The copy as a paradox of change:
Copying and mimicry in social interaction

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Month of submission:
November 2016
Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgment has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the exegesis/project is the result of the work that has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Joel Gailer

March 30 2017
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The copy as a paradox of change:
Copying and mimicry in social interaction

JOEL GAILER, JIMMY SINUMOANA, FRED OGE, THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD (WORK IN PROGRESS), 2014, MIXED MEDIA, 180X100CM
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisors, Associate Professor Dr Shane Hulbert, Dr Richard Harding and Dr Emma Barrow, for their encouragement and support throughout the project. A special mention is deserved for my associate supervisor, Dr Emma Barrow, who supported me and encouraged me to pursue my chosen research position.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance in this project of my work colleagues and fellow candidates from the School of Art, the Print Imaging Practice Studio and Cozens St Studios.

I would like to especially acknowledge the assistance I received from the following people: Jenny Mai Hall, Brett Mallon, Boris Falovic, Nicholas Chilvers, Hong Jung Woo, Stephanie May Eather, Allen De Carteret, Azlin Amin, Jo Powell, Remen Blakely, Ken Gailer, Jeannette Gailer and thank you to my editor Mary-Jo O’Rourke AE who provided timely and efficient copyediting and proofreading services according to the University endorsed national guidelines.

Finally, I would like to thank my amazing family, my partner Susannah Powell, Wyndham Hardman-Gailer, December Jack Gailer and Eilie Constance Gailer, for their continued and ongoing support.
Abstract

This research project investigates the paradox of the *copy* through experimental print-media methods. It examines the copy as a primary component of social change and as a transformative act usually associated with concepts of the original. The paradox of *copying* as apparent in processes of mimicry in human interaction is positioned and evidenced through the visual culture of printmaking, performance, painting and sculpture by means of mechanical, electronic or manual reproduction. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the research serve to emphasise the shift from the 20th-century notion of the original to the less definitive current status of the copy as evidenced in print-media practices and social change. The research identifies specific historical periods in which copying can be recognised as an agent of cultural change.

The project has articulated alternative interpretations of copying through a print-informed investigation. This approach has aided a multi-artform practice that challenges and reveals the significance of copying through collaborative and individual methods of production, enabling a greater insight into concepts and methodologies of copy-based art making. Through a sustained enquiry using processes of duplication, repetition and performance, artwork outcomes demonstrate the generative nature of copying. The final artworks of the project contribute to my understandings of copy-based art-making through an investigation of copying and mimicry as a method to stimulate change in social interaction.

Research questions

How can explorations of reproductive art-making articulate the significance of the copy in times of cultural change?

In what ways do mimicry and copying challenge theories of truth, originality and authority, and how can this be utilised in the production of artworks?
The culmination of this research combines five of the major project outcomes that are discussed in Chapters three to eight of this document. Selected works from these major projects are listed here.
The authority of the stamp and the mass production of knowledge

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FIGURE 1
Print. Text. Copy

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FIGURE 8
If the singular vision doesn't interest you, try the multiple

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   Dimensions variable

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   110x150cm

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   110x150cm

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   A/P ed. 3
   Polycarbonate and acrylic plastics and steel
   300x500x100cm

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   A/P ed. 3
   Polycarbonate and acrylic plastics and steel
   300x500x100cm

9. Joel Gailer
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   A/P ed. 3
   Polycarbonate and acrylic plastics and steel
   300x500x100cm

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    A/P ed. 3
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Introduction

In front of an audience, I am standing atop a pyramid of counterfeit Andy Warhol Brillo Boxes, shouting declarations through a megaphone: “Copying is a primary agent of change” and “Copying surpasses the absolute concepts of originality”. From this soapbox I proclaim that the act of copying presents a conceptual paradox, one that challenges historic notions of the singular original by considering a model of ‘copying’ that opens up a generative cycle; producing new possibilities for new outcomes and meanings involving more people.

Such action-based research was a method to test studio-developed theoretical concepts that explore the practice of replication in the wider social realm. This research has identified ‘originality’ as a hierarchical mechanism that signifies an origin from which a secondary form or idea may stem. This hierarchical structure is not evident in conventional understandings of a copy. I argue that these less definitive concepts of the copy and methods of copying are a perpetual activity and a primary component of change.

The production of the multiple in traditional printmaking has informed this research proposition. This production is the activity of producing numerous impressions of an
image for a print edition, a process that presents a paradox within which each resultant print can be interpreted as a copy that requires the singular act of my manual production. The perception that originality is a consequence of individual production or unique thought is countered in this creative process of reproduction, exemplified by printing an unlimited edition of artworks.

Print processes encompass a whole gamut of techniques, from the digital to the woodblock print. This technically broad approach enables a multidisciplinary process for artwork creation that extends beyond the specificities of traditional printmaking practice. The multi-artform method is used to engender copying as an agent of transformation, renewal and positive change. This position is extended to collaborative processes as a mode of operation that negates concepts of the singular author. Furthermore, collaborative processes are employed as a means to create a collective entity into which individual artists may relinquish authorship.

Such strategies align with the method of print production in a shared, community print studio. As well, print outcomes may eliminate the need for origin-based concepts due to the inherent two-part (paper and plate) reproductive nature of print techniques. Equally the copy as secondary or subsidiary situates creative acts of copying and processes of reproduction within the politically charged position of the auxiliary or supportive role.

Soapbox oration 2

Again I am stranding on a soapbox handing out leaflets of paper stamped with the text, The truth is a copy; this active and repetitive act of stamping multiple sheets of paper enacts the claim in the print’s text. Such activity initiates a social interaction with a repetitive act and aims to emphasise the paradox that is enacted when the copy is the origin of an enquiry.

Through action-based research, project work and historical analyses, I have found evidence that notions of originality contain a hierarchical mechanism that is not evident in a copy; instead, less definitive concepts of the copy and methods of copying are examined as a perpetually present activity, an idea that denotes a variety of actions, which resists reduction to any constant meaning, an idea that contests the absolute and fundamental notion of an original.

Chapter summaries

Chapter one positions the research within a studio-based methodology and foregrounds particular cultural occurrences that have influenced the research proposition of a primary copy. These include mimicry, social interaction, appropriation in current art practice, historical examples of copying and an analysis of copying as a complete cultural practice in 20th-century South West Pacific nations.

Chapter two explores the literary works of 20th-century cultural theorists and critics who identified the role of copying as a primary agent of change, such as sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard (France 1929–2007) and cultural critic Walter Benjamin (Germany/Spain 1892–1940). Key works from their catalogues are copied and creatively reused in action-based and theoretical research.
Chapter three details initial explorations in print, including the technique of stamping. Artwork in traditional methods produced The truth is a copy, which explores ideas of repetition and the multiple; its print method was the stamp. The truth is a copy attempts to articulate this paradox: a stamp that enacts its own truth by the act of its repetition. I stamped text onto gold leaf, a material that often signifies authority and wealth. In historical Western art, gold leaf was used in religious images to signify ecclesiastical and papal godliness, another signifier of truth. Research of historical methods suggests copying is a major component of our present visual-media world and the historical techniques are the foundation of current print and imaging technologies. This knowledge produced a work, Unique state in 2012, a two-page offset lithograph published on pages 66 and 67 of Art Monthly, issue 250. Unique state was then assembled as an installation filling the entire floor of a gallery space.

Chapter four explores reproduction in text-based work. Using acrylic fluro colours and black text in oil paint, I investigated the replication of ideas through the written word. Writer, David Owen (2004, p. 1) asserts that writing succeeded spoken language as a form of copying and "exponentially extended the human network that language created, writing freed copying from the chain of living contact." The reproducibility of the written word is explored in these works using humour and popular slang. Such text work relies on the work’s existence within a predefined English language and cultural system. Studio works created in this manner also reuse or reproduce the bright colours from Pop Art and the gesture of abstract expressionism.

Chapter five explores the emergence of sculpture in my practice. Initially sculptural elements formed part of the performance component of my research, Performprint. The sculptures consist of makeshift print machines that became sculptural vestiges after the performance ceased. These sculptures consist of car tyres and skateboard wheels on which the tyre/wheel surface has been carved and printed like a traditional relief print. Such work extends the performative nature of the print and highlights the cyclical processes of print repetition.

With this experience and knowledge, sculpture developed as a major factor in my research. A large-scale sculpture was created with pre-cast modular forms titled Mirror state, 2014. This work was conceived by interpreting Jaques Lacan’s essay Mirror Stage. In the essay Lacan explores the early childhood stage of recognition of self, exemplified by a child’s response to their mirror reflection. The final outcome deviates from Lacan’s idea of a separation of self but incorporates important elements of his proposition.

Chapter six charts the development of a series of paintings of Yadua Island in the South Pacific and the reflective research that has emerged from the process. Initially the paintings were an extension of my bibliographical research of cargo cults, the island representing the region being researched, the image is sourced from the Internet and copied by hand in acrylic and oil paint using traditional processes. The paintings manifest my distanced and theoretical position as a researcher in Melbourne, Australia. The artworks were titled Pacific mindedness, 2013–2016 and consist of eight individual hand-painted copies. It was an ongoing painting project for the duration of my research. The work is displayed in a small room. Two works are
displayed on each wall in a four-walled room within which the public can be completely surrounded by the individual copies.

*Chapter seven* identifies performance as a new mode of my practice that has emerged from my project. Early experiments with performance artist Michael Meneghetti (Australia 1980–), titled *Performprint*, combine printmaking and performance. The premise of this artwork is the collaborative and performative activity of the community print studio. Throughout a performance of ten-hour duration, Meneghetti and I explore concepts of the copy through print activities, which include large-scale woodblock printing with a cricket pitch roller, car tyre relief prints and a traditional etching press. This work was initially performed at the Fremantle Arts Centre in 2012 and an expanded version was performed at the North Melbourne Meat Market as part of FOLA (the Festival of Live Art) in 2014. Such work has developed the key concepts of mimicry and copying within my research questions. Mimicry and copying are important themes within *Performprint* and, through dedication to copying, many new elements have been added to the performance, enacting my second research question: *In what ways do mimicry and copying challenge theories of truth, originality and authority, and how can this be utilised in the production of artworks?*

*Chapter eight* records the development and completion of a residency that I was invited to do in the Solomon Islands. This country was important for my research because the Solomon Islands lies within the region of Melanesia and has a history of resistance movements instigated by the desire to withstand colonial oppression. During the residency I was able to collaborate with professional artists John Seda, Jimmy Sinumoana and Fred Oge. Collaborative activity is an important aspect of my broader research and in this case represents a meaningful engagement with the creative community in the Solomon Islands.

The conclusion articulates the specific findings developed in my project chapters. Its charts the development of my ideas from bibliographic sources to specific project development and the related ideas that emerged from reflective, post-project, research in the studio. This process yielded ideas, related to my artwork, which uncovered important philosophical developments for notions of copying in social interaction.
Chapter 1

*Positioning the research*

This research is mobile and travels from classical ideas of mimesis to the cultural practices of the Melanesian Pacific islands (1900–1967)

Methodology

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**FIGURE 29 JOEL GAILER, PRINT MULTIPLES, STUDIO DOCUMENTATION, 2013**

The copy, from the perspective of this project, is a component of print-media methods and a form of mimicry. Mimicry is perceived as a factor of social interaction that may draw attention to cultural change. In this research, cultural or social change are interchangeable and consider the ways in which the copy interprets and responds to the new conditions encountered in times of transition.

I conducted my research via three distinct project enquiry lines — action-based (field) research, bibliographic research and qualitative practice research. These processes provided a flexible structure for the varied elements of the project and enabled a focused study within a framework of distinct research components. Bibliographic research was defined as the study of existing literature and qualitative research evaluated the combined creative outcomes of practical and theoretical investigations.

Studio and on-site action-based research comprised reflective acts of repetition using print-media informed methods to examine the copy as process and as it relates to human social interaction. My studio work combined collaborative and solo aspects. While these modes of operation are not mutually exclusive and informed each other, the collaborative work and solo work have distinctly separate outcomes. I have attempted to bridge concepts of the copy with distant cultural movements and a print-informed art
practice. I have used a multi-disciplinary approach through the current notion of the ‘mash-up’\(^1\), meaning a combination of studies from seemingly disparate fields. Using the inherent reproductive potentials of print-media methods to contest concepts of the original, I have explored experimental print techniques like the processes of stamping and branding in a performative context. Concurrently a series of studio investigations were conducted to examine both the processes used and the act of making a copy to inform the development of future works, the research proposition. Studio practice has produced a range of experimental studies, including responsive techniques like painting and drawing, object/installation, the act of branding, mass-production and sculpture, in order to inform the development of works through an examination of repetition. In addition I have used performance techniques coupled with experimental explorations in the studio to create works that extended my investigations of the copy and mimicry into social interactions.

Mimicry

Mimicry is examined as a performative mode of copying evidenced in human interaction. Research on the themes of mimicry has examined its occurrence in the context of current visual art practices and the human exchange performed in a cultural transition. In this research, cultural or social change is considered in the way in which the copy interprets and responds to the new conditions encountered in human interaction. Examining copying as a perpetual social and performative process dispels the necessity for an origin. Similarly, in project work, performance and collaboration are utilised as a social activity in which mimicry is a paradox of the new conditions created in human social interactions.

Social interaction

FIGURE 30 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION, DURATION: 7 HRS

\(^1\) A musical genre encompassing songs that consist entirely of parts of other prerecorded songs. The term can also be applied to visual media, particularly video.
Action-based research is here defined as a performative methodology in social interaction. Through this approach I have explored the ways in which the copy mimics human interactions in times of change. The interpretations of the copy in my current art practice are as diverse as mimetic art, printmaking, mimicry, forgery, simulacra, repetition, multiplicity and copyright. This research is mobile and travels from classical ideas of mimesis to the cultural practices of the Melanesian Pacific islands (1900–1967), highlighting the paradox which results from processes of mimicry and copying being used in order to recreate and revitalise.

The copy in current practice

My bibliographical research has identified the strong presence of copying and mimicry in art practice and theory. I have investigated these practices in a range of processes, from exploring mimesis in representation to copying historical artworks and motifs.

![This image is subject to copyright](image)

FIGURE 31 RENE MAGRITTE, THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES (THIS IS NOT A PIPE), 1948, OIL ON CANVAS, 63.5X94CM

I have researched international artists who challenge the infallibility of originality. Artists such as neo-conceptualist Jeff Koons (America 1955–), multi-disciplinary artist Richard Prince (America 1949–) and surrealist René Magritte (Belgium 1898–1967) have been examined as practitioners who consciously engage with copying and appropriation. Artists who challenge the aesthetic categories of the fine arts have also provided rich resources for a multi-disciplinary enquiry, such as Wim Delvoye (Belgium 1965–), Marcel Broodthaers (Belgium 1924–1976), Barbara Kruger (America 1945–), Joseph Kosuth (America 1945–), Jasper Johns (America 1930–) and Robert Rauchenberg (America 1925–2008). Such artists’ work has informed the emergence of the project’s visual theorising about the copy and the potential redefining of concepts of the “original” (Ortega-Alvarez, 1994). Australian artists who share similar concerns include Imants Tillers (1950–), Tim Johnson (1947–), Richard Harding (1965–), Mike Parr (1945–) and Carlie Fischer (1976–). Such artists have influenced distinct investigations of repetition in relation to the copy. With these influences, I have been informed by creative processes, as well as bibliographical research.
Appropriation in contemporary art is a core factor in this research. I have interpreted Richard Prince’s series of paintings Untitled (de Kooning), 2009 and Imants Tillers’ Drift, 1991 (a woodblock print after American abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock’s painting Number 24, 1954) in an attempt to create a paradox, that is, copying abstract expressionist paintings of which a key tenet is their hold on originality.

Artists engage with the copy through varied artistic mediums such as print, painting, sculpture, photography and performance. Through appropriation, recontextualisation and outright copying, artists have tried to open a dialogue about the copy by interrogating notions of the original. For example, Michael Wolf’s (America 1954–) photographic series Real fake art, 2011, portrays the copy artists of Dafen, China posing with their paintings. Wolf’s photographs unmask the conflation of art history that occurs when canonical works of art are copied for popular consumption. Contemporary artworks are also repainted en masse for the market in Wolf’s photographs. For example, Real fake art #14 depicts a copy of German artist Neo Rauch’s painting by a copy artist in Dafen which is presented by Wolf as a photograph of a street scene. This is a conflation of the postmodern paradigm of appropriation, as contemporary artists such as Neo Rauch are subsumed into the common thread of reproduction.
Richard Prince and Jeff Koons both use copy and appropriation to negate concepts of originality, while Imants Tillers explores art history as a primary source of content for his paintings. Sherrie Levine’s (America 1947–) photographic reproductions imply that appropriation is not necessary as a method to reimagine the source material. She rephotographs the images of 20th-century photographer and photojournalist Walker Evans (America 1903–1975) of life during the Great Depression\(^2\) (1929–1939) in littoral photographic reproductions. She claims her photographs of photographs become new artworks because of their context in time and place.

This practice underscores the way in which art expresses new meanings in different times and places. My print work has been primarily informed by artists such as Sherie Levine, as well as Pop Artist Andy Warhol (America 1928–1987). Warhol used existing cultural materials to create new artwork.

His utilisation of repetition and reproduction of commercial products through painting and screenprinting position him as a pioneering artist of copy-based methodologies. Art critic and curator, Nicolas Bourriaud (France 1965–) describes this practice in *Postproduction*[^3]. Bourriaud highlights contemporary artists from 1990 to the present whose practices reappropriate, rearrange or reuse existing imagery and cultural products to create new artworks as *postproduction* artists. He describes the process of using the existing forms, images and systems of the world to build new cultural products as if they are tools or components. This enabled my print work to explore both pictorial and performed creative methods of appropriation and reappropriation that occur within and outside the perceived structure of Western[^4] creative systems.

**The pre-modern copy**

Pre-modern examples of copying (that pre-date modern copyright laws) have been an important source for my research. These include the practice of copying in the Roman Empire (1st century BCE to 5th century CE), a time when ancient Greek marble and bronze sculptures were cast in plaster and replicated in marble or bronze: “Since most ancient bronze statues have been lost or were melted down to reuse the valuable metal, Roman copies in marble and bronze often provide our primary visual evidence of masterpieces by famous Greek sculptors”[^5]. In examining classical Roman *copies* as a primary model, we see how the tenets of originality such as creativity and inventiveness are applied to a copy. In my project work, sculptural casting and prefabrication are explored as processes that enable duplication.

**The performed copy**

Mimicry and copying are evident across a range of cultural scenarios. In cases where copying takes the form of religious ritual, it is often part of a wider revolutionary cultural occurrence. In his essay *Of Mimicry and Man*, cultural theorist Homi K Bhabha discusses the emergence of mimicry in colonial India: “The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (Bhabha 1994, p. 85). Pro-social behaviour studies[^6] propose that the act of copying in the form of

[^3]: Baudrillard J. *Simulacra and simulation*, University of Michigan Press, 1994
[^4]: All references to Western cultures in this research refer to a heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems and political systems that have some origin or association with Europe or whose history is strongly marked by European immigration, colonisation and influence, such as the countries of the Americas and Australasia, and are not restricted to the continent of Europe.
[^6]: Academic and author Rick van Baaren claims that “Recent studies have shown that mimicry occurs unintentionally and even among strangers. Studies have consistently found that mimicry increases pro-social behavior. Participants in these studies who have been mimicked were more helpful and generous toward other people than were non-mimicked participants. These beneficial consequences of mimicry were not restricted to behavior directed toward the mimicker, but included behavior directed toward people not directly involved in the mimicry situation. These results suggest that the effects of mimicry are not simply due to increased liking for the mimicker, but are due to increased
mimicry (imitation of something that exists) is a pre-programmed function that human beings enact to benefit when confronted with new circumstances. It is in this context that the copy may be understood as an agent of social and cultural change, the social interpreted as a performed act that occurs between two or more people. A key theme of my research is the role the copy plays in human interactions. The study of pro-social behaviour asserts that mimicry encourages positive behaviour and is a structural response of human beings when confronted with new circumstances or power relations. Printmaking, in this research, is considered a performative investigatory tool and therefore provides a strong entry point for my research into the role the copy plays in human relations and social orders.

I have sought to identify the performed copy as mimicry and the performative copy as print-media. I have used both of these practices as tools to investigate the social paradigm that change creates and have linked both positions to the transformative act historically associated with concepts of the original.

