Pop Tasmanian Gothic: A Studio-based Exploration of Place Characterised by the Tasmanian Gothic and the Tourist Experience.

by

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Ethics Project ID: 18565

Signed

Josh Simpson

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Abstract

My practice-led research project investigates how artistic practice brings new understanding to, and provides critical perspectives on, the relationship the tourist has to the places they visit. For exploration purposes, I used the lens of a fantasy Tasmanian holiday, played out in elaborate sets from my Melbourne studio. In this scenario, I used a fictional character, 'the tourist', to reveal my ambivalent connection with Tasmania. I inserted this character into pastiched versions of Tasmanian Gothic tropes and more recent tourism marketing tropes, known as Pop Goth.

My key research question is: how do forms of artistic practice, including roleplay of touristic cliché, stereotype, pastiche and multi-media studio practice, reflect a changing Tasmanian identity characterised by Pop Tasmanian Gothic? Due to constraints brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, my research also considers the impact of travel restrictions asking how we might tour when we can't travel and what a studio-based imaginative tour might reveal.

My research is informed by personal observations as an expat Tasmanian who, over a decade of travelling back and forth from Melbourne, observed the State's emergence as a cultural tourist destination featuring the Tasmanian Gothic as a dominant branding strategy which I discuss as Pop Tasmanian Gothic.

My overarching methodology was to gather source material for investigation in the studio by adopting the 'role' of the tourist. This involved combining and adapting the stages of touristic activity identified by sociologists Clawson and Knetsch to the creative process. These stages are anticipation, travel, experience and recollection (as cited in Pearce, 2005, p. 9).

Within the tourist methodology, I use camp and pastiche as overarching methods to represent my personal connection to place. Supported by the work of Susan Sontag, Christopher Isherwood and Cindy Sherman, I argue that camp provides a meaningful platform to investigate a shifting perception of place through humour and roleplay. By adopting Richard Dyer's definition of pastiche, I explore how copying and combining in an expansive platform of tropes can express an emotional connection to place. I explore how these tropes can co-exist in one space through scenography, painting and animation.

In my research, I contextualise Pop Tasmanian Gothic visual art through a range of artists including William Piguenit, Jane Burton, Tom O'Hern and Robert O'Connor. I discuss my use of scenography through the work of Tracy Moffatt and Jacqui Stockdale and the free-standing cut-out through David Noonan. Animation is examined with reference to Heath Franco and Heather and Ivan Morison.

The final output for this project is a multi-media installation-based exhibition consisting of a digital animation, paintings, and free-standing sculptural cut-outs. This results in a cacophony of motifs that circulate between and around each other in a dimly lit immersive spectacle. The work provides an opportunity to reflect on the emergent tropes of Pop Tasmanian Gothic in visual art and in the Tasmanian Gothic at large, identifying new tropes that are relevant in a contemporary context, disclosing new perceptions and critical perspectives of the relationship to place held by the tourist as I reconcile my own attachments, memories and associations to Tasmania.

Background to the Project

I grew up in Tasmania. I spent my childhood years in Collinsvale, a quiet country town about 30 minutes north/west of Hobart and my teens and early 20s living in the city suburbs. As a child, art was one of the few things I excelled in. In 2009 I left Tasmania. The following year The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), a privately owned subterranean museum with the central themes of sex and death, opened. In 2012 I returned to Hobart to complete Honours in painting at the University of Tasmania. On my arrival, I was struck by a sense of change. For me, this was directly linked to the success of MONA, which I felt had reinvigorated my former home state with music, art, events, and tourism. Hobart was no longer the quiet backwater where I grew up; it was now an international tourist destination known for something I truly connected with – art. Although part of me was reluctant to leave, once I had finished my studies, I moved back to Melbourne where my family lived. With no relatives in Tasmania and dwindling social connections, it was hard to find reasons to go back to my former home. My last remaining connection with Tasmania was through art. I regularly found myself returning for art related activities such as exhibitions, prizes, residencies and the Dark MOFO winter festivals. This shadowy and seductive spectacle provided rose (or perhaps crimson) coloured glasses to view my former home, infusing paganistic ritual, sensual burlesque and carnivalesque excitement with well-established Tasmanian Gothic tropes, transforming the streets of Hobart into a midnight playground. As with my Honours year, art became a reason to return. I have been living in Melbourne for over a decade now, and I am well and truly an *expat* Tasmanian. I now have a house and a family with two small children in Melbourne and when I come to Tasmania, I feel more like a tourist than a local.

Chapter One: Central Argument

Introduction

My practice-led research project investigates how artistic practice brings new understanding to, and provides critical perspectives on, the relationship the tourist has to the places they visit. Exploration was done through the lens of a fantasy Tasmanian holiday played out in elaborate sets from my Melbourne studio. In this scenario, I used a fictional character, 'the tourist', to reveal my ambivalent connection with Tasmania. I inserted this character into pastiched versions of Tasmanian Gothic tropes and more recent tourism marketing tropes, known as Pop Goth.

Traditionally a literary genre, Tasmanian Gothic is derived from its European counterpart. It features the history and landscapes of Tasmania in themes of menace, isolation and the supernatural. Tasmania's colonial past of violence and subjugation, the dark, dramatic landscape, and geographical remoteness of an 'untamed' land provided the raw materials for the Gothic genre to take root in the Tasmanian imagination (Haynes, 2006, p. 219). The visual arts also draw on Tasmanian Gothic tropes to include a haunting past, a menacing environment, the supernatural, the grotesque, torment and isolation These characteristics are supported by the texts of many Tasmanian Gothic scholars including - Emily Bullock's *Dark Heart of the Island: The Kettering incident's Tasmanian Gothic Fairytale* (2017), Edward Colless's *The Error of My Way* (1995), Jim Davidson's *Tasmanian Gothic* (1989) and Philip Mead's *Tasmanian Gothic and its Discontents* (2019).

Tasmanian Gothic is not a static concept; it evolves and adapts to changes in time, place and medium This is supported by the texts of gothic scholars including Emily Bullock's *A Cultural Poetics of Contemporary Tasmanian Gothic* (2009,p.26), Justin D. Edwards's and Agnieszka Soltysik's From Gothic to Pop Gothic (2013, p.15) and Lorna Piatti-Farnell's Sites for Contemporary Gothic (2014, p.2) For example, the recent rebranding of Tasmania as a cultural tourist destination has transformed the Gothic mode in art thrusting it into a Pop Goth age of spectacle, entertainment and tourism (Edwards & Monnet, 2013). This transformation is supported by many texts including Professor Adrian Franklin's Where 'art meets life': assessing the impact of Dark Mofo, a new mid-winter festival in Australia (2019), Briony Kidd's How Tasmania Became the Gothic Muse of Australian Film and TV (2019) and Louise Ryan's Re-branding Tasmania: MONA and the Altering of Local Reputation and Identity (2016).

Cultural theorists and Gothic scholars Justin D. Edwards and Agnieszka Soltysik describe how Pop Goth, or in this context *Pop Tasmanian Gothic,* explores how the genre intertwines with popular culture in music, fashion, cinema, visual culture, television and tourism (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, p.

1). It is both a mainstream spin-off from the Gothic, informed by the language of merchandising, marketing and promotion; and a means to push the boundaries of the Gothic, experimenting with a mixture of creative reproductions and parodies (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, pp. 1-16).

Pop Goth has a unique set of characteristics that parallel existing Tasmanian Gothic tropes, bringing them into the 21st century, making them more familiar and accessible. These include commodity, hybridity, humour, sexuality, urbanisation, performance and a dark future (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, pp. 1-16). For example, in Chapter Two, I discuss Tasmanian born photographer Jane Burton whose mysterious nudes, Gothic abodes and haunted landscapes conjure traditional Tasmanian Gothic tropes of menace, the supernatural and torment. I also discuss Tasmanian artist Tom O'Hern's ominous themes of decay, moral disorder and environmental ruin which display traditional Tasmanian Gothic tropes such as a menacing environment, a haunting past and the grotesque through the Pop Goth filters of commodity, hybridity and humour.

This research is informed by my observations as an expat Tasmanian who, over a decade of travelling back and forth from Melbourne, observed the State's emergence as a cultural tourist destination featuring the Tasmanian Gothic as a dominant branding strategy. This is largely due to the success of MONA and a Tasmanian cinematic renaissance that has seen films such as *The Hunter* (2011)[1] starring Willem Dafoe, and the award-winning period thriller *The Nightingale* (2018)[2], presented to international audiences. This tourism and entertainment spectacle plays on Tasmania's moody past, mysterious wilderness and geographic isolation to frame experiences and inform fantasies of an exotic place.

