as 'a practice that engages research participants in the interpretation of preliminary research findings, and through arts-based methods, leads to the co-production of visual outputs and research communication for diversified audiences, especially those beyond solely academic readers' (p. 25). The EYRA Study also sought to do this by engaging some of the participants in a creative activity designed to extend and deepen the findings from the earlier, interview stage of the project. The second example is a study by Urbanik and DiCandeloro (2020) which, although based on an in-person creative workshop with research participants, produced creative work for the purposes of exhibition in an art gallery. This imperative of producing work which would eventually be exhibited was also something envisioned as part of the EYRA Study from the outset.

What follows is a process-oriented account of how 16 artworks were produced for the 'Finding Home' exhibition during the latter half of 2020. For most of this time, not only were Australia's state borders closed to interstate travellers but some of us were also living under lockdown orders (i.e. only allowed to leave home for limited periods of time to exercise or access essential goods and services to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus). These conditions made for a different kind of collaboration, a much more distant one, which also imparted greater creative freedoms to all involved.

Place-Based Photography

Method

Various methods of participatory photography, including photovoice and photo elicitation, have been employed by social researchers in the past to explore participants' viewpoints on many issues (Byrne et al., 2016; Ozanne et al., 2013). Within human geography, there has been a growing interest in situated knowledge in relation to affect theory, and the ways in which photography can help orient participants towards the more-than-human world (Alam et al., 2017). Alam et al. (2017) refer to more-than-human-oriented photography as 'photo-response'. Photo-response involves three steps—the first is where participants 'respond to the camera' in the taking of photos, the second is where participants 'respond to the images' by discussing them with a researcher and the third is 'responding to the image locations' where individual participants physically guide the researcher through the locations where the images were taken while reflecting on them. The approach taken in the EYRA Study involved these first two steps but not the third (as it was not physically possible due to constraints imposed by government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic) and so I am referring to it here as 'place-based photography'.

In the interview stage of the EYRA Study, emails and phone numbers were collected as part of the recruitment phase (and kept securely and separately from de-identified transcripts). After an open call, ten participants from the interview stage agreed to take part in the photographic activity. As part of the consent process, young people were given the option to be identified, they gave permission for their images to be used for research purposes (including publication and the research exhibition), and they were not asked to transfer copyright. Understanding that the copyright remained with them as the photographers, all ten participants agreed to be identified by name in association with their photographs.

While it was possible to ask participants to take photos on their mobile phones, they were instead sent a black-and-white disposable film camera. There were several reasons for doing this; foremost was the 'forgiving nature' of black-and-white film and its long-standing association with both art and documentary photography (Grainge, 2002). Another reason was the limited number of shots (24 + 3 in reserve) which meant that participants had to be judicious in how they used them. A less anticipated reason was the tendency of black-and-white photography to elicit

placed-based memories (see Boyd & Gorman-Murray, 2022). Finally, the camera itself, as something unfamiliar to be negotiated and learned, might encourage a different way of thinking, noticing and encountering what were otherwise familiar places (Coats, 2014). Participants were sent the cameras by mail with a plain language statement, consent form, model release forms (should they chose to take photos of people), and one page of instructions which included how to use the camera and some suggestions on how to go about the task:

> It might be difficult to know where to start, but this video on YouTube is a great example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVl6f3Gfe94. These guys use the same camera as you've been sent to take photos of the place that they live in. There are a lot of things about the way they've done this that are good—they take photos of areas and scenes that involve some kind of activity (doesn't have to be human, can be birds or animals), and they take photos of areas or scenery that they like. They also take photos from behind people or from a distance that means that they don't need permission from those people to use their image. I'd like to encourage you to use a similar approach but make it about what's important to you.

Other than this initial guidance, participants were free to take photographs however they wanted. The disposable camera also contained a flash so that it was possible to take photos at night and indoors, but these were of much poorer quality and none of them ended up in the exhibition. After cameras were returned, they were sent on to a film processing lab where they were processed and then scanned. The scans were sent electronically to me ahead of the physical negatives being posted. Each set of scans varied according to how many photographs were 'useable', shots that had 'failed', or some participants not using all the available shots on the roll. Out of each set of scans, and due to interviewing time constraints, I chose four to discuss with participants during a follow-up phone or video chat. The set of four included at least one which had potential to be exhibited and in choosing that one, aesthetic choices like composition, lighting and focus came to bear. The final decision on which photograph to include rested with each participant. For the remainder of the photographs selected for discussion, I just aimed to get a range in locations and subjects.

Participants were interviewed individually for approximately 30 minutes. The interview was semi-structured around three questions. The first question was about their experience of the task. The second question was

about 'why' they'd taken each photograph, and in the third I asked them to imagine being in that place and what it was that they sensed. This third question was a remote attempt at something like Alam et al.'s (2017) 'responding to image locations' stage, but in practice was a poor substitute. Overall, participants found doing this third stage via memory and imagination too confusing and difficult.

When it came to commenting on the task, participants were generally positive and made comments that reinforced the choice of an analogue medium. For example,

> It was taking photos in a different way, where you had to be a lot more conscious of what it was that you were taking a photo of. If you'd just said go out and take a whole lot of photos [with your phone] it wouldn't have been as self-reflective.

> I gave a bit of thought of what I wanted to take but just wasn't sure how it would turn out. You have to really think about it and get the frame right. Using the 'old school' camera definitely brought back more memories.

When it came to taking the photographs, some participants had planned ahead but most had taken a 'roaming' approach (see Bhattacharya & Barry, 2021 on the affordances of roaming), and most had taken all the photographs in one session of around an hour and a half. Regardless of the approach, participants mentioned that the task had helped them to notice things that they would normally take for granted, realising their importance (see Stedman et al., 2014 on visual methods, place attachment and place meaning). Participants also talked about how the task brought up place-based memories for them:

> I hadn't actually stopped and looked around Lincoln for a while. To actually stop and have a look around at what is here, even the colours and stuff like that. It was just a good experience to stop and see what actually is here, and what was important, rather than focussing on what's not here.

> Every corner you walk around, every street, you realise that it does have a significance to you. I found I had a lot of memories.

Some participants described being acutely aware that their photographs would become part of an exhibition and so applied thought to what they

wanted to represent. As such, some participants wanted to represent their town, not just what was important to them.

> I was picking places that sort of described Hedland in a way, through a picture. It's a really industrial town and you have to see how mining is a part of everyone's day regardless of whether you work in a mine.

> I had a lot of fun, actually. It got me out of the house to a lot of places that I wouldn't have gone. It gives you more of an appreciation for home, because you're sort of showing it off like 'these are the good bits' and there are a lot of good bits, so that was nice.

In addition to place-based memories, photographs focussed on the aesthetics of natural environments (Berleant, 1992, 1997), human and non-human relationships (Basu, 2020), belonging and community (Mee & Wright, 2009), and restorative or 'soulful' places (Hooks, 2009). The ten photographs that were mutually chosen to be included in the 'Finding Home' exhibition are reproduced below. Each is preceded by a statement and direct quotation from each young person (and approved by them), which appeared on a label next to each photograph in the exhibition.

Emma

Carla took this photograph, because as time passes her memories of being a child in that place become more vivid. In the photograph, her daughter Emma is eating a cupcake from Bertoldos Bakery, which is opposite the memorial park, just like Carla did when she was a child (Fig. 3.1).

> It's something that's so ingrained in Griffith. Parents do it with their kids, grandparents do it with their grandkids. And when you actually stop and sit, you realise how important that place is to you and other people in Griffith.

Down Oxford Street

Roger took this photograph, because, for him, it captures what he loves about Sydney—energy, community and freedom. In the foreground is a common area in his apartment building, and in the background is Oxford Street which is known as Sydney's Golden (Gay) Mile. The common area

Fig. 3.1 'Emma' by Carla de Valentin

is a sanctuary of sorts where residents are free to sunbathe and socialise (Fig. 3.2).

> Level 3 is a great place to relax. Most weekends other residents are there chilling out, sunbaking, alone or with friends, some having a few drinks, a barbeque or even a party … and it's just fun. Everyone loves it. It's a great place to be on a Sunday afternoon after a night out on Saturday.

Asta

Jasmine took this photograph, because she loves her dog. He's really important to her, especially with her family being in Perth. He's her boy, and he's with her all of the time. Wherever he is, home is (Fig. 3.3).

> He's just sitting there, and you can see the dirt. There's not much grass growing in the background. Grass up here is really hard to grow. The dirt

Fig. 3.2 'Down Oxford Street' by Roger McDonald

and the rocks are mainly what makes up everyone's backyard. His ripped toys are ragged. He needs new toys!

The Swing Set

Vicki took this photograph, because she remembers playing on this swing set as a child at her Nonni's farm just outside Griffith. It moved from the farm back into town with them. It represents family for her and the Italian culture (Fig. 3.4).

It's served three generations. Broken plastic seats have been repaired with pieces of scrap timber; the chains have replacement sections. As Italian immigrants, the Nonni were the original 'reduce, reuse, recycle'. They didn't believe in waste, due to lack of money but also a great respect for the environment. The land provided food for the table and a means to build a life. This I attribute my 'work hard' ethics to.

Fig. 3.3 'Asta' by Jasmine Hair

The Civic Centre

Claire took this photograph of the Civic Centre in Port Lincoln, because she likes going there in the summertime and watching the water. It makes her feel peaceful and excited for summer. The Civic Centre and the foreshore symbolise the heart of the town for her (Fig. 3.5).

> I go and hang out there with my friends. Typically, you'd park your car and go for a walk or a swim. It's where everybody meets. It's a lovely area to be in. Those steps are a stage area where we have performances during festivals. It makes me feel part of a community to be there.

The Jetty

Rebekah took this photograph, because she spent a lot of her childhood and teen years during summer hanging out at the jetty with friends. It has a lot of memories tied to it for her, and she knows a lot of young people who use that space (Fig. 3.6).

Fig. 3.4 'The swing set' by Vicki McRae

> One of my first memories of this place was when a bunch of us went for a swim. We had to work each other up to jump off into the shark cage, and I just remember all of us being so terrified but when we actually did it, we ended up feeling very accomplished, and very lucky to have a place like that.

Out to Sea

Kody took this photograph of her sister at the beach in Port Hedland, because she likes to go there when she needs some time to herself and look out to the horizon. When it's not windy, it can be really peaceful (Fig. 3.7).

> The beach is calming. Nature has a lot to offer. It can actually be peaceful, relaxing and therapeutic. It's a place to escape and be quiet. Sometimes there are no people there, and you've got it all to yourself.

Iron Ore Trains

Jack took this photograph, because he finds that people who live in Hedland are constantly reminded of the 'work' the town does. Even when

Fig. 3.5 'The Civic Centre' by Claire Window

they leave work for the day, it's difficult to escape it. At the same time, it does give him a little bit of pride to know just how much the town produces (Fig. 3.8).

> A lot of people don't understand how long our trains are! They're well over a kilometre long. It intrigues me how far we've come with technology to be able to move such extreme amounts of weight. And yet it's still really relaxing to be there, when you sit at the lookout or walk up the ridge to the bridge to look at the trains.

Almond Trees at Dusk

Jacinda took this photograph, because she feels enticed every year to wander through the almond blossoms when the orchards are in bloom. Almond farming was initially a big risk for farmers in the region. Seeing the almond plantations makes her feel proud of just how much Griffith produces (Fig. 3.9).

Fig. 3.6 'The jetty' by Rebekah Danzic

> I feel at peace here. It's calm and very pretty. A lot of people get family photos taken out the front of the almond trees at this time of year, so it's a sense of home as well as happiness. But it also provides jobs for people, so it's 'giving back'.