Motivating the research

The inspirational trigger for this research occurred during investigations into Bhabha’s belief that mimicry is a type of subversion. My research uncovered an important example of mimicry and copying as a complete cultural phenomenon. An example of performed appropriation is found in historical study of the cargo cults of Melanesia which occurred in the South West

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1. Rick B. van Baaren, Department of Social Psychology, University of Nijmegen, Netherlands.
   a. Not derived from something else
   b. Showing a marked departure from previous practice.
4. Throughout colonisation the populations of the numerous island countries of Melanesia were Australian citizens and had been since 1906. Australia had made them citizens without consultation, but did not allow them any of the rights of citizens, nor any citizenship of their own. For three generations, nothing was done to develop Papua New Guinean leadership; in fact, everything was done to block its development and ensure that leadership roles and responsibility were held by Australians and there was no chance for institutional development of national consciousness or leadership in Melanesia. Despite Melanesia being a colony, Australia ensured that it did not get its first secondary school until international pressure led to the opening of one in 1955. Very few others were built for a long time in a country of similar size and population to New Zealand. This lack of education facilities is now seen as a major human rights abuse by Australia in international critiques. Education was enforced by the UN in 1967. Much of this policy must be understood within the framework of the now-reviled White Australia policy, which was officially abolished in 1973 by the then Australian Labor Government.
5. The first account of indigenous desire for liberation from colonial rule was ‘noted in the Ra Province as early as 1877. But it was not until 1885 that the colonial administration became really disturbed: they heard that parties of men with blackened faces, and clothed in robes of native cloth, were carrying out military drill on the upper reaches of the Rewa river.’ This was local unrest stimulated by a religious cult, heralded by a leader who claimed prophetic powers. He announced that the order of the world was soon to be reversed: “Whites were to serve natives and chiefs were to be inferior to commoners”.
7. A grouping of islands in the South West Pacific Ocean which includes Papua New Guinea.
Pacific during the Australian colonial period (1906–1967). The cargo cults were indigenous South West Pacific island religious movements that occurred as a socio-cultural response to an enforced Australian military culture and comprised existing cultural practices combined with resistance to the colonial administration. These movements are an example of what Bhabha describes as the subversive nature of mimicry.

During my research I have identified the valuable contribution of study of the copying and mimicry in the cargo cults. This was motivated with the objective of enhancing current understandings of copying and mimicry as they relate to human interaction.

In early 20th-century Melanesia, the proponents of the cargo cults used mimicry and copying in an attempt to overturn the colonial power structure that was forced upon them. Australian academic Andrew Lattas describes the “reterritorialization of identity” (Lattas 1998, p. 102) that was enacted when the Western military cultures were confronted with mimicry in cargo cult rituals as an attempt to reimagine the conceptual borders of cultural meaning. For example, the cargo cults created effigies or models of aeroplanes and constructed jetties as an attempt to interpret and challenge the foreign military culture. The cargo cults provide strong examples of the role of mimicry and copying in cultural resistance. Therefore this project incorporates a detailed investigation of the cargo cults as a way to further consider the role of the copy as a primary component of change.

Within the broad scope of literature about the copy, my research attempts to investigate the paradox that the act of copying is a primary component of change. This project has sought to enhance understanding of the role of

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12 In this text the interpretation of paradox is best understood within the paradox of Theseus’s ship. Also known as Theseus's paradox, this paradox raises the question of whether an object which has had all its components replaced remains fundamentally the same object. The paradox is most notably recorded by Plutarch in Life of Theseus from the late 1st century. Plutarch asked whether a ship which was restored by replacing all of its wooden parts remained the same ship. www.logicalparadoxes.info/theseus-ship
copying and mimicry and to articulate a correlation in print-media and visual art practice. The copy is integral to our current image culture with its technological genesis in the historical techniques of printing. More broadly, the copy is evident in other artforms such as painting, sculpture, photography and performance.

Pro-social behaviour studies propose that the act of mimicry is an adaptive mechanism that human beings enact in order to assimilate. Cargo cult researchers often propose that the rituals served as revolutionary precursors in the achievement of independence from the imposed foreign administration. This idea extends existing views of mimicry or copying as a purely altruistic adaptive mechanism by showing it to be a potentially aggressive tool used to overcome hegemonic oppression. Lacan succinctly articulates this idea:

   The effect of mimicry is camouflage … It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare. (Lacan, 1981, p. 99)

To date, little work has been undertaken to investigate the specifics of copying and mimicry in the cargo cults. Researching such ideas through visual art methods adds another investigative component to study of the copy and understanding of copying in human interaction.

This research travels from classical ideas of mimesis to an artist residency in the Solomon Islands and from Postmodernism to nineteenth century representation. The copy is mobile in this project and occurs in multiple hypotheses simultaneously.

14 According to pro-social behaviour studies mimicry is a response humans enact for benefit in the new circumstances encountered in social interaction.
Chapter 2

Defining the research

Soapbox oration 3

I again find myself on a soapbox declaring this secondary state is the perpetual agent of change. I proclaim:

What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.\(^{15}\)

This quote has been used in a number of Brillo Box performances\(^{16}\) at different locations throughout Australia and internationally. The first performance occurred in De Graves Street; Melbourne in April 2012 at the beginning of my candidature and it has recurred in multiple locations such as the Art Academy of China in Hangzhou and the Fremantle Arts Centre in Western Australia. In this performance I also argue for the importance of copying in the history of art, citing diverse sources such as the Gutenberg printing press and the media-saturated environment of today. I am always surprised, however, by the responses from the public about the origin of the quote. I receive explanations that it comes from sources as different as William Shakespeare\(^{17}\) and Arthur Conan Doyle.\(^{18}\) An Internet search reveals many examples of similar phrases throughout history.\(^{19}\) In this research, the unclear origin of the quote is pertinent because it signals an undefined original form that may exist only as a reference. In the performance, I am quoting from King Solomon in the King James Bible version of the Old Testament, first published in 1611 in the book of Ecclesiastes, this itself an accumulation of earlier texts from the 2nd century BCE. This quote is a relevant example of the primacy of copying, as much because of its ‘origins’ as its content. Historical and current, there is little variation between the King James version and other literary manifestations: “If there be nothing new, than that which hath been before … with a backward look, even of five hundred courses of the sun” (Shakespeare 1609, 59: 1&6).

Similarly, by using a quote from Ecclesiastes, I have copied a textual device of Jean Baudrillard in Simulacra and Simulation (1981). Baudrillard begins his book with a quote from Ecclesiastes: “The simulacrum is never what hides the truth – it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true.” Many authors\(^{20}\) have noted that these lines do not in fact appear in the book of Ecclesiastes in the King

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\(^{15}\) The Book of Solomon, The Ecclesiasts 1: 4–11 King James Bible.
\(^{16}\) Joel Gailer, Soapbox, 2012–2014, Degraves St, Melbourne, Victoria, and Fremantle Arts Centre, Western Australia, Sydney Rd, Brunswick, Victoria, North Melbourne Meat Market, Victoria, China Art Academy, Hangzhou, China, University of South Australia Art Gallery (SASA).
\(^{18}\) Sherlock Holmes Quotes, 2016, Sherlock Holmes Quote – A Study in Scarlet: There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before, available at: http://sherlockholmesquotes.com (accessed 20 June 2016).
James version of the Old Testament, but are presumably an idea provoked or garnered by Baudrillard as an interpretation of Ecclesiastes. This may be a ploy by Baudrillard to foreground the idea that the simulation is the truth, by simulating the authority of a biblical quote.

This assertion by Baudrillard, that the “simulacrum is true”, is interpreted in my research as its being the primary copy.

Relative research

Baudrillard positions Simulation and Simulacra as a reflection on the postmodern period, noting it as a case or description of the late-20th-century paradigm. Simulacra and Simulation articulates the postmodern concerns with the reference, appropriation and the copy. Other theorists researching similar themes include Walter Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (Felix Alcan, 1936), Hillel Schwartz (America 1948–), The Culture of the Copy (MIT Press 1996) and John Berger (England 1926–), Ways of Seeing (Penguin 1972). These theorists position the proliferation of the copy in relativist terms, articulating it as a late modern phenomenon. Walter Benjamin describes reproduction as an escalating phenomenon in The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, articulating his present experience in the early to mid 20th century: “Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction” (Benjamin, 1936, p. III).

In such works, attempts are made to define modes of copying in art as a relative state of culture and media at a given time, sometimes positioning it as a defining characteristic of a particular period, most notably the 20th century. This research finds an unqualified position for copying throughout history and cites the emergence of modern concepts of originality and authorship, as they relate to art, as analogous with the emergence of concepts of a secondary
copy evident in the development of copyright laws from the early 18th century\textsuperscript{21} onwards.

These themes have emerged from my art practice as a result of the active use of copy-based technologies including printmaking and photography, as well as responsive techniques like painting and performance, to address the paradox that copying is a primary component of change. Initial strategies of copying – appropriation, para-fiction, mimesis and reproduction – within my print-informed practice have exposed an inherent questioning of or a type of resistance to ideas about authenticity and originality.

Chapter 3

The authority of the stamp and the mass production of collective knowledge

A division of two parts

This chapter is divided into two parts and explores the paradox of printmaking as a process that is simultaneously a production of singular and multiple copies. Part I explores the use of the copy as a referent to authority, foregrounding the historical print technique of stamping. This research is centred around the studio production of a stamp titled *The truth is a copy*, 2012. Part II considers the purpose of copyright laws, highlighting the development of modern copyright laws as a reaction to the proliferation of products of the printing press in the 15th century. Bibliographical research suggests that the printing press at this time was an agent of social change (Eisenstein, 1969, p.18). Reflective studio research on this subject has led to the production of a commercially published print titled *Unique state*, 2012.

In these works, the significance of copying is explored as a self-contradictory idea in which the secondary copy is a primary concept. From this, a paradox arises when modes of print, such as the official stamp and the certified copy, replace an original document as a signifier of authority. Investigating this occurrence in relation to the broader fields of artistic practice has uncovered an important role for printmaking as a primary artistic method. Creative experiments in copy-making in the studio explore repetition and the multiple through the print methods of stamping and offset printing. This chapter highlights significant evidence of another paradox inherent in print production, that printmaking processes can produce multiples of the same image, but each print can be considered a unique creation in its own right. This paradox is explicitly highlighted in the production of an individual print, because, as the printmaker produces each print, they are making a unique work that is simultaneously a copy.

The truth is a copy

The sacred rooms of past centuries were theatres for performing ritual and religious activities

In my research and studio experimentation in early 2012, I have explored ways to question dominant notions in artistic practice such as originality, uniqueness and

authorship. Concepts inherent in print methods, specifically, reproducibility and the multiple, are employed because of their intrinsic methodology. In this part of the project, historical and current art practices are explored in the studio, producing outcomes in print. Research in historical perceptions of print methods has found evidence of a prescribed secondary position for such media, noting also print outcomes such as the multiple being considered derivative of concepts of originality and beginnings. Action-based research has explored possibilities for redefining and prioritising print processes to avoid the necessity of an original. Research has explored examples of primary prints such as prehistoric ochre handprints stamped on cave walls. Bibliographic research of creative practices from prehistory to the present has found substantive links between the Paleolithic cave, the medieval chapel and the present-era art gallery as sites for performing, enacting and re-enacting different interpretations of origin narratives, noting the frequent use of print and repetition in the production of such narratives.

Questioning truth and origins

Studio experimentation in early 2012 produced a small text-based self-inking stamp, titled *The truth is a copy*, of which the title constitutes the content of the work. The aim of this work is to articulate the paradox inherent in the production of traditional print multiples, that is, the quality of uniqueness present in hand-printed production that simultaneously generates multiples. *The truth is a copy* is a hand-held stamp that enacts the statement of truth explicit in the content of the work through the act of repetitive stamping. The multiple iterations of this work include handing out stamped sheets of paper on a street corner, incorporating the activity of stamping into other performance activities (notably *Performprint*, a collaboration with performance artist Michael Meneghetti and Jenny Mai Hall) and positioning the work in the art gallery as a relational sculptural work for audience members to activate and produce their own print. This last effectively encourages the viewer to engage in the authorship of the work and extends studio work into social interactivity.

After several trial presentations in the Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Fremantle Arts Centre, Dark Horse Experiment, Arts House and South Australian School of Art Gallery, as well as experimentation in the studio, the work has attained a type of fixity. For the conclusion of the work, I have chosen to stamp the text onto gold leaf, a material that signifies wealth, authority and divinity. I have then framed the work in a box frame. The final work consists of three elements: stamped text, gold leaf and frame. In the following text, I elaborate on the varying influences that have informed these three choices.

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Furthermore, this project has utilised the art gallery as an important site for research outcomes. The art gallery or museum is considered the current manifestation of the formal site for the display, performance and storage of cultural products. Historically, other architecture that shared similar functions includes museums, churches and their prehistoric equivalent, the subterranean cave or grotto.

Gold and the symbology of truth

In *The truth is a copy*; gold leaf is used to invoke the long history of symbolism and metaphor. In the historical Western art of the Italian and Byzantine medieval and Renaissance periods, gold leaf came to signify ecclesiastical and papal godliness as a traditional referent to truth and authority.

![Image of gold leaf artwork](image_url)

**FIGURE 38 JOEL GAILER, THE TRUTH IS A COPY, 2012, STAMP ON GOLD LEAF, 12X12CM**
Gold adorned the Byzantine Christian icons and mosaics of the medieval period (1050–1200 CE). The use of gold was a common practice at this time, and its symbolic and metaphorical meaning was commonly interpreted due to its repeated use over an extended period. This practice continued into the late medieval or proto-Renaissance period in Florence, Italy (1200–1400 CE), when artists used gold as a symbolic device to represent divinity; this practice is exemplified by Proto-Renaissance artist Giotto di Bondone (Italian c.1267–1337) (Piper n.d). Giotto regularly embellished the halo (also known as the nimbus, aureole, glory or gloriole) of sacred persons in his paintings with precious metals. The gold leaf surface was then stamped with patterns to create mesmerising details. This type of stamping is related to printmaking and reflects the compelling patterns achieved when the same print is repeated many times. Embellishing an artwork with gold in this period created the specific implication of wealth and authority, as well as creating an aural sense of divinity. The halo was depicted as a circular motif positioned behind the forward-facing features of both celestial and human figures. Often the halo shape was repeated multiple times across the painting, effectively multiplying the same form, a process that encouraged the viewer to follow the narrative of the painting.

25 Interestingly, Byzantine Christian artworks are predominantly unauthored.
Current artistic practice

The social and political significance of gold leaf persists to this day; artists such as Joseph Beuys, Yves Klein, Jeff Koons and Jannis Kounellis have all investigated the significance of gold leaf as a signifier of wealth and authority.

Jannis Kounellis’ installation Tragedia civile, 1975–2006 uses gold leaf to explore desire. Tragedia civile depicts a wall embellished with gold; in front of this wall is a hatstand on which hang a worn coat and hat. The title and contents of the work allude to a desire for or attainment of status and wealth by a middle class represented by the worn coat and hat. “Reminding us of the golden mosaics in sacred rooms of past centuries” (Kolumba Art Museum 1995), Kounellis invokes ideas of truth and authority evident in past eras through his use of gold leaf. The gold leaf wall forms a backdrop against which desires are projected; simultaneously, the reflective surface of gold presents a mirror of human action. This action is figuratively represented by the coat and hat and literally reflects the social activity of the gallery in the shiny surface of the gold leaf. Tagedia civile thus works within the concepts of a picture as a theatre or stage within which the world is reflected. Such figuration has a history in the 19th-century tableau vivant, a method of performance used to depict or represent human activity. While Tragadie civile is not literally based in concepts of the copy and representation, the reflective surface of the wall and the stage-like presentation allude to the elements of mimesis inherent in classical pictorial

Tragedia civile is constructed on and against the far wall of a room. The room is equal in width to the gold wall and creates the effect of an altar or stage. The Kolumba Art Museum describes Tragedia civile as a “shining surface that evokes the recollection of medieval mosaics in sacred rooms”. The sacred rooms of past centuries were theatres for performing ritual and religious activities. The stage-like setting and enclosed room of Tragedia civile also recall a medieval chapel or a prehistoric cave. This research has found historical links between the gold-adorned medieval chapel and the cave used for religious ritual.

The use of gold in The truth is a copy has been conceived with the intention to impart a similar sense as the precious metals used in religious objects. Such objects are symbols of historical ideas of truth and authority represented in Christian dogma. Stamping such text onto the gold leaf is not a provocative sacrilegious act. It is instead an earnest reading of current vested interpretations of newness and the

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29 Lascaux II, a replica of a complex of caves in southwestern France famous for its Paleolithic cave paintings, is located 200 metres from the real cave; it was opened in 1983 because the original was deteriorating.
30 Ephesians 5:1 King James Bible: “Therefor be imitators of God, as his beloved children”.

FIGURE 43 JANNIS KOUNELLIS, TRAGEDIA CIVILE 1975–2006, GOLD LEAF, COAT, HAT AND HATSTAND, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
processes of change. The printed text is suggesting a type of paradox invoked when secondary concepts like the copy are given primary status like the truth. The gold leaf is used as a motif to represent ideas of authority, wealth and ecclesiastical godliness (traditional signifiers of truth and beginnings). Two separate, stamped gold leaf sheets are framed in black, ten-centimetre-deep box frames and mounted back to back. The depth of the frame is an attempt to imply a precious box or encasement, a housing for a sacred object.

A sacristy\(^{31}\) is a room in a church, often decorated with gold mosaics and paintings embellished with gold leaf. A sacristy is smaller than a chapel, it is cave-like, and it keeps safe the vestments and sacred objects such as gold reliquaries and icons. The deep box frame encasing the stamped gold leaf in The truth is a copy has been conceived as a container for a precious object found in a chapel or sacristy or cave. Such signifiers position the artwork The truth is a copy in a religious context and the frame becomes the architecture for the religious object. Such architecture is the theatre or stage on which ritual activities are performed and religious objects are stored and displayed. The sacristy has a similar function to the museum or art gallery of today. In prehistoric times,\(^{32}\) caves operated in the same way as the chapel or sacristy, containing sacred images and objects, as well as serving as a place to perform ritual.

Paradox of the primary copy

Architecture as a site to perform ritual and house significant cultural artifacts has an equivalence in many cultures. The most prevalent examples in the present era are the church, mosque and synagogue. These serve as temples or places of worship and may have their origin in the prehistoric caves of Paleolithic humans. The first evidence of human creativity appears in the Upper Paleolithic time: 30,000 to 15,000 BCE (Paleolithic Architecture n.d). At this time humans dwelled in different types of shelter, including caves. Over time, caves became the predominant site for social, religious and ritual purposes.\(^{33}\) Art was a significant element of prehistoric cave occupancy and art production may have played a part in ritual activity, producing some of the earliest forms of figurative art. Performing religious ritual is still a complex and important part of religious activity and there is evidence that art plays a significant part in these performances, producing the earliest method of printmaking.

\(^{31}\) A room in a church where sacred objects such as vestments, vessels and icons are kept. Available at: www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sacristy (accessed 27 February 2016).

\(^{32}\) Caves: Upper Paleolithic period and into the Neolithic period (15,000–2000 BCE).

Hand stencils and handprints are techniques used by humans of the Paleolithic period to create artworks, and evidence suggests the handprints and hand stencils of this period are the oldest examples of figurative art. Handprints were preserved inside caves primarily for the purposes of ritual and religious activities by the time of the Upper Paleolithic period and into the Neolithic period (15,000–2000 BCE). The handprint on the cave wall may be the earliest example of artwork within a cave. These prints are the result of using the forearm and hand as a stencil or directly stamping ochre-covered hands onto the wall. The handprint is possibly the simplest and most primary form of printmaking and may also be the most primary creative mark. In this time, caves had a function similar to that of the chapel, sacred room or sacristy of medieval Western Europe.