First Nations People

From the outset, an important consideration in my research was confronting Tasmania's dark history including the plight of its First Nations people. Misinformation, mysticism and extreme brutality towards the Palawa underpins the shared experience I refer to as Tasmanian Gothic. This problematic history is aptly distilled in the infamous aboriginal diorama that was on display at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery from 1931 to 1995 (Norman, 2013) and was compulsory viewing during school excursions to the museum when I was a child. This misleading representation of the Palawa people perpetuated false stereotypes about their primitive nature and informed my only understanding of our shared history through my early education. This dark memory represents a

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[1] The story of Martin David, a mercenary sent to Tasmania by a biotech company to hunt down the supposedly extinct Tasmanian Tiger for its DNA to build a lethal weapon.

[2] Set in 1825 a young convict woman tracks colonial officers through the Tasmanian wilderness seeking revenge after her rape and the murder of her family.

way of thinking synonymous with Tasmanian Gothic as a colonial imposition on the land and represents my own misgivings about the genesis of the Tasmanian Gothic. Throughout the project, I experimented with motifs form the TMAG diorama, locating them in my theatrical sets and interacting with them through role-play. This resulted in a huge amount of photographic data, which began to unravel the indigenous story from my perspective in relation to Tasmanian Gothic. However, as the project developed it became less about representing the Tasmanian Gothic and more about forging a personal connection with place through the Tasmanian Gothic, specifically Pop Tasmanian Gothic, a Gothic subcategory associated with tourism, marketing and entertainment. This personal connection was explored through a dark and playfully humour which did not come from a place of criticality but rather a place of affection. As a result, I decided to remove indigenous representations from the final output because my strategies of exaggeration, humour and campness seemed deeply inappropriate to engage with the subject. The commodification of the Tasmanian Gothic at the expense of Firsts Nations people through dark tourism is clearly problematic. Throughout my investigation I confronted this in my own personal way, drawing connections between the colonial settlers and the contemporary white tourist who are both visitors in a strange land. Although not explicit in the final body of work, the brutal impact of violent and horrific colonisation on the traditional owners underpins the project becoming assumed knowledge within the work.

Tourist Reality: Perception of Place

The tourist has ways of perceiving and understanding place. In *Tourism: Enacting Modern Myths* (2002), cultural theorist Chris Hennig points out the tourist world is "real and imaginary, dream and action" (Hennig, 2002, p. 170). He suggests travel is one of the last remaining activities where myth can be enacted in a meaningful way (Hennig, 2002, p. 185). I use this to navigate the relationship between Pop Tasmanian Gothic and tourism. If the Tasmanian Gothic creates a fantasy world, positioning the landscape as other, an extraordinary and mysterious place where mythology is informed by adventure, the exotic and paradise, then how might these be woven into the tourist's world where place is enacted through travel?

In a Tasmanian context, dream and action merge with Pop Tasmanian Gothic filters associated with tourism and marketing. See, for example, the MONA FOMA and Dark MOFO festivals, where tourists are immersed in interactive exhibits that span the entire city. In *Re-branding Tasmania: MONA and the Altering of Local Reputation and Identity* (2016) Louise Ryan describes how travellers are "journeying" to the "end of the world" to experience "cutting-edge" shows and immersive technologies in thought-provoking environments where individual and community identities can be

pulled to pieces, formed and reformed (Ryan, 2016, p. 442). In relation to this, Hennig suggests tourist partake in the fantasised and idealised world of premodern idyll through festivals and folkloric events via personal contact with local people, purchasing arts and crafts and consuming traditional cuisine themselves becoming temporarily part of the otherness (Hennig, 2002, p. 176). We can see this in the Dark MOFO winter festivals which utilise ritual, idyll and the primitive. For example, in the 2018 festival participants offered their fears to an Ogoh-ogoh, a giant totem-like sculpture in the form of a Tasmanian Cave Spider derived from a Balinese purification ritual. The spectators wrote their fears on a piece of paper and then placed them inside the totem which was paraded around Hobart's waterfront and then sacrificed in a "blazing forest of smoke fire and noise" (Museum of Old and New Art, 2019). In an act of pastiche, this spectacle entangles Balinese and Tasmanian culture through Pop Goth filters of hybridity, performance and commodity associated with tourism and marketing creating an amalgamated construction of place. Like the Ogoh-ogoh, exciting experiences and sensationalised depictions of place intertwine with the tourist's world influencing their gaze and contributing to a fanciful reconstruction of reality. The tourist lens therefore enables a hybridised exploration of Pop Tasmanian Gothic and tourism by combining personal narratives with local myth, fantasy, clichés and history within the Tasmanian Gothic mode.

Objectives, Aims and Questions

The primary aim of this project is to investigate how artistic practice can bring new understandings to, and provide critical perspectives on, the relationship that the tourist has to the places they visit. This studio-based, practice-led investigation proposes that touristic clichés and stereotypes can be used to evoke an ambivalent relationship to Tasmania. It does this by complicating the tourist trope; exploring my own feelings and relationship as an expat Tasmanian when hypothetically visiting in the guise of the tourist. Due to constraints brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, my research also considered the impact of travel restrictions, asking what the isolated tourist does when they can't travel.

The research problem can be summarised by the following questions:

- How can particular forms of artistic practice, including the roleplaying of touristic cliché, stereotype, pastiche and multi-media studio practice, reflect a changing Tasmanian identity characterised by Pop Tasmanian Gothic?

- As an expat Tasmanian artist, how can I use the figure of the tourist to reveal my ambivalence towards this changing identity?

Methodology

Practice-led research is concerned with the nature of practice, that is, the actual application of an idea, belief, or method, which leads to new knowledge that has significant value to the practice (Candy, 2006, p. 1). Vital to this process is an understanding of performative research[3] which suggests practice and presentational forms such as an exhibition, "not only express the research but, in that expression, becomes the research" (Haseman, 2006, p. 102). Practice-led research draws on subjective, interdisciplinary and emergent methodologies (Barrett & Bolt, 2014, p. 1). This approach was put into action by combining a tourist methodology, identified by sociologists Clawson and Knetsch (cited in Pearce, 2005), with a practice-led one. The tourist methodology was adapted for artistic practice from a sociological framework. This was done to examine tourist activity in a critically meaningful and immersive way as well as capture and include my own personal experiences, feelings and practice. The tourist methodology was used to gather source material for investigation in the studio by adopting the role of the tourist. This involved combining, expanding and adapting the stages of touristic activity as defined by Clawson and Knetsch: anticipation, travel, experience and recollection to the creative process. For Clawson and Knetsch, anticipation involves a prolonged period of planning and fantasy regarding the forthcoming travel. It encompasses mundane tasks such as booking tickets, planning routes and arranging accommodation as well as dreaming, fantasising and imagining possible travel scenarios. Travel describes the commute to and from the holiday destination. It could be by boat, plane, bus, train, walking, virtually or otherwise. Travel is an integral part of the touristic experience and heightens anticipation. Experience is about being somewhere. Typically, this is an intangible occurrence and an opportunity to, sense and interact with the travel destination. Recollection refers to a prolonged period of reflection on the touristic experience, reliving exciting moments, telling travel stories and re-examining photos from the trip (cited in Pearce, 2005, pp. 9-10).

Covid-19 travel restrictions meant that rather than applying this methodology through excursions to Tasmania, roleplaying the tourist on location and then recreating the experiences in the studio as planned, I embarked on a fantasy Tasmanian holiday using elaborate sets in my Melbourne studio. In the fantasy, a fictional character, the tourist, was used to reveal my ambivalence towards a changing

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[3] Performative research finds its origins in philosopher John L. Austin's notion of performativity which he used to describe language's ability to change the world we live in. Speech acts such as promising, betting and performing a marriage ceremony are examples of this. For instance, saying "I do" in the right circumstance changes someone from being unmarried to married (Cavanaugh, 2015). In contemporary culture this understanding has been expanded beyond speech acts to include other acts such as the production of presentational forms like a play or a novel.

Tasmanian identity. This self-portrayed character is both me and someone else – an amalgamation of tourist stereotypes such as backpackers, bushwalkers, campers and party-goers with Pop Tasmanian Gothic clichés such as convicts, ghosts and cannibals. He is not a medical, culinary or wellness tourist but a reflection of myself and my interests and experiences. The tourist was developed to explore how clichés and stereotypes inform and contextualise interactions with place – specifically the Tasmanian environment and my connection to it. This resulted in three fantasy scenes combining Tasmanian landscapes, tourist tropes and Gothic clichés.

Creating these fantasy holidays required a sense of anticipation. This involved location and historical research and the development of tourist scenarios to create a holiday narrative that could be played out in life-sized theatrical sets. Constructing the sets involved scenography, making my own props, painting backdrops, designing costumes and theatrical lighting. Once completed the tourist travelled and experienced the location through a series of photoshoots bringing the fantasy to life. These scenarios informed the final artistic works in the project which include an animation, paintings and cut-outs.