Feeling Feet

Tijana took this photograph, because it brings back happy memories of going to the beach near her grandparents' house. She loves the freshness of the sea air, compared to the pollution of the city. Being by the sea gives her a feeling of calm and peace (Fig. 3.10).

> In the photo, the sand is being washed onto the rocks. The ocean, sand and the rocks under your feet feels funny, but it's kinda nice. I like spending time in the natural environment. And when I look out to the expanse of the ocean, it creates a sense of space in my mind.

Fig. 3.7 'Out to sea' by Kody Oborne

Story Quilts

As geographers have noted, it is common for quilt patterns and designs to represent places (Cidell, 2021; Kepner, 1990). Quilts can also be powerful symbols of home, as Hooks (1990, p. 161) explains:

> … I thought about the quilt I covered myself with in childhood and then again as a young woman. I remembered Mama did not understand my need to take that 'nasty, ragged' quilt all the way to college. Yet it was symbolic of my connection to rural black folk life—to home.

However, quilts are not just bed coverings. They can also be considered a fine art form. One of the first examples of quilting as fine art was a 'story quilt' made by Faith Ringold in 1983 through which she narrated her personal experience as an African American woman (Sider et al., 2018).

Tal Fitzpatrick is a contemporary textile artist who 'combines the physical techniques of appliqué quilting and embroidery with the practice of socially-engaged art making' (Fitzpatrick, n.d.). Known as 'craftivism' (a

Fig. 3.8 'Iron ore trains' by Jack Neylon

portmanteau of craft and activism), Fitzpatrick's practice aims to 'amplify the voices of people from diverse backgrounds' while 'challenging patriarchal ideas and values' (Fitzpatrick, 2018a, p. 15). Craftivism is politically driven, but as Fitzpatrick and Dunlap (2021) assert, it is also a caring and ethical practice which enables people with shared, affirmative values to make meaningful connections.

I first met Tal Fitzpatrick when we were both PhD students in the Centre for Cultural Partnerships at the Victorian College of the Arts. Tal's PhD was titled *Craftivism as DIY Citizenship: The Practice of Making Change* (Fitzpatrick, 2018b), and I had the pleasure of witnessing exhibitions of her quilts, and even participating in some of her research projects during that time. We stayed in touch after our studies, and so when the opportunity to contribute to the 'Finding Home' exhibition came about, I was grateful and thrilled when Tal agreed to fulfil one of the commissions. The commissions for the 'Finding Home' exhibition were made possible through savings from the EYRA Study's research budget that were meant to go towards in-person creative workshops for the

Fig. 3.9 'Almond trees at dusk' by Jacinda Violi

co-production of the exhibition solely with research participants. As with the place-based photography, the commissions weren't originally planned but instead presented an opportunity to extend the exhibition in both form and content.

I was keen for this commission to not just represent the testimony of the study's participants but also the places involved in the study. And so, Tal and I discussed the possibility of three story quilts—one for each town. I had been inspired by Tal's 'Back Track' story quilt from 2018 which was created with input from young people at Backtrack Youthworks in Armidale, New South Wales, Australia. As Tal explains on her website, she worked directly with the young people as they shared their experiences of what made Backtrack Youthworks special to them. I asked her to produce something similar based on what the young people in the EYRA Study had said was special to them about their regional hometowns.

Although we worked in the same city, Tal and I were unable to meet in person while she completed the work because of Melbourne's 111-day lockdown in the latter half of 2020 (New York Times, 2020). Even after

Fig. 3.10 'Feeling feet' by Tijana Franco

the lockdown lifted, the policed barrier between metropolitan Melbourne, where Tal lived, and regional Victoria, where I lived, remained in place, and so our communication about the commission took place by email or video chat. After an initial video call where I summarised the findings from the EYRA Study's interviews, we discussed the locations, activities and landmarks that young people had identified within each of their towns. I also compiled a list of links to websites so Tal could see what these places, activities and landmarks looked like. Otherwise, the only request that I made of Tal, apart from the size of the works, was that the dominant colour for the Hedland quilt would be orange/red, green for the Griffith quilt and blue for Port Lincoln—the same colours I had strongly associated with each location during the fieldwork in 2019 and which I hoped would also resonate with people from those towns.

During the production of the quilts, Tal sent through regular updates on her progress, including test pieces and conceptual drawings (see Fig. 3.11). While some modifications were needed for accuracy, Tal was free to represent the towns in her own way, which apart from appliqué also

Fig. 3.11 Tal's conceptual drawings. Photo credit: Tal Fitzpatrick

involved hand painting with screen printing inks. The resulting story quilts were vibrant and rich in detail and iconography. Each of them is presented below, after the short description that accompanied them at the exhibition. Ironically, Tal was also a young person in the millennial age group who had just decided to return to a regional area after studying and working in Melbourne (not something I had known before the commission). In putting together the exhibition label for her pieces, she offered the following quotation:

> I take the telling of people's stories very seriously. I grew up in a regional area of Australia myself, moved to the city to study and work, and I'm now moving back to regional Australia again. As an artist and a young person of a similar age, I can empathise with these stories.

The Hedland story quilt incorporates images that represent Port and South Hedland. Favourite activities like camping and fishing, football and basketball, can be seen as well as the iconic water towers, esplanade hotel and iron-ore trains. The sea turtle and ghost gum are indicative of a love of nature, and the treasured 'mingle mob' bus takes pride of place in the centre (Fig. 3.12).

The Griffith story quilt depicts elements from the landscape including the vineyards and orange groves visible from Scenic Hill. Young people's enjoyment of nature-based activities and local festivals is also apparent as well as iconic landmarks and symbols of settler/post-war immigration (Fig. 3.13).

The Port Lincoln story quilt celebrates the coast and the activities it affords such as ocean fishing, bike riding and swimming. Iconic structures like the jetty and the silos provide a backdrop for the famous Tunarama festival each year. Netball and horse riding were pastimes that young people from this area enjoy as well as an appreciation for live music and the arts (Fig. 3.14).

Text Montage

With Tal's story quilts, there were 13 complete works for the 'Finding Home' exhibition, but as a researcher I was acutely aware that they didn't tell the whole story. By the nature of the works themselves, but more so the guidelines and suggestions provided, the exhibition at this point was largely positive and affirmative of the three regional locations. This overall

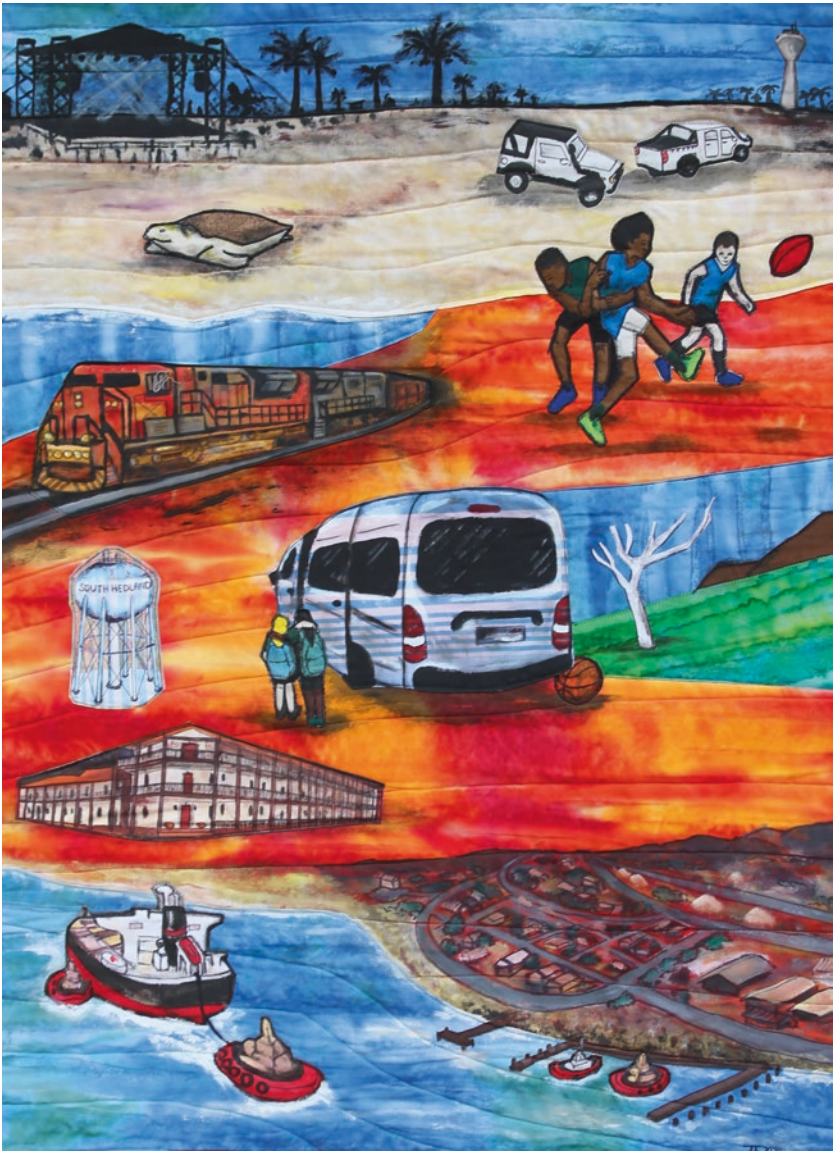

Fig. 3.12 'The Hedland Story Quilt' by Tal Fitzpatrick. Photo credit: Author

Fig. 3.13 'The Griffith Story Quilt' by Tal Fitzpatrick. Photo credit: Author

Fig. 3.14 'The Port Lincoln Story Quilt' by Tal Fitzpatrick. Photo credit: Author

affirmative message was also skewed between those who had chosen to stay and those who had chosen to return, thereby omitting the voices of young people who had chosen to leave and never return for negative reasons. As Rose et al. (2021) argue, the 'problem' with affirmation is not what it does but what it leaves out, such as 'the dark, broken corners of geographical thought where failure, exhaustion, and frailty are real' (p. 14). In sympathy with this idea, I sought not to negate or compromise the affirmative messages of the exhibition but instead do them justice by including other, less affirmative, ones.

As discussed in Chap. 1, there are several researchers around the world who identify as artist-geographers. Although their art takes different forms, they generally understand that it is their 'training in social and cultural geography that influences and impels [their] art practice' (Gorman-Murray, 2018, p. 221). This is why some geographers refer to the practice as geography-art, because the geography, in many ways, takes precedence (Hawkins, 2013). Either way, art takes skill. Patchett and Mann (2018) suggest that there are five aspects to skill of any kind—it is *practical* (concerned with doing something), *processual* (emergent and responsive), *technical* (involving techniques of the body), *ecological* (not just individual but inclusive of the field of relations that make practice possible) and *political* (both micro and macro). Each of these would play a role in creating the text montage.

Having some skill with Adobe Photoshop, I thought I could create a text montage for the exhibition which comprised direct quotations from the entire pool of young people who were interviewed for the EYRA Study. A text montage normally involves replacing a person's image, usually a close-up of their face, with text (see Cross, 2009). There are many different effects, but most enable the image to be seen from a distance and the text to be read on closer inspection. I had the text, which needed to be selectively sorted through, but I didn't have an image and was still unable to travel back to case study locations to take more. And so, I waited, in hope that an image might 'reveal itself'.

According to Huttunen (2006, p. 2), text montage is

> the principle of composition of a text constructed from separable parts, a principle which is based on the alternation between the author's fragmentation and the reader's integration … The bestowal of the general meaning of the text occurs in the reader's mind in reconstructing the connections between the elements of the text. To put it briefly, a montage text is an

> apparently fragmentary (and often heterogeneous) text, which the reader brings together into a unified whole in relation to the general meaning of the text.