Easily reproducible, the handprint appears in many prehistoric cave ‘paintings’; in some caves it is repeated tens or hundreds of times. This common and incidental

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35 The world’s oldest hand stencil comes from the Leang Timpuseng Cave in the Maros-Pangkep Karst area on the Island of Sulawesi, Indonesia. The site also includes some of the most ancient animal paintings, all made by aboriginal migrants who were reportedly heading for Australia. Prehistoric Hand Stencils n.d available at: www.visual-arts-cork.com/prehistoric/hand-stencils-rock-art.htm (accessed 28 February 2016).
form of stamp-making is represented in our present era as the forensic print: the fingerprint or handprint. Synonymous with individuality, uniqueness, ownership and singularity, the forensic print is used to identify a person. It is positioned as an infallible science of one hundred per cent certainty. My research has identified this as the print/original paradox: the handprint simultaneously invokes the multiple and the singular; it is reproducible as well as ‘unique’. In this research, contradictory ideas are combined to reveal the paradox that constitutes text: The truth is a copy.

The truth is a copy employs stamping to achieve diverse exhibition outcomes including performance and traditional print presentations. The stamp matrix is small, hand-held and versatile. It can be a viewer-activated object or fitted as a tool to create traditional print work. The title of the work constitutes the text present in the work. The truth is a copy signals a type of paradoxical truth that is enacted when the work is printed multiple times.

The final outcome of The truth is a copy as a double-framed image is significant because the two identical images reinforce the notion of the multiple. The work is small, about 20 centimetres square, and it is un-editioned, which allows the work to exist in as many copies as possible. The claim to truth in this artwork is itself a contradiction, because concepts of truth are linked to absolute ideas of origins and authority, while the copy is generally considered secondary to or derivative of an assumed original. The work is manipulated to instigate many contradictions or paradoxes: the ‘truth’ of the ecclesiastical symbolism of gold leaf combined with the inferior or secondary copy of the stamped print. In a trial presentation of the work in 2013, the stamp was activated by a member of the public and stamped on the gallery wall multiple times, as well as on other surfaces.

The stamped print finds its prehistoric origin in the handprint on the cave wall, but this itself invokes the contradiction of a primary mark made by a reproducible matrix, effectively the hand stamped on a cave wall. The term ‘handprint’ is used for both stencils and stamps, and these two basic print methods are fundamental techniques that underpin all relief printing such as woodblock printing, as well as stenciling such as screenprinting.

The truth is a copy utilises the historical significance of gold leaf to amplify the print/original paradox, identified as the moment when the secondary state (the copy) is given primary status. In this case, the research origin is a production of multiples and the formation of a print work (the stamp). The creation of this artwork and bibliographic research provide both methodological and theoretical evidence that

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36 Because of this claim of truth, the proof of the forensic print is now being questioned. Silverman M. Why your fingerprints may not be unique available at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/10775477/Why-your-fingerprints-may-not-be-unique.html (accessed 29 February 2016).
print production, in my practice, could be an example of a primary copy.

**Unique state**

Uniqueness is codified in art and language as originality, in printmaking it is codified as the unique state, in law it is copyright.

The truth is a copy stamp has been incorporated into a much larger installation that explores similar themes, with different methods, initially installed at the Canberra Contemporary Arts Space (CCAS). *Unique state, 2012* is a mass-produced commercial offset lithograph\(^{38}\) printed as two pages in the popular art journal *Art Monthly* as part of the 250th edition, June 2012. The installation covers the entire floor of the gallery and consists of 500 magazines left open at the same pages, printed with a white ‘1/1’ graphic set against a black background. The title of the work, UNIQUE STATE, IS A LIGHT-HEARTED, IRREVERENT reference to the idea that each work in each magazine is unique, one of one. In printmaking a ‘unique state (u/s)’ is a work that is different to the rest of the print edition. This work exists

\(^{38}\) This is a technique used commercially for ads and magazines.
only as a two-page spread in *Art Monthly*. It is not a reproduction, nor is it an advertisement for a broader project. It is an artwork created within the parameters of ‘artistic work’ according to the Berne copyright convention, 1886–1989.

The offset print, “a red flag for mass production” (Mandrick, 2012), is a method I have employed previously.39 Mass production is an important medium for this research because it signifies the print and the copy simultaneously, and offset printing is a process used to mass-produce printed material. *Unique state* partakes in a long history of artistic intervention into systems of commercial print publishing, which are as old as the printing press itself. This work utilises mass print production as a medium for knowledge-sharing and considers mass production as a predecessor to computer network technologies such as the Internet.

![Figure 46: JOEL GAILER, UNIQUE STATE 2012 (INSTALLATION VIEW), OFFSET PRINT PUBLISHED IN ART MONTHLY, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE](image)

The volume of prints produced in *Unique state* and the methods used to create the work have resulted in an open-ended enquiry.

Reflective research and post-project investigations have then led to an ongoing questioning of the authority of copyright40 as confirmation of originality, authorship and ownership. My research has questioned the application of copyright to a mass-produced artwork, foregrounding mass production as a medium for creating artwork in a space that resists the applicability of copyright. Mass production and Internet-to-print delivery methods are synonymous in the present era, such that current digital

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and computer network systems have created uncertainty for traditional copyright laws.

Copyright law as it relates to the visual arts has had a broad impact on the ways artists engage with existing visual, oral and literary material. The legal copyright principle, first developed in Britain (1600–present), emerged concurrently with the development of the printing press throughout Europe.\(^{41}\) Evidence suggests early copyright laws were historically linked to authorities’ attempts to control printers and limit the distribution of books.\(^ {42}\) As the number of printing presses grew in late-15th-century England, authorities sought to control the proliferation of printed books. The unregulated production of printed material initiated the legal concept of copyright and resulted in the Licensing of the Press Act in Britain in 1662 as a result of “the frequent abuses in printing seditious treasonable and unlicensed Bookes and Pamphlets and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses” (Licensing of the Press Act 1662). The same period also saw the emergence of mass-produced printed material.

However, copyright as a principle existed before this, evidenced by the Battle of Cúl Dreimhne\(^ {43}\) (c. 555 CE). In European countries, prior to the emergence of the printing press, books were hand-copied by scribes, and so they were laborious and time-consuming to produce and error prone; this process limited a book’s dissemination. The Battle of Cúl Dreimhne is an important historical milestone because it reveals early concepts of literary ownership and negative notions towards copying that pre-date print reproduction. The battle was instigated over the copying of a theological manuscript, a hand-copy of Saint Jerome’s Psalter. Saint Columba\(^ {44}\) (Ireland 521–597 CE) hand-copied the first copy of the Psalter to reach Ireland. The document was, at the time, the possession of Saint Finnian of Movilla (Ireland 470–549 CE), Saint Columba’s former teacher. In medieval Europe it was common to copy biblical manuscripts for dissemination and Saint Finnian’s manuscript was potentially a copy of a copy.\(^ {45}\)

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\(^{44}\) Patron of Derry, floods, bookbinders and poets in Ireland and Scotland.

\(^{45}\) According to various research sources in which Saint Finnian’s manuscript is referred to, it is recorded as either a copy or an original, although preference is given to it being a copy. What is without doubt is that Saint Finnian neither wrote nor hand-copied the manuscript; he acquired it.
Saint Columba was a scribe and copied up to 300 books and manuscripts in his lifetime\(^46\) intended for public use in Ireland. Found guilty of illegal copying at trial, Columba stated, “that the divine words in that book should perish, or that I or any other should be hindered from writing them or reading them or spreading them among the tribes”.\(^47\) In this statement he was declaring that copying was a right of ‘the tribes’ of Ireland. His position is an early signal of the perceived positive impact of copying, motivated by the principle of knowledge-sharing and the development of the written language. Columba’s position poses the question, if such processes of copying are illegal, how was development of the written language and the visual arts possible?

The printers of 16th-century Europe were the precursors to the mass production of images and text we have in the present. Artists have engaged with mass production to publish artwork with political and formal content to engage wider audiences than the singular or editioned artwork allows. Bibliographical research identifies the Futurist Manifesto\(^48\) written by poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (Italy 1876–1944) and published several times, most famously in the popular French newsprint *Le Figaro* on 20 February 1909, as a significant historical signpost for this enquiry.

Marinetti engaged mass-produced commercial print as a method to reach a broad audience and alert the public to the Futurist movement. His choice of commercial printing cleverly combined the rhetoric of speed and mechanisation in the *Futurist Manifesto* with the medium of mass production. “We affirm that the world’s magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed” (Marinetti, \(^48\)

\(^47\) The History of Copyright Law: The Battle of Cúl Dreimhne to Napster and the Present.
This sentiment is expressed throughout the *Futurist Manifesto* and reflects the growth of industrial mechanisation of the early 20th century. Such language could aptly apply to the developments in the printing press at the same time, notably the offset lithographic press.\(^{49}\)

In a mass-produced offset print, the final image or page has been moved once from its initial plate and all other copies stem from the secondary surface (Mandryk, 2012); this secondary surface is generally a rubber cylinder. In mass production, there are so many copies produced and disseminated publicly that the concept of copyright becomes less relevant. This is evident when the image or text becomes subsumed (and copied) into a variety of new media, a product of its proliferation. In this process, mass production may be synonymous with the idea of collective knowledge, rather than the concept of individual ownership. In the Internet age, an image can quickly become far removed from its initial intent or audience. In the present time, there are strong links between commercial print production and digital applications, partly due to Internet-to-print delivery systems.

Such systems of image production and dissemination are problematic for ideas of creative ownership expressed in the copyright principle. Fair use\(^{50}\) laws allow exceptions to a creator’s ownership and were introduced as a response to the perceived expansion of copyright laws. Digital media and computer network technologies such as the Internet have prompted reinterpretation of the exceptions of fair use and introduced new difficulties for the enforcing of copyright. Since the *Licensing of the Press Act* in 1662, copyright protection for literary and artistic creations has been expanded many times. Initial licences were for a period of 14 years, with provision for 14 more. Importantly, early regulations sought to limit an author’s or printer’s monopoly over licences and copyright. In the later *Statute of Anne*\(^{51}\) (Britain 1710–1842), limits on copyright were intended to “stimulate creativity and the advancement of science and the useful arts through wide public access to works in the public domain” (Association of Research Libraries 2014). This admission effectively acknowledges the importance of copying as a knowledge-sharing activity that benefits humanity and develops literature and the arts.

The proliferation of image and text in our current world has its history in the centuries-old techniques of printmaking. With the advancement of printing processes in the 19th and 20th centuries came the mass production of printed material. Mass production in the 20th century enabled vast populations to access a range of printed material, from advertisements to reproductions of artworks. Access to information expanded greatly with telecommunications and more recently computer network technologies (the Internet). The Internet is the likely successor of mass-produced

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\(^{50}\) Fair use policy available at: www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/foundation/fair-use (accessed 14 March 2016).

printed material and, despite the differences of delivery in the mediums, they are both examples of knowledge in the public domain whose copying, reprinting, reprocessing and appropriation are virtually impossible to control. This research positions the mass production of printed material and the Internet as knowledge-sharing mediums that may exist outside the control of copyright, highlighting the positivity inherent in copying and its broad benefits.

My artwork *Unique state* has been produced using a web-based photo-editing program and emailed directly to the *Art Monthly* publisher. The work’s moment of creation is undoubtedly the time I created it on my computer (2:40 pm AEST 5 May 2012) but this is not its origin. Looking for the origin of *Unique state* leads to a variety of contradictions: the computer photo-editing device has an inherent reproducibility, Internet-to-print delivery multiplies the artwork and the printing is a process of mass production. In conceptual and formal terms, *Unique state* is informed by and aligned with a variety of artists including Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer (America 1950–), Richard Prince and Robert McPherson (Australia 1937–), artists who, to varying degrees, use text to deconstruct the language systems underpinning their current socio-political contexts.

Although her diverse practice incorporates a wide variety of media, neo-conceptual artist Jenny Holzer is internationally known for using light to project politically charged text works into public spaces. Holzer organises language to juxtapose contradicting or opposing ideas so as to create *truisms* that appear like a type of postmodern haiku. Text works such as *Sex differences are here to stay, 1977–79/2008* combine concepts of disparity and change with the constancy of “here to stay”.

![This image is subject to copyright](image-url)
Barbara Kruger is from the same generation of American artists, often called the Pictures Generation due in part to the media culture of film and television they were born into (Eklund, 2016) and the title of an exhibition of the same name curated by American theorist Douglas Crimp (America 1944–) at the Artists Space in New York in 1977. Artists of this generation such as Kruger are known for their re-presentation of mass-produced imagery often taken from advertisements. Kruger engages various modes of display, from museum exhibitions to public billboards. In her utilising a variety of commercial print processes such as offset lithography, the message within Kruger’s work reaches a wider audience though the production of copies. *Untitled (You rule by pathetic display)*, 1982 is a photo-offset lithograph with serigraph (also known as a screenprint). The work is billboard scale, depicting a knife dividing a stream of water (presumably from a tap) with Helvetica text restating the words from the title. Kruger implicates the viewer in her compositions by addressing them directly (Cox Khul, 2008). This creates a doubling of the work, as the viewer interprets himself or herself as the protagonist in the narrative. A further doubling can be interpreted in the gender relations of the male/female signals implied in the text Kruger employs. *I, My and We* refer to the feminine, while *You and Your* refer to the masculine (Cox Khul, 2008). The text allows the audience to alternate between gender roles, potentially allowing a male or female to appropriate the opposite gender position.

Appropriation is a key method of the Pictures Generation and Kruger’s imagery unapologetically appropriates images or copies from print media and commercial magazines. Using the technique of a *copyist* Kruger rephotographs found images in commercial media, configuring the images with text to highlight or critique the implicit gender or hierarchical code underlying our commercial media. Mass production is central to Kruger’s work, from the initial source material of mass-produced commercial advertising to public outcomes in printed media. The copy is an important tool in Kruger’s method but it is also an outcome, as the mass-produced offset lithograph.

FIGURE 50 BARBARA KRUGER, *UNTITLED (YOU RULE BY PATHETIC DISPLAY)*, 1990, OFFSET LITHOGRAPH AND SERIGRAPH ON PAPER, 280X150CM

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52 A formal labeling for a group of artists who shared similar conceptual and material concerns, namely appropriation art.
Unique state engages with the systems of mass production using the medium of offset lithography as a method to challenge the codifying of uniqueness evidenced in the copyright principle. Through processes of reproduction (copy-making), the proliferation of the single image provides evidence that methods of mass production can exist as collective knowledge. In Unique state the copy is a print outcome of the mass-produced offset lithograph; the print is created and delivered by digital media. It can be argued that computer network technologies expose a space in which concepts of copyright justified in art and language may be negated. The concept of copyright, historically and in the present era, is evidence of an implied illegal and negative interpretation of copying, often associated with deceit. This research positions mass production as a positive process of knowledge-sharing exemplified by outcomes in offset lithographic printmaking. Such ideas highlight the functional aspect of copying and position the copy as a primary component of change.

Outcomes

In The truth is a copy; signifiers of authority and languages of truth are used to locate concepts of originality. Gold leaf is used to indicate that originality is a concept based on the theological beliefs of origins and beginnings. Bibliographic research on stamp-making has found a paradox in which the earliest form of printmaking is in the Paleolithic era; this is the ochre handprints stamped onto the stone surface of a subterranean cave dwelling. My research has found that the hand stamp signifies a primary form of mark making and creative activity. Paradoxically, the most primary mark is perpetually reproducible and effectively an activity of making copies.

In the second part of this chapter, I investigate processes that test the application of a legal copyright principle. The legal concept of copyright is positioned as a method to restrict copying in the present era. My research has found historical links between the emergence of the printing press in 15th-century Europe and the development of laws to restrict the creation of copies by methods of printmaking. This research connects social and political change in the 15th and 16th centuries with the proliferation of the printing press, and sites this change as an element of applied copyright restrictions. Mass-produced commercial offset lithography finds historical lineage in early developments in printing exemplified by the Gutenberg printing press. My qualitative research seeks to imply that mass production and computer network technologies are methods that can invalidate restrictions on copying due to massive image proliferation in such media. These ideas are explored in the work Unique state, an offset lithograph published in the pages of the 250th edition of Art Monthly, a popular Australian art magazine. Unique state was printed in over 20,000 copies of the publication and, as the title suggests, explores the singularity of the copy. This conundrum highlights the paradox of the print original and creates a space for the positive processes of copying, defined as a method to share knowledge, a space beyond the legal parameters of copyright.
FIGURE 51 JOEL GAILER, THE TRUTH IS A COPY, 2012, STAMP ON GOLD LEAF, 14X14CM
Figure 52 Joel Gailer, *Unique state* (detail), 2012, offset print published in *Art Monthly* journal, dimensions variable

Figure 53 Joel Gailer, *Unique state* (detail), 2012, Offset print published in *Art Monthly* journal, dimensions variable
Chapter 4

Print. Text. Copy

The multiplicity of meaning

*Writing succeeded spoken language as a form of copying*

It became apparent that the use of text in my work needed to be investigated in relation to the core concepts of my research, notably the application of text as a method to copy. Printed text is a dominant element in the artwork *The truth is a copy*, 2012 and the contradictory or absurd equation printed in *Unique state*, 2012. These works use text in two ways: for the formal qualities of the alphanumeric characters, and to impart the meaning signified in the printed word or numeral.

My studio research and bibliographical analysis has attempted to define the written word as a tool for *copying*. To articulate this equivalence, my investigations have focused on writing as a form of reproduction. Explorations in the studio have utilised oil and acrylic paints to create combinations of abstract painting with words in non-cursive print. These activities have resulted in text-based fluro-coloured multi-media paintings.

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**FIGURE 54** JOEL GAILER, *THE OTHER*, 2013, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON PAPER 110X76CM

**FIGURE 55** JOEL GAILER, VAILALA, 2013, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON PAPER, 110X76CM
This series of text paintings relies on the works’ existence within a predefined English language and cultural structure. The structure of signs that constitutes the English language is a predetermined aesthetic in my work, primarily because it is the ethnographic and linguistic system of the English language, which is discussed later in this chapter.

In this project, I draw comparisons between the words ‘print’, ‘text’ and ‘copy’, finding similitudes in language. ‘Print’, ‘text’ and ‘copy’ are words and themes that relate directly to my art practice. By utilising ideas from my initial studio experimentations, I have discovered precise meaning in language and related it to a proliferation of ideas. This chapter locates written text as a method of reproduction.

On paper, fluro acrylic paint was applied in a neo-expressionist painting style and overlaid with text painted in black oil paint. This process is an attempt to investigate the reproduction of ideas through the written word and as a gestural painting style. ‘Print’ is a term to describe both the activity of printing and a non-cursive or block-lettering style of handwriting. Handwritten ‘print’ is a stylistic derivative of machine-

53 A style of late modernist or early post-modern painting that emerged in the 1970s, characterised by intense subjectivity and rough handling of materials.
made typeset print. This printmaking signifier is also evident, to varying degrees, in the words ‘text’ and ‘copy’. A prime example of this is the printed book.

Writer David Owen’s historical analysis of the photocopier and its inventor, Chester Carlson (America 1906–1968), (2004, p. 1) asserts, "writing succeeded spoken language as a form of copying and exponentially extended the human network that language created, writing freed copying from the chain of living contact."

FIGURE 58 ANGELA BRENNAN, UP, 2016, OIL ON LINEN, 210X160CM
This is interpreted in this research as the reproducibility of the written word. Using *print* in these paintings is an intuitive, self-reflexive gesture based on my desire to express myself with text and my reliance on the English language. Ideas relating to copying are explored in these works using humour and unconventional words or phrases, an everyday language that approximates slang. As well as exploring the potential of text, I also reuse or reproduce the bright colours from Pop Art and the gesture of neo-expressionism. The images are composed of two elements: the base of the image is painted with bright acrylic colour and text is applied as a second layer.

The outcome mimics the neo-expressionist style of Australian artist Angela Brennan (Australia 1960–). Brennan’s text paintings often employ quotes or references, such as in the work *Invitation*, 2009, a humorous work with an abstract-coloured background. The text is painted boldly, quoting the famed statement of actress Sofia Loren (Italy 1934–), “Everything you see I owe to spaghetti”. It is an appealing use of words, although the active agent for my research is not what the text signifies, it is the ease with which the text replicates from subject to subject, creating the possibility for ceaseless reproductions as ideas migrate from spoken word to written word.

Further experimentation in this series has led to the installation *Homage to Richard Larter*, 2014, in which a segment of pop artist Richard Larter’s (United Kingdom, Australia 1929–2014) painting *Outlook*, 1998 was replicated in oil and acrylic on canvas. The image is copied from a polyptych in which Larter depicts the Australian landscape as seen through the curtains of a moving train. Over several identically shaped canvases, Larter describes glimpses of a landscape blurred through the movement of a vehicle or train. The painting I have produced is copied from a reproduction of Larter’s painting in a popular Australian art journal.