The tourist methodology also delivered a viable means to enact Chris Hennig's tourist reality as a liminal space between fantasy and reality. This was achieved by juxtaposing real against fake. This duality of fantasy and reality appears throughout the entire project and is a defining component of the final output. This 'flipping' not only signals Hennig's tourist reality but my own ambivalent position as I try to reconcile the projected fantasy and my own attachments, memories and associations to Tasmania.

Within the tourist methodology, I position camp and pastiche as overarching methods that represent my personal connection to place. Supported by the work of Susan Sontag, Christopher Isherwood and Cindy Sherman, I argue camp provides a meaningful platform to express my ambivalence towards a shifting perception of place through humour and roleplay. By adopting Richard Dyer's definition of pastiche, I explore and express an emotional connection to place by copying and combination in an expansive platform of tropes, co-existing in the one space. These two overarching methods were then applied to my key studio methods to physically make the work and communicate the aims of my research. These were scenography, painting and animation (which are discussed further in Chapter Three).

The final exhibition was designed to be viewed as one work with a variety of components which interact with each other in a single space. Barbara Bolt's notion of materialising practices is highly relevant to this. Under the umbrella of performative research, she suggests there is ongoing performative engagement and productivity both at moments of production and consumption. In

other words, new knowledge emerges from human involvement with objects in the world (Barrett & Bolt, 2014, p. 143). It is useful to understand the emergent aspect of presentational forms and the dynamics of circulation between the artworks. In the final installation, motifs circulate between painting, cut-out and animation in a dimly lit immersive space. Abstracted tourist marketing cut-outs operate as de facto signage that orientates viewers, moving them around the space, providing locational or directional information as if they are in a surreal and abstracted tourist experience themselves, and, in doing so becomes part of the circulation (this is discussed further in Chapter Three).

Structure of the Exegesis

Chapter Two: Tasmanian Gothic in Visual Art establishes a visual art guide for the Tasmanian Gothic for use in my studio-based investigation of place. This is achieved through an evaluation of the Gothic and the Tasmanian Gothic using key texts to illustrate recurring tropes and characteristics. These include *The Gothic* (2007) by Gilda Williams, *Gothic* by Fred Botting (2014) and *New Directions in 21st-Century Gothic: The Gothic Compass* (2015) by Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Donna Lee Brien which are used to establish the characteristics of the Gothic at large; and *Tasmanian Gothic* (1989) by Jim Davidson, *Tasmanian Visions: Landscapes in Writing, Art and Photography* (2006) by Roslynn Haynes, and *A Cultural Poetics of Contemporary Tasmanian Gothic* (2009) by Emily Bullock which illustrate tropes and characteristics unique to the Tasmanian Gothic. These tropes are then used to analyse specific artworks including that of William Charles Piguenit and John Glover which establish an early precedent for the Tasmanian Gothic in visual art; and Kristin Headlam, Helen Wright, Pat Brassington, Jane Burton, Rodney Pople and Julie Gough track the development of Tasmanian Gothic from the mid-90s through to its current application. The chapter concludes by addressing contemporary Tasmanian Gothic in relation to tourism and marketing underpinned by the subcategory of Pop Goth, identifying its tropes through the key text *From Goth/ic to Pop Goth* in *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture* (2013) by Justin D Edwards and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet and applying them to Tasmanian visual art with work from Robert O'Connor and Tom O'Hern.

Chapter Three: Studio Methods outlines the studio methods of camp, pastiche, scenography, painting, and animation. These are discussed with relevant examples of my work and contextualised with examples from other practising artists including Cindy Sherman who is discussed in relation to camp and roleplay in visual art and pastiche which is examined with reference to Neil Haddon. Tracy Moffatt and Jacqui Stockdale who are discussed in relation to scenography and David Noonan with

reference to the freestanding cut-out. Heather and Ivan Morison and Heath Franco are examined with reference to animation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the final installation, discussing artworks in an expanded and immersive network of objects with reference to Ronnie Van Hout.

Chapter Four: Conclusion discusses the final body of work and how the outcomes of my research have addressed the key aims and objectives, reflecting on how, as an expat Tasmanian artist, I can use the figure of the tourist to reveal my ambivalence towards a changing Tasmanian identity exemplified by Pop Tasmanian Gothic.

Chapter Two: Tasmanian Gothic in Visual Art

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a visual art guide for the Tasmanian Gothic for use in a studio-based investigation of place. This is achieved through an evaluation of the Gothic and the Tasmanian Gothic using detailed examples to catalogue recurring tropes and characteristics such as a haunting past, a menacing environment, the supernatural, the grotesque, torment and isolation. These tropes are then used to analyse specific artworks that provide key examples of Tasmanian Gothic visual art. The chapter concludes by addressing contemporary Tasmanian Gothic in relation to tourism and marketing through the subcategory of *Pop Goth*, identifying its tropes including commodity, hybridity, humour, sexuality, urbanisation, performance and a dark future, and applying them to Tasmanian visual art.

Gothic

The Gothic is a contentious term. It is named after the nomadic Goths of northern Europe who in the 5th century AD overturned the Roman Empire marking the beginning of the medieval period (Bullock, 2009, p. 26). In The BBC documentary *Art of the Gothic: Britain's Midnight Hour Liberty, Diversity and Depravity* (Comely, 2014), host Andrew-Graham-Dixion explains that the term Gothic was coined by the artists of the Italian Renaissance as an insult used to describe anything that did not come from the civilised world of ancient Greece and Rome. Meaning barbaric, wild and gloomy; they dismissed centuries of medieval art and architecture as primitive and worthless

As a narrative genre, its origins are in European literature and can be attributed to Horace Walpole's novel *The Castel of Otranto* (1764)[4], subtitled by the author as "A Gothic Story". Classic Gothic fiction is "characterised by suspenseful and sensational plots involving supernatural or macabre elements and often (especially in early use) having a medieval theme or setting" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). The genre emerged in mid-18th century Europe as a counter to the Enlightenment. Gothic writers undermined the social order, rationalism and security of the time by depicting a state of moral and social anarchy beneath the veneer of civilised society (Haynes, 2006, p. 218). In his book, *Gothic* (2014) academic Fred Botting lists many of the literary genera's narrative tropes such as darkness, passion, violence, romance, delusion, wonder, monstrosity and magic (2014, p. 2) while many of these might be familiar, Emily Bullock in her thesis *A Cultural Poetics of Contemporary*

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[4] The story of Manfred (the Prince of Otranto) who endeavours to secure his family castle shrouded by a mysterious curse. Other examples of classic Gothic fiction include Mathew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1823) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

Tasmanian Gothic (2009) points out they are widely divergent, making the Gothic notoriously difficult to define (p. 26).

These literary conventions are subject to ongoing appropriation and manipulation. Over time, the Gothic has morphed beyond literature into a historical, artistic and architectural term. It has also spread across disciplinary boundaries influencing music, fashion, advertising, tourism and film (Bullock, 2009, p. 26; Edwards & Monnet, 2013, p. 15; Piatti-Farnell, 2014, p. 2). Given this diffusion, establishing a common set of conventions can be problematic as it suggests there is an authentic and inauthentic Gothic identifiable by a complete set of tropes fixed in time and place (Bullock, 2009, p. 27). The Gothic is better characterised as a 'mode' which captures the mutability and hybrid nature of 'genres' to shift and adapt, incorporating and transforming other genres (Bullock, 2009, p. 27; Piatti-Farnell & Brien, 2015, p. 4).

Although the Gothic mode is not bound by them, there are many recurring themes, tropes and motifs that appear in its numerous iterations, including a haunting past, an unfamiliar and hostile environment, isolation, the supernatural, madness, passion, sexual depravity, disease, disorder, moral chaos, corrupt power, malevolence, horror, mysticism, wonder, death, and a play on darkness and light (Botting, 2014, p. 2; Haynes, 2006, p. 218; Piatti-Farnell, 2014, p. 2; Williams, 2007, p. 12). Subversive in nature, these tropes blur the line between humanity and monstrosity. Although the Tasmanian Gothic has developed its own unique set of tropes, many of these narrative devices are relevant to a discussion of contemporary Tasmanian Gothic.

Tasmanian Gothic

Tasmanian Gothic is derived from its European counterpart. It features the history and landscapes of Tasmania in themes of menace, isolation and the supernatural. It draws on a Tasmanian colonial past marked by convict transportation to the formerly named (and appropriately Gothic) Van Diemen's Land. At the hands of the British Empire, convicts were subject to extreme physical and psychological torment in appalling conditions, the indigenous population were hunted down in an attempted genocide, and the land was ravaged for its resources. The colonists themselves felt imprisoned in a world riddled with fear, conflict and oppression, isolated emotionally and geographically from their family homes in Britain. In her book *Tasmanian visions: Landscapes in writing, art and photography* (2006) Roslynn Haynes points out the violence and subjugation of colonialism and the alien Tasmanian wilderness provided astonishing parallels with established tropes in the Gothic genre, allowing it to firmly take root in the Tasmanian imagination (, 2006, p. 219). Haynes also notes how indigenous violence at the hands of the colonialist contributed to the states haunted past in the Tasmanian Gothic genre. The Palawa not only haunted the landscape with

their absence, but in Tasmanian Gothic art and literature, acted as symbols of guilt and loss felt by the colonialists and their decedents for the atrocities committed against them (2006, p197).