The text montage I created for the 'Finding Home' exhibition partially meets this definition. As a researcher, I sorted through over 150,000 words of transcript, distilling them down to approximately 3000 words of 'text fragments' (or phrases of testimony) which I then combined so that it would read as a single narrative while moving through the multiple stories of those who had chosen to stay, leave and/or return. Therefore, the 'montage effect' was partly in the construction but also in the reading, where what might appear to be a single narrative at the start would be disrupted by differences 'along the way' so that the reader would soon realise that it wasn't a single narrative at all. More importantly, I constructed this narrative in thirds so that equal weight would be given to those who had stayed, left (including those who had done so under negative circumstances), and those who had returned having left for a time.

The image for the text montage did eventually reveal itself by happenstance. I was on social media when a friend and former colleague from the youth mental health sector, Mel Thurley, posted a photo of herself with the following quotation:

> I always thought my parents were kooky for wanting to live in the middle of nowhere. I hated it when I was young. I felt asphyxiated and agoraphobic all at once. It was as though there was a world that was orbiting and pulsing and sparkling, where exciting things were happening, and the kids wore better clothes and knew interesting things. Then there was my world, on the dusty, forgotten edge of the other, better world. Long dirt roads with no streetlights. Strange creatures making strange noises in the deafening silence of the black, black night. The post office that was also the fish and chip shop that was also the video store. It was not a place for me. I kicked off my RM Williams boots and ran as fast as I could, as far as I could from there. And now, I find myself running toward it. My feet can't carry me quick enough down open, winding roads, through empty, echoing spaces. Oh, the beautiful, aching irony of being proven wrong … to arrive in the knowing. I am here, and I finally understand. It resonates so deeply; the need to be separate, to be wild, to be on the magnificent, dusty edge of that other, broken world.

Mel's quote, the photograph, and her experience corresponded so well to the composition of the text montage, I asked her if I could use it. She agreed and provided written permission for the use of her quote and approached her friend, Jade Bartlem who had taken the photograph, for permission to use the image as well. The image was taken in colour with a mobile phone and was of low resolution (72 dpi). I thought I could visually tie the participants' photographs and the quilts together in the exhibition if the image were greyscale and the work was printed on fabric, but this also helped to compensate for the poor image quality. Within Adobe Photoshop, I experimented with fonts and colours so that the text would fit and be readable. In converting picture to text, there wasn't enough contrast to delete the image altogether; however, I thought that the penultimate stage, including image and text layers, was visually effective, and so this became the 14th work in the exhibition (see Fig. 3.15). Mel's quote was included on the label accompanying the work when it was displayed, and it was titled 'The Dusty Edge' after her inspiring quotation.

Contemporary Aboriginal Painting on Wood

For more than half my life as an Australian citizen, I never knew whose country I was on. I knew I was on stolen land, but I didn't know the name of the peoples it was stolen from. I now know that I live and work on Dja Dja Wurrung Country and that the institution that currently employs me was first built on the lands of the Wurundjeri people. The majority of Australians over 65 years of age don't know whose lands they live and work on, while 70% of younger Australians [say they] do, although it varies significantly by postcode (ABC, 2021). As a human geographer and an artist, it bothered me that in describing their hometowns, none of the participants in the EYRA Study had acknowledged the traditional custodians of the lands on which their towns were located. While 'they could be forgiven for that', I didn't think that I could.

During my time in Hedland in 2019, I visited Spinifex Hill Studio twice. Located in South Hedland, this art studio supports over 100 emerging, mid-career and established Aboriginal artists from across the Pilbara region. The studio also functions as a 'cultural hub' where people from Indigenous backgrounds share stories and learn new skills (Spinifex Hill Studio, n.d., see also Mackell et al., 2022). In Aboriginal culture, painting goes beyond making and creating; as Butler (2019, p. 91) states, 'visual imagery plays an amplified role in oral cultures where collective memory is

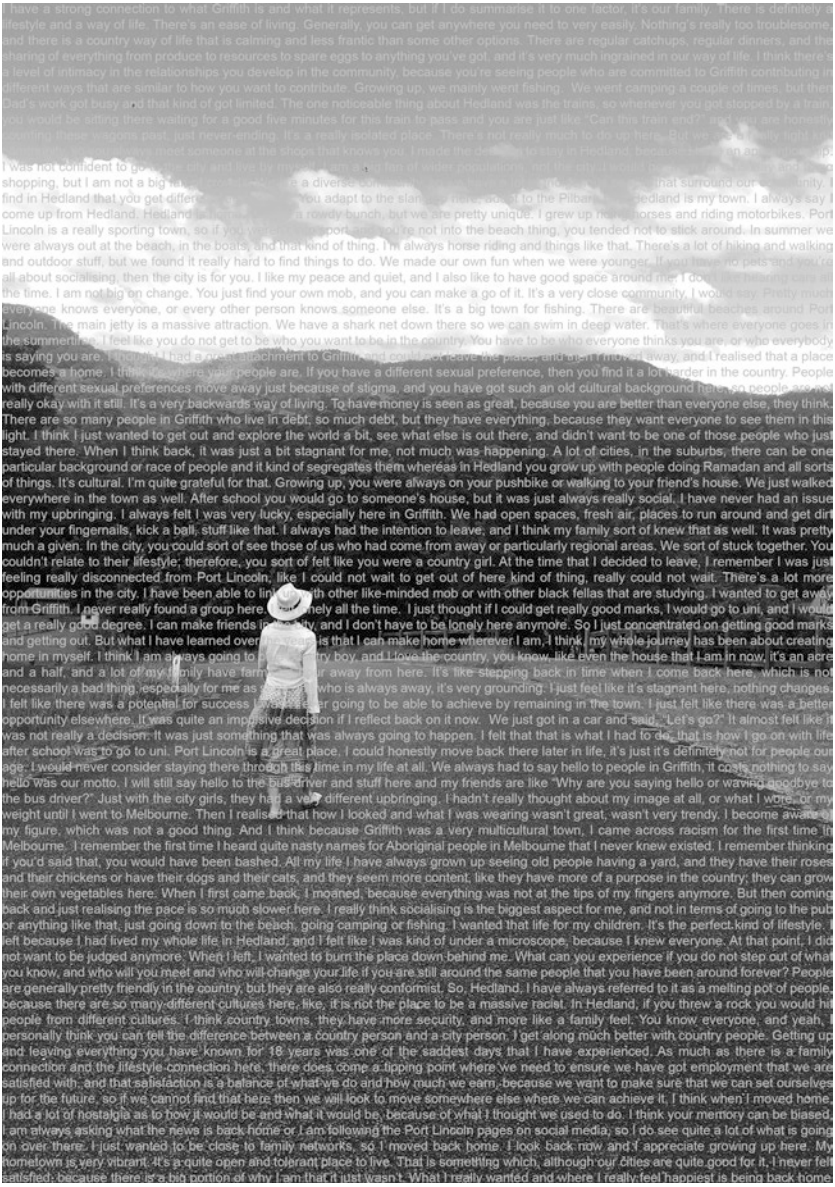

Fig. 3.15 'The dusty edge' by Candice Boyd

transmitted through means other than the written word'. Furthermore, Aboriginal art often depicts Country, which, as Harrison et al. (2016, p. 1321) point out, is 'the very anchor of life for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people … central to Indigenous identities and history, and [is] a powerful signifier of overall health and well-being'.

With funds remaining for another commission, I approached then centre manager at Spinifex, Sophia Constantine, about the possibility of engaging an artist from there to respond to the findings from the EYRA Study. After speaking with her team, Sophia said that two artists—mother and daughter Lorna Dawson and Kimberley McKie—would accept the commission. In addition to being profiled artists, Lorna (see www.spinifexhillstudio.com.au/artist-profiles/lorna-dawson) and Kim (see www.spinifexhillstudio.com.au/artist-profiles/kimberley-mckie) both worked at the studio, and Kim is now the studio's coordinator. However, this commission was different to Tal's for several reasons. There is a shameful history of cultural appropriation, gross underpayment, and the 'faking' of Aboriginal art in Australia (Butler, 2019). Spinifex Hill Studio is a signatory to the Indigenous Art Code which protects Aboriginal artists from such exploitation (see Indigenous Art Code Limited, 2019). Thus, I didn't speak to Lorna or Kim directly for the length of the commission, with all communication happening via the centre manager.

I had finished the text montage by this time and so posted a full-size test print of it along with a research summary and a note to Lorna and Kim to use whatever they wanted from this as their inspiration. As a way of adding further interest and variety to the exhibition, I also had an idea that Lorna and Kim could paint an object of some sort which could be a central, sculptural feature. Incidentally, a family member of mine had recently given me a piece of wood from a fallen Southern Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) from his nearby house, so I prepared the wood with an acrylic polymer and sealer, thinking that Lorna and Kim could paint its surface. There was also a certain symbolism in something from Dja Dja Wurrung Country, where the exhibition was conceived, travelling over 5000 km to Kariyarra Country to be painted and then exhibited in the first of the 'Finding Home' exhibitions. I was delighted when Lorna and Kim agreed to do so.

Between them, the artists agreed that Kim would take the lead in their collaboration. This was exciting as it meant that the work would be created from the perspective of a young person of similar age to those involved in the EYRA Study. In community contexts, older Aboriginal people and

Elders are valued for their wisdom and life experiences, although these roles and relationships have been eroding (Busija et al., 2020). Rather than reinterpret findings from the EYRA Study directly, Kim and Lorna chose to emphasise the importance of intergenerational knowledge sharing and caring among Aboriginal people in general, and for them especially. As Kimberley explains:

> To my mother and I, the passing down of our knowledge and culture to me and my siblings is very important, as it gives us an opportunity to see what it was like for my mother to grow up, and how we will be able to learn and grow to make the future better for all the next generations to come. If my mother didn't pass down her knowledge and culture to us, it would be harder for us to see the correct path in life for us to take to ensure we have a good future, and place to live in, for our next generations.

The above quote from Kim was included in the label for the work at the exhibition. The three themes of 'growth', 'knowledge' and 'future' tied in with the exhibition very well. The painting combines Lorna's fine dot techniques with Kimberley's contemporary style and symbolises intergenerational support through a mother's hand supporting her daughter's as she 'learns and grows'. The 'seed' of knowledge sits within the brick-red dirt of the Pilbara region (see Fig. 3.16).

Silent Video Projection

As with the text montage and the contemporary Aboriginal painting, the silent video projection was designed to fill a perceived gap in the exhibition. Just as human geographers acknowledge and respect the world's First Nations Peoples, we also appreciate that the human is not at the 'centre' of our planet—people are interconnected with, and dependent upon, non-human (or 'more-than-human') entities (Panelli, 2010; Williams et al., 2019). Known as 'posthumanism' throughout the social sciences and humanities, this idea not only challenges the sovereignty of the human subject but also increases the accountability and responsibility that humans have in relation to the more-than-human world (see Braidotti, 2013, 2019). At a time when the consequences of anthropogenic climate change are undeniable (e.g. Utsumi & Kim, 2022), the concept of posthumanism and its associated ethics of care are vitally important.

Fig. 3.16 'Passing down our knowledge' by Kimberley McKie and Lorna Dawson. Photo credit: Tahnee Newton

Within the 'Finding Home' exhibition, the young people's photographs were appropriately human-centric, especially when accompanied by their personal reflections. Although depicting the human and non-human, the story quilts revolved around favourite places and activities for regional youth growing up in the three towns. The text montage was obviously human-centric as was the contemporary Aboriginal painting (or perhaps less so with its subtle references to Country) as it celebrated intergenerational relationships among Aboriginal people. So, for one last exhibit and in the time remaining, I thought it was possible to produce a work which introduced the concept of posthumanism to exhibition audiences by highlighting the more-than-human environments of the EYRA Study's participating towns.