Larter was a pioneering Australian Pop Artist whose formative works depict images from news media and television. The print process of stenciling plays an important role in Larter’s early work. Using the Gestetner stencil duplicator, Larter printed and reprinted newspaper clippings onto his painted surfaces. The images he chose were

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political and provocative, often combining pornographic images with pictures of political figures.

![Image of Red Momma](image)

**FIGURE 60** RICHARD LARTER, *RED MOMMA (DETAIL)*, 1970, ACRYLIC ON COMPOSITION BOARD, 122.5X183CM

*After Richard Larter*

*Homage to Richard Larter* combines the fluro text paintings with the literal copying of the central panel in Larters 1998 painting, *Outlook*. This installation highlights some important and necessary aspects to my research questions; emphasising the traditional practice of copying a historical painting. However it did not articulate the function of the written or printed word as a method of reproduction. Due to this methodological inaccuracy, this line of enquiry has been concluded.
Angela Brennan

Investigations have returned to the neo-expressionist paintings of Angela Brennan, whose text paintings display an impressive spontaneity and humorous wit and, most importantly, convey the potential of text as a tool for reproduction. Mimicking her technique of painting a coloured abstract painting and boldly brushing text onto this surface, I have produced a work titled *The first reference to the copy*, 2013. This work presents a light-hearted conundrum, evident in the title and painted in thick black oil paint over the coloured background. The sentence invokes the hierarchical or linear order of logical reasoning by the use of “The first”, implicating these words as a primary referent and countering this by indicating that “The first” is the copy.
This work explores a similar conundrum to those evident in *The truth is a copy* and *Unique state*. The choice to use painting methods and disregard printed processes is a measured decision to explore ideas evident in printmaking methodologies and theories through other mediums.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, this painting relies on a predetermined social, cultural and linguistic system to interpret the words painted onto its surface. This could be interpreted as limiting the work’s scope for common and universal interpretation. Furthermore, it could be argued the English language is a dominant and pervasive linguistic presence worldwide and the use of such in artwork could naively be participating in its expansion. This question was considered as an afterthought and has necessitated the acceptance that the proliferation of the English language has been in part due to the colonial expansionist practices of the United Kingdom between the 16th and 18th centuries, which resulted in the political, legal, linguistic and cultural legacy of England becoming widespread. When I was thinking about language alternatives to express such ideas in a text painting, another conundrum developed in which the appropriation of another culture’s linguistic system could be interpreted as a neo-colonial act.

Outcomes
When considering an appropriate conclusion for this artwork, it became important to mitigate possible interpretive flaws that might be evident in the work, such as a permissive use of the English language. As a strategy to avoid interpretations that might limit the universal appeal of the work, I have focused on the inherent stylistic design of the non-cursive text for its formal qualities, as well as its literal reading. To heighten the formal aspect of the text in the work, I decided to re-engage the printing process. The painted work has been photographically reproduced in high definition and digitally printed as a reverse or mirror image to the exact dimensions of the painted version. This mirror print is then positioned side by side with the painting, to increase the formal impact of the printed words. The new composition also acts as a reference to the printing plate and its composite image, a combination of image and plate that is revealed when the paper or substrate is peeled away from the printing block.

![Image](image-url)

**FIGURE 64 JOEL GAILER, UNTITLED, 2013–2016, OIL, ACRYLIC AND DIGITAL PRINT ON PAPER, 110X150CM**

The work has been retitled *Untitled* and is the culmination of an enquiry into the reproducibility of the written word. This enquiry has found additional meaning in my studio work uncovering the historical role for the written word as a means to reproduce ideas in multiple geographic locations. Resolved studio work combines painting, photography and print to explore several contradictory or paradoxical ideas. A methodological conundrum has been investigated in the potential colonial aetiology of the English language and the choices that govern its use in artwork. Multiple contradictions or paradoxes have found a conclusion in the creation of a diptych that combines painting and print. The words ‘text’, ‘print’ and ‘copy’ have been found to have historical connections to the printed typeset document, as well their own individual interpretations as signifiers of the handwritten word. Ultimately the mirror reflection is used to deflect the overtly specific readings of written language and has come to define the final artwork for its formal design, as well as the literal meaning of the painted words.
FIGURE 65 JOEL GAILER, *UNTITLED*, 2013–2016, ACRYLIC, OIL AND DIGITAL PRINT ON PAPER, 110X150CM

FIGURE 66 JOEL GAILER, *UNTITLED*, 2013–2016, ACRYLIC AND OIL ON PAPER, 110X150CM

Figure 67 Joel Gailer, *Untitled*, 2013–2016, acrylic and oil on paper, 110x150cm
Chapter 5

The reflected copy

Mirror state

*In this project, the form and its specular image combine to create a new entity, the holistic combination of the reflection and the subject*

![Image of Joel Gailier's Mirror State sculpture](image)

**FIGURE 68 JOEL GAILER, MIRROR STATE, 2014, CAST ACRYLIC AND POLYCARBONATE PLASTICS AND STEEL, 500X300X100CM**

The mirror reflection has been identified as an important aspect of the existing bibliographical theory relating to the copy and it became necessary to explore this concept. I have designed a sculpture based on the idea of the mirrored copy. I chose to investigate the mirror reflection on the assumption that it creates a paradox by constituting something more than a subject and its reflection. The form and its specular image combine to create a new entity, the holistic combination of the reflection and the subject. The resultant sculpture is two symmetrical halves of clear polycarbonate tube slides; large cylinders of clear plastic. The assembled sculpture is without a logical conclusion, created by attaching two beginnings together. The idea has arisen

*Mirror state*, 2014 is a large sculpture (3000x5000x100cm) made of clear polycarbonate and acrylic plastics and steel. It is constructed from modular prefabricated forms. The design is somewhat predetermined due the material used, a material popular in the construction of tubular slides, the type found in children’s playgrounds. The work has been conceived as drawings on paper, which were then digitally copied and emailed to plastics manufacturers. This was a process of finding an importer with an existing product that could be manipulated or a manufacturer with suitable plastics moulds that related to my design, a process that took several months. Ultimately I found a manufacturer with an existing product that was suitable for the project.
Slight adjustments were made to the design due to the modular plans available from the supplier, as well as a major shift in the colour of the sculpture. In pre-design the sculpture was conceived of as transparent blue with red attachments. During structural planning with the supplier, the opportunity to make the sculpture completely transparent arose and I accepted, given that transparency would heighten the specular play of light on the surface of the sculpture.

In *Mirror state* the equivalence created by the mirror is a significant conceptual element. Rather than creating a setting where one thing contemplates another, *Mirror state* sets up a cyclic equality in which the reflected image combined with the subject creates a whole. The comprehension of the unique self or individuality, which is the focus of Lacan’s essay, is countered in *Mirror state*. The ontological proposition of the “I” or recognition of such by Lacan is not present in *Mirror state*; instead, this project positions the mirror as a perfect representational copy, a reflection that mimics whatever is before it and comprehends this reflected state as a conundrum that results in the acceptance of multiplicity, rather than singularity. In *Postproduction* Nicolas Bourriaud foregrounds artists “who use existing forms to create artwork as testimony to a willingness to inscribe the work of art within a network of signs and significations, instead of considering it an autonomous or original form”. In this research, the reflected image prescribes a form as already existing. It reflects a copy that is simultaneous with the singular.
The ubiquitous copy reveals a type of commonality that is not evident in the singular. Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (cited in Bourriaud 2003) says, “what matters is introducing a type of equality, assuming the same capacities, the possibility of an equal relationship, between me – at the origins of an arrangement, a system and others”. The mirrored image is a metaphor for this equality. In Mirror state there is no primary and secondary aspect to the sculpture; it is two equal halves: the reflection has become tangible, evidenced by the holistic sculptural form.

Mirror state does not have a logical conclusion; instead, it is created by attaching two beginnings together. The beginnings are entrance points from children’s tubular slide designs attached and joined in the centre. Perspex ladders lean into the entry points at either end, inviting the public to physically participate and enter the sculpture. This proposition is a ploy to psychologically engage the public in a game of decipherability. In Mirror state interaction is impossible because, if the sculpture was activated, the participant would become trapped in the centre, as there are only two entrances, no exits, and the scale physically prevents this. This act (of joining two beginnings) is a metaphor for the paradox of the copy, because when you try to use a paradox, you become stuck in a cyclic state of decipherability.

The ontological copy...

The creation of Mirror state from polycarbonate plastics and moulds anticipates its reproducibility. Such casting methods copy the historical methods of bronze sculpture casting. Pre-modern examples of copying are an important theoretical source for my reflective research, providing a historical methodology and substantive evidence of a paradox of the copy, defined as a form without an origin. Historical examples include the practice of copying in the Roman Empire (1st century BCE to 5th century CE), a time when ancient Greek marble and bronze sculptures were cast in plaster and replicated in marble or bronze. “Since most ancient bronze statues have been lost or were melted down to reuse the valuable metal, Roman copies in marble and bronze often provide our primary visual evidence of historically significant Greek sculptures.”55 Plaster copies of pre-modern Greek and Roman in the Italian Renaissance were the popular equivalent of the Roman copy in the early modern period throughout Europe (c.1500–c.1800). It was common for a museum to exhibit plaster copies as venerated sculpture alongside works in marble, wood or bronze, for appreciation and study (Schwartz, 1996, p. 251). This occurrence was more than the reproduction bringing the original closer to the public, as Walter Benjamin describes. It was a negation of the inferior/superior dichotomy of original and copy, similar to the experience of seeing an ancient Roman copy of a classical Greek sculpture.

Three Graces (Roman 2nd century BCE) is one of 16 Roman copies known in existence. It is unsigned, as was common practice in this period. According to the American Metropolitan Museum of Art’s website,\footnote{Metropolitan Museum of Art, Marble statue group of the three graces, available at: www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/2010.260 (accessed 4 May 2016).} it is one of the most famous compositions known from antiquity. Where and why it was conceived are unknown but it was ‘most probably’ (my italics) developed in the Hellenistic period (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010). It is a canonic formula for representing the Three Graces. The features of the three women are often almost identical, as are the poses that depict the three women dancing in a cyclical pattern, each reflecting the other. Plaster cast versions have been created consistently in modern history (1500–present). Neo-classical artist Antonio Canova (Italy 1757–1822) is a notable example. Canova’s version of the Three Graces is stylistically congruent with the neo-classical period and is more eroticised than the Roman version. The Three Graces composition has been copied, repeated and re-appropriated innumerous times in many different artistic media.
The configuration can be interpreted in paintings from such dissimilar works as Sandro Botticelli’s (Italy c.1445–c. 1510) *Primavera*, 1482 to Henri Matisse’s (France 1869–1954) fauvist painting *Dance II*, 1910. Matisse’s lyrical composition, a painting he repeated several times in his life, is represented here by photographer Cesar Santos (Cuban-American 1982– ). Santos interprets *Dance II* in his Syncretism series (2010–2013) as a representation of the *Three Graces* composition, achieved through the performance of three women in front of Matisse’s *Dance I* in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

FIGURE 73 SANDRO BOTICELLI, *PRIMAVERA*, 1423, OIL ON CANVAS, 200X314CM

FIGURE 33 ANTONIO CANOVA, *THREE GRACES*, 1815, PLASTER CAST, 160X90X90CM

FIGURE 34 HANS-PETER FELDMAN, *UNTITLED (THREE GRACES)*, 2012, PLASTER, 120X120CM

FIGURE 35 CESAR SANTOS, *THREE GRACES*, 2012, DIGITAL PRINT, 60X30CM

Neo-conceptual artist Hans-Peter Feldman (Germany 1941– ) describes himself as a practitioner who re-presents existing images and objects. He self-consciously leaves his work unsigned and untitled, and makes limitless print and sculpture editions. This
action partly references his large collection of un-authored cultural artefacts he regularly uses in his exhibition practice, and partly his disregard for concepts of ownership. These ideas are present in his print work, which is regularly gifted during exhibitions. Feldman’s *Untitled (Three Graces)* is a plaster relief painted in an artificial skin tone colour and is formally imitative of the 2nd-century Roman version in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The work is suggestive of plaster garden decoration, a mass-produced object made from a mould.

The moulded, *copied* and mass-produced *Untitled (Three Graces)* has undergone a cycle of decontextualising and recontextualising. Bourriaud describes this process as, “the displacement of works from the canon towards commonplace contexts … and embedding the forms of popular culture in a high art context” (Bourriaud, 2003, p. 42) as a priority for postproduction artists. Bourriaud describes postproduction as the creative use of systems, images and forms already in existence. Postproduction processes are identified in Feldman’s work. *Untitled (Three Graces)* has undergone a series of shifts back and forth from high art to commonplace object and antique to thrift shop in a cycle of re-moulding, remaking and copying. Feldman’s *Untitled (Three Graces)* succinctly illustrates the cast as a copy-making method that locates forms beyond the definitive concepts of originality and the ontology of history and into an undefined commonality that is perpetually present.

**Sculpture casting**

Sculpture casting is a type of replication technology and the plastic moulds that *Mirror state* has been cast from use the same methods as a bronze or plaster cast, although the polycarbonate material requires its own set of conditions. The pre-existing nature of the materials used to construct *Mirror state* relates this work to Borriaud’s theories of postproduction. In *Postproduction* Bourriaud posits that artists are now going beyond the art of appropriation, because that implies an ideology of ownership, and moving towards a culture of the use of forms (Bourriaud, 2003, p. 9). *Mirror state* employs this type of production. The cast plastics were pre-designed and prepared. This pre-existence required changes to the form of my initial design; most notably the arc or curve needed to be adjusted, because the existing polycarbonate tube was formed with 90-degree bends as opposed to the 45-degree bends in my drawings. This insertion of my work into an existing form is what Bourriaud cites as the contribution to the eradication of the traditional distinction between production and consumption, creation and copy, ready-made and original work of art (Bourriaud, 2003, p. 13).

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**Mirror state** signals the definition of another mode of deciphering the reflected image, one in which the reflection constitutes a new whole by reflecting and socialising with its subject. This process is an informal and indistinct play of simultaneity. The psychology of early childhood play is invoked in *Mirror state* by the narrative of the children’s slide. This reference invokes Lacan’s early childhood theories in his essay *Mirror Stage*, although a distinctive difference emerges in the theoretical and conceptual outcome of the work. In *Mirror Stage* Lacan locates the reflection as a moment of separation and recognition of individuality. In *Mirror state* the mirror becomes a metaphor for symmetry and multiplication simultaneously. The process of deciphering uncovers a paradox that relates to traditional concepts of the copy. This paradox is evident in the plaster relief of Hans-Peter Feldman, in which historical forms are reused, recycled and copied in a constant state of reproduction. *Mirror state* responds to the concept of an ever-present copy that at once precedes and follows itself.

**Postscript**

Theoretical impetus for the sculpture titled *Mirror state*, 2014 has derived from reading secondary textual references of an essay by Lacan. The preliminary conceptual intent has relied on the copying of the title of Lacan’s seminal essay *Mirror Stage*, with the naïve assumption that the title was a direct copy. Through research and reading the primary source, the error in my translation was evident. This error was doubled in a theoretical inaccuracy caused by relying on secondary sources such as French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s (France 1908–1961) *Eye and mind (from the primacy of perception)* 1961, as well as miscellaneous articles that implied similar theories. Analysis of Lacan’s essay has also uncovered an important theoretical divergence. In *Mirror Stage* Lacan’s focus locates the early childhood account of the specular image (mirror reflection) as a moment of separation. While mimicry, duplication and symmetry are elements of Lacan’s theory, such ideas are positioned as functions that establish the difference between the organism and reality, the comprehension of individuality. This is opposed in *Mirror state*, as the mirrored form constitutes half of the complete sculpture.
FIGURE 75 JOEL GAILER, MIRROR STATE, 2014, POLYCARBONATE AND ACRYLIC PLASTICS AND STEEL, 300X500X100CM
FIGURE 76 JOEL GAILER, MIRROR STATE, 2014, POLYCARBONATE AND ACRYLIC PLASTICS AND STEEL, 300X500X100CM
FIGURE 77 JOEL GAILER, MIRROR STATE, 2014, POLYCARBONATE AND ACRYLIC PLASTICS AND STEEL, 300X500X100CM

FIGURE 78 JOEL GAILER, MIRROR STATE, 2014, POLYCARBONATE AND ACRYLIC PLASTICS AND STEEL, 300X500X100CM
Figure 79 Joel Gailer, *Mirror state*, 2014, polycarbonate and acrylic plastics and steel, 300x500x100cm
Chapter 6

*If the ‘singular vision’[^58] doesn’t interest you, try the multiple*

The copy is the source of this research chapter, which then unfolds from the politics of the multiple into an enquiry of colonial and postcolonial land tenure.

Initial studio research

The multiple in printmaking is often a technical outcome. However, through this research, secondary questions have developed: What happens when the multiple is executed through a medium or technique not often associated with reproduction? In chapter four, painting emerged as a medium to explore ideas developed in my print practice, and oil and acrylic paints were used to impart ideas through text. It has been noted that painting is generally linked to the singular ideas of authenticity and originality in art practice. Through studio reflection, other genres of painting have been considered as a methodology to extend my research in this area. Landscape painting has become an area of enquiry and secondary questions arose, such as: What is implied when a painting is repeated several times?

Throughout this research project, copying in social interaction and cultural transitions has been articulated through a print-media methodology. Print methods have been crucial for the articulation of the copy as an agent for change because, in such methods, the work derives from a combination of a matrix (plate), a medium (ink) and the support (a substrate). This combination of elements is without a singular source and creates a print that can be multiplied at will. The print is crucial for comprehending the paradox of the copy as an agent for change. Although such a position could be evidenced through other art processes such as painting, the painting is a handmade copy rather than a mechanically made copy. In my research, I define painting as a mode of working that can be considered to reference ideas of singularity and originality. As well, the handmade painting is often referred to as being unique or inimitable.

This scenario can ignore the sources of ideas and images, those references, which are a type of copying. The references and appropriations not often acknowledged in claims of originality are key to interpreting the paradox of the copy: that paradox which is enacted when copying becomes the agent of change.

[^58]: In the context of this chapter, the singular vision of an artist refers to a type of production that is stylistically consistent; an artist may produce work in a similar style for their entire career, a *singular vision*. 
This project is a suite of paintings depicting Yadua Island, an atoll situated in the South Pacific Ocean, an uninhabited region of Melanesia. The paintings depict an island that is geographically and conceptually linked to the Pacific islands of Melanesia, a type of quixotic destination I had first experienced through the tourist brochure or television travel show – as a type of simulacral utopia.

_Pacific mindedness_, 2013–2016 was initially copied from an image on the Internet site www.privateislands.com advertising ‘Private islands for sale’. This source firstly situates the origin of the work in the realm of the Internet-derived artwork although, most importantly for this research, it locates the author as the _copyist_. Like the amateur artist replicating an Old Master painting, in this case it is an un-authored photograph. Secondly, it is a highly politicised image source. The South Pacific has a history of colonial appropriation and exploitation, and the Internet site selling seemingly deserted islands implies a foreboding history of colonial resettlement (Gosden & Knowles, 2001).

The image I have utilised is _copied_ from the downloaded Internet file and printed on an inkjet printer. The print itself is divided into a grid that corresponds to the canvas, comparatively like a traditional drawing aid. The work generates from one canvas to the next, each canvas following a traditional painting method; firstly priming the canvas with a red ground, squaring the canvas with a grid and drawing the image onto this support in pencil. The work is then built up in acrylic paint and glazes.

The methods I use follow traditional painting techniques and allow the work to be discussed within the languages of traditional painting, as a category of art that prioritises uniqueness. This conceptual impetus drives the production of the work, a work of _copies_. From this origin of _copies_, the work develops from canvas to canvas, each canvas becoming a reference for the next, until multiple references of the same image drive the re-production of the next painting.

FIGURE 80 JOEL GAILER, _PACIFIC MINDEDNESS (WORK IN PROGRESS)_ (2013–2014), ACRYLIC ON CANVAS BOARD, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
The expected secondary nature of replication is questioned in this enquiry as I seek to define copying as a primary element of change within the narrative of the unique painting. Researching such ideas in the studio has produced paintings titled Pacific mindedness, these paintings enacting the same conclusions that the printed multiple might describe.