Like the Gothic, Tasmanian Gothic is not a static concept. It evolves and adapts in time, place and medium. Since its inception, which is at least as old as Marcus Clarke's novel, *For the Term of his Natural Life* (1872)[5], specific tropes have emerged which are unique to Tasmania. For Jim Davidson in *Tasmanian Gothic* (1989), it is an amalgamated vision accommodating past and present disjunctions; even thriving on them to form an uncommonly picturesque landscape of rugged cliffs, sudden lakes, sombre forests, and overwrought coastline with seething presences and unpredictable weather (Davidson, 1989, p. 310). Davidson's article was a response to the deluge of Tasmanian literature and film in the 1980s which dealt with a sense of atavism, menace and the grotesque (Bullock, 2009, p. 17). Using a range of examples including Peter Conrad's damning memoir *Down Home* (1988)[6], Louis Nowra's play *The Golden Age* (1985)[7] and Roger Scholes's film *The Tale of Ruby Rose* (1987)[8], Davidson argues the pervasive spread of the Gothic has turned Tasmania into "our very own little gothic repository", an island storehouse of liberated rather than repressed myths, tropes, stereotypes, jokes, clichés and distortions (Davidson, 1989, p. 310).

Davidson also suggests a Tasmanian Gothic vision relishes in odd juxtapositions such as neo-Georgian refinement and the halfwits of "diamond shaped family trees" (Davidson, 1989, p. 310). Edward Colless expands on this in his selected writing about Tasmania titled *The Error of my Ways* (1995) by saying the most compelling aspects of Tasmanian culture are forged by such aberrations, by a kind of perversity, which is found in quaint villages against untamed scenery or charming orchards in contrast to the dim-witted folk art. He reads the barren 'moonscape' of Queenstown (devastated by a century of mining), with its "deep craters and poisonous makeup of orange, pink and violet" as a delightful symptom of this ironic juxtaposition calling it 'Tasmanian grotesque' (1995, p. 149).

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[5] *For the Term of His Natural Life* is considered the first Tasmanian Gothic novel. The semi fictionalised accounts of actual events capture the brutality of convict era Tasmania through the wrongfully convicted protagonist Rufus Dawes.
[6] Tasmanian expat Peter Conrad returns to his former home to explore his own identity in a Gothic landscape.
[7] Set in 1940s Tasmania, two young hikers discover an isolated 'tribe' of British settlers deep in the Tasmanian wilderness. Drawing similarities with the Tasmanian Palawa, the community struggle to assimilate to modern life resulting in tragedy.
[8] Based in 1930s Tasmania, Ruby and her family live an isolated existence trapping animals in the central highlands. Full of mysticism, dark characters and menacing landscapes, the film follows Ruby's quest to cure her fear of the dark that stems from a repressed childhood trauma (Bullock, 2014, p. 89). The film is a hallmark of Tasmanian Gothic cinema and pioneered the visual palette for contemporary Tasmanian Gothic (Mead, 2019).

While not definitive, there are several reoccurring motifs that are located in Tasmania's unique history and landscape (Bullock, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2017; Colless, 1995; Davidson, 1989; Haynes, 2006; Mead, 2019):

A haunting past can take the form of a repressed memory, a dark secret or a traumatic historical occurrence. Common motifs include dreams and nightmares, the slaughtered Palawa, convict era Tasmania and the extinct Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger). The seething landscape stands as testament to this haunted past and is usually confronted by the protagonist evoking sensations of anxiety, mystery and suspense.

The supernatural is a manifestation that often masks traumas too shocking to be true (Haynes, 2006, p. 218). Motifs include indigenous rituals, possessed figures, ghosts and folklore. Malevolent in nature, the Gothic supernatural conjures a chilling mysticism, an otherworldly evil and the dark sensation of being watched.

A menacing environment is as much about Tasmania's topography as it is about the ghosts that haunt it. Specific motifs include shifting light, wild weather, long dark nights, dense wilderness and brooding mountains. Supplemented by a haunting past and the supernatural, a menacing environment represents unnamed terror that parallels actual horror, evoking sensations including fear, alienation and wonder.

Isolation is the prerequisite to Gothic terror (Haynes, 2006, p. 219). It takes many forms in the Tasmanian Gothic, including geographical, physical, mental, social and temporal isolation. Motifs include a lost child, a lone figure, an outsider, migrant workers, imprisoned convicts, and marginalised social groups such as the poorly educated. Isolation can conjure madness and evoke terror resulting in an overall feeling of powerlessness, suffering and melancholy.

The grotesque captures the ugly, strange and darkly humorous aspects of the Tasmanian Gothic mode. Motifs include cannibalism[9], genetic deformities[10], environmental decay, lurid eroticism, filth and anthropomorphic landscapes. It is found in a clash of opposites, rotting vegetation, strange behaviours and the uncommonly picturesque landscapes and summons both disgust and delight (Colless, 1995; Davidson, 1989; Gregg, 2011).

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[9] Cannibalism finds its origins in the true story of escaped convict Alexander Pearce who ate he fellow escapees to stay alive. Marcus Clarke popularised the story with his own cannibal convict Gabbett in *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1872).
[10] Genetic deformities that occur because of inbreeding constitute a long-standing joke and negative stereotype about Tasmania's isolation, small population and low social and economic prospects. It is also a recurring Tasmanian Gothic motif identified in *Dying Breed* (2008), a horror film about the decedents of Alexander Pearce and *The Golden Age* (1985). Both stories depict lost tribes of people deformed by their small gene pool.

Torment covers the extreme violence, death, sexual depravity, destruction and psychological torture that exists in the Tasmanian Gothic mode. Common motifs include downtrodden convicts, desperate criminals, tortured Aboriginals and haunted individuals. This mayhem is often hidden by the façade of everyday society and evokes the macabre, terror and anguish.

Based in both truth and fiction, the Tasmanian Gothic goes well beyond the field of literature and film and has infected the broader cultural imagination of Tasmania (Bullock, 2009). As a cultural mode, it affects and shapes the intricate ways in which myth and history blend to form a sense of place. Given the right inflection, it seems, just about anything Tasmanian can be Gothic (Mead, 2019).

Tasmanian Gothic: An Artistic Precedent

I propose that many of the previously identified tropes, such as menace, isolation and the supernatural that Haynes (2006) claims are hallmarks of Tasmanian Gothic literature, can be found in artistic practices including still-life, figuration and abstraction.

Although Haynes claims that the Gothic has rarely been part of Tasmanian landscape painting, she nonetheless identifies Gothic elements in William Piguenit's, *A Mountain Top, Tasmania* (1886) (Figure 1). An analysis of the painting reveals many hallmark tropes including a menacing environment, the supernatural, a haunting past, the grotesque and isolation making it an excellent example of Tasmanian Gothic painting.

For Haynes, this work is an 'impressively Romantic' painting which exudes a sublime splendour. However, its complex mood of fear and wonder is not achieved so much by height, immensity and grandeur but rather the eeriness of the frosty ethereal light, the trails and swirls of mist that veil the overwrought mountains and the reflections of the primordial boulders arranged like the remnants of a pagan stone circle. In this reading, the dark green dolerite pillars stand in for the Gothic motif of the medieval ruin which Haynes says "have Gothic suggestions of some former disaster" (Haynes, 2006, p. 163). These anthropomorphic boulders haunt the scene, looming like malicious figures that somehow look back at us as we gaze upon them evoking the malevolent supernatural. Disquiet is echoed by the odd silence captured by the stillness of the lake against dark turbulent skies. There is a sense of isolation portrayed by this stillness, as well as in the geographical remoteness of the location, frozen in time. When describing the painting, Piguenit himself references the Gothic saying its purpose is "to show the peculiar, one might say *weird* character of the mountain solitudes" (as cited in Haynes, 2006, p. 163). Weird presumably being a reference to Marcus Clarkes much-

published phrase 'weird melancholy'[11] (Haynes, 2006, p. 163) which Clarke used to describe the Gothic nature of Australian scenery, and, in doing so, captured the terror with which Europeans viewed the land (Gregg, 2011, p. 30).