There was a lot of unused video footage collected during fieldwork in 2019, some of it filmed in collaboration with Dr Elizabeth (Libby) Straughan. I approached Libby, also an artist-geographer, in late 2020 to see if she would be interested in collaborating with me on the production

Fig. 3.17 'Posthuman landscapes' by Candice Boyd and Elizabeth Straughan. Photo credit: Author

of an experimental video. She agreed, and as lockdown orders had lifted by then, we were able to collaborate in person. We met over several sessions to work on different parts of the video and worked independently in between. We conceived of a video that made use of the panoramic footage we had collected, with a 'text crawl' (slow moving text) running through the centre. Libby composed the writing for the text crawl while I sorted through and edited the video footage. Our thinking, alongside a description of our writing and film-making practices, was recently published (Boyd & Straughan, 2022). The resulting film was silent, ran on a loop, and was projected on to a wall in each of the 'Finding Home' exhibitions (see Fig. 3.17) except for the final one in Canberra where we instead provided a QR code so that it could be accessed via the internet and viewed on a mobile phone (see https://vimeo.com//502416861). The label accompanying the video at exhibition included the following definition:

> Posthumanism refers to a critique of Humanism, emphasizing a change in our understanding of the self and its relation to the natural world, technology,

> biotechnology. The notion of what it means to be human in the 21st century no longer reflects the ideas of 18th-century Humanism. We are gradually becoming aware that man [*sic*] is not the center of the universe [but rather a part of] a multidimensional network of beings entangled with other beings. (Anastasiia Raina, Eye on Design Magazine, 2019)

Conclusion: Curating a Research Exhibition

> Curators are more than finders. They organise content. Helping to bring order from chaos. Curators create an organizational framework, presenting their curated output in a coherent and logical frame. The art of honing down large collections of content to a digestible, coherent arrangement of editorial elements is often painfully difficult. The art is in the edit, culling the avalanche of information into a relevant curated collection (Rosenbaum, 2014).

The above quotation describes what curators normally do, at least those with access to an archive. However, when it comes to curating an exhibition based on research findings, the curator starts not with works of art or historical objects but with knowledge. Curatorial skills still apply—organising content within a logical frame, aiming for a coherent exhibition, and 'culling' information down to what is most relevant. The more difficult part of curating a research exhibition is guiding the creation of art. Encouraging creative freedom and constraining it at the same time is a kind of 'reverse curation' where the curator of a research exhibition is not selecting from a wider catalogue of work but exerting influence over what is produced before it even exists. This creates a bind, contra to creativity, and is difficult territory to negotiate. Trusting in people based on rapport, having faith in the creative process of another, and keeping lines of communication open, are key.

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CHAPTER 4

Staging and Evaluating the 'Finding Home' Exhibition

Abstract In this chapter, Boyd describes the staging and evaluation of the 'Finding Home' exhibition within the context of university 'impact agendas'. The notion of societal impact is critiqued before the tasks involved in staging the 'Finding Home' exhibition are detailed. The findings from the exhibition's evaluation, which included 100 visitor surveys and 31 phone interviews with exhibition audiences, are also presented in this chapter. The chapter concludes with reflections on the labour involved in bringing a research exhibition to multiple publics.

Keywords Societal impact • Impact agendas • Exhibition staging • Exhibition evaluation • Stakeholder engagement • Visitor surveys

Introduction: Societal Impact

Societal impact has become a feature of academic research to such an extent that commercial academic publishers are now invested in the notion. Recent research undertaken for SpringerNature suggests that there is an illogical gap between academics' desires for societal impact and how they evaluate their performance in this domain (Arkbright et al., 2020). An over-reliance on citations or conference presentations as a 'yardstick' is part of the problem as these activities are unlikely to reach non-academic audiences on their own.

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Societal impact is defined by the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) as 'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia' (UKRI, 2022). While it is a lofty ideal, there has been an ongoing debate within academia about how impact strategies shape impact practices and ultimately affect the production of academic knowledge (de Jong & Balaban, 2022). The 'impact agenda', as it has become known across many universities, ultimately influences what academic research does and doesn't get funded (de Jong & Balaban, 2022; Martin, 2011).

Zheng et al. (2021) analysed 6882 case studies submitted to the UK's REF and Australia's EI (Engagement and Impact assessment) to determine the main types of societal impact employed by academic researchers in these countries. Using a text mining approach, they identified three types of practice. The first might be considered as 'buy-in' but the authors describe it as 'recognition of new opportunities among potential users' (Zheng et al., 2021, p. 7414). The set of practices that make up this first type of activity includes engaging with stakeholders and end-users to determine what sort of research-based solutions they need. The second practice type was 'length of use', which relates to whether the adoption of research findings has been 'constant' or 'sustained over time', and the third practice type was 'experience improvement for users' (Zheng et al., 2021, p. 7414).

Ozanne et al. (2017) contend that '[f]or research to have societal impact, scholars must engage with stakeholders ranging from consumers, businesses, and nonprofits, to media and the government' (Ozanne et al., 2021, p. 127). In so doing, they support a 'relational engagement approach' where knowledge is created through frequent interaction with these outside agencies. Societal impact, in this sense, is not only measured by discrete outcomes or 'packages' but processes of engagement and the quality of relationships (Ozanne et al., 2017). A relational engagement approach, Ozanne et al. (2017) argue, makes a space for the creation of both traditional and non-traditional academic and non-academic research outputs, but also productive interactions, improved social networks and enhanced capacity which can be carried forward into future projects. According to these authors, increased research awareness leading to greater research use and societal benefit is reliant on impact strategies that prioritise relationships (Ozanne et al., 2017).

Being able to demonstrate how a research project intends to benefit society is a feature of the Australian Research Council's Discovery Scheme

which funded the Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study. Early stakeholder engagement, akin to Ozanne et al.'s (2017) relational engagement approach, was a distinct phase of the project (Stage 1), regional youth were consulted directly about their personal experiences (Stage 2) but also interpreted that knowledge through the co-production of creative works (Stage 3). In this chapter, Stage 4 of the EYRA Study—the staging and evaluation of the 'Finding Home' exhibition—is described. The 'staging' and the 'evaluation' are presented in separate sections. The 'staging' section has a similar rationale to Chap. 3 of this book in that it is described in sufficient detail to be instructive. The 'evaluation' section describes how the exhibition was evaluated as well as summarising the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected via visitor surveys and phone interviews.

Staging the Exhibition

As an artist-geographer who maintains a modest art practice, I had some experience of planning, installing and contributing to art exhibitions prior to 'Finding Home', but I had never attempted a touring exhibition. Thankfully, there are freely available resources on the internet to help artists and curators plan their exhibitions. I found the Museums and Galleries of New South Wales (NSW) website (Museums & Galleries of NSW, n.d.) particularly useful. In addition to several 'factsheets', this website includes a link to a curatorial toolkit produced in Canada, which I can highly recommend (see 2010 Legacies Now, 2010).

If you want to exhibit in a public art gallery, then you need to approach them at least one year ahead of when you would like your exhibition to be staged. Programmes are typically planned a year in advance, so it makes sense to contact galleries as far in advance as you can. I was in contact with galleries in Port Hedland and Port Lincoln a year before 'Finding Home' but struggled to make contact with the Griffith Regional Art Gallery until I was able to visit in person. While I was constrained by pandemic lockdowns, it is also worthwhile to note that emails and phone calls can go astray. It's important to 'turn up' and meet with people face to face. It is also important to appreciate that when you talk to gallery coordinators, you are in their world. With any kind of engagement outside of the academy, it's important to abandon 'academic speak'. If you have an existing arts practice, no matter how small, then start there. Recognition and respect are as much a part of the art world as any other.

The then coordinator of the Courthouse Gallery+Studio in Port Hedland, Elisa Trifunoski, whom I met in person in March 2020, scheduled the 'Finding Home' exhibition for late March to early May 2021. Georgina Shirley, coordinator of Nautilus Arts Centre in Port Lincoln, whom I contacted by phone in July 2020, scheduled the exhibition for June 2021. Ray Wholohan, coordinator at Griffith Regional Art Gallery, met with me in person in early December 2020 after several months of pandemic lockdowns. Although the programme was already full, Ray agreed to stage the exhibition from September to October 2021 in their Gallery B, limiting the scheduled exhibition to Gallery A. He agreed to do so because he thought that the 'Finding Home' exhibition would be meaningful for the people of Griffith.

Gallery Agreements

Depending on the timelines for the production of artwork, there is an inevitable delay between the informal agreement with a gallery and the formal agreement, although some galleries require artists/curators to submit a formal concept proposal as a first step which they accept (or not) in writing (2010 Legacies Now, 2010). The informal agreement between artist/curator and gallery is mainly for the sake of programming at which point you might be asked to submit a 'hero' image to the gallery for inclusion on their website. A 'hero' image can either be of a completed work, a section of a work or a comparable work. In the case of the Courthouse Gallery, the first venue for the 'Finding Home' exhibition, there were no completed works at the time that the exhibition went up on the gallery's website and so Tal Fitzpatrick agreed that we could use a section of her 'BackTrack' story quilt she'd produced in 2018 as it was indicative of what her work in the exhibition would look like. Interestingly, some visitors came to the opening night of the exhibition in Port Hedland based on this image as they were quilters themselves.

Works need to be completed before an exhibition agreement can be drawn up and signed as it needs to include a schedule of works and their replacement value for the purposes of insurance. Galleries accept works on 'consignment', which allows the gallery to pay for the price of artworks after they've been sold. As such, the schedule will usually include a replacement value and a sale value. In the case of the 'Finding Home' exhibition, I decided that works would not be for sale, and so it was essential that this was specified in the agreement. My reasoning for not selling works was

that they had already been publicly funded by the Australian Research Council, so it was unclear where any profits would go. Also, being publicly funded research, there was a sense of 'giving back' to the people and communities who had participated in the project. Therefore, it had been agreed in advance that framed photographs would be returned to participants at the end of the tour, the story quilts would be donated to a community organisation within each town, the contemporary Aboriginal painting would be donated to an Aboriginal organisation, and I offered the text montage to the Regional Australia Institute in Canberra, which they accepted.

Apart from a schedule of works, gallery agreements assign responsibilities to the curator and the gallery coordinator, which includes a commitment to the exhibition dates, an opening night (or reception), expenses related to publicity and promotion, installation costs, insurance cover, transportation costs, provision of labels and assistance with installation and de-installation of the exhibition. Each of the galleries I worked with required me to be there for the installation but took responsibility for the de-installation. The artist/curator is normally responsible for transportation costs. The gallery covers insurance and usually provides labels. The gallery provides some promotion for the exhibition, maintains the exhibition (including cleanliness), and has a duty of care for the work to prevent damage or deterioration. Some, but not all, galleries will keep a record of attendance. The agreement also includes a floor plan of the exhibition layout, which, although not binding, is an important exercise to ensure that the artworks will fit within the gallery space. Galleries provide floor plans with measurements, but artists/curators need to devise their own layouts, which, depending on the size of the gallery, may include the 'stacking' of displays (i.e. hanging works above and below one another). Gallery agreements will also include a clause regarding termination of the agreement, which is usually 60 days' notice for either party.

Preparing Artworks, Packing and Logistics

There are various considerations when it comes to hanging 2D art in a gallery (Museums & Galleries of NSW, 2019a). Probably the most crucial is whether the gallery allows wall fixing or uses art track. Art track is a hanging system where cables with moveable hanging hooks are suspended from a track which is attached to the top of the wall. Wall fixing is usually by a screw or nail into a hard wall or a screw with a backing into a gyprock

plasterboard. I've noticed a difference with gallery coordinators who are also artists as they tend to be very forgiving about gallery walls, or even floors or ceilings. A gallery close by to where I live in regional Victoria, Australia still bears the marks from an exhibition ten years ago where the artist-curators broke through the brick floor of one of the galleries to display a work from underneath, which they later filled in with concrete and painted over. Strangely, and although it has other benefits, art track is a way of protecting gallery walls from art. Regardless, artwork is likely to damage the wall in some way.