As a creative strategy the multiple has been used by artists in both present and historical contexts. American artist Andy Warhol’s exploitation of commercial screenprinting processes is a key reference for this project due to his manipulation of the multiple to re-present societal changes experienced by a growing consumer-focused culture. His work often repeats the same image to achieve powerful effects. Brillo boxes, 1964, screenprinted ink on wood, simultaneously shows Warhol’s fascination with consumerism as well as the mesmerising effects of aligning identical images within one work.59 I have redeployed this strategy in the display of Pacific mindedness, installing the suite of paintings in a small room in close proximity.

The historical and current handmade copy

Bibliographical research has revealed a rich history of artists pursuing replication through paint. Early accounts of this mode of copying point to a formal and technical pursuit of composition through what is typically known in art as a ‘study’. The study is considered a minor painting that comes before or after a major painting of the same subject. In addition to this tradition, there is some evidence of artists engaging with the conceptual possibilities of copying, preceding Warhol (throughout history) (Schwartz, 1996, p. 180). Schwartz sites examples of 19th-century artist Jon Haberle’s (1856–1933) highly detailed Imitations (1887) of American banknotes. Haberle was forced by law to desist from his trompe l’oeil versions of American currency due to the legal implications of forgery.

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Notwithstanding these histories, a primary source of this investigation begins in 1957 with American abstract expressionist artist Robert Rauschenberg’s *Factum I and Factum II*. These two paintings by Rauschenberg, painted at a time when the themes of abstract expressionism were thoroughly entrenched in American art, were pivotal in signaling the change from modernist modes of practice to conceptual explorations. Rauschenberg’s execution of two identical abstract expressionist paintings creates a double ambiguity. In this, the artist’s overall intention is to disrupt the viewer’s expectations of originality. Rauschenberg’s deliberate reversal of ideas about the ‘original’ challenges the assumptions of authentication that have been attached to the fine art system; despite the works’ existence as gestural abstract paintings, they also exist as non-originals. These works are Rauschenberg’s refutation of the “myth of abstract expressionist spontaneity, on which the special authenticity of the painting was thought to depend. In the very act of mimicking the heat of the creative moment, they give a perfect and ruthless critique of the very notion of accident.”

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60 Hughes, R. 2006 available at: www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/jan/26/art1
In a current art context, a 2014 exhibition of work by artist Adam Henry (America 1974–) held at the Joe Sheftel gallery[^61] in New York explores themes of abstraction, replication and the copy. The exhibition of 14 nearly identical paintings, hung symmetrically on the side-walls of the gallery, takes "a firm stand against the fetishisation of authenticity". According to the gallery website (www.joesheftelgallery.com) Henry is exploring differentiation through repetition.

Henry’s work is abstract in appearance, but due to multiplicity and repetition the work takes on a new significance, that of mimesis and representation. This uncanny position of verisimilitude and falsity explores the relationship between the psychological and the optical through questioning notions of time, the time in which a painting is viewed and the narrative concept of time that is disrupted when the painting is repeated 14 times. Similar to Henry’s 2014 exhibition, Pacific mindedness explores the type of representation that is enacted when a painting is repeated several times. The repetition of the same island eight times in Pacific mindedness creates a paradox of perception by halting possible sequential narratives or conclusive readings. The time that unfolds when interpreting a linear narrative through a series of painting panels is collapsed when each painting is identical. The narrative becomes cyclical, as the viewer is constantly returned to the same view while reinterpreting successive images.

In a sense Pacific mindedness is informed by René Magritte’s work The treachery of images (1928–29); however, it is linked only by its representational opposition. Pacific mindedness somehow affirms its position as an island, which it represents, while The treachery of images undermines our auto-interpretation that the pipe is a pipe. Philosopher Michel Foucault (France 1926–1984) recounts, in cyclic phrase, the endless possibilities of the image and text within The treachery of images. The painting highlights the recurring ambiguity and the reciprocal relationship between the signifier and the signified. In Magritte’s simple juxtaposition, the painting becomes a representation of a representation and the image of the pipe is multiplied, not only by its description in word and image, but because of the uncanny resonance and the multiplication of idea.

There is no conclusive end point in The treachery of images and Foucault articulates this in his essay This is Not a Pipe (1983, University of California Press, London, UK) by stating, “There are two pipes. Or rather must we not say, two drawings of the same pipe? Or yet again two drawings each representing a different pipe?” This cyclical narrative is present in the idea that the copy is a primary agent of change because the repetition of the existing form creates a paradox of interpretation, where
at once the copy is positioned as a reference but it is also an agent for an entirely new proposition.

FIGURE 84 RENE MAGRITTE, THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES (THIS IS NOT A PIPE), 1928–1929, OIL ON CANVAS, 63X94CM

*Pacific mindedness* is somewhat opposed to Magritte’s deconstruction of image perception. In *Pacific mindedness* repetition is used for purposes that highlight its significance as a picture of something. While this strategy differs from Magritte’s, the multiplication of Yadua Island in Melanesia is an attempt at signification and somehow an assertion of my representational ability with acrylic paint. While Magritte was referring to the ability of the image to somehow substitute and deceive, *Pacific mindedness* utilises repetition to define and articulate, essentially highlighting the actuality or assumed actuality evident in the naturalistic painting.

Method and meaning

*Pacific mindedness* began in 2013 and started with the deliberate replication of a photograph representing Yadua Island in the South Pacific, which was painted as accurately as possible. The image is copied from a website and reproduced in acrylic on canvas board eight times, this number equivalent to two paintings per wall in a four walled room. In this project, this image is significant for multiple reasons:

1. Its underlying political positioning as referent to my initial research into 20th-century cultural movements in Melanesia in the South Pacific

2. Its actual depiction of a place, an island in Melanesia

3. Its status as a multiple, or a series of copies
Through replicating this work multiple times, the potential of representation through repetition has become more pronounced as the production of the canvases increases. The multiplicity of the image has the potential to increase the image’s mimetic and symbolic power, its realism. While one painting of an island in the Pacific signifies a traditional landscape or seascape, copying this image several times may increase its likelihood of being read as an actual description of a place. Through the accumulation of the paintings, a strange conviction is realised, that is, the emphasis that *this is an island*. Or, more specifically, the overemphasis enacted by painting the image repeatedly seems to imply a naturalistic reading.

Creating multiple copies of the same painting results in certain elements of the technique being dismissed or assumed as needed, like missing details or overemphasis in particular passages of paint. This is achieved because the many copies of the same image within close proximity generate a conceptual view of the island that is not reliant on traditional interpretations of a painting as mark-making. Through replicating the same image, I am overstating the subject of the painting as a realistic depiction, taking away the need to view the painting for its material and painterly character. The resultant effect is reducing the significance of the ‘artist’s hand,’ despite it being present in the work. Such a strategy is an attempt to provoke questions about the necessity for assertions of authenticity and uniqueness.
Political positioning

Furthermore, reproducing this image of Yadua Island in Melanesia may also increase its metonymic potential as a copy. The island, as a destination and subject in this project, is not a primary factor; its purpose is to represent the South Pacific region of Melanesia. As the repetition magnifies the island’s significance, its referential power is heightened and the question of signification arises: What is the island? Where is the island? To whom does the island belong?

In this project, this singular island becomes a motif for my fascination with the islands and cultures of the southern Pacific Ocean. By imitating it many times, I am trying to create an imaginary archipelago of copies of copies of this singular island.

More importantly, the source of the image subtly refers to the post-colonial factors facing the region. Land tenure in post-colonial Melanesia is radically different to Australia’s, despite sharing similar colonial histories. In the colonisation of Melanesia, very little land was either registered or alienated, and thus land remained under customary title, controlled by clans and families. The photograph I have copied is sourced from a website, ‘Private islands online,’ which specialises in the sale of islands internationally. The questions that arose in the initial research for this image are: How did this land become commercially available? Has this land been alienated from its traditional owners? And has customary land ownership been applied?

While the questions above are complex and not central to this project, questions of ownership are inevitable when painting within the tradition of mimetic Western

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landscape painting, which is the type of painting I have produced. These questions are amplified when the land has an Australian colonial history. The source of this image highlights the problems associated with land ownership and the depiction of such land. These questions are inherent when viewing an image styled in “the landscape of absolute property, often founded in and engendered by the ‘ego centered’ and ‘perspectival’ landscape” (Sullivan, 1998, p. 12).

The history of depicting the landscape as a view or property arose in parts of Western Europe between the 15th and 19th centuries. Two important developments in European countries occurred in the same time period. European countries like great Britian, Holland and Spain began aggressive colonial expansion, and artistic production began to prioritise the singular individual artist, expressed by a move away from the anonymous medieval artwork and towards the early modern practice of signing an artwork. In paintings of the natural world, there was an applicable shift from the 16th to the 17th centuries signalling a change from the land as an arena in which people’s lives played out to the visible world as seen by a spectator or land owner. In Ways of Seeing John Berger suggests that there is an “analogy between possessing and the way of seeing which is incorporated in oil painting” (Berger, 1972, p. 83). Therefore a relationship between painting and property has played a certain role in the development of the landscape painting tradition. This history implies that the depiction of land in a naturalistic or mimetic fashion cannot be separated from the discourse of ownership. Pacific mindedness signals such interpretations as a depiction of an island landscape that is for sale, manifest through copying. Here the copy is the source of the research, which then unfolds from the politics of the multiple into an enquiry of colonial and post-colonial land tenure.

This unfolding of the ideas within the subject matter of the paintings is an active example of the use of copying to inform change. The research and image making begins with copying an image from the Internet in a mimetic and photo-representative painting style. Through studio activity (repetition) and research, the symbolic and metonymic potential of the image is confronted. Such idea development, occurring through a process of copying, is the research proposition; that copying is the driver of change. Pacific mindedness highlights the possibility that the methodology of the multiple in printmaking has a recurrent facility that operates in the traditional processes of painting and that such insights highlight the primary role of copying in the development of change.

Initially the image as a multiple is foregrounded, sourced from a website that offers islands for sale. The number of spectators and outcomes is multiplied due to the secondary nature of the image source – the Internet. These ideas gradually gave way to a multifaceted understanding of this type of image depiction, the naturalistic image of landscape as property, engaging a deeper comprehension of the history and politics within modes of landscape painting and the issues associated with this

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63 G. Sullivan, Land, Property and Social Relations in the Early Modern Age, Stanford University Press, California
64 G. Sullivan, Land, Property and Social Relations in the Early Modern Age, Stanford University Press, California
tradition. Through such research, the colonial and post-colonial history of the South Pacific region can be discussed and questioned, enacting a deeper interpretation of the work. Bibliographical research has found a concurrent development of the genre of landscape painting in parts of Western Europe with concepts of individuality and colonial expansion. Linking these ideas together, as aspects of imperial ambition, relates ideas of individual land ownership represented in landscape painting with the aggressive and catastrophic practices of modern European colonisation.

FIGURE 87 JOEL GAILER, PACIFIC MINDEDNESS (DETAIL), 2013–2016, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS BOARD, EACH PANEL 45.5X61CM
**FIGURE 88** JOEL GAILER, *PACIFIC MINDEDNESS (DETAIL)*, 2013–2016, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS BOARD, EACH PANEL 45.5X61CM

Figure 89 Joel Gailer, *Pacific mindedness* (detail), 2013–2016, acrylic on canvas board, each panel 45.5x61cm
Chapter 7

Performprint

Performprint is a combination of printmaking and performance art. The title and definition of Performprint cannot be credited to one person, it is a collaborative effort. Performprint is an idea that performance and printmaking have comparable methodological and philosophical properties, which are explored here.

FIGURE 90 PERFORMPRINT, BEARINGS, BEAUTY AND IRRELEVANCE, 2014–2016, FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE

Performed printmaking

Within this multidiscipline exploratory research, I have sought to find methodologies that could articulate the function of copying as a component of social interaction. Collaboration has emerged in this research as an important methodological activity. It has been discovered that collaboration can be a mode of practice that might liberate the artist from concepts of singular authorship and the ownership of the artistic work. Additionally, the act of mimicking has emerged as a self-conscious performance to engender or coerce change in various social human scenarios. Mimicry can also be a collaborative act that can articulate copying as a process of change through mutual knowledge and skill-sharing. The nature of mimicry defines copying as an aspect of
human activity and the performative agency of mimicry as a collaborative act has become the focus for the development of an action-based research approach to uncover the role of copying in social interaction.

Through informal and reflective enquiries, it has been perceived that a particular aspect of my creative practice, developed in collaboration with performance artist Michael Meneghetti and titled Performprint, could articulate the role of copying in social interaction as a collaborative act.

Performprint was developed during a residency with Meneghetti at the Fremantle Arts Centre in 2012. We initially conceived Performprint as a collaborative exhibition title for an exhibition at the Centre that would culminate with the end of the residency. Explicit in the name is the combination of performance and printmaking. Performances have since occurred in a variety of public locations such as the Fremantle Arts Centre, Arts House Melbourne, the China Academy of Art, University of South Australia, RMIT University and informal settings including community venues and roadside sites. Performprint continues to evolve with new active participants as well as new performances.

Although Performprint combines many aspects of artistic practice, including duration, performance, video, sound, spectacle, community engagement and gender identity, the elements of Performprint that relate to the specific concepts within my research project are in focus for this chapter, namely, mimicry, collaboration, authorship and printmaking.

At the inception of Performprint Meneghetti and I found related conceptual concerns that equally apply to our respective practices in printmaking and performance. Meneghetti noted the correlation of the re-performed performances of Marina Abramović (Serbia & America 1946–) with processes of mimicry. Other conceptual linkages include the resultant loss of material ownership in an intangible performance artwork – the collaborative and performative aspect of the community print studio – and the divesting of authorship as a means to extend the artwork into broader social realms. With such idea synchronicity, the methodologies of mimicry, collaboration, intangibility and re-authorship connected current research with notions of the copy through performance.

Initially conceived as a standalone, durational, ten-hour collaborative artwork exploring printmaking and performance, through successive opportunities to represent our collaborative work, questions arose relating to our individual practices and the authorship of works that have been merged into the Performprint canon.

65 Performance artist and printmaker Jenny Mai Hall joined Performprint in 2016.
Reflecting on such concerns, in March 2014 Meneghetti and I formally incorporated our collaborative work as Performprint. The naming decision was an important act, allowing the project to exist as a separate entity with its own title. Performprint could then officially incorporate other authors from the broader community.

Collaboration and the renegotiation of authorship

Collaboration plays an important role as a positive aspect of social interaction, one that defines multiple authorship as a method to influence change between individuals and communities. It also creates an apparatus, which allows the divestment of singular authorship. An important aspect of Performprint’s inauguration was the necessity to release individual authorship to the new entity Meneghetti and I formed.

From the position of diverse methodologies, Performprint is able to incorporate performers from other disciplines. While the primary members maintain a significant part of the Performprint workload, performers from varied communities have been approached to join the project. To date, these include visual artists, professional skateboarders, actors, motorcycle enthusiasts, photographers, musicians and other community members. Engaging community and encouraging others to participate is an important aspect of Performprint. Each additional collaboration creates a new artwork and the collaborator becomes an author of Performprint. The comprehension of a decentralised collective authorship is important for understanding Performprint as a potential alternate mode of practice beyond the individual. In Performprint methods of copying are instigated as a counterpoint to the conclusive notions of originality generated by the concept of the singular author.

The conceptual impetus for Performprint is the social activities of the community print studio. In the community print studio, printing presses are shared and the printing activity is based around a mutual jostling for time and space. This incidental form of collaboration and performance appears to be an alternative working process to the classical mythology of the artist’s solitary effort (Bourriaud 2003). The collective affinities in collaborative practice are described by Plutarch (cited in Carter 2004) as similar to a game of ball in which the actions of receiver and thrower must be a harmonic performance. In his book Material Thinking, academic and artist Paul Carter implicates the statuesque classical poses of traditional or mythological narrative-based artwork as commonly associated with established or fixed methods and ideals. Carter also uses the analogy of alloying, the process of combining two or more different metals to make another material, for collaboration. Carter cites the importance of the heterogeneity of materials to create a strong alloy as an analogy for collaboration, in this case, performance and printmaking.

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Performprint primary members are: Joel Gailer, Jenny Mai Hall and Michael Meneghetti.
As such, *Performprint* activities are an attempt to invent new connections between artistic practice and a set of human activities by constructing a space that is not a fixed classical sculpture but a jostling space set in motion.

![Performprint](image)

**FIGURE 91 PERFORMPRINT (PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION) 2014, DURATION: 10 HOURS**

This space is the venue. *Performprint* has exhibited in art galleries, universities, public spaces, converted meat markets, and open air and roadside spaces.

**The exhibition space**

In a traditional exhibition gallery display, the object or work of art is presented as a sacred, unique and autonomous form. In this project, the exhibition as a site or space for the conclusive artwork is considered a concept that reinforces or is analogous to prevailing notions of the original or absolute creation. Challenging established notions of the exhibition, experimental exhibition practices have expanded the exhibition space into the social space of the broader public realm. *Performprint* reimagines the traditional exhibition site with the concepts of the workshop, production site and public rally; prints are created with experimental methods on site and gifted to visitors as a free performance vestige. Social interaction is an important part of *Performprint* and performances are created with the expectation that these exchanges will encourage the receiver to grasp the social significance of printed material as a medium to inform change because of its ability to reach large audiences.

**Mimicry**

Mimicry as a form of copying is explored in my broader research as a formative response that human beings enact when confronted with significant change. In the performance activities of *Performprint*, mimicry has become an important element. It is an automatic response enacted to comprehend the new modes of artistic practice.
that Meneghetti and I revealed to each other, printmaking and performance respectively. This type of copying is similar to a mode of mimetic education (Billet 2016) in which learning is a process of mimicking.

As well as unconscious mimetic copying, mimicry is also enacted in a conscious and formal manner during performances. Activities are repeated and re-performed in front of audiences as an analogy for the repeated print. Such activity has contextual history in the re-performances of Marina Abramović. *Seven easy pieces*, an exhibition by Abramović at the Guggenheim Museum in 2005, includes the performing of Joseph Beuys, *How to explain pictures to a dead hare*, 1965, 2005. This re-performance of Joseph Beuys’s (Germany 1921–1986) work is more than copyist homage or re-enactment for educational purposes. There are indicators in Abramović’s repetition of Beuys’s work that this is an example of mimicry activated as an agent of change. This is evident in Abramović’s gender.

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In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze defines repetition as a paradox. He argues that each repeat attains a perfect independence on the part of each presentation. Questioning the process of change in unmodified repetition, he identifies time and space (Deleuze, 1968, p. 70) as the principal elements of change; in this research this is identified as context. He articulates the paradox further by arguing this contextual change makes repetition disappear at the instance it appears: “For how can we say ‘the second’, ‘the third’ and ‘it is the same’” (Deleuze, 1968, p.79). Deleuze argues that the change occurs in the mind that contemplates the repetition. A similar process unfolds when contemplating Abramović’s re-performance of Beuys. Time, space and context are certainly evident as significant elements of change. The gender inversion from Beuys (masculine) to Abramović (feminine) is an important point to note, although other political elements exists in this act of copying...

In the 1960s and 1970s, performance art was considered an artform that seemingly defies commoditisation and the marketplace because of its intangibility. Despite this immateriality, it is interesting to note that in this period, the element of the singular author in performance art is strongly apparent and this conundrum is explored by examining Marina Abramović’s *Seven easy pieces*, 2005. In her re-performances, Abramović has used the methodology of mimicry and copying to highlight concepts of authorship evident in an activity positioned outside the singular authority of the absolute work of art. Despite Abramović’s seizure of other performance artists’ work, in *Seven easy pieces* the bold restatement of an earlier author highlights the referred

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author’s authority and singularity. In this performance Abramović approaches a paradox in which her processes of copying and re-authorship signify the earlier performer and partly obscure the re-performer, Abramović. Such an outcome highlights the aspect of mimicry that is camouflage. Cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha (India & America 1949–) describes the effect of mimicry as camouflage: “it is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 121). Bhabha describes the effect of mimicry as both resemblance and menace. In Abramović’s re-performances, this position is expressed by a re-authoring of historically significant performances that simultaneously express Abramović’s position in current time and space as well as obscuring her and revealing the former artist she is copying. The process highlights the complexities involved in copying.