Figure 1: William Charles Piguenit, *A Mountain Top, Tasmania*, 1886

Margaret Scott's interpretation of John Glover's *Study of the Orphan School at New Town* (Figure 2) locates the Tasmanian Gothic tropes of menace and isolation in the work:

> "The forest surrounding the building is a dark presence willed with the menace I sensed on arriving in Hobart. There is a rainbow in Glover's painting, signifying hope, but the hope resides not in the wilderness but in the school whose occupants can be expected to grow up to tame the wild and carry the march of civilisation over the mountains" (Scott, 1996, p. 50).

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[11] The term first appeared in his preface to *Poems of the Late Adam Lindsay Gordon* (1880) in a passage that was originally composed as a commentary on two works in the National Gallery of Victoria. Nicholas Chevalier's *The Buffalo Ranges* (1864) and Louis Buvelot's *Waterpool Near Coleraine* (1869). For Clarke, weird melancholy is akin to the dominant note of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry, 'fear inspiring and gloomy'. It is "mountain forests, funeral, secret and stern… savage winds that shout among the rock clefts … [f]lights of white cockatoos [that] stream out, shrieking like evil souls … [and] dismal chant[s], and around fire dance, natives painted like skeletons" (as cited in Gregg, 2011, p. 30).

Figure 2: John Glover, *Mount Wellington with Orphan Asylum, Van Diemen's Land*, 1837[12]

In the touring exhibition *Brushing the Dark* (1996) curator Victoria Hammond presented eight artists (Jeff Burgess, Tim Burns, Kristin Headlam, David Keeling, Anne MacDonald, David Stephenson, Philip Wolfhagen and Helen Wright) on a Gothic island, excavating meaning to produce art which related to time, place and contemporary practice (Hammond, 1996, p. 7). In the exhibition, abstract landscapes were sombre, brooding and suggestive of solitude. Socio-political scenes occupied a psychological space, dreamlike with a sinister darkness, absence and stillness. And seductive still-lifes resonated with tension and spoke of decay, romance, desire and fear. (Hammond, 1996, pp. 9-23). The exhibition featured many Tasmanian Gothic tropes and motifs. For example, a menacing environment was demonstrated by Headlam who subverts the notion of parks as sites for innocent amusement. In her work *A Garden at Midnight: Ceanothus and Photinia* (1994) (Figure 3), a maze with surreal clouds of acid blue and yellow foliage beckons a player. However, enveloped by a haunting unease, the labyrinthine path does not lead to freedom but a place of fear and entrapment (Hammond, 1996, p. 13).

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[12] This is the final painting made from the *Study of the Orphan School at New Town* which Scott refers to.

Figure 3: Kristin Headlam, *A Garden at Midnight: Ceanothus and Photinia,* 1994 (from the exhibition *Brushing the Dark*, 1996)

Consistent with the Tasmanian Gothic trope of the grotesque, Wright's work evokes disgust and delight through her odd wit and a clash of opposites. In her work *Hair* (1995) (Figure 4), a subterranean jungle of plaits, braids and curls grow like vines drawing parallels with the dense Tasmanian wilderness. Enchanting but sinister, the autonomous hair grows without a host consuming the picture plane (Hammond, 1996, p. 25).

Figure 4: Helen Wright, *Hair, 1995* (from the exhibition *Brushing the Dark*, 1996)

Brushing the Dark captured the complexity of the Tasmanian Gothic in visual art, beyond just that of the landscape, and positioned it within a broader cultural imaginary that Margaret Scott, in the catalogue essay, eloquently defined as "the riddling paradox between the sublime and the brutal, between extreme violence and deep peace that constitutes incitement to make sense – or art – of this place" (Scott, 1996, p. 49). By this, Scott is referring to Tasmania as a continually inspiring and complex land of contrasts.

Another early example of Tasmanian Gothic in visual art comes for the touring exhibition *Bad Light* (1995). Through the photographic work of Pat Brassington (Figure 5), Jane Burton, Jane Eisemann and David McDowell, curator Philip Holliday captured a dark Tasmanian atmospheric quality usually located in the landscape which he says is felt like a "like a bad presence" (Holliday & Colless, 1995, p. 4). This 'presence' was expressed through grim interiors, ghostly nudes, surreal figuration and forensic evidence that offered clues to crimes and violations. Through a complex web of mystery, fractured narratives and psychological suspension, the exhibition offered dark mental recesses in which ghosts hide (Holliday & Colless, 1995, pp. 4-5).

Figure 5: Pat Brassington, *Screw Up* (from *Pond* series), 1995 (from the exhibition *Bad Light*, 1995)

The Melbourne-based photographer Jane Burton spent her adolescent years in Tasmania, where the dramatic landscape and haunting history exerted a powerful influence on her photography (Gregg, 2011, p. 65). Her work is a sinister and mysterious collection of light speckled nudes, Gothic abodes and haunted landscapes that transcend beauty to conjure the sublime (Gregg, 2011, p. 67). Of her work, Burton says, "I view the world through the veil of Romanticism, though one that is most certainly tinged with melancholy and a tendency towards the Gothic" (Gregg, 2011, p. 62). In the work *A Temptation to Ships #12* (2018) (Figure 6), a sensual but ghostly nude is sprawled on the steps of an abandoned pool. Covered in filth, her bruised tones of blue and red are suggestive of trauma and fluctuate between life and death. The decaying urban environment and suffocating darkness host unseen monsters and conjure phantasmic apparitions. As this nightmare encroaches, the tormented figure dips her toe in the obsidian abyss beneath her feet.

Figure 6: Jane Burton, *A Temptation to Ships #12*, 2018

Confronting in scale and content, Rodney Pople's 2012 exhibition *Shudder* (Figures 7 and 8) depicted Port Arthur's savage past as a crime scene spooked by the ghosts of the distant and recent past. In the work, ephemeral visions of violence and perversion between convict prisoners and colonial guards haunt the Gothic ruin. Among these ethereal figures is Martin Bryant who in 1996 massacred 35 people on a merciless rampage. Graffiti covers the walls of the historic site, defacing the popular tourist attraction with references to the massacre. In the painting *Tasman Bridge 4* (2012) (Figure 8), Pople captures the 1975 Tasman Bridge collapse in which a drunk sea captain crashed into the bridge removing a section and killing 12 people. Pople reminds us that these recent histories continually feed into the Tasmanian Gothic narrative.

Figure 7: Rodney Pople, *Port Arthur Triptych,* 2012

Figure 8: Rodney Pople, *Tasman Bridge 4*, 2012

Julie Gough is a Tasmanian Aboriginal artist who uses historically charged narratives to investigate the impact of colonialism on the aboriginal people. Her work aligns with Tasmanian Aboriginal academic Greg Lehman, who reads the term Gothic as a profound sign of the dark secrets that run deep in Tasmanian history generating half-truths and silence on the surface (Lehman, 2013, p. 201). Gough draws on the past to engage with conflicting histories (Gough, 2019), presenting the Tasmanian Gothic as code for the spectre of genocide (Lehman, 2013, p. 212). The Black Line[13], the introduction of diseases such as small pox as well the abduction of women and children for sex and labour are examples of the horrifying acts towards Tasmania's indigenous population at the hands of the British colonialists. This brutality underpins the Tasmanian Gothic, informing its tropes such as torment, a dark past and menacing environment making it what it is today.

In spite of this, Gough's work provides a prime example of how Tasmanian Gothic tropes are used in different contexts for different means. Her retrospective exhibition *Julie Gough: Tense Past* at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in 2019, provided many examples of how fundamentally European tropes can be flipped to tell a different but equally horrifying story.

For example, in her work *Observance* (2012) (Figure 9) Gough records her time reconnecting with her ancestral homeland in Northeast Tasmania. However, her ability to do so is continually interrupted by venturing tourists. For the project, Gough secretly films these unsuspecting tourists wandering the beach, most likely unaware they are on sacred aboriginal land. She does this to draw attention to what has been disrupted and stolen in an investigation of memory, time and space (Gough, 2019). In the work, we glimpse at how aboriginal people might have felt when the British Empire made them fugitives in their own land (Cordier, 2019). Although the context is quite different, the sense of the outsider is very real. In presenting the menacing environment embodied in the watchful eye of the artist and the haunted past of stolen aboriginal land, Gough flips the Tasmanian Gothic narrative on its head reckoning tourism as another form of colonialism.

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[13] An attempt by the colonialists to eradicate the indigenous population in 1830 by combing the landscape with a human chain of British settlers.

Figure 9: Julie Gough, *Observance*, 2012

It is important to note that many artists discussed here would not consider themselves to be Tasmanian Gothic artists but rather, as Williams suggests, the Gothic in contemporary art is a partial term which serves mostly to identify a peculiar, dark sensitivity shared by the artist and the observer (Williams, 2007, p. 13). In other words, the Gothic can be hard to see when you are living in it. This may be the case for many of the artists discussed in *Brushing the Dark* (1996) and *Bad Light* (1995) who still engage in a way of working that utilises Tasmanian Gothic tropes and motifs. For example, isolation and menace can be found in the current work of Philip Wolfhagen whose austere landscapes depict the dying twilight with a hint of melancholy (Figure 10). This is also true of Tim Burns whose sparse abstract scenes capture the dramatic Tasmanian light which can transform a landscape from wonder to horror in a matter of seconds (Figure 11).