Photographs don't always need a fixture. It is possible to have them printed on a light material like corflute or foam board and then stick them to the gallery wall using a removable adhesive. The exhibition alongside 'Finding Home' in Gallery A of the Griffith Regional Art Gallery was a selection of photographs from *Australian Geographic* magazine of people and sites within regional Australia. All these photographs were printed on foam board and stuck to the gallery wall. In addition to being lightweight and, therefore, cheaper to transport, they are also less susceptible to damage. For 'Finding Home' I decided to frame the photographs. Because the photographs were black and white, the frames seemed more in keeping with the aesthetic but, also, frames are thought to draw the viewer in and hold their focus for longer, which is particularly important when the photographic display is also presenting an 'argument' (Harper, 2003).

Custom framing at the size and quantity for the ten photographs in 'Finding Home' was not economical, so I purchased some 'off the shelf' frames instead. It seems obvious, but if you don't have your photographs custom framed then you must find frames first and print your photographs second. The frames I found were a standard poster size (61 × 91 cm) with a matt board insert, a black frame and a plastic sheet instead of a piece of glass. I had the images professionally printed to fit the matt board, bought foam board and mounted the photographs onto the foam board backing with a spray adhesive before placing them back into the frame. They were then sealed with framing tape. Although it took more effort, this was about 20% of the cost of custom framing without compromising too much on how the photographs presented visually.

Tal's story quilts contained a 'rod pocket' for a hanging rod at the top of each work. The quilts were heavy enough to hang well from a single rod. When Tal hangs her work in galleries, she often uses a stick of bamboo which is held in place by a nail at each end. Knowing it wasn't possible to use nails in each venue, I constructed hanging rods for each quilt out of

metal piping, capped on both ends with rubber stoppers. Drilling through the rubber stoppers, I attached a piping cord to each rod. I had the text montage printed on canvas fabric, which was much lighter than Tal's quilts, so asked the fabric printer if they could finish the work with a rod pocket on the top and bottom. I constructed hanging rods in the same way for this work as for the story quilts. The painting on wood was presented on a plinth, which each gallery already had, and the silent video projection was loaded onto a USB drive.

The labels for the exhibition were in preparation well before the artwork was completed. As Hawkins (2021) notes, labels do 'discourse work' which can often be exceeded by their supplementation with QR codes, web links or other printed materials. While it's possible to complicate labels in this way, I was relying on the labels for 'Finding Home' to do most of the discourse work for the exhibition. The main reason for this was the inclusion of direct quotations from the regional youth who'd taken part as well as quotations from the commissioned artists. This would place the works clearly in the context of the larger qualitative study on which they were based. This also meant the labels went through a 'member checking' process to ensure they met the approval of those who had offered the quotations. After adopting a traditional format for the labels (see Museums & Galleries of NSW, 2021), direct quotations were incorporated as part of the description of each work and printed at A4 or A3 (much larger than normal art labels) on phototex—a recyclable and reusable polyester fabric, adhesive material which could be used across all four exhibitions (Starleaton Holdings, 2021).

Packing and crating is a key consideration when it comes to touring exhibitions, because artworks can be damaged through repeated handling, changes in microclimates and movement during transit (Museums and Galleries of NSW, 2019b). Depending on the fragility of works, a specialist art carrier might be needed, otherwise work can be wrapped in protective material such as bubble wrap and cardboard or packed into plastic containers before placing in a crate. Palletised crates are made from wood with a pallet attached to the bottom so that they can be lifted by a hydraulic lifter or forklift. You will need a palletised crate if you want to transport your crate through a logistics company. Some logistics companies base transport costs on cubic volume, not weight, and many of them won't take glass. I was not aware of this when I was framing the photographs for 'Finding Home', and so it was fortunate that the frames I bought did not have glass in them. I made other mistakes, though, mostly relating to trusting in the first instance

that goods would be delivered on time. The artwork for the second exhibition in South Australia didn't make it in time for the installation or the opening night, because it had been sitting in an interim depot in Western Australia for two weeks. If I have one piece of advice when it comes to crating and transporting through a private carrier, it's to check with them every day to make sure your crate is on the move!

Installation

Artists/curators should be present at the installation to work with gallery coordinators in determining whether the preliminary layout works well and whether the appearance of the exhibition works spatially (2010 Legacies Now, 2010). Things like the flow of foot traffic through the space and the order in which audiences will encounter works are also relevant. I was present for the installation for three out of four exhibitions for 'Finding Home'. I was unable to travel to Griffith for the installation there because the border between Victoria and New South Wales, Australia, was closed at that time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In each case, however, the preliminary layout was abandoned for a more intuitive approach which involved responding to the space of the gallery. It's difficult to describe how this is done, except that it is about how things feel in a space as much as it's about practical considerations. For the exhibition at Griffith, Ray called me multiple times during the installation and sent photographs about how it was coming together. He respectfully asked me to make decisions about placement, but it became apparent during the process of consultation that it was better for Ray to make those decisions than me, because he was in the space, and he knew the space. His layout allowed the story quilts, with all their colours, and the painting on wood, to be encountered from the back of the gallery which added an extra dimension to the visitor experience (see Fig. 4.1).

When it comes to hanging photographs, there is a standard height which is 150 cm from the floor to the centre of the picture. The formula for calculating this is 'Height of the artwork ÷ 2 + 150 cm = Top of the artwork' (Museums & Galleries of NSW, 2019a). This is the optimal viewing height for the average, standing person, which will be less optimal for people of short stature or people using wheelchairs which may be a consideration depending on who your main audiences are likely to be. Most galleries have a toolkit with the essential tools for fixing work like a cordless drill, tape measure and spirit level. Most galleries will also have fixed,

Fig. 4.1 'Finding Home' exhibition at the Griffith Regional Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ray Wholohan

flexible lighting. Although most have fixed or portable projectors, not all of these will take a USB drive. It was again fortunate and unplanned that the gallery in Port Lincoln had a second portable projector with this facility as their regular projector didn't. Neither did the projector at the Courthouse Gallery in Port Hedland and so an iPad was used to run the silent video projection on a loop. The other consideration for projections is whether the gallery has a relatively dark space and a suitable wall to project on to. At the Courthouse Gallery, the only suitable space was in a 'back room' behind the main gallery space which meant that some visitors didn't realise it was there. In contrast, the Nautilus Arts Centre in Port Lincoln, the largest gallery space of the three, had a darkened corner created by an adjacent dark-coloured wall as well as the ability to turn the lights off in this section, which were ideal conditions for the video projection. The size of this gallery space also meant that the photographs could be displayed across one entire wall (see Fig. 4.2).

Last but not least is the inclusion of an introductory, information panel which would normally be encountered at the start of an exhibition. In addition to providing some background and context, an information panel

Fig. 4.2 'Finding Home' exhibition at the Nautilus Arts Centre in Port Lincoln. Photo credit: Author

helps set the 'entrance narrative'. The entrance narrative, from museum studies, refers to the preconceptions, life experiences and worldviews that visitors bring with them to an exhibition (Doering & Pekarik, 1996). Thus, an information panel, especially when it comes to a research exhibition, should provoke audiences to be conscious about what their personal entrance narrative might be. The information panel for 'Finding Home' was designed to do several things. First, it acknowledged and affirmed the traditional custodians of the land on which the work was made. Second, it embedded the exhibition in the larger study from which the findings were obtained. Third, it raised youth outmigration as a relevant social issue for the region in which the exhibition was taking place, and fourth, it challenged visitors' personal narratives around this social issue. Finally, it prompted people to complete the visitor survey at the end of their visit and acknowledged the exhibition funder and its partners. The information panel for 'Finding Home' was printed on phototex at A0, the same size as the textile works in the exhibition (see Fig. 4.3).

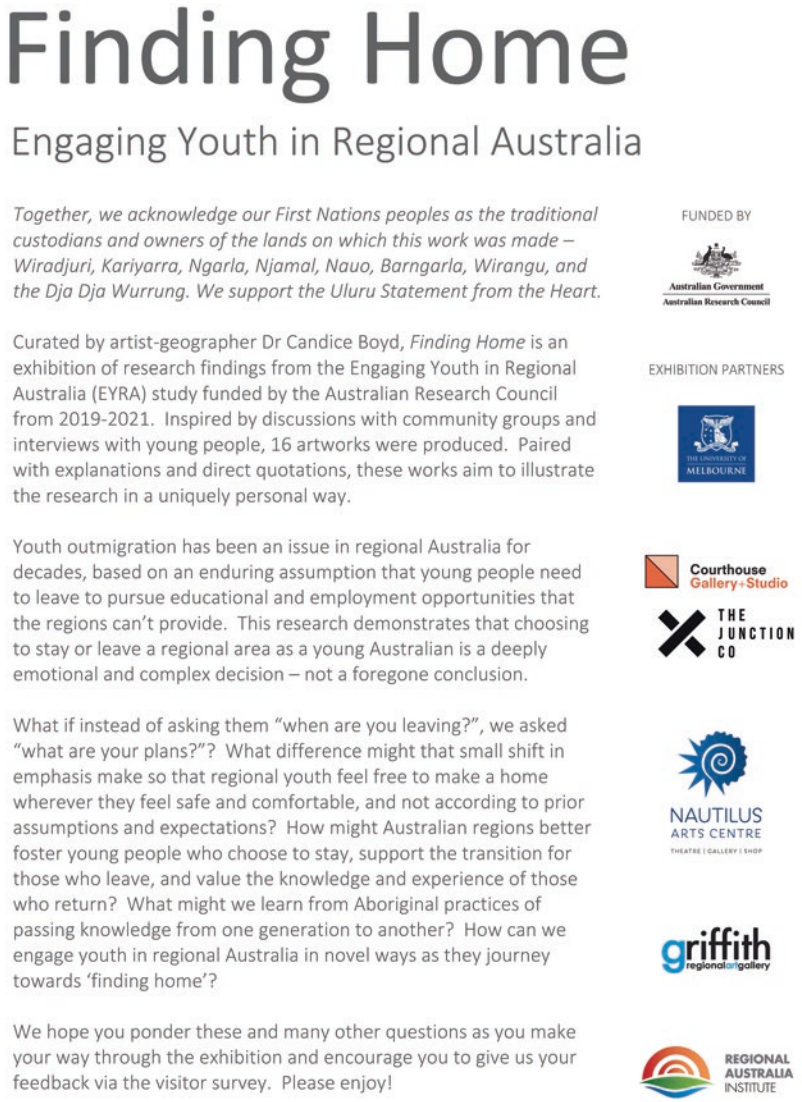

Fig. 4.3 'Finding Home' information panel

Media, Promotion and Opening Nights

A reasonable critique of art exhibitions as a method of knowledge translation is that they attract audiences of a certain demographic—mostly white, educated, middle-aged women. At least, this is the case for both urban and regional art galleries in Australia (Steele & Huxley, 2010). Nonetheless, the eventfulness of an art exhibition creates further opportunities, via conventional media and social media channels, to bring the associated research to a wider public. The Australian Communications and Radio Authority (2020) estimates that 18% of Australians aged 18–44 years and 49% of Australians aged 45 years and older listen to AM (news) radio weekly, while 29% of regional Australians across both age groups listen to AM radio at least once a week. Furthermore, a recent survey published in *The Conversation* found that 61% of 'country' news readers prefer to get their news from their local newspaper. Although the social media page for the EYRA Study was originally set up to recruit young people to the interview stage of the project, it became useful as a platform to promote the exhibitions leading up to each event. Similarly, the event of the exhibition attracted local and national media attention—radio and press—which was then reposted online and shared on the study's social media page.