These issues were confronted at the inception of Performprint and a conscious decision was made to negate authorship wherever possible. A range of methods have been activated to achieve this, such as encouraging the broader community to collaborate, giving artwork away for free and producing work that is inconclusive and ephemeral. Wherever concepts of ownership and authorship appear, a new strategy has been developed to counter this.

**Social interaction and soapbox performing**

Performance art emerged as a significant avant-garde activity in the 20th century. While historical narrative is not the purpose of this research, performance art has precedence in the emergence of what pioneering conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp (France 1887–1968) termed anti-art, the nihilistic art of Dada (Zurich 1916–23), active during and after the First World War. Early performances of this time partly consisted of the public presentation of artistic or political manifestos.70

**Performprint** emerged as a space to talk about and proclaim the continued relevance of printmaking in a contemporary setting. Using the apparatus of the spectacle, the initiation ritual and the sermon, Performprint ‘spreads the word’ in a broad discussion about printmaking and the role of the copy. This idea achieves a type of literal manifestation as an element of Performprint performances that have been repeated several times. It consists of an oration through a megaphone while standing atop a terraced step-pyramid of copies of Andy Warhol’s iconic Brillo Boxes. The oration declares the ongoing theoretical and methodological relevance of printmaking in the current era, similar in tone to the Dada public declarations of manifestos.

69 See Felix-Gonzales Torres print stacks as a contemporary example of what is historically called the Gratis Print.
Actions like the soapbox oration turn the exhibition space into a site of social interaction. The audience enters and navigates performance-related objects and performers, while collecting prints offered for free, created during the performance. This type of close-encountered social interaction is an important vehicle to test out ideas that are integrated in my broader research, such as theories about print as a technology of the copy and the multiple. The soapbox orations locate mimicry as a primary mode of artistic practice, as well as a primary component of change. The orations articulate historical and current examples of the print paradox, siting the origins of mark-making as the prehistoric handprint and highlighting the paradox that the first creative mark was a print (see chapter three). Announcing such ideas using spoken word amounts to a declaration, similar to the early Dada performances that involved readings of manifestos71 at the Cabaret Voltaire, a nightclub in Zurich, Switzerland founded by artists in 191672 and an important site for Dada activities.

As well as singular performances, Dada performances included highly theatricised, nonsensical narrative theatre that revolved around abstract sound and movement, as

71 Tristan Tzara, 1916, Tristan Tzara on Dada, YouTube stream, viewed 6 May 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3aNi0rjU
72 The press release* announcing the opening of Cabaret Voltaire stated: “In principle, the Cabaret will be run by artists, permanent guests, who, following their daily reunions, will give musical or literary performances.” [Hugo Ball, *La fuite hors du temps* ([1916], 1993) 111].
well as Cubist-style performance objects and backdrops.\textsuperscript{73} The absurd narrative performances had a staged sequential flow but ignored decipherable language and formal auditory sequences. The Dada performances at Cabaret Voltaire were a visual and auditory spectacle that defied any sense of formalisation.

*Performprint* similarly invokes the spectacle using installation, sound, video and the production of prints. Throughout the performance, the production of prints is used as a means to enlarge the performance site. As print multiples are produced during the performance using a variety of experimental processes, the *copies* are distributed around the performance area, enlarging it. The audience may take the prints or they remain as an installation.

*Performprint* activities and print production position the copy as indiscriminate and democratic. Unsystematic distribution methods and notions of the *gratis* print are used to invoke unplanned outcomes and reduce ideas of ownership evident in notions of authorship. Outcomes copy the nihilistic theatre of Dada and create a spectacle using the notion of the *complete work of art* (Hugo Ball, 1946, cited in Nadia Gahnem, 2005) in which performance, sound, film, art production and art consumption are activated simultaneously. In *Performprint* the *complete artwork* is a site of social interaction.

Towards a history of performed print

Simultaneity is evident in *Performprint* when print production is performed. This act happens within the interdisciplinarity of a performance art, which is simultaneously a production of prints. This practice has historical precedence in the multidiscipline artwork of Yves Klein’s (France 1928–1962) *Anthropometries*, a series of impressions made by a human figure coated in International Klein Blue (IKB), a colour Klein registered (under French law) in 1960.

This research investigates Klein’s *Anthropometries* series within a printmaking framework. While most of the resultant artwork from the *Anthropometries* series is discussed in terms of painting, which is instrumentally probable for the works, in which Klein’s model is moved around the surface of paper or canvas like a brush, this only forms a small part of the *Anthropometries* series. The majority of the works conform to a printmaking framework in which a matrix is coated in a type of ink that creates an impression or stamp on another material. In this case the female human body is the matrix that stamps the canvas or paper in a similar way to the human impression made by the handprint. *Anthropométrie sans titre (ANT 62)*, 1960 depicts

\textsuperscript{73} Greta Deses, 1969, *Dada* available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkd92oV1kMc (accessed 6 May 2016).
three female torsos and three pairs of handprints in IKB ink on canvas coated in a gold pigment and each of the three impressions has been applied twice, which creates a two-tone effect. The use of the female form is consistent with notions of the matrix, which is a vital concept that relates printmaking to reproducibility. The relationship of Klein’s Anthropometries series with printmaking is not often discussed; instead, painting analogies are prioritised in historical analyses. Terms like “living paintbrushes” are used to describe the bodily enactment of transferring pigment from the human figure to the canvas. The selection of painting referents over printmaking descriptions suggests the hierarchical prioritisation of classification in art, in which printmaking was historically described as a decorative or applied art.

Klein’s use of female figures conforms to the classical idea of the human model, which prioritised one gender (female) over another as the quintessential human form for creative practice. Klein’s use of the female form therefore is not interpreted, in this research, as either an erotic or gender-biased interpretation. Instead, it can be interpreted as a motif for reproduction. If the female figure conforms to the logical conclusion of the matrix (printing plate), then Klein’s Anthropometries series can be comprehended as a precursor to a performative printmaking.

Other examples of performed printmaking include conceptual artist Felix Gonzales Torres (America & Cuba, 1957–1996) whose dramatic *Untitled*, 1991 billboard depicts the impression left behind in bed linen from two people who recently slept but have since departed. The constructed installations of printmaker, Richard Woods’ (America 1956–) brightly coloured printed floorboards anticipate their activation through people walking on them. Emerging artist Lee Wagstaff (America 1965–) is an experimental artist whose focus on the artists body is conclusively visceral. He produces live surface impressions and prints in blood. Wagstaff’s prints are sometimes impressions of resultant dermatologic excretions caused by tattooing his body or screenprints produced using his own collected blood. Australian artist Ex De Medici produced an exhibition in 1997 at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art based on a similar process of tattoo blood swabs\(^7\).

\(^7\) Logan, J. *Indellible, Ex De Medici and Kelly Leonard*, exhibition catalogue, January 24 to March 2, 1997, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, VIC.
Outcomes

Through action-based research it has been discovered that mimicry is a vital function of copying in social interaction and that the performative action of mimicry can be explored within a collaborative practice. In *Performprint* Meneghetti’s formative knowledge of performance art has been incorporated with the performative and collaborative social doings of the community print studio. The inception of *Performprint* as a collaborative exercise has enabled its rapid expansion into a collective of authors from the broader community. This process necessitates the divesting of authorship for works already produced and any future productions that active participants have/may create within *Performprint*, allowing authorship to rest with an entity that has no central form and can incorporate new participants, thus enabling *Performprint* to decentralise. This process emancipates ownership from all contributors, as well as allowing contributors to identify as authors, *Performprint*. My research has found historical links to Klein’s *Anthropometries* series and notes a distinct lack of literary reference to this work as print production. I identify this as a hierarchical or political naming decision that ignores the reproducibility of the method. Print production as a copy-making technology is conceptually related to broad ideas in art and social interaction. Mimicry is examined as a type of reproduction in Marina Abromovic’s re-performances of important historical works, in which copying is a type of camouflage, and it has been found that this activity can reduce the significance of the author. Such outcomes extend the possible interpretations of copying as a driver of change. This has been achieved by action-based processes that reveal *the copy’s*
illicit and potent content as present time and space, defined in this research as context.

FIGURE 100 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), 2015, (PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION), DURATION: 10 HOURS

FIGURE 101 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), 2015, (PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION), DURATION: 10 HOURS
FIGURE 102 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), 2015, INSTALLATION VIEW

FIGURE 103 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), 2015, (PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION – PRODUCTION DETAIL), DURATION: 7 HOURS
FIGURE 104 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), 2015, PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION DURATION: 7 HOURS

FIGURE 105 PERFORMPRINT, (UNTITLED), 2015, PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION DURATION: 7 HOURS
Figure 106 Performprint, (Untitled), 2015, performance documentation (production detail) duration: 7 hours
CHAPTER 8

The extraordinary and the performative: Copying and mimicry as revitalisation in colonial and postcolonial Melanesia

Melanesian histories and European histories became forever enmeshed when Australia annexed the region in 1906 and this research has found qualitative and insightful evidence of positive uses for copying and mimicry within this period.

Locating the researcher

This project investigates the paradox that the act of copying is a primary component of human interaction in times of change. Creative methodologies are utilised to investigate the historical particularities of a specific cultural practice in Melanesia (1906–1967) at a time when military and colonial interests were pervasive throughout the South West Pacific. Existing research of this subject provides a key historical account of performative acts of mimicry and copying exercised as an agent to generate cultural change.76

In this project I utilise the methodology of collaboration as a primary agent for realising creative outcomes, and collaborations are realised with professional artists in the Solomon Islands. Collaborative methodologies are informed by Australian artists of European descent whose practices involve collaboration with cultures outside their own, such as the cross-cultural painting practices of Tim Johnson (Australia 1947–). The reader may ask why the cultural history of Melanesia is relevant for an artistic investigation into the role of the copy as an agent of change? Importantly, and significantly, these cultural movements have resulted in the development of processes of mimicry and copying performed as resistance, in order to revitalise and recreate a sense of cultural identity. As such, the inventive nature of copying in these movements is not passive, inasmuch as participants have remade and re-contextualised what was being copied. The significance of copying and mimicry within these cultural movements informs a new interpretation of the copy as it relates to processes of comprehension and renewal – enacting the paradox that copying is a primary component of change, the research proposition. Research of these movements is the entry point for my investigations and provides an important historical account of copying and mimicry being used as a revolutionary and revitalising performative activity.

Such cultural practices emerged at a time when the possession of Melanesia was placed under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia. This annexation of Melanesia followed the passage of the *Papua Act* in 1905, in which British New Guinea became the Territory of Papua, and formal Australian administration began in 1906. It is this period of the region's history that is investigated here and it is this period that concerns me most as an Australian of European descent. Defining myself in this, in the context of Australia's colonisation of Melanesia, is a necessary position. While my aim is not a political investigation into colonial Melanesia, it is important to have full recognition and knowledge of the geopolitical terrain that existed while the particular cultural movements flourished.

I began this project as a researcher of Australian/European descent, and my studio location is far from the Pacific Islands. The initial theoretical research, in the studio, uncovered ideas and produced studio work that was distant and conceptual, with outcomes that were largely imaginary, due to my research position. My locality has eventually expanded into the artist/researcher travelling to specific islands within Melanesia. Artwork and research undertaken has been collaborative, produced within the Solomon Islands community, and informed by the artists I participated with.

**Preliminary research: Finding oneself in the other**

It is not popularly known that Australia, as a nation, colonised Melanesia and enacted the same white colonial settler state similar to places like South Africa, Canada and Algeria, built by invading Europeans and based on the dispossession of indigenous populations. Although this study does not seek to articulate accounts of colonial mistreatment in Melanesia, this history is significant.

During the period of official Australian colonisation (1906–1967), specific cultural movements flourished on many of the Melanesian archipelagos of the South West Pacific, movements in which copying and mimicry were used as a type of subversive practice, an attempt by the practitioners to subvert the colonial power structures they faced. These movements have received broad interest across many fields of study, from sociology through to art. They have been popularly titled cargo cults. There are problems with the term ‘cargo cult’ and from the beginning anthropologists sought alternative names. These include ‘revitalisation movement’, ‘messianic movement’, ‘millenarian movement’, ‘crisis cult’, ‘Holy Spirit movement’, ‘protonationalist movement’, ‘culture-contact movement’ and the like. These labels highlight the similarities of Melanesian cargo cults with social movements elsewhere, social movements that also appear to have been reactions against colonial misappropriation of land. ‘Cargo cult’, nonetheless, remains the now standard label for the South Pacific version of global millenarian movements.

Research of another culture can be problematic if generalisations such as naming cause a narrowing of interpretations. This research project looks past the specificity of naming and instead highlights method and process within these cultural movements. As a researcher I have utilised a collaborative methodology to negate the divide between researcher and subject.
Australian artist Tim Johnson is well known for his collaborative works with Aboriginal communities in Australia and Tibetan communities in both Australia and China. “He composes through drawing on great cultural precedents: ancient Chinese landscape painting … and Aboriginal painting of the central desert” (Benjamin, 2014, p. 9). Johnson’s work sets a precedent for a project such as this. His ethical framework is developed with the artists he works with and is embodied by mutual respect and equal responsibility. His most relevant collaborations for this project are those with Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. Johnson’s travels to the Papunya Tula Arts Centre between 1983 and 2000 have generated over 60 collaborative works.

This image is subject to copyright

FIGURE 107 TIM JOHNSON AND NAVA CHAPMAN, LAKSHMI, 2012, ACRYLIC ON LINEN, 182X152CM

Johnson’s pioneering cross-cultural collaborations offered me a 20th-century example of good practice when working with creative artists from a culture that shares a colonial history with the culture I am descended from. From this position, I locate my research within a tradition of meaningful exchange of thought and process. Melanesian histories and European histories became forever enmeshed when Australia annexed the region in 1906 and this research finds qualitative and insightful evidence of positive uses for copying and mimicry within this period.

In *Finding Oneself in the Other* by G. A. Cohen (2013), Cohen’s recurring theme is finding completion in relation to the world of other human beings. This premise is positioned by a mutual humanity he found during his travels in India, despite his Western comforts. As elementary as these statements may sound, they are pertinent for research such as mine which seeks insights from historical studies of another culture, a culture that underwent radical change during a time when it was colonised by my culture.

**Miracle of the cargo cult**

Part of my research has sought to answer complex questions about the role mimicry and copying play in the development of cultural change. Therefore I have asked what the cargo cults tell us about the role of the copy in social relations. What do they tell us about concepts of originality? How do they help advance a study of these themes within both the geopolitical and historical specificity of early-20th-century Melanesia and a wider social and historical context? The miracle of the cargo cult reveals the ways in which social change is navigated, as well as the unexpected potentials of interpretation. The extremities of the colonial situation in Melanesia reveal how a somewhat exacting interpretation of an object, as with the airplane, was still only culturally defined. The stress of the Australian–Melanesian cultural clash re-designed concepts of the object/airplane, through mimicry and copying, to become an icon for transcendence and power, performed through re-enactment.

To comprehend the key factors within the cargo cults, a consideration of the role of objects in social relations is required. The colonial situation conjoined the Melanesian people with foreign cultures through the movement and appropriation of objects, often displacing them into new sets of contexts and effects. Airplanes, boats and flagpoles were recontextualised and re-presented in elaborate performances that were both ritual and social action and, alternatively, indigenous cultural artefacts were reappropriated within Western notions of archiving and collecting.

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Cargo cults were a means for social action; the Melanesian people were confronted with a situation in which they were forced to believe in their own inferiority. The Australian administration imposed onto the Melanesians a class structure that was informed by the politics in Australia. Although cargo cults have their origin in the 19th century, they were most predominant in the first half of the 20th century, a period when Australia was practising an extreme exclusivist and racist political agenda tainted by the White Australia Policy (WAP). This policy had a definitive influence on the socio-political climate in Melanesia and, through a military presence, the Australian administration created an environment in which the Melanesians were excluded from all forms of Australian colonial society.\(^8\) This set up a situation where the local people had to find other ways to interpret and gain access to a culture vastly different to their own. The apparent wealth imbalance created a perplexing situation and, without access to the systems of Australian culture, the Melanesians, in part, sought to understand their experience through the ritualisation of copying and mimicry. This response, which often included copying of military ceremonies, exposed an ontological conundrum for concepts of development and change. Change, which in this circumstance, was partly achieved by copying.

Australian colonialism was developed within the framework of early modern European expansion, the type of colonialism that relied on a presumed absolute and fundamental cultural superiority, an enforced hierarchy. Modern European colonialism emerged in a time period that coincided with the emergence of landscape painting and individual creativity. A greater emphasis was placed on concepts of the author and originality to emphasise a unique, singular and absolute origin. It is important to note that early modern examples of artistic practice extended into the social and political sphere, a time when the concept of the artist as tradesperson and

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labourer was developing into the singular artist as genius.81

The role of myth

In many Melanesian societies during transitional periods (which to some extent continue to this day), myth plays a dynamic role as an accessory to social change.82 In the first half of the 20th century, local attempts to explain the white man’s arrival and his dictated ‘superior’ material culture were often based on old mythological themes combined with colonial influences. These cultural movements sought emancipation from Australian rule through ritualism and transcendence achieved via the performative acts of mimicry and copying. This response went beyond an act of copying as an outcome of desire, and exposed the active nature of copying as a primary method to perceive new realities and as the effective component of change.

In the phenomenon of the cargo cults, the copy became a tool for exploration and revitalisation. Objects and ideas were reappropriated, remodelled, redefined and represented to signify something completely new. They became a platform for revitalisation and rejuvenation in a time of social unsettlement. Such outcomes are significant for interpreting the perceived restrictions of copying and highlight the potential of the copy as a tool to create positive change.

The anticipation of travel

This project emphasises the role of copying as a tool to communicate complex social concerns as an individual or within groups. My studio research has revealed extensive potential in acts of copying. Action-based processes of repetition, initiated as a research origin, have created the potential for ongoing explorations and change. Artwork created by means of copying in the studio has led to explorations into the history of landscape painting and mark-making. Such studio work includes a series of identical paintings of an island in Melanesia titled Pacific mindedness 2013–2016. Repeating the same painted image several times on independent panels has negated the need to assess the painting in terms of the painted surface and its figurative qualities, and instead repositioned an image to create new interpretations of a copy for its symbolic meaning. The image, in this case an island, has become a metonym for questioning interpretations of landscape painting as a depiction of ownership. Such images painted in the studio were initially a supposition, due to my

81 It is important to note that this is also the period that marks the transition from the anonymous medieval artwork to the authored Renaissance artwork. University of Wisconsin, 2014 Lecture #6 – The Changing Role of the Artist in Society, University of Wisconsin: www.uwgb.edu/malloyk/lecture_6.htm (accessed 6 May 2016).
location at the time in Melbourne, Australia. Knowledge of cargo cults and the region of Melanesia had been, at the time, up to August 2014, theoretical, resulting in artworks created that were distanced from the viewer and positioned from an aerial perspective.

The initial studio research about cargo cults is evidenced in *Pacific mindedness*. The aerial perspective was copied from an Internet source. The initial photograph I have copied was un-authored and was taken to serve the real estate agenda of ‘Islands for sale’, a website specialising in the sale of islands internationally. The photo could similarly be utilised as a postcard for travel or a holiday resort advertisement. The production of these paintings (eight identical acrylic on canvas board paintings) represents the researcher as a detached theoretician gazing from a distance. The paintings *Pacific mindedness* also reference a desire for travel to Melanesia and a more engaged, first-hand experience, evidenced in the postcard-like depiction.

![FIGURE 110 JOEL GAILER, PACIFIC MINDEDNESS (DETAIL), 2013–2016, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS BOARD, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE](image)

The distanced perspective of *Pacific mindedness* is a reflection of my distanced position as a studio researcher. This position has tenuous political implications for an Australian of European descent, given the shared colonial histories of Pacific Island nations and Australia. During the formulation and enactment of this cargo cult research, my position as an Australian researcher of European descent created ethical questions about the authority of this researcher to undertake such a study. Was I simply re-enacting a type of colonialism, an intellectual colonisation, performed through a postcolonial study? Was it appropriate for an Australian of European descent to research the cultural practices of another culture? It became evident that the research needed to address these possible negative interpretations. This required the development of a strategy, alongside a personal position of mutuality and respect, that could moderate colonial readings and be evidenced in tangible research outcomes.