Figure 10: Philip Wolfhagen,

Searching for the Path No. 1, 2019

Figure 11: Tim Burns,

There is no Light Without the Dark, 2017

Torment and the grotesque are hallmark traits of Pat Brassington's current work. Her psychological, ambiguous and seductive photography effortlessly depicts the grim spectre of the Tasmanian Gothic. And now, more than ever, Jane Burton's haunting ethereal figures and ramshackle abodes conjure menace, the supernatural and torment through a mode that can only be described as Tasmanian Gothic. These examples support my view that the Tasmanian Gothic in visual art can often go unseen because the Gothic in Tasmania is just a part of everyday life. It is only when you take a step back that it becomes clear. This is a sentiment reinforced by Victoria Hammond in *Brushing the Dark* (1996) who acknowledges how the worldly experiences of the exhibiting artists influence an understanding of place (Hammond, 1996, p. 6), and by Emily Bullock in her PhD thesis *A Cultural Poetics of Contemporary Tasmanian Gothic* (2009) when she describes the circumstances that led her to write about the Tasmanian Gothic.

> "I had moved to Sydney, but I was writing home … my scribblings from these trips became echoes of a phantom Tasmania lodged within, unprocessed. The more I read, the more I travelled there, the more these memories extruded and encroached" (Bullock, 2009, p. 10).

My own experience of living away from Tasmania has provided me with enough distance to form a clear vision of place. This vision compresses the complexity and nuance of living in the Tasmanian Gothic to a palette of tropes. The distillation of the Tasmanian Gothic to a series of readily identifiable visual tropes has found an equivalent in the marketing of Tasmania.

Pop (Tasmanian) Gothic

The recent rebranding of Tasmania as a cultural tourist destination has given the Tasmanian Gothic a new voice as a Pop Goth spectacle of art and entertainment for the masses. (Bullock, 2011; Franklin, 2019; Kidd, 2019; Ryan, 2016). According to Edwards and Monnet in their book *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture* (2013) it has emerged as a Pop Goth sensation. This is due to the success of MONA, a privately owned subterranean museum with the central themes of sex and death; and a Tasmanian cinematic renaissance presenting Hollywood productions such as the feature film *The Hunter* (2011) staring Willem Dafoe and the awarding-winning period thriller *The Nightingale* (2018) to international audiences.

Pop Goth explores how the Gothic has been intertwined with popular culture appearing in music, fashion, cinema, visual culture, television and tourism (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, p. 1). It is both a mainstream spin-off of the Gothic, informed by the language of merchandising, marketing and promotion and a means to push the boundaries of the Gothic, experimenting with a mixture of creative reproductions and parodies that sustain and subvert the Gothic mode (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, pp. 1-16). Pop Goth is consistent with other 'pops' such as pop psychology, pop art and pop music, and refers to a popular form accessible to the general public and, by extension, is perceived to be lacking in authenticity (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, p. 2). In a Tasmanian context, the Gothic has always been a successful commodity. From Marcus Clarke's seminal novel to the ruins and recent history of Port Arthur then the cultural festivals of MONA, the Gothic continues to sell well[14]. Pop Goth's influential stylings have moved well beyond the publishing and music industries, infecting all of the cultural industries and it has become the most lucrative form of Gothic to date (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, p. 4).

Tasmanian Filmmaker Briony Kidd notes that the marketability of the Tasmanian Gothic is marred by an element of contrivance especially in relation to film which is the most commercial of all art forms. She discusses the Tasmanian Gothic in film as an enduring brand, concept or identity that is associated with place and has the potential to shift the way people think about Tasmania (Watts, 2018). An example of Pop Tasmanian Gothic on the big screen can be seen in the HBO sci-fi thriller series *The Kettering Incident* (2016). Set in a menacing Tasmanian landscape, its dark and intricate

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[14] For example, in 2019 the Port Arthur Historic Site had over 350,000 visitors (PAHSMA, 2019) and in 2018 MONA attracted 347,000 visitors and was the State's second most visited attraction (Tourism Tasmania, 2018). MONA has been extremely successful when it comes to marketing the Tasmanian Gothic using the midwinter arts and music festival Dark MOFO as the central protagonist (Watts, 2018). This Pop Goth spectacle infuses, paganistic ritual, sensual burlesque and carnivalesque excitement with well-established Tasmanian Gothic tropes to transform the streets of Hobart into a midnight playground.

plotline adheres to, as well as extends, the Tasmanian Gothic genre by including a science fiction component (Bullock, 2017, p. 45).

Although not conclusive, Edwards and Monnet outline a set of tropes and characteristics unique to Pop Goth. In a Tasmanian context, these are adaptations that parallel existing Tasmanian Gothic tropes, making them even more familiar and accessible.

Commodity: Pop Goth recognises its ties to marketing, commodification and consumption. Pop Goth adaptations are often shrewd, glamorous and, at times, gimmicky. A Tasmanian example is the annual Dark MOFO nude winter solstice swim in which participants register for a mass dawn dip in the freezing cold Derwent River, commodifying the longest, coldest night of the year and drawing thousands of people to the winter festival.

Performance: Pop Goth creates a more immersive consumer and fantasy world that often physically engages the spectator beyond the mere telling of a story. An example of this comes from the Dark MOFO festivals, where tourists are immersed in shadowy interactive exhibits that break the barriers between the performer and the spectator in a citywide spectacle.

Hybridity: Pop Goth fluidly moves between trends both inside and outside of the Gothic merging genres, industries and motifs at an accelerated rate. The merging of science fiction with the Tasmanian Gothic in *The Kettering Incident* (2016) is an example of this.

Sexuality: comes to the forefront in Pop Goth. It blurs gender lines and defies heterosexual norms with common motifs including androgynous figures, bisexual vampires and emotionally sensitive male characters. A Pop Tasmanian Gothic example can be seen in the striking androgynous pole dancers who lure spectators into Dark MOFO after-party events.

Urbanisation: as the Gothic moves into the 21stcentury so too does the landscape it haunts. Tasmanian Gothic examples include the reactivation of urban sites for Dark MOFO and the Stan Network web television series *The Gloaming* (2019) in which Tasmania's capital (Hobart) is portrayed as a menacing backdrop to crime, drama and horror.

Humour: founded in oddity, irony, and the grotesque, humour has long been a feature of the Gothic. Pop Goth representations parody the Gothic, in turn becoming a caricature of themselves. For example, see the well-endowed Thylacine motif of Tasmanian artist Tom O'Hern committing lurid sexual acts (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Tom O'Hern, Instagram post: 05/06/2020

A dark future: if the Gothic is located in the past, then Pop Goth finds a new home in the future. More precisely an apocalyptic future. From the swarms of zombies in *World War Z* (2013)[15] and alien Armageddon in *War of the Worlds* (2005)[16] and *Edge of Tomorrow* (2014)[17] to environmental destruction in *The Hunter* (2011) and *The Kettering Incident* (2016), Pop Goth presents "a world that is lost, beyond saving" (Edwards & Monnet, 2013, p. 12).

Tom O'Hern's practice spans painting, drawing, sculpture, murals and animation. His dark themes of decay, moral disorder and environmental impact come to life through ominous futures, grotesque humour and local histories which lampoon the Tasmanian Gothic narrative. This is best communicated through O'Hern's Instagram profile where he regularly posts self-deprecating autobiographical imagery, crude comics that satire Tasmanian life and intricate works of fine art. In the amalgamated snapshot from his account pictured below (Figure 13), the geographic symbol of Hobart, Kunanyi/Mount Wellington is playfully animated with a menacing smile and a grotesque two-headed Tasmanian is comically graffitied on the face of the Gordon Dam. A Thylacine sexually violates a man and angry planes bomb picturesque Hobart. Bodies hang along the Midlands Highway in scenes of an apocalyptic future and a humorous deconstruction of Tasmanian art references the Thylacine as a Tasmanian Gothic symbol. The disquiet of Queenstown is haunted by an alien host and a Tasmanian Devil poses for a quick snap, deformed by a rampant facial cancer which has

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[15] A horror film based on the 2006 novel by Max Brooks about a zombie pandemic.
[16] An action/sci-fi film based on the 1897 novel by H. G. Wells about an alien invasion.
[17] A sci-fi/adventure film about a solider stuck in a time loop fighting an alien invasion.