I'm not aware of research which indicates that media outlets are more likely to contact researchers around a public event than they are from a standard press release. However, it was certainly my experience with 'Finding Home' that journalists became aware of the research because of the exhibition and its surrounding publicity. In all, I took part in 24 media engagements relating to the research and the exhibition, including print and radio (e.g. 'Regional youth leave home lured by city lights but some dreams are shattered', 2021). A local newspaper journalist in Griffith did a series of three newspaper articles leading up to the exhibition, without my knowledge—'Art frames why youth can leave' (2021), 'Exhibition on youth in regional Australia postponed' (2021) and 'Finding Home exhibition finally here' (2021)—which were clearly oriented around the exhibition as an anticipated event in the town.

An opening night (or reception) is an early evening event which is often promoted alongside exhibition dates. Opening night performs several functions such as introducing the exhibition and acknowledging those who have been involved, and so it's important the exhibition's curator attends. Opening nights are also free social events that are usually catered for with food and drink. There is a lot of variation as to whether the gallery

will provide the catering, organise the catering which you must pay for or leave the catering up to the artist-curator to organise. In most cases, however, it's something that needs to be included in the project's budget.

I produced a series of four, themed flyers for the opening nights of the 'Finding Home' exhibition (see Fig. 4.4), and mistakenly, in hindsight, spent time and money on distributing these to shops and venues in each of the towns in the week leading up to the exhibitions. Other than potentially raising awareness, I'm not convinced that this activity had any effect on attendance at the opening nights. Rather, attendance seemed to rely on the activities of the gallery—their advertising on social media, distributing flyers through their emailing lists, and direct invitations to members of the community who had lasting connections with the gallery. As such, attendance seemed to relate to the gallery's enthusiasm and efforts to support the exhibition as well as their standing in the community and the strength of their community connections.

Leading up to the opening of the 'Finding Home' exhibition in Port Hedland, we were convinced that I wouldn't make it to opening night. From March 2020 to March 2022, Western Australia's border was closed to national and international travellers for 697 days due to the COVID-19 pandemic (The Guardian, 2 March 2022). There were just a few weeks between the Delta and Omicron 'waves' where Australia had zero cases of community transmission of the coronavirus, and these coincided with the exhibition opening in Port Hedland when WA opened to travellers from Victoria for a few weeks. The opening of 'Finding Home' at the Courthouse Gallery+Studio in Port Hedland was the most successful of the four, with over 70 people in attendance. The exhibition was opened by the Honourable Stephen Dawson MP, local member for the Western Australian parliament. It was also a delight that Lorna Dawson and Kimberley McKie attended the opening and were pictured alongside their joint artwork (Fig. 4.5).

Due to the delays in the transportation of artwork from Port Hedland, Western Australia, to Port Lincoln, South Australia, the opening night at that location needed to be cancelled and rescheduled for a week later. This coincided with a long weekend (public holiday) in Port Lincoln which meant that none of the gallery staff could attend, and many local people were out of town. Sadly, less than 20 people attended this opening night which was opened by Councillor Faye Davis, who had been a great supporter to the exhibition and the research from the start. CEO of West Coast Youth and Community Support in Port Lincoln, Joanne Clark, who

Fig. 4.4 Opening night flyers. Design credit: Author

Fig. 4.5 Opening night at the Courthouse Gallery+Studio in Port Hedland. Photo credit: Tahnee Newton

had also been a keen supporter of the EYRA Study, performed a unique and powerful 'mindful' Acknowledgement of Country. In addition to the national media attention around the event, I had the opportunity to work with Paul Rohan from Eyre Media before the exhibition ended at the Nautilus Arts Centre as he created a 360 virtual (online) gallery of the exhibition, and so the time and effort spent in that location was still worthwhile. Paul's virtual gallery can be viewed online here until 2026: http://www.candiceboyd.net/finding-home-virtual-gallery.html.

I only made it to Port Lincoln for the installation and opening, because I dashed across the border one week earlier than planned and one day before it was closed by the South Australian government due to new coronavirus cases in Melbourne, Victoria. Melbourne would go into its fourth lockdown during this time, closing its border to New South Wales (NSW) which also went into lockdown for the second half of 2021. This initially meant postponing the exhibition in Griffith NSW indefinitely. Thankfully, Griffith was one of the first areas of regional NSW to 'reopen' and so the exhibition went ahead, but the border closure between Victoria and NSW would remain in place until December 2021 which meant that I couldn't be there. Furthermore, COVID-19-related restrictions in Griffith, post-lockdown, meant that they couldn't have an opening.

Liz Ritchie, CEO of the Regional Australia Institute, a nonprofit nonpartisan think tank, became aware of the EYRA Study in 2019 after I'd sent her a copy of the industry report based on the initial stage of stakeholder roundtable discussions. She responded by inviting me to exhibit at the institute's hub, which has an informal exhibition space. The Regional Australia Institute (RAI), located in Australia's capital city of Canberra, is heavily involved in research and policy relating to regional Australia and fosters close connections to government departments, regional nonprofits and businesses, as well as elected parliamentarians. Although open to the public, the exhibition at RAI was different in that its primary audience comprised professionals associated with either nonprofit or government agencies and organisations. To maximise engagement with this audience, it was decided, in consultation with Emilie MacIssac, RAI's events coordinator, not to have an official opening but a 'Meet the Artist' event early in March 2022, before the exhibition ended. Twenty-six professionals representing government departments and agencies registered but as with the earlier exhibitions, the event coincided with a COVID-19 outbreak in Canberra which affected attendance and even the ability for RAI's CEO to attend. For those who were able to attend (around 20), I conducted a 'floor talk' which involved taking visitors through the exhibition before finishing with a convivial, catered event funded by RAI (see Fig. 4.6). I had also planned to organise visits to the exhibition by groups of school students while it was on display at RAI, but the COVID outbreak in Canberra at the beginning of 2022 resulted in a governmental ban on school excursions, which prevented this from happening.

Only one gallery out of the four passed on official visitor numbers—the Griffith Regional Art Gallery. The exhibition ran at that location for 7 weeks and had 396 patrons during that time. Given that the exhibition in Port Hedland ran for 8 weeks, the exhibition in Port Lincoln for 3 weeks, and the exhibition in Canberra for 14 weeks, it seems reasonable to conclude that the 'Finding Home' exhibition was likely viewed by over 1000 patrons. It also seems reasonable to suspect that had the touring exhibition not taking place during a pandemic situation, the attendance would have been higher.

Fig. 4.6 'Meet the artist' event at the Regional Australia Institute in Canberra. Photo credits: Author and Jocelyn James

Evaluating the Exhibition

There are better ways of evaluating visitors' emotional responses to exhibitions than a written survey, including drawing/walking methods (Boyd & Hughes, 2020), focus groups and semi-structured interviews (Tischler,

Carone, & Mistry, 2016), and Q-methodology (Brook, 2022). Methods like these give participants a greater chance of connecting with, exploring and communicating the cognitive and the visceral (bodily) dimensions of their emotional responses (Düringer, 2014). The benefits of visitor surveys, however, are that they are brief and self-paced, allowing respondents the time and comfort they need to reflect, and they don't need to be 'supervised', making them less expensive.

There are different theories, principles and methods of evaluating the arts depending on whether it occurs at the level of an exhibition or an entire arts programme (Rajan & O'Neal, 2018). For a single exhibition, a common form of evaluation is known as 'summative evaluation' (Stuart, Maynard & Rouncefield, 2015). A summative evaluation doesn't provide information on a project to help it to improve but rather it 'tries to give a pure evaluation of outcomes, the effectiveness of the process of the project in working towards outcomes, as well as its impact' (Stuart et al., 2015, p. 64). The summative evaluation of the 'Finding Home' exhibition included a visitor survey and follow-up telephone interviews. Both strategies were an attempt to gauge whether the exhibition had succeeded in translating knowledge (cognitive and affective) from the EYRA Study as well as the exhibition's overall impact on its audiences.

Visitor Surveys

Ethical approval to collect data from visitor surveys at each exhibition was granted via an amendment to the EYRA Study's original ethics application. The visitor survey was designed to fit on a single page (see Fig. 4.7). In addition to collecting basic demographic information, the survey also included a series of statements which visitors were asked to endorse if they agreed with them. Visitors were also asked to rate the exhibition overall, indicate which were their favourite artworks and why, and provide contact details for a follow-up phone interview. Surveys were collected by gallery reception staff and then scanned and emailed back to researchers over the course of the exhibition with hard copies being forwarded later. Visitors received a tote bag as a gift for returning their survey to the reception desk. In all, 100 surveys were collected. This number was arrived at after following up with a small number of people who had seen the exhibition but were not able to attend the 'Meet the Artist' closing event in Canberra. Quantitative and qualitative data were entered into a spreadsheet, and quantitative data were analysed using the spreadsheet's programmed functions.

'Finding Home' Exhibition

Visitor Survey

About you

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Non-binary ☐ Prefer Not to Say

☐ 18-24 years ☐ 25-36 years ☐ 37-55 years ☐ 56-69 years ☐ 70+

☐ From Hedland ☐ From Griffith ☐ From P/Lincoln ☐ From Elsewhere .....

Please tick the boxes below if you **agree** with the statement:

☐ The exhibition gave me new knowledge about regional youth
☐ This exhibition only told me what I already knew
☐ I better appreciate the reasons why young people choose to stay or leave because of the exhibition
☐ The exhibition communicated the research in a way that was more helpful than a presentation
☐ I was moved by the artworks and the stories they conveyed
☐ Communicating research through art doesn't work for me
☐ I would not have known about this research if it wasn't for the exhibition

How would you rate the exhibition overall?

1---------2---------3---------4---------5---------6---------7---------8---------9---------10

Why did you give this rating?

Which was your favourite exhibit (and why)?

☐ Text Montage ☐ Young People's Photos ☐ Story Quilts ☐ Painting ☐ Video

.....

.....

.....

.....

Can we contact you by telephone for an interview (10 mins) about your experience of the exhibition?

☐ Yes Your first name ..... Your phone number .....

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return to the front desk to receive a complimentary tote bag.

Fig. 4.7 Visitor survey

Consistent with general gallery audiences in Australia (Steele & Huxley, 2010), 78% of survey respondents indicated that they were female and 14% male. No respondents indicated that they were non-binary; however, the one person who ticked 'Prefer not to Say' wrote next to it that their gender was 'none of these', suggesting that it would have been better if this category had been 'Other' with the option to write a response. Seven people (7% of respondents) didn't provide information about their gender. In terms of age, and also consistent with general gallery audiences, 34% of respondents were in the age group 37–55, 16% were in the age group 56–69, 13% were in the age group 18–24, 13% were in the age group 25–36, and 7% were 70+ years. Seventeen people (17%) did not give their age.

Regarding location, 24% of survey respondents indicated that they were from Hedland with an additional 3% of people who attended the exhibition at that location indicating they were from elsewhere. In contrast, 11% of respondents said they were from Griffith with 6% noting that they were from elsewhere. The remaining 14% of respondents were from Port Lincoln with 3% of visitors who had attended that exhibition being from elsewhere, and 12% were from Canberra with 4% from elsewhere. Most of the people from elsewhere who attended exhibitions at Port Hedland, Griffith or Port Lincoln (12% in total) were visiting regional locations from an urban location. A total of 23% of the sample didn't indicate where they were from.

For statements about the exhibition and the question about favourite artworks, dummy variables (i.e. coded 0 or 1) were created for each item within these questions. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 display the results by item, and because these were dummy variables, the values have been converted to percentages for ease of interpretation (i.e. by multiplying by 100). It can be seen from Fig. 4.8 that not only did respondents indicate that they gained new knowledge from the exhibition but that they were 'moved' by the exhibition and the stories it conveyed. Accordingly, the favourite artworks in the exhibition were the young people's photographs, followed by the story quilts and then the text montage.