Collaboration was an early methodology I adopted to mitigate interpretations of intellectual colonialism, as well as an approach to develop mutuality with artists in the South Pacific region of Melanesia. Bibliographical research highlighted collaboration as an important tool for cross-cultural dialogue. This generated the necessity for a mutual exchange of knowledge and skills with the communities and individuals I would work with.
Through my existing professional channels, I was awarded a residency with Art Haus, the first community-run arts organisation in the Solomon Islands, a country in the region of Melanesia. I anticipated that I would try to collaborate with Solomon Island–based artists. From 2012 onwards, collaboration had become an important aspect of my work. It was both a means of repositioning a solo art practice, as well as an important creative method to relieve concepts of authorship from the singular and unique. Through collaboration, my artistic research and creative practice had become a tool to renegotiate the singular authorship of a studio practice. Importantly, other collaborative projects were conceived at the beginning of my research in 2012, most notably Performprint, a collaboration with Michael Meneghetti.83

Solomon Islands

On arrival in the Solomon Islands and alighting from the airplane, I experienced my first geographical and cultural contrast, interpreted through my knowledge and research of the cargo cults. This experiential clash was the contrast between the pristine, air-conditioned interior of the plane (I had travelled from Melbourne’s international terminal) with the dusty, 40-degree heat of Honiara in the Solomon Islands. The immediate area surrounding the airport is a small and vibrant community consisting of banana leaf huts and a street market that appears to rely on the trade made available by the arrivals and departures of the airport.

I then travelled by car to the Solomon Islands National Gallery in the capital city, Honiara, on the island of Guadalcanal, where the residency would take place at a small studio in the gallery. Honiara is an active port city. It is the main conduit for imported goods for all the islands within the region. Due to the clamour and activity of the port, the city is very dusty and a layer of orange clay-coloured dust rests on the facades of businesses in the centre of town, which is in close proximity to the main port. The importance of trade and importation is readily apparent, as cargo ships constantly appear on the horizon (the offing) and shipping containers line the main road which links the city to the airport.

Such experiences made it immediately apparent that the cargo cult ritual theorised as desire, associated with perceptions of material wealth and the distribution of such, is an interpretation that relies solely on the appearance of difference. This position has been explored by researchers such as Christopher Pinney (Sri Lanka 1959–) and Nicholas Thomas (Australia 1960–) in their co-authored book *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the technologies of enchantment*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001). Attainment is the primary political aspect of this theory, which implies the cargo cults were activist movements that attempted to gain access to material wealth and create equality between colonists and colonised.

This project acknowledges the importance of postcolonial research in this area, although such political positioning is an aspect of this study achieved only by default. This research of cargo cults is not about desire or attainment, but the methods used to achieve this. Copying and mimicry are an important methodological agent in cargo cult ritual and are an aspect of the creative output of particular cultural movements within a given time period (1906–1967). The foundation of this research is a preconceived equality evident in the concept of the copy, the copy as multiple and the copy as the individual – equivalent to its counterpart.

Work in the Honiara studio began immediately, with reprints of existing plates I had brought with me. These *copies* were used as *gratis* prints for people I engaged with, a simple and effective positivity evident in the creation of multiple *copies*. Studio work expanded to large-scale stencils on paper titled *Attainment #5, Attainment #6, Attainment #7*. The imagery combined stencils of a black-and-white ladder with
Solomon Island referents hand-painted into circular portholes at the ladder's apex.

While I was working on the three stencils of the ladder, the need to begin my collaborative research and engage with the broader art community surrounding the National Gallery became apparent.

The major questions of such a decision are highlighted within the research paradigm and the ethical frameworks for working with indigenous populations. Questions about my suitability for such research are related to my heritage as an Australian of European descent. My research position relies on the already established and shared histories between my culture and the Solomon Islands culture. The ethical dilemma expressed to me from an Anglo-Australian perspective is related to heritage. My research attempts to negate this position because it is not inherently a question of heritage but, rather, related to method, the method of copying and mimicry utilised as an agent for social and cultural change. Despite the positioning of my research as a study of the copy, the critical questions about the ethical positioning of this project needed to be addressed and settled within the Solomon Islands by a senior academic. I approached Tony Heorake in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Director of the National Museum. Discussions with Mr Heorake revealed a surprisingly different view to the neo-colonial implications of the Anglo-Australian
academic position. In these discussions I foregrounded my research of the cargo cults within the framework of copying and mimicry, and Mr Heorake offered positive informal approval of the project, as well as examples of cargo cults that had occurred within the Solomon Islands, most notably the Marsina Ruru (Marsina Rule). This movement was a resistance group that played an important role in seeking independence and occurred on the island province of Malaita. In addition, Mr Heorake offered to contact artists who might be interested in collaborative work.

From this position, I began discussing my research with artists who worked in the vicinity of the National Gallery. I was aware of the potential ethical dilemma that a predetermined desire for collaboration was without a mutual conceptual origin. Such theoretical hazards were considered during the initial stages of proposal planning and research for this project. Attention was given to informal research methods that could overwrite such negative interpretations. Methodology for collaboration was developed in which collaborative artists would become the drivers of the conceptual and formal frameworks of the artistic outcomes, instructing the production of the work and placing me in the position of student.

Oral histories form an invaluable part of the cultural landscape in Melanesia, and my cargo cult research of this time was based on listening to the oral histories of artists John Seda, Jimmy Sinumoana and Fred Oge, recounting their knowledge of these movements as they related specifically to the Solomon Islands – again referring to the independence movement Marsina Ruru, popularly titled ‘Marching Rule’. Research in this method has further informed my understanding that copying and mimicry in these cultural movements is related to resistance, revitalisation and renewal during the colonial period.
Potential criticisms of such cross-cultural collaboration persisted, defined by the idea that the mutual exchange and skill-sharing was directed by an Australian of European descent, and the implication of Australia’s colonial practices in the early 20th century was again highlighted. Such negative connotations for cross-cultural projects and collaboration are inherently paradoxical, because a position that is critical of such exchanges raises ethical conundrums due to its insistence that communication and contact be avoided, essentially a retroactive attitude that would undermine important developments in cross-cultural dialogue, particularly where the cultures share a colonial past.

Through contemplative research and informal discussions with Solomon Island artists, it became apparent that the charge of re-establishing or mimicking the colonial past through cross-cultural collaboration was inherently flawed. There are distinct differences of mutuality and honesty. The particular artists involved would not lose their agency as the artmakers; in fact, in the process they were the principal conceptual designers and the active makers in processes they were skilled in. Therefore the ethical frameworks were developed with the artists I collaborated with.

Collaborative work

Collaborations with sculptor John Seda began with conversations about a diverse mix of heritage and popular culture as it related to the Solomon Islands. John then began instructing me in the creation of an ironwood walking stick. We began with a quick sketch, executed by copying and simplifying symbols of Western influence in the Solomon Islands. Cars, water bottles and hamburgers were incorporated with significant cultural motifs such as turtles, fish and octopus. John Seda instructed me how to carve the dense ironwood in a slow and incremental fashion. This repetitive mark-making highlights the importance of repetition in the production of artwork and the initial designs utilised concepts of copying from drawing. Such methods emphasise the universal nature of copying in art production. In the formation of our working relationship, it became apparent that John Seda’s role as principal artistic director in a shared collaborative outcome could be misinterpreted in a neo-conservative environment. This question had implications for the ownership and benefit of an artistic outcome in an academic environment, an environment that John Seda was not part of. As a method to overcome such interpretations, John Seda and I worked on a silk cut print at the same time as the wood sculpture. This would be his first attempt at printmaking and, as such, I assumed the role of traditional printer. The resulting print incorporates traditional Solomon Island imagery with perceptual-based landscape drawing. This process of skill-sharing emphasises the mutual exchange at the core of these collaborations.
Resolving my research position

Mimicry and copying are universal human practices that have different social and cultural forms. A number of scholars (philosophers and anthropologists) have worked on these second forms of nature\textsuperscript{84} that human beings create, namely Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze (France 1925–1995) and Michael Taussig (Australia 1940–). In this project, the inventive nature of copying and mimicry in the cargo cults has been remade and revisited.

\textsuperscript{84} Taussig, Michael. MIMESIS AND ALTERITY. 1993 New York: Routledge.
This project extends the theories propositioned by Australian academic Andrew Lattas (Australia 1956–) that the ‘reworking’ in the cargo cults was attained by mimicry and reappropriation.\(^8^5\) Mimicry and copying in the cargo cults are understood in this project as an important building block for interpreting perceived new realities apparent in concepts of origin and beginnings. More importantly, it exposes a structural response in the form of the mimicry and copying that individuals and groups enact when confronted with new ideas and experiences, therefore providing in-depth research that print-media can foreground the copy as an affective print outcome and this consequence is effectively analogous to broader trends in human activity that use copying to create change.

Copying is not a passive activity, it remakes and recontextualises what is being copied. In colonial Melanesia, economic, political, religious and artistic forms overlapped and this position was navigated by means of copying and mimicry. The Art Haus residency project was my attempt to meaningfully extend the bibliographical research undertaken in my studio. My position as an artist in residence from Australia working in the Solomon Islands resulted in a deeper understanding of the geopolitical terrain in a specific part of the South Pacific.

In this location, I exhibited my own spontaneous and performative mimetic behaviour. In simplistic terms, the equatorial environment necessitated that I dress in a similar manner to that of most Solomon Islanders due to the excessive heat. In creative processes, the tutelage of John Seda and his instruction for the creation of Rock’n’roll walking stick required a complex mix of wood-carving technique and assimilation into the historical and mythological meaning of the traditional motifs incorporated into the design. According to Michelle Puetz (America 1978–) “in acts of copying and mimicry the distinction between the self and other becomes porous and flexible. Rather than dominating the subject, mimesis as mimicry opens up a tactile experience of the world in which the Cartesian categories of subject and object are not firm, but rather malleable; paradoxically, difference is created by making oneself similar to something else by mimetic ‘imitation’. Observing subjects thus assimilate themselves to the objective world rather than anthropomorphizing it in their own image”.\(^8^6\)

The initial theoretical research, in the studio, resulted in works that were distant and conceptual, with outcomes largely imaginary, due to my suppositive research position. Bibliographical research found a concurrent historical link between modern European colonial expansion, the emergence of concepts of the individual self, ideas

\(^8^5\) 1998. CULTURES OF SECRECY: REINVENTING RACE IN BUSH KALIAI. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

of ownership (as they relate to property) and the notion of originality. This linkage was further developed by the acceptance that perceptions of origin are closely related to ideas of heritage, a hierarchical perception evident in Australia’s colonial annexation of Melanesia at the time of the White Australia Policy.

The position of researcher eventually unfolded into the artist as traveller working within the South Pacific Solomon Islands. Artwork and research undertaken within the region of Melanesia were collaborative, produced within the Solomon Islands community and directed by the artists I participated with. This process of unfolding from studio researcher (observer) to active participant was achieved through acts of copying. Similarly, cargo cult research highlights the necessity of copying and mimicry as a method to navigate and interpret new socio-political environments, resulting in cultural change and renewal. This research associates notions of change with ideas traditionally related to concepts of origins and beginnings. Research outcomes therefore expose a paradoxical position for mimicry and copying as a primary driver of change. **MIMICRY AND COPYING CONSTRUCT** “a world of illusion, appearances, aesthetics, and images in which existing worlds are appropriated, changed, and re-interpreted” (Poetz, 2002, para. 4). Such processes are a part of our material existence, but they also mimaetically bind our experience of reality to subjectivity. In this process of reinterpreting, reappropriating and recontextualising, it becomes apparent that copying is an important component of social and political change.
Figure 117 Joel Gailer and John Seda, *Rock’n’roll walking stick*, 2014–2015, ironwood and shell inlay, 90x19x90cm
Figure 118 Joel Gailer and John Seda, *Rock’n’roll walking stick* (detail), 2014–2015, ironwood and shell inlay, 90x19x90cm
Figure 119 Joel Gailer and John Seda, *Rock’n’roll walking stick* (detail), 2014–2015, ironwood and shell inlay, 90x19x90cm
FIGURE 120 JIMMY SINUMOA, FED OGE AND MYSELF IN THE ART HAUS STUDIO AT THE SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL GALLERY
Conclusion

Background

The copy as a paradox of change: copying and mimicry in social interaction is a visual and theoretical research project investigating the proposition that the act of copying is a primary agent of change. Research has been undertaken through action-based, practice-led and bibliographical research methods. Practice-based research has been accomplished with print-informed studio methods, and action-led research performed as activities in the public sphere and supported by historical and bibliographical investigations.

The inspirational trigger for this research was a historical study of specific cultural movements that occurred in the South West region of the Pacific Ocean, Melanesia, 1906–1967. These movements, popularly titled cargo cults, expose a formative and ontological conundrum within concepts of originality and origins. Distinctive and primary aspects of the Melanesian cargo cults include the mimicry and copying of colonial activities and military ceremonies. The cargo cults were an innovative socio-political response to the new circumstances Pacific Island cultures faced during the Australian colonial period. The formative use of copying in these movements inspired a deeper methodological analysis of acts of copying as a method in art practice and as an agent of change in broader social interaction. Analogous methods of copying were detected in social interaction as mimicry and as a mimetic method in art practice.

The absence of an original in a two-part printing process became the conceptual and practical starting point for my enquiry. Bibliographic research began by locating copying and mimicry within existing literature. Qualitative research has found comparable links between the methodology of reproduction in art practice and the paradox that is invoked when copying is considered the primary agent of change. Methodological associations have been strengthened by the activity of producing the print multiple. Practice-based research in the print studio has exposed a lack of origin in the print process, finding a paradox as I manually produced an individual print that was simultaneously a process of making copies. This methodology provided the trigger to consider my two principal research questions:

How can explorations of reproductive art-making articulate the significance of the copy in times of cultural change?

In what ways do mimicry and copying challenge theories of truth, originality and authority, and how can this be utilised in the production of artworks?
Question one articulates cultural change through the historical analysis of copying and mimicry as a cultural response to changing socio-political circumstances. In addition, the concept of change as broadly experienced in the perpetual continuation of uninterrupted time is not located in a specific period or culture. An interpretation of change has therefore been enacted in the creation of performance and traditional artwork, presenting diverse methods of art-making to perform and articulate the role that copying plays in transformation. Printmaking, painting and sculpture have been utilised to articulate particular topics, and collaboration and solo studio activity have expressed specific themes within my research area. The multi art-form approach has chartered copying and mimicry across a diverse cultural terrain, a diversity reflected in distinct choices of creative disciplines.

Question two is inspired by the formative research of the cargo cults. This knowledge has been reinterpreted and compared to postmodern and post-structuralist theories exploring the role of the copy. Thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard and Hillel Schwarz had ideas related to the copy that are comparable to my understandings, interpreted from the historical study of cargo cults in Melanesia. Knowledge of the cargo cults has deepened my comprehension of important postmodern concepts of the simulacra, as well the function of mimicry in social interaction. Action-based research has used experimental performance methods in the public realm to test ideas developed in the studio, and copying and mimicry were performed as active printmaking performance. Mimicry has been identified as a primary response that humans enact when faced with the new circumstances that occur in social interactions, and copying is considered to be synchronous with the development of art. Aspects of historical research of both prehistoric ochre handprints on a rock wall and intellectual property disputes in the courtroom have uncovered a perpetual position for copying as a cyclical state of unification and dissemination.

A sustained enquiry directed by the research questions has supported an investigation that has deepened my knowledge of copying as an instrument of change. In effect, my project has tried to identify alternative definitions for understanding the nature of change.

Identifying multiple paradox

Although the intention of this project is to define the primary role of copying as an important aspect of change, my choice of subject matter and project design has led me to points of concern in which my research, at times, has been interpreted as being complicit with historical colonial, authoritative views of othering and race. Even though it had not been my intention to investigate the realm of race and difference, my study of the cargo cults on occasion elicited such concerns from a select Anglo-Australian audience. I have endeavoured to shift the focus towards the actual methods of mimicry and copying evidenced in the cargo cults, as a primary method of resistance utilised by the respective population at the time. However, it became
necessary to discuss racial identity in relation to this aspect of my research. This process revealed a contradiction:

It is the very notion of origin, or in this case heritage, that necessitates racial distinction. This occurs because the colonial authoritative assertion of and imagined ‘superiority’ indicates an internal perception of a priori origin. My research has subsequently found concepts of heritage to be complicit with concepts of an original. Thus, at times, responses towards my cargo cult research have presented a paradox that pre-rendered colonial interpretations of my research position as a continuation of the negative perpetuation of the colonial separation of the subject and self. Perceptions of modern-day racial identity applied to the research pre-created this separation. Ironically, the actual enquiry into the primary copy necessitates equality at its very nexus.

From the beginning of this project I conceded, theoretically, that copying is a primary activity; this consent, at the ‘origin’ of the project, permitted the copy to be the first activity from which new artwork and thinking may generate. Acclaimed art critic Boris Groys (Germany 1947–), in his essay Politics of Installation (2009)\(^\text{87}\) identifies the production of copies in contemporary digital technology as a transmission from one generation of technology to the next. “To transmit information from one generation of hardware and software to the next is to transform it in some way” (Groys, 2009, p. 3). Computer software technology commonly generates reliance on generations of copies and the digital copy is recognised as an area of possible future research.

Generation is an interesting idea when applied to a copy, for generation implies growth, and it also implies origination. Generation of copies is therefore contradictory and often perceived as a form of entropy or de-generation, implying that a copy loses a degree of quality as it transfers from media to media. This perception perpetuates the belief in an inferior or secondary form. My research has sought to reverse such interpretations through a positive application of the generative and progressive nature of copying.

From this position, a paradox has occurred that denies interpretations of origin-based concepts and the linear narrative. This is the paradox I have worked within. Artwork has been created using sources and materials that correspond to my proposition and it has been found that diverse mediums, techniques, styles and concepts can all conform with a process that relies on the use of a copy as the beginning of the enquiry. Essentially exposing a flaw in the origin concept and allowing a cyclical interpretation of generative ideas through acceptance that copying is the source of change.

As I have discussed throughout my research, the primary copy has a methodological equivalent in the printed image. A traditional print is without a singular source and there is equivalence between the first print taken from a plate and the last. This equality of the print is a metonym for the broader role of mimicry and copying in social interaction. The commonality or equality of the print is a central tenet of new interpretations of change according to the paradox I have investigated.

**Examination presentation**

The culmination of this research combines five of the major project outcomes that are discussed in chapters three to eight of this document. Selected works from these major projects have been displayed in a public gallery as an example of either the culmination of a conceptual process or a representative work of a bigger project. Solo studio work, performance vestige and collaborative outcomes have been presented in a non-sequential and non-thematic way. The solo studio works chosen for this display are: *The truth is a copy* 2012, *Mirror state* 2014, *Pacific mindedness* 2013–2016 and *Untitled* 2013–2016. The collaborative work presented is *Rock’n’roll walking stick*, an ironwood carving created with John Seda in the Solomon Islands in 2014. *Performprint* is represented by a self-inking car tyre that prints the sentence “*The printmaker’s progress*” backwards, multiple times, on the gallery floor.

This type of display allows the public to review each project as an independent entity, making available a distinct research result from the different methodologies explored within my research project. Each work presented has involved action-led methods central to my PhD enquiry, such as performance, mimicry, repetition, reproduction and duplication.

**Findings**

Technically linked art and copying are in a cyclical state of unification and dissemination. From the ochre handprints on a rock wall to intellectual property disputes, art and copying are synchronous.

Anthropologist Michael Taussig describes the nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy. He describes how the wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original (Taussig, year 1995, p. XIII). This position, which allocates an ‘original’ to a copy, is countered in this research by the concept of a primary copy. Reproduction, duplication, replica, imitation and print are methods that apply to the primary copy. The copy is not a stable or absolute idea; instead, it is purposefully contradictory and paradoxical. It is a process of creating change through generations of media, performance, language and social interaction. The instability of such a concept is its strength. The indefinite position enables an unpredictable growth, unlike the absolute concept of the singular
original which is predetermined. The copy yields to positivity, although it can also be used for deceit – interestingly, the deceptive copy relies on the language of the authoritarian original to achieve its aims, enabling further contradictions.