decimated their population. And in an example of the marketability of O'Hern's take on Pop Goth, freezing skulls adorn Moo Brew's Untropical Island IPA.
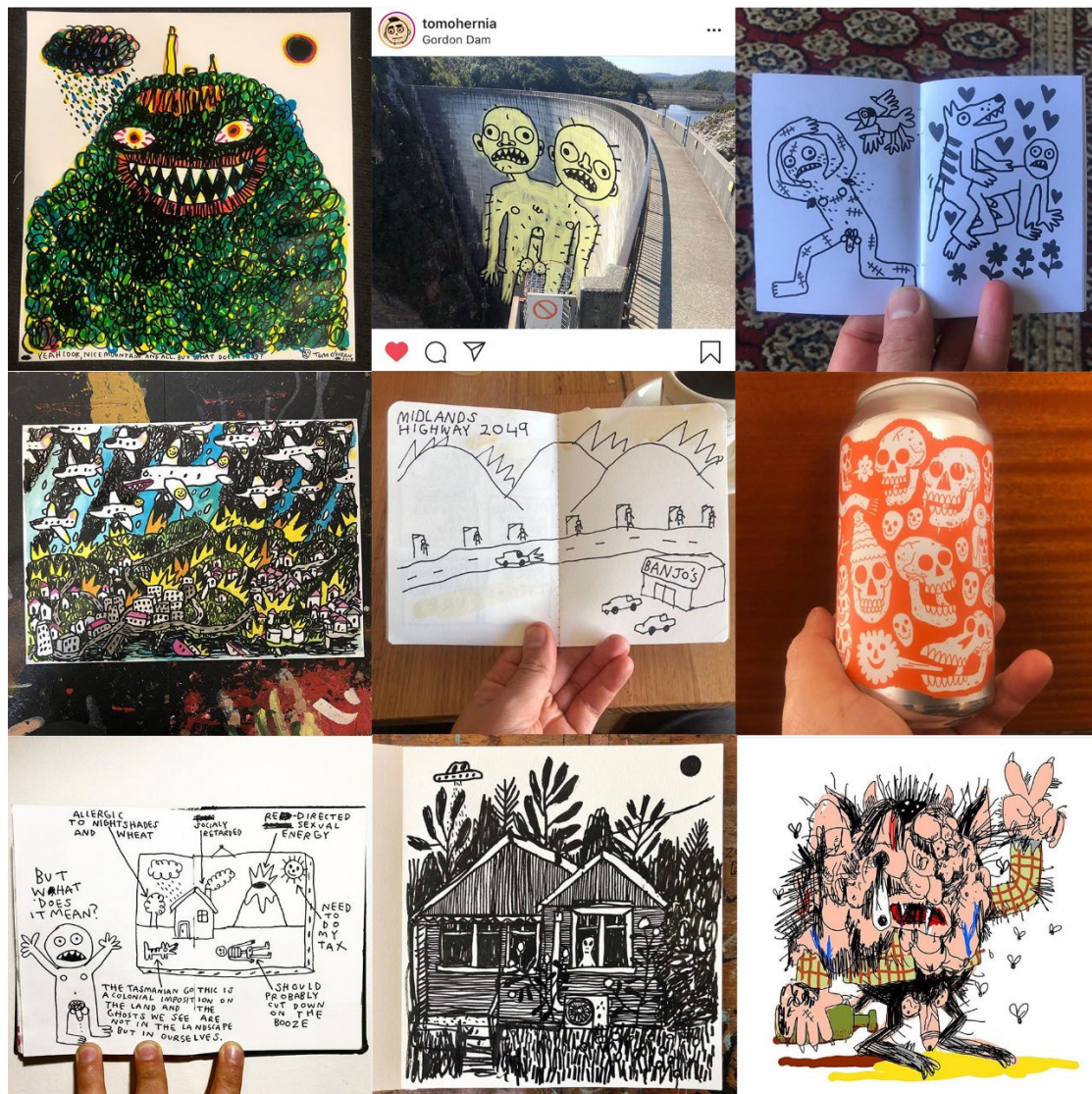
Figure 13: Tom O'Hern, composite Instagram snapshot: selected posts from 2018 – 2020

Another example of Pop Tasmanian Gothic can be seen in Robert O'Connor's darkly humorous painting, *Somewhere in the Midlands* (2020) (Figure 14). Although not as blatant as O'Hern's practice, the wit of O'Connor's work can be understood as Pop Goth parody. The work depicts an oversized chunk of lamb sitting atop peas, gravy and mashed potato, placed in a sparse Tasmanian landscape. The work is absurd and grotesque, with ironic references to colonial Tasmania's compulsion to tame the native landscape, clearing it for farming, housing and livestock. This is symbolised through the comical roast which blocks the view of the once pristine wilderness which is now grazing land for livestock. The parody is peppered with menace in the contrasting skies and the strange horror of the meat. Of the work, O'Connor says "Things were going pretty good. Then

Europeans arrive, erect fences and place foreign livestock on the land, now we're cooked. I can hardly see the landscape with all the stuff in the way" (O'Connor, 2020).
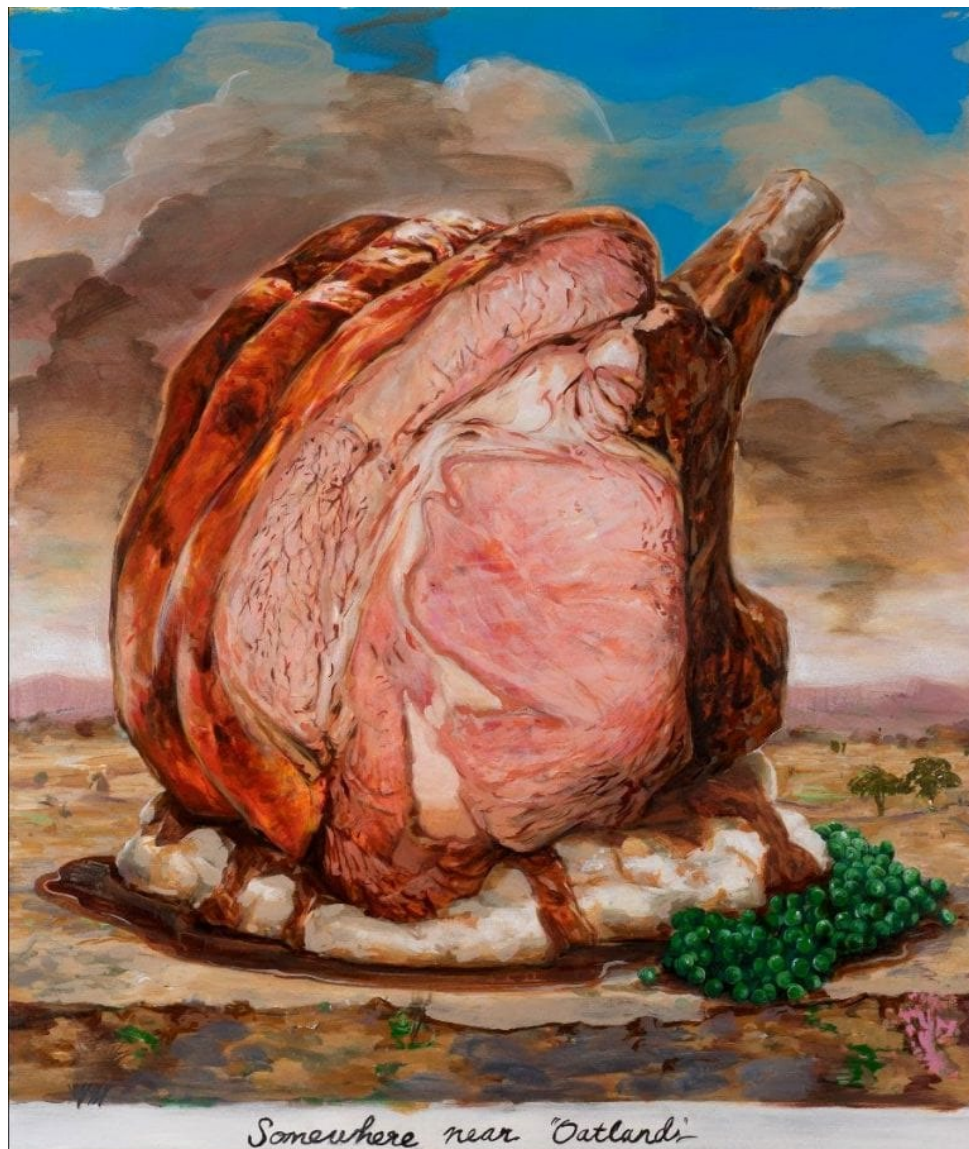
Figure 14: Robert O'Connor, *Somewhere on the Midlands*, 2020

Conclusion

 The Tasmanian Gothic in visual art appears through a complex and elusive set of tropes, characteristics and motifs that merge genres and traverse artistic styles, camouflaging it in a Tasmanian sensibility. In my evaluation of the field, I have identified specific works that can be regarded as examples of Tasmanian Gothic visual art and isolated dominant tropes that can be used in a studio-based investigation of place. As I have outlined, a Gothic sensibility continues to be rewritten and used in different ways by subsequent generations of Tasmanian artists. Its transformation into the marketing phenomenon Pop Goth reveals a cultural trope that bleeds out

into different areas of receptivity. The question is, how then does Pop Goth come back into contemporary Tasmanian art culture? For my research, I have adapted traditional Tasmanian Gothic tropes such as a menacing environment, the supernatural and a haunting past, filtering them through Pop Goth commodity, hybridity, humour, performance and dark futures.