The average overall rating for the exhibition was 8.66 out of 10, with a standard deviation of 1.36. However, there was an outlier (which is also evident in the data presented in Fig. 4.8) where one respondent gave the exhibition a rating of 4 out of 10. Without this outlier, the mean was 8.70 with a standard deviation of 1.07, and, therefore, the outlier had no real effect on the overall average. The reason this person gave for their rating

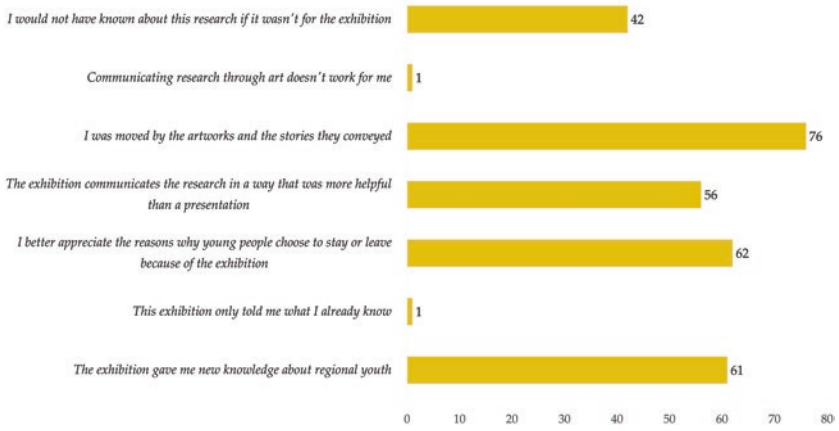

Fig. 4.8 Impact of the exhibition

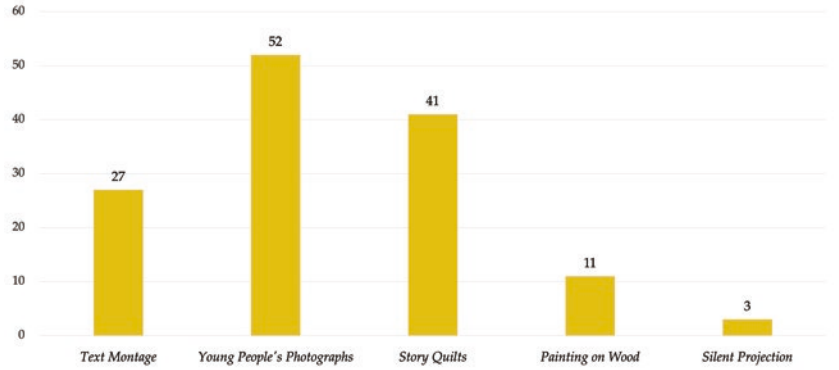

Fig. 4.9 Favourite artworks

was that, for them, art had to display technical skill and so they were potentially comparing the artworks in the exhibition unfavourably to what is sometimes considered to be 'high art' (Winston & Cupchik, 1992). Only two people didn't provide an overall rating of the exhibition, and 81% of respondents provided a short explanation. These explanations included general praise, appreciation for the insights into regional youth

provided by the exhibition, liking the variety of art forms within the exhibition, and positive feelings in response to the exhibition. The follow-up phone interviews provided the opportunity to explore these responses in more depth.

A large percentage of survey respondents (44%) didn't provide a reason for why the artworks they'd nominated were their favourite, whereas only 2% didn't nominate any artworks at all. Of those who did provide a reason, it was apparent that visitors had mostly liked the young people's photographs and the text montage because of their emotional response to the combination of images and stories, and visitors who liked the story quilts were mostly responding to their aesthetics, for example, colours, technical skill and composition. In the next section, visitor's reasons for the responses they gave to the survey are explored in greater detail.

Phone Interviews

Follow-up telephone interviews with those who had provided their details on the visitor survey were conducted by Dr Elizabeth Straughan, and these were overwhelmingly positive. There were 31 interviews, between 5 and 10 min in length, which took place within 2 weeks of visitors completing the survey—7 from Griffith, 10 from Hedland, 10 from Port Lincoln and 4 from Canberra. Respondents were mostly women, with approximately one-third from the 25- to 36-year age group and two-thirds from the 37- to 55-year age group. The qualitative findings from these interviews are grouped into two parts in this section: detailed explanations about responses to the endorsed statements from the visitor survey and explanations regarding favourite artworks.

Endorsed Statements

In reference to the first statement, about whether the exhibition had provided visitors with new knowledge, respondents indicated that the exhibition had made them rethink their assumptions about regional youth migration decisions. This finding also reinforced that the dominant narrative, and the one that regional people are most aware of, is the reasons why young people leave.

> I never appreciated that there was some really good routes for young people to go down if they want to go into shipping or mining or things like that. There are actually some good opportunities up here that kids from the city don't have.
>
> That whole concept that everyone wants to leave and go to the city is just not true … there's so many reasons why someone might stay or go. It's a really personal decision that anyone who grows up regionally … when you think about it there's no surprises, it's just getting someone to think about those concepts, it's just been a perception that every country kid wants to leave.
>
> It allowed me to see all of the reasons, but also the emotion behind them. I know a lot of people who have left, but not a lot of people who have come back so I liked hearing about those who had returned.
>
> The importance of place for young people, and that it comes in a variety of forms, and it's not necessarily what we might think of … a jetty, a dog … and it was as much a feeling as it is a thing.
>
> Being a city-dweller, I think it's very easy to label the country and to think about things in more simplistic terms without thinking through some of those things.

The main reason why people appreciated the exhibition in preference to a research presentation was being able to 'wander' and 'roam' as well as having time to 'wonder' and 'think'. Several respondents emphasised that they appreciated being able to speak to the researcher/curator at the opening night and enjoyed the social aspect of these events. Others said that they wouldn't have gone to hear a presentation on the topic, or, if they had, it wouldn't have had the same impact.

> I don't always do things in order, so I like being able to take my time and enjoyed doing it at my own pace. No one is pushing information on to you.
>
> The choice of images were beautiful. I'm someone who gravitates towards visual storytelling, so I thought that it made the research really accessible. The writing [labels] were helped by the images to really lead you in and help you to engage.
>
> [The researcher] sent me through the report, and it's a report and it's great, but to see the exhibition and all that great work, I just thought it was amazing. I've never been a part of something that resulted not just in a report but something that took into account different people's ways of learning and

> retaining information … I thought it was great. I was really 'blown away'. It really captures what she learned while she was here.
>
> When you have a presentation, it's normally people sharing statistics and information from a not-personal perspective. I find that a really good aspect was that you could connect with the emotion behind the research … it made it stick in my head more and connect to it more.
>
> I read a lot of research reports. You don't get a connection out of a piece of paper. The exhibition connected people to what the exhibition was about.

However, some people pointed out the exhibition's limitations:

> Sometimes I feel like you're not getting the people you need to. You're not accessing the ones you need to. The people who are going to a gallery are the parents who are already engaging … there's a snapshot that wasn't being represented.
>
> I think the exhibition would need to be more interactive to engage younger people, say age 12 to 18, who are about to make these decisions in the future.

In terms of being 'moved' by the artworks and the stories they conveyed, respondents talked about relating personally to stories and/or having new insights into the experiences of others. For example:

> I just loved all of it. I felt like it was so relatable. It was beautiful and grounding.
>
> Some stories, I could see myself reflected in and having that sense of a shared experience.
>
> I thought that some of the insights were really profound. A couple of them touched me quite deeply how the opportunity to contribute [to the exhibition] had really been good for them and gave them a chance to reflect … I think it's good for young people to reflect on what the town does for them, and if it doesn't, what is it that they want.
>
> It stirred up a lot of feelings about what home is … hearing people's stories is what made it moving.

When it came to not knowing about the research if it weren't for the exhibition, respondents said:

> We have a lot of people with government funding who come to the community, you don't even know what's going on. They'll be people out there doing research … they'd be doing stuff out in the community … and we wouldn't get any feedback and they'd be finding all this interesting stuff out. It never came back to the service providers who actually work in the community. I was really pleased that she had the exhibition, because I at least knew what was going on … often the institution holds on to it and as a community we don't learn anything from it, so I liked that about the exhibition.

> It made me think about it, otherwise I wouldn't have thought about it.

> I was excited to go to an art exhibition that was art and science combined. It was really nice to see funding go to something like this, as a scientist. It was nice to see people doing art and creating and geography and all these amazing interdisciplinary things … it was great to see an art-science 'love child'. We often talk about art and science as separate things, but it was nice to see art and science merged together.

> If it had been put on my desk as research, it would go into a folder of 'things I'd love to read, but I'm not going to do it, because I'm too busy' … I found out about the research and now I'm wanting to know more, because of having an emotional attachment to it.

General feedback on the exhibition included liking the layout and the descriptions accompanying the works, as well as experiencing the exhibition as 'cohesive', 'interesting' and 'varied'. People also used superlatives like 'awesome', 'impressive', 'amazing', 'magnificent' and 'beautiful'.

> I just thought that it was a really beautiful touch to talk to people from these different communities but also engage with the local artists in those communities. I think communities really respond to that and it goes a long way.

> I was glad to hear that it was going to be exhibited in each of the communities, and thought it was a great way to link those communities together.

> Moving forward with any research involving young people, what an innovative way to do research and then to present the findings. It was just amazing, and there should be more of it.

Favourite Exhibits

When it came to the young people's photographs, people mentioned liking the black-and-white aesthetic and the 'uniformity' of the photographic

display. Others said that the black and white colour scheme was a pleasing contrast which pulled them towards the more colourful works in the exhibition. Moreover, respondents emphasised the importance of linking stories (or direct quotations) with the images, not just in making sense of them but also personalising them.

> It's because they were so directly linked to the person, the piece was by the young person whose story it was. I also liked how simplistic they were, even though they were simple, they told a big story.
>
> It was a really good way to have a conversation with others in the room … we reflected upon why we thought that location would be important, and whether it would be a place that we would like to be, or even a place that we go to, and what it is about them … they were great catalysts for me to think about why I live where I live.
>
> To me, you had to have the story behind the photo absolutely linked. If it was just the photos, it wouldn't have worked. The story is what moves me more, and then the visual.

Respondents who liked the text montage appreciated the way it had been composed of several different perspectives and experiences of regional youth. Interestingly, some people had taken the time to read the whole piece while others were able to 'grab' segments of testimony.

> I loved the piece that had the excerpts from the interviews. That was really cool how it chopped and changed conversations … it resonated with me personally. I thought it was really cool to hear about people's different experiences of staying or going.
>
> The image with the words and the picture, I think, to me, that was the one that really stood out to me. That was the one was the most striking. And the tapestries [story quilts] were striking. [ES: Did you read all the text on the text montage?] Yes, I did. I thought it was really powerful. I think the use of imagery is really important in telling stories like that.
>
> I loved its simplicity and its complexity, and how it wasn't possible to take in all the words, but some just popped out at you.

People who liked the story quilts were impressed by their colourfulness and how well their composition represented each area:

> I loved being able to tell through the colours, which town it was. There are all these characteristics within each town, which makes them special.
>
> I felt like those landscapes and vibes were similar to a lot of regional areas.
>
> I loved how vibrant the quilts were, and each in their own way with their own colour schemes, and just how much of that particular region it was possible to get in there.