The mirror has become an important theoretical device for this research. It has first been investigated in hand-painted text that explores the reproducibility of the written word. These works identify the written word as a primary tool to reproduce ideas in different localities and contexts. The mirrored reflection has been achieved by photographing existing painted works. These were then digitally printed as a reverse image and the two images were combined as one equal form. The effect of this composition negated the need to prioritise print or painting.

The concept of the mirror has been further investigated in a large sculpture titled Mirror state. In his essay Mirror Stage, Jacques Lacan identifies the moment in early childhood when a human perceives their reflection in a mirror. Lacan defines this moment as the stage of childhood when a human perceives their individuality. My comprehension of the affect of the mirrored reflection is not as a moment of separation, but a moment of unification in which the reflection and the subject are inseparable. This duality redefines the subject and the self into one wholistic entity that is not in a fixed state of individuality; instead, it is two parts perpetually mirroring and mimicking each other.

By negating a fixed and absolute individuality, we return to the cargo cults of 20th-century Melanesia. These movements were influenced by pre-existing social and cultural functions, as well as the established hierarchies and perceived authority within the colonial position. The extremities of this cultural clash exposed an ontological conundrum for the colonial authorities at the time. This is because mimicry and copying were used as a revolutionary activity to undermine the imposed Australian administration. These activities created an unsettling image for the colonial administration, because the performances and sculptural effigies often mimicked military rituals and objects. This process was an entirely different mode of resistance to the modern Westernised concept of revolution, which foresees an initial act of destruction before building anew. For the cargo cults, it was an attempt at regeneration through mimetic processes.

Modern European colonial expansion occurred most aggressively between the 16th and 19th centuries and continued into the 20th century (it can be argued that it persists to this day). It is a period that also saw the assertion of individual creativity and modern ideas of the author, articulated in this research as the signed work of art. University of Chicago academic Michelle Puetz identifies 17th and early-18th-century conceptions of aesthetics in which mimesis is bound to the imitation of (empirical and idealised) nature. Puetz argues that aesthetic theory at the time emphasised the relationship of mimesis to artistic expression, and began to embrace interior, emotive and subjective images and representations. She describes this as a turn away from Aristotelian conception of mimesis as bound to the imitation of nature, and a move
towards an assertion of individual creativity in which the productive relationship of one mimetic world to another is renounced (Puetz, 2013, p.3).

The productive relationship of one mimetic world to another is identified in this research as the constructive and generative nature of mimicry and copying as primary nature. The copy is a very broad and theoretically elusive term that encompasses a range of methods for how people self-articulate, symbolically generate and re-create the world they live in. Classical Greek philosopher Aristotle viewed mimesis as something that nature and humans have in common – that is embedded not only in the creative process, but also in the constitution of the world.

Current concepts of an ‘original work of art’ evolved at a time of rapid colonial expansion in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, periods which also saw the emergence of the landscape painting genre and representations of property ownership. Another important development that occurred concurrently is the development of mechanical printing processes and the printing press. Throughout this research, the concepts of the unique, the singular and the original have been related to heritage, authority and the absolute. These ideas have emerged as representations of an authoritarian colonial position.

I have attempted to highlight the concurrent development of originality in context of aggressive colonial expansion and the assertion of individuality to reveal a conceptual link between colonialism and originality. As an alternative, the concept of the copy has been developed to articulate a positive notion of change and an expressed commonality.

Linking Western European and Anglo-Australian colonialism with the development of the ‘original work of art’ and the genre of landscape painting has uncovered complicity between originality, colonial dominance and land ownership. Colonialism is interpreted as a function that presupposes an authoritative heritage and enables the separation of the colonial self and the other. The mimicry in the cargo cults provides a timely re-reading of this colonial paradigm. In these cultural movements, the colonial and military original was wrested from its specific tradition and re-presented as performed resistance.

Printmaking in this research is a metonym for the generative nature of the multiple. In Europe the printing press emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries and attested to a period of rapid social change. Copyright laws were initially developed in the 18th century in the United Kingdom (Statute of Anne 1710). Despite printmaking’s latent reproductive capability, the concept of copyright is perceived not as a method to protect artistic creation, but as a legal concept developed in the 18th century to control the spread of seditious and dissenting printed matter. In this project the printing press, which such laws emerged to control, is interpreted as a method to make copies. Copyright laws are thus interpreted in this research as an extension of belief in a fundamental and absolute origin. Therefor printing processes are seen as a positive method to offset modern concepts of originality.
Methods of stamping, painting, mirroring, mass production, reproduction, performance and collaboration have been employed to make copies that signal a positive definition for copying and an alternate notion to the development and generation of change. This is apparent in the copy’s indefinite origin and the copy’s potential to generate appearances and illusions that affect the perception and behaviour of people, copies which easily transfer from medium to medium, which are indeterminate and cannot stabilise. A copy that readily yields in every direction, which easily divides and scatters itself and which unites and collects itself; which is decentralised and mobile; and which readily clings to another body and revitalises it or re-germinates elsewhere – copies that socialise and interact in a generative process of change.
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APPENDIX

Catalogue documentation

*Unique state*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 2012
Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, 2012
Helen Brack, *Imprint*, 2013
JOEL GAILER: everything is text

by Helen Brock

[Article content]

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Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, 2014

*Impact 9*, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China, 2015
PERFORMPRINT

Performprint is the collaboration of Michael Ferneretti and several student engineers, concept artists, performance art and experimenter printmakers. The Performprint context is the first to develop performance art that is intended to be (per)formed, social viewing, and host environment.

The performprint experiment reaches back to the specifics of print on a medium and extends the philosophical elements of printmaking, such as concepts of the copy, the multiple and collaboration through engagements community engagement and collaboration to extend events. The project attempts to articulate the broader meaning of the print on a present sense.

We are attempting to highlight the broader relevance of printmaking within the context of contemporary architecture. Performprint art and print continue to present an environmental, collaborative inquiry into the role of print in the broader community. The process of traditional printmaking and the community print studio are inherently collaborative because such activities often require more multiple processes to produce print. Taking this performative aspect as a philosophical position, we interpret this figure into a concept. Performprint, engaging print as performance which we ask the viewer to think about the content when removed from conceptual knowledge.

Our working method attempts to link the medium and the outcome in a combination of usage and process. The site or location for the work is the place where experience becomes part of the medium and is that which becomes the outcome. Our collaborative-working method is informed by the community and the social setting as well as the host environment.

We attempt to find innovative resolutions in the working process, using community engagement and collaboration, the method is an attempt to articulate the meaning of the artwork location and the personal philosophies of the Performprint art practice.
Notfair, Melbourne, 2016
Awards, residencies and acquisitions

2016  Winner – Nicholas Projects Art Prize, NotFair. Melbourne, VIC
      Recipient – Artclub commission. Melbourne, VIC
2015  Acquired, National Gallery of Victoria, Australian prints
2014  Finalist – Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre WA
      Finalist – Artecycle Environmental Arts Prize, Incinerator Gallery, VIC
      RMIT research fund grant for international travel
      New work grant for production of Performprint, Artshouse, VIC
      Art Haus International Artist in Residence, Solomon Islands National Art Gallery
      Artist in Residence, City of Yarra Youth Art Space
      Artist in Residence, Huneyhum Farm, Kangarilla SA
2013  Australian Post Graduate Award
      Finalist – Libris Artist Book Award, Mackay Regional Gallery, QLD
      Finalist – Artecycle Environmental Arts Prize, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne VIC
      Recipient - Artclub commission, Melbourne, VIC
2012  Artist in Residence, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA
      Finalist – Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA

Project presentations

Solo exhibitions

2015  
      Mirror state, Incinerator Art Gallery, Melbourne VIC
      Performprint, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China
2014  Joel Gailer, Solomon Islands National Art Gallery, Honiara, Solomon Islands
      Performprint, Artshouse, VIC
2012  Performprint, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA
      Unique state, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, ACT
Art Monthly, issue 250 August 2012

I’m your distant cousin, Stockroom, Kyneton VIC

Group exhibitions

2016 Interactive and Collaborative Art Fair (PICFair), performance, SouthBank, Melbourne VIC
NotFair, 524 Flinders Street, Melbourne VIC
Out of the Matrix, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne VIC
The unstable image, SASA, University of South Australia, Adelaide SA

2015 Impact 9, Print in the Post Print Age, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China
Multiple Choices, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA
Ctrl Alt Dlt, Fort Delta, Melbourne VIC

2014 Meet the Public, Blindside, Melbourne VIC
2004, Brunswick Arts, Brunswick VIC
Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA

2013 Artlife International Art Fair, Sunshine Coast QLD
Libris Artist Book Award, Mackay Regional Gallery, QLD
Artecycle Environmental Arts Prize, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne VIC

2012 Artists for Kids Culture (annual charity art auction), Melbourne VIC
Recycled Dreaming (artists books), Sydney NSW
Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award, WA
Art of the Cuff, Melbourne Fringe Festival, Melbourne VIC
Ctrl Copy, Gallery one three, Melbourne VIC
Artecycle (sculpture prize), Incinerator Gallery, Moonee Ponds VIC
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Art Monthly Australia issue 250 June 2012


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Rainforth, D. Celebration of print and design returns to NGV,

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Cardeira, F. Joel Gailer,
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A copy of the Art Haus acceptance letter:

Art Haus International Artist Residency

Dear Joel Gailer,

Re: Invitation to join Art Haus Solomon Islands International Artist in Residency Program

Art Haus would hereby like to invite you to join our International Artist in Residency Program as part of your PhD research in Print Making during 2014.

Art Haus is a place to come together, share, learn and celebrate arts and culture. The community arts hub is a project of Solomon Islands Arts Alliance and located in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The Art Haus International Residency Program aims to:
- CONNECT communities and artists through the sharing of ideas and experiences
- EXCHANGE skills and knowledge for the development of arts and culture in Solomon Islands
- GENERATE real income to support Art Haus’s economic independence

We look forward to working with you during this residency and developing an ongoing working relationship.

Yours Sincerely,
RMIT University ethics application

Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN)
Sub-committee of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

Notice of Approval

Date: 28 March 2014
Project number: CHEAN A 0000618139-02/14
Project title: Printmaking collaboration and workshop by invitation from the Solomon Island Arts Alliance and Art Haus International Artists in Residency Program.
Risk classification: Low Risk
Investigator: Dr Emma Barrow and Mr Joel Galler
Approved: From: 28 March 2014 To: 29 August 2014

I am pleased to advise that your application has been granted ethics approval by the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network as a sub-committee of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Terms of approval:
1. Responsibilities of investigator
   It is the responsibility of the above investigator/s to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by the CHEAN. Approval is only valid whilst the investigator/s holds a position at RMIT University.
2. Amendments
   Approval must be sought from the CHEAN to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment please use the ‘Request for Amendment form’ that is available on the RMIT website. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from CHEAN.
3. Adverse events
   You should notify HREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
4. Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)
   The PICF and any other material used to recruit and inform participants of the project must include the RMIT university logo. The PICF must contain a complaints clause including the project number.
5. Annual reports
   Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report. This form can be located online on the human research ethics web page on the RMIT website.
6. Final report
   A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. CHEAN must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
7. Monitoring
   Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by HREC at any time.
8. Retention and storage of data
   The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

In any future correspondence please quote the project number and project title.

On behalf of the DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network I wish you well in your research.

Suzana Kowcevic
Research and Ethics Officer
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University
Ph: 03 9925 2874
Email: suzana.kowcevic@rmit.edu.au
Website: www.rmit.edu.au/dsc
Project description

Summary: I have been invited to travel to the Solomon Islands by Solomon Islands Arts Alliance (SIAA) and Art Haus International Residency Program (AHIRPP), (22 July–29 August 2014). This residency includes access to a studio and residential accommodation for the duration of my stay. I am known to the organisation through my professional printmaking practice. The purpose of the trip is to work with key local artists as nominated by SIAA to initiate an artistic collaboration and conduct a printmaking workshop organised by AHIRP. Specific historical arts practices in Melanesia play an important role in my PhD research. My research examines methods of copying in printmaking practice and the role of copying in Melanesian art between 1900–1967. As part of my research my aim is to initiate collaborative artworks with local artists. If such collaborative works are produced the works will remain with the SIAA organisation, however with the support of the SIAA and nominated artists a sample of these artworks will return to Australia with me. It is anticipated these works may form a component of my PhD practice research project, in regards to gaining a deeper understanding about the value of Melanesian art practice in context to methods of copying in the making of art.

Project aims: Visual arts collaboration with the Solomon Islands Arts Alliance nominated artists.

Research design approach: This research is founded on informed consent working closely with Arts Haus International Residency Program and the Solomon Islands Arts Alliance. This research is being conducted in accordance with Solomon Islands (SI) research guidelines. An application for a SI research permit will be lodged with RMIT consent and successful Ethics approval. I have been advised of the correct research application procedure by Tony Heorake, Director of the Solomon Islands National Museum (SINM). (see coresspondance and relating documents attached).

There are no current travel restrictions in the Solomon Islands and the Australian Government travel advisory website, (www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Solomon_Islands), advises people traveling to SI to excersise normal safety precautions. The website also states that civil unrest and protests occur from time to time. I will continuously monitor official Australian Government reports and monitor media for information about possible new safety or security risks up to and during my residency (22/07/2014–30/08/2014).

Methodology/data collection techniques and analysis: Action research, collaboration and production of artworks through organised printmaking workshops. Collaborations will be based on understanding, equality and sharing of knowledge and skills in a mutual exchange.
A copy of letter and RA Form to the Undersecretary, Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development for purposes of carrying out research in the Solomon Islands

7 May 2014
The Under Secretary
Administration, Ministry of Education
& Human Resources Development

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am writing to request a research permit from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development to conduct collaborations with Solomon Islands artists, in consultation with Arts Haus International Residency Program (AHIRP) and Solomon Islands Arts Alliance (SIAA). My application and supporting documents are enclosed.

I am a practising artist from Melbourne Australia and current PhD candidate with RMIT University. My primary output is printmaking. I have been generously awarded an Artist in Residence through AHIRP, supported by SIAA. As part of my Residency I have been asked to conduct printmaking workshops. To support these workshops and Arts Haus I am raising money in Australia for a printmaking press which I will transport and donate to Solomon Islands Arts Alliance for their unrestricted use in their community program at the Arts Haus.
During my Residency, I hope to initiate artistic collaborations with key Solomon Island artists as nominated by SIAA and AHIRP and with the approval from participant artists. SIAA and AHIRP outcomes will form a component of my PhD exegesis (all artworks created will be attributed with co-authorship (c)). My research investigates modes of copying in artistic practice and mimicry in human interaction. My ideas about copying and mimicry are actioned through printmaking and in my practice printmaking is an important medium to make copies. Printmaking collaborations form a component of my output and I hope to extend this mode of working with Solomon Island artists.

I am truly excited to be given the opportunity to create art in your country and I am grateful for your consideration of my permit request.

Sincerely yours,

Joel Gailer
SOLOMON ISLANDS

FORM R A – RESEARCH APPLICATION

1. NAME Associate

2. Joel Gailer

3. Curriculum Vitae

Attached

4. Subject(s) to be studied (Brief synopsis, detail should be on the research proposal)

I am a practising artist from Melbourne Australia and current PhD candidate at RMIT University, my primary output is printmaking. I have been generously awarded an Artist in Residence through Arts Haus International Residency Program (AHIRP), supported by Solomon Islands Arts Alliance (SIAA). As part of the residency I have been asked to conduct printmaking workshops. To support these workshops and Arts Haus I am raising money in Australia for a printmaking press which I will transport and donate to Solomon Islands Arts Alliance for their unrestricted use in their community program at the Arts Haus.

In addition to the workshops I hope to initiate an artistic collaboration with key Solomon Island artists as nominated by SIAA and AHIRP and with the approval from participant artists, SIAA and AHIRP outcomes will form a component of my PhD exegesis (all artworks created will be attributed with co-authorship (c). My research investigates modes of copying in artistic practice and mimicry in human interaction.
My ideas about copying and mimicry are actioned through printmaking and in my practice printmaking is an important medium to make copies. Printmaking collaborations form a component of my output and I hope to extend this mode of working with Solomon Island artists.

Through my research I have investigated accounts of copying and mimicry as a positive tool to navigate social change and one line of my enquiry is based on the historical accounts of specific creative acts from the movements, popularly titled cargo cults (1890–1960). Through collaborating, exchange and informal discussion I am hoping to learn more about these movements.

Collaborating artists will be asked to consider the role of copying as a component of change and from initial discussions and presentations collaborations will begin with a range of experimental and traditional printmaking techniques. Any artwork created will remain the property of participating artists, SIAA and AHIRP and with their approval a component of the collaborations may return with me to Australia and be included in my final PhD outcome. All information gathered will, within, five years be destroyed, or returned to SIAA. Artwork and files will be stored in a locked studio until this time. Images of artwork will only be included into the final archival RMIT data base with consent from participating artists, SIAA and AHIRP.

The proposed trip is based on mutual respect and reciprocal frameworks of working. The design for the project is supported by the existing model of engagement practiced by SIAA.

5. Areas/locality where research work is to be conducted

Arts Haus in conjunction with Solomon Islands Arts Alliance, Honiara.

6a. Who is funding the research

I am an RMIT PhD candidate subsidised by an Australian Post Graduate Award. Arts Haus International Residency Program is providing accommodation and studio access. I am funding my travel to and from the Solomon Islands, travel within the Solomon Islands as well as all materials used in the creation of artworks.

b. What is the level of funding

N/A
7. Method of research (see also detailed proposal attached)

Action research/collaborative art making.

8. My research will involve

Inviting artists to collaborate on artworks using processes of printmaking.

9. Arrangement for accommodation in the places of research

Arts Haus International Residency are arranging a home-stay style of accommodation in Honiara.

10. How will the research results be used?

The research may be used as part of my PhD exegesis.

11. List benefits of research for Solomon Islands

Exhibitions of any artwork created will be held in the Solomon Islands and Australia.

12. Name and address of any person/organisation/institution who is willing to assist you while you are doing your research

Arts Haus International Residency Program and Solomon Islands Arts Alliance

13. How long will the research take? Specify dates if possible

22 July 2014–30 August 2014
14. Any specific information you consider useful for our perusal of your application may be described below

N/A

15. Referees certifying your research application and background

Dr Emma Barrow, Lecturer School of Art and coordinator of RMIT Post Graduate Indigenous Education, RMIT University Melbourne.

   email: 

   phone: +61 3 9925 9689

Dr Shane Hulbert, Program Director of the Bachelor of Arts (School of Art), RMIT University Melbourne.

   phone: 

Richard Harding, Lecturer and Studio Coordinator of Printmedia, RMIT University Melbourne.

   email: 

   phone: 


Printing press fundraising

As part of this project I raised funds to gift a printing press to the arts organization supporting my residency, Solomon Islands Arts Alliance (SIAA).

A copy of fundraising initiatives related to the printing press:

**Australian artist invited to share his print ideas in the Solomon Islands**

Award-winning Australian printmaker, Joel Gailer, will collaborate with Solomon Islander artists at the Solomon’s first community art space when it opens in July.

Gailer has been invited to share his printmaking techniques at the art hub, Arts Haus, which provides an environment of mutual exchange between visiting artists and local practitioners. With the help of Stephen Twohig from Fitzroy Etching Presses Gailer will deliver the first piece of substantial equipment to the facility.

He invites the Australian arts community to participate by helping him raise $3000 required to transport a printing press and supply materials to the centre.

The printing press will give local artists opportunities to develop their printmaking skills and and learn techniques including intaglio (etchings, dry point), relief printing (lino cuts, woodblock) and mono prints.

Melbourne-based printmaker, Gailer, is the first international artist to join the Art Haus residency in the international collaboration program. “This is a great opportunity to further develop the relationship between Melbourne and the Solomon Islands arts communities, I am looking forward to collaborating with Solomon Island artists and developing my art practice and I am honored to be the first international artist invited to Arts Haus,” says Gailer.

Art Haus is located within the Solomon Islands National Museum precinct in the capital Honiara and from July will host a wide range of community and arts activities and international collaborations. The project is a partnership between Solomon Islands Arts Alliance, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and People with Projects, whose mission is to empower and motivate by building secure and sustainable pathways for the people through the arts.
All donations over $100 will receive a gift of a hand colored relief print by Joel Gailer.

For more information and further comment regarding Project Printing Press phone Joel [redacted]
http://www.pozible.com/project/180599

Email: arthaussolomonislands@gmail.com

FB: www.facebook.com/arthaussolomonislands