Consistent with the results from the visitor survey, not many people who were interviewed mentioned the contemporary Aboriginal painting on wood or the silent video projection. However, it is important to note that in the phone interviews, respondents were only prompted about works that they had already nominated as their favourites in the survey. Nonetheless, the following comments were offered about these final two works:

> I liked the storylines in it [the painting on wood].
>
> I liked to see the connection to Country, because Country is everywhere.
>
> The 'haiku idea' video. That was so clever. I could have happily sat there for half an hour just looking for details that I missed the first time through, but it was just little snapshots of ordinary-ness. When you go and visit somewhere, like a famous place, I'm always struck by how ordinary it is, but when you go to an ordinary place, I'm struck by 'hey, they've done this here' and it just makes it unique.
>
> That little bit extra [the video] gave you some insight into what the places looked like. I think the main factor of it was seeing it all in real life.

Conclusion: Demonstrating Societal Impact

As an example of arts-based knowledge translation in human geography, 'Finding Home' conveyed knowledge from the Engaging Youth in Regional Australia (EYRA) Study. Not only did those surveyed say that they had learned something new, but, via interview, they were also able to specifically describe what that new knowledge was. They also reported being affected or 'moved' by the exhibition, not just in relation to their own experiences but in empathising with regional youth whose experiences were different to their own. This is important because affective knowledge translation through art isn't about entertaining audiences or

making them 'feel good', it's about transmitting 'felt' knowledges so that they might be 'felt' again. In 'Finding Home', these feelings related strongly to a sense of belonging, which had positive associations for visitors, but affective knowledge translation is equally applicable to experiences of suffering and trauma, although in these instances it is more challenging to do it ethically and safely (see Boyd & Hughes, 2020).

There are three definitions within the Australian Research Council's (ARC) Engagement and Impact (EI) assessment that are relevant for arts-based knowledge translation efforts like 'Finding Home' and comparable to those used in other countries like Canada and the UK. The first is *research* itself, which the ARC defines as 'the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings' (ARC, 2019). 'Finding Home' certainly meets this definition, but it does so under the category of Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs; ARC, 2018). With an accompanying research summary, there are three valid NTROs from 'Finding Home'—the exhibition itself as a major work, the text montage as a minor work, and the silent video projection as a minor work. Although they make up the exhibition, works produced by participants or commissioned artists are not considered to be separate NTROs as they weren't created by a researcher employed by an academic institution. The second relevant definition is *engagement*: '[r]esearch engagement is the interaction between research and research end-users outside of academia, for the mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge, technologies, methods, or resources' (ARC, 2019). 'Finding Home' satisfies this definition. Under the EI, at present, quantitative indicators need to accompany an explanatory statement for this to be assessed, which is controversial within the arts and humanities (see AAH, 2020).

The third, relevant definition within the Australian Research Council's (ARC) Engagement and Impact assessment regards *impact*. Research impact 'is the contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research' (ARC, 2019). The ARC does recognise that for many engagement and impact activities, especially those which are new, there may not be any impact to report and so it was not a requirement for submissions to the 2018 EI assessment to have them. They did, however, need to have evidence of engagement. Furthermore, the EI has two impact ratings—one for impact and one for the *approach* to impact (which are the mechanisms to encourage translation). 'Finding Home', as an example of arts-based

knowledge translation, can demonstrate the effectiveness of its mechanisms for facilitating societal impact but actual societal impact, like changes in local government policy and/or cultural changes in narratives around regional youth migration, are much more difficult to determine and would require additional time and resources beyond the project's timeframe.

The artworks from the exhibition were all gifted back to communities after the final exhibition in Canberra. The Griffith story quilt now hangs behind the reception desk at the Griffith Community Centre, the Hedland story quilt hangs in the Youth Involvement Council's mindfulness space in South Hedland. The Port Lincoln quilt is hanging in the offices of West Coast Youth and Community Support, and the Regional Australia Institute accepted the text montage. As it proved less expensive to have participant's works reprinted and a new frame sent to them than to post their framed photographs back, one of the participants photos remained at the RAI, another hangs in the offices of SARRAH (Services for Rural and Remote Allied Health), and the remainder will be hung in an independent school in Canberra. The contemporary Aboriginal painting on wood was presented to the Clontarf Foundation in Perth—an organisation that improves the education, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. The work and impact of the 'Finding Home' exhibition has the opportunity to continue and grow through these more permanent displays.

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CHAPTER 5

Closing Thoughts

Abstract In this final chapter, Boyd considers the strengths and limitations of the methods used to evaluate the 'Finding Home' exhibition, including what can or can't be measured about the visitor experience. This is further elaborated by pointing out that part of what visitors experience in response to an art exhibition is ineffable, and in making this point, Boyd returns to the concept of affective knowledge translation introduced in Chap. 1. Boyd goes on to emphasise the importance of establishing rapport in working with multiple actors during the production of an art exhibition, as well as raising some caveats about research exhibitions as a 'technique' of knowledge translation. Boyd suggests how universities can better support art-based knowledge translation efforts and concludes with some thoughts about transdisciplinarity.

Keywords Ineffability • Rapport • Arts-based knowledge translation • GeoHumanities • Transdisciplinarity

The Ineffable

Reducing affective knowledge translation to a dummy variable while promoting the utility of art as a communication tool for researchers diminishes what exhibitions are and what they do—immensely. Manning (2008, p. 7) argues that evaluation 'happens from the outside as an undoing of a

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work's process' whereas Williams (2021, p. 14) contends that the 'event of the exhibition cannot simply be evaluated in a space of phenomenological experience because it is excessive of subjective recognition and expectation'. However, and as the philosopher Whitehead (1978, p. 340) states, '[o]bjectification requires elimination', and 'it is an empirical fact that process entails loss'. For me, that loss is acceptable if it means that my fellow creative geographers have the empirical 'evidence' they need to support their arts-based knowledge translation efforts. Nonetheless, in 'giving in' to positivism and the demands of the 'neoliberal' academy (Troiani & Dutson, 2021), let's not forget that there are modes of academic thought which thoroughly reject them (Nordstrom, 2018).

Even when prioritising the phenomenological experience of exhibition visitors, there will be aspects of that experience that defy representation and cannot be expressed. As Gäb (2020) explains, this is not only because of the limits of language ('weak' ineffability) but also, in some cases, the sheer impossibility to form a mental representation capable of being expressed in words ('strong' ineffability). However, just because we can't express it doesn't mean that we don't know it (Boyd & Hughes, 2020; Dewsbury, 2003). This is central to affective knowledge translation because we all have the capacity to affect and be affected through our bodily senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste—if we have them all—and a sixth according to Serres, 2008). As Shouse (2005, para. 9, 10) argues, 'without affect feelings do not "feel" because they have no intensity'; however, 'the transmission of affect does not mean that one person's feelings become another's' rather it involves 'resonating with the intensity of the context'. It is perhaps for this reason, too, that virtual online galleries cannot re-create the atmosphere of an in-person exhibition or event and, sometimes, the intensity of the body's sensations (or the act of being 'moved') 'can "mean" more to people than meaning itself' (Shouse, 2005, para. 11).

Rapport

When I first met with a manager of a museum at the start of a different project to this one, she thanked me at the end of the meeting for 'being a "real person" and not an academic'. I think that was less of a judgement about my academic worth than it was a compliment for taking the time and making an effort to establish rapport. Establishing rapport for the sake of a research project starts from the researcher, and it evolves from there.

In the case of 'Finding Home', it was about caring about regional youth and the regions—their experiences and their challenges—not just being able to demonstrate that through past research but being able to express it with conviction to those who share similar convictions.

Rapport is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a '[m]utual understanding between persons; sympathy, empathy, connection; a relationship characterized by these' (OED, 2022). Furthermore, the 'concepts of "trust" and "liking" can help to differentiate rapport and friendship … [r]apport is a relationship marked by confidence and trust, but not necessarily by liking' (Glesne, 1989). In communicating with commissioned artists, research participants, multiple stakeholders, gallery coordinators, but also the 'hidden people'—technical support, administrative staff, customer service staff and so on—it is not necessary for us to 'like' one another, even though in many cases common interests and personalities make it inevitable that friendships will form. What is necessary is that the nature of the work also matters to them (even the customer service agent will 'go the extra mile' to find your lost crate of artwork if they understand what the project is about and respect what you're trying to do).

Caveats and Costs

As much as the evaluation of 'Finding Home' addressed many questions related to its reception, several remain unanswered. For instance, how does knowledge curated by the research exhibition radiate from attendance, who does it exclude, how do visitors really make meaning from it, and then who do they tell? As much as all regional people are marginalised by the urban, 'Finding Home' (mostly) was about privileged white people talking about their privileged lives and then having those stories artfully curated and exhibited by privileged white people wherein they were viewed and appreciated by mostly privileged white audiences. This was not exclusively the case, but this is a problem for arts-based knowledge translation. If relatively colonial institutions mostly appeal to those who have benefitted from colonisation, then the reach of arts-based knowledge translation efforts via 'the gallery' will be limited accordingly. Finally, and in relation to Hawkins (2021) call 'what work does art do in the world?', 'what work do "middle-aged women" do in the world as communicators of arts-based knowledge?'

I remember the need to respond to a reviewer of my original grant application for the EYRA Study who thought that arts-based knowledge

translation wasn't effective or value for money. I hope now, and because of the work relayed in this book, that creative geographers will be able to respond to comments like this with even more 'evidence' than we had before. However, and perhaps why the grant application was successful, two out of three reviewers applauded the strategy. In practice so did the exhibition's audiences, with some expressing delight that the work was government funded and with stakeholders asking for more of it. That means that we need to continue to do this kind of work in a way that convinces funding bodies that it *is* value for money. This doesn't mean doing it less expensively, but it does mean justifying costs versus benefit, and in this domain arts-based knowledge translation still has a lot of work to do.

In reducing costs, universities can do more to support arts-based knowledge translation through the provision of infrastructure, like exhibition spaces, for the express purpose of presenting research exhibitions to the public. This would be particularly helpful for urban researchers who might otherwise struggle to stage a research exhibition because galleries in city areas don't always acknowledge work like this, they don't have a community remit like regional art galleries do, and they can be dismissive of work they don't perceive of as 'high art' (Winston & Cupchik, 1992). At a school or departmental level, universities can implement modest schemes and initiatives to support art-science collaborations—even just the production of a single work—where a body of themed work might emerge over time.

Transdisciplinarity

Despite all the benefits of arts-based knowledge translation outlined in this book, I am against STEAM—the insertion of art into STEM and divorcing it from HASS (Lachman, 2018)—as it runs the risk of treating the arts as a convenient teaching/learning device, rather than recognising the arts as a way of knowing. Van Baalen, de Groot, and Noordegraaf-Eelens (2021, p. 35) describe this form of transdisciplinarity in relation to the arts as the *instrumentalised position*, whereby the arts are treated as 'a tool or a guide for action, rather than an end in itself'. In contrast, the GeoHumanities valorise the arts and humanities for 'modes of the empirical other than the extractive' (Hawkins, 2021, p. 15). This second form of transdisciplinarity is referred to by van Baalen et al. (2021) as the *artistic vantage point*, which 'influences the ways in which a subject is approached, valued, and understood in relation to other processes or objects' (p. 37).

However, the third position, and what van Baalen et al. (2021) consider to be a fully *transdisciplinary approach* in relation to the arts, is one that involves 'a wide variety of actors' participating in 'heterogenous collectives and initiatives that [take] place in different contexts', as well as research which uses 'a combination of art forms' to 'transgress disciplinary boundaries' and which 'demand[s] to be understood from a transdisciplinary perspective' (p. 37).

'Finding Home' is an example of van Baalen et al.'s (2021) second kind of transdisciplinarity, and consistent with a GeoHumanities perspective, although it has elements of the first and the third. Still, I hope that this book has demonstrated the value of arts-based knowledge translation in tackling pressing or persistent societal issues. I also hope that in being partly empirical, partly theoretical, and partly 'how-to' guide, that this book inspires other academics to embark on their own transdisciplinary trajectories.

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