The global Covid-19 pandemic has created a temporary 'death of tourism'. In this context, Pop Tasmanian Gothic not only challenges how we experience place and history through tourism but also provides an appropriate viewpoint to investigate a world on the brink of collapse; embracing the mysterious, the negative, and the unknown to reflect who and what we are in a post-pandemic state (Cohen, 2003).

Chapter Three: Studio Methods

Introduction

This chapter outlines and contextualises the studio methods I have used in this project. It situates these methods by referring to contemporary practising artists and elaborates on the tourist methodology that I have employed. I position camp and pastiche as overarching methods within the tourist methodology, forming a crucial link between the conceptual framework and the final output. I argue camp provides a meaningful platform to express my ambivalence towards a shifting perception of place through humour and roleplay. I define pastiche as a way to express an emotional connection to place through copying and combination in an expansive platform of tropes that co-exist in the one space.

These two overarching methods are applied to three key methods I have used in the studio: scenography, painting and animation. Scenography provided source material for the paintings, cut-outs, and animation. Painting communicated the staged and fanciful nature of the tourist reality while animation explored my mixed and contradictory feelings about place through a darkly humorous and surreal sequence.

All these methods are used within the parameters of the tourist methodology to investigate the fantasy world of the tourist as defined by Hennig. This allows me to explore my tenuous connection with place as an expat Tasmanian artist, trying to reconnect and process change through my own fantasy made of attachments, memories and associations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the final installation, discussing artworks in an expanded and immersive network of objects that reveals the visual divide between fantasy and reality.

Overarching Methods

Camp

The origins of camp taste can be found in the early Gothic novels of the 18th century (Sontag, 1964, p. 519). Here, theatrics, artifice and hyperbolic plotlines undermined social order with tales of passion, darkness and wonder. Some suggest Gothic is camp because stylistically, they are both theatrical, extravagant and artificial (Fincher, 2006). These enduring characteristics live on in Pop

Goth performance, hybridity and sexuality which often reference anti-heteronormativity such as in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)[18] and *Interview with the Vampire* (1994)[19].

The connection between Gothic and camp encouraged me to explore camp as an overarching studio method in my research[20]. I adapted the characteristics identified by Susan Sontag in *Notes on Camp* (1964): exaggeration, extravagance, playfulness and artifice to the creative process. This enabled the expression of content in terms of fun and artifice (Apelgren, 2020) aligned with Pop Goth characteristics of humour and performance. The result was an exaggerated performance of the tourist, emphasising characteristics of well-trodden stereotypes such as the eco and beach tourist. The fanciful holiday sets and implied narratives that I constructed placed the tourist in farfetched combinations of time and place. The oversized and highly saturated motifs that appeared in these sets were then used in the final works to create extravagant plays of tropes, cliches and stereotypes that almost overwhelm the picture plane. The playfully theatrical pictorial hyperbole allowed me to express ambivalence and affection towards my former island home.

Humour

Humour has a long history in the Gothic. Even Horace Walpole's Gothic masterpiece *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was considered a spoof of medieval literature (Lee, 2017). Humour is also an identified characteristic of Pop Goth where representations often parody the Gothic, exaggerating its tropes (Edwards & Monnet, 2013). Yet, humour in my work does not come from a place of criticality, but rather a place of affection. American art critic Donald Kuspit writes: "humour restores honesty … humour has the capacity for affectionate feeling" (Klein, 2007, p. 5). So, rather than humour as visual satire or parody, I used camp as an alternative. Camp humour does not necessarily take a positive or negative position but rather, oscillates between revealing and concealing my stake in the project, articulating how I maintain my tenuous connection to place. In other words, the humour is about honesty, affection and restoring or holding onto a sense of place that I feel further removed from every day.

In *The World in The Evening* (1954) Christopher Isherwood says of camp and humour:

> "Camp always has an underlying seriousness. You can't camp about something you don't take seriously. You're not making fun of it; you're making fun out of it. You're expressing

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[18] A young couple seek shelter from a storm in a nearby castle belonging to an eccentric alien transvestite.

[19] A vampire tells his life story of seduction and betrayal to an eager reporter.

[20] This idea is put forward by Apelgren who says camp is to be found in the performative act of *readings*, specifically, decoding the relationship between signifier and signified through the camp eye to examine aesthetic experiences (Apelgren, 2020, p. 2).

what's basically serious to you in terms of fun and artifice and elegance." (cited in Apelgren, 2020, p. 5)

This rang true for me because humour provides me with access into vulnerable territory regarding my sense of place and a sense of self, navigating my fading connection to Tasmania by making fun out of it in a bid to restore those connections. Rather than making a conscious decision to use humour as an artistic strategy, it emerged in the process of navigating my feelings regarding a desire to connect with Tasmania and confronting my own romanticised expectation of my former home. Humour is expressed in many ways in the work. Exaggeration, absurdity, irony, visual puns and dark humour all disrupts the viewers' associations in subtle as well as obvious ways (Klein, 2007, p. 13).

Roleplay

"Roleplay is the act of imitating the character and behaviour of someone different from yourself" (Collins English Dictionary, 2019). Roleplay in camp is "to perform a role or scene in an exaggerated, extravagantly theatrical, or knowingly playful way" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021a). Using roleplay allowed me to locate the project in the shoes of the tourist, physically acting out and connecting with the concerns of the research. By taking on this persona, my biases, feelings and emotions about Tasmania could be critiqued in ways that were not considered negative while still unearthing feelings and confronted histories in an absurd and idiosyncratic interpretation of place. Roleplay allowed me to be both myself and someone else, exploring the artificial sense of place spun by the marketing phenomena that is Pop Goth and my own feelings about change, place and where I fit in.

The contradictory nature of this performance was a constant challenge as I tried to reconcile my complicated feelings about how I connect to place within a fictional character that did absurd, dark and selfish things. For example, posing for a selfie in front of a collapsed bridge surrounded by tombstones with dying Tasmanian Devils (Figure 30) made me question my motivation asking who was I doing this for and why? Through excessive and exaggerated performances, I pushed boundaries of my own narrative to explore these questions.

Cindy Sherman is an example of someone who uses camp and roleplay in her work. In the *History Portraits* series (1990), Sherman presents chaotic scenes in which art history and popular culture clash and mix (Hinderliter, 2014). She poses in multiple guises, amusingly combining costume, prosthetic devices, makeup and set design to distort and critique art history with a feminist twist (Hinderliter, 2014). In *Untitled #183-A* (1988) (Figure 15) the characteristics of camp are at play. Her exaggerated features, comical prosthetic breasts, pursed scarlet lips, and sickly green skin, mock the male gaze in a playful and darkly humorous way. Her extravagant and highly finished costume

remind us of François Boucher's portrait *Madame de Pompadour* (1759) (Figure 16) creating an artifice for which to view art history that challenges the viewer with her studio fiction, set in stone by her frosty stare; a stark contrast to Boucher's romantic and idyllic garden scene (Hinderliter, 2014).

Figure 15: Cindy Sherman,

Untitled #183-A, 1988

Figure 16: François Boucher,

Madame de Pompadour, 1759

Pastiche

Pastiche finds its origins in the Italian word pasticcio, used to describe a pie made from a mixture of meats and vegetables. The notion of a mixture of ingredients was applied to art to describe an amalgamation of elements from different sources in a single work. For Richard Dyer (2006), pastiche in contemporary culture is an intentional imitation which combines prior works, breaking down restrictions of genre and medium to challenge traditional conventions.

Importantly for my research, Dyer states that pastiche can reveal an emotional tie to place. He says pastiche is most prevalent in circumstances of geographic, temporal, ideological and cultural dislocation. Pastiche articulates this not through intellectual reflection but emotional affect (Dyer, 2006, p. 180). This idea is consistent with the humour in my work, expressing affection and honesty through laughter.

I use pastiche to combine elements for which I have an emotional connection. However, I expand on Dyer's definition which states that pastiche can only be the combination and imitation of prior art works (Dyer, 2006, p. 9) to include tropes and motifs from tourism as well as the Tasmanian Gothic mode. This allows me to combine elements from tourism, popular culture and the Tasmanian Gothic mode to exist on one platform as I register my personal stake.

In this project, pastiche is used throughout the stages of the tourist methodology to create an amalgamated fantasy world. It is particularly relevant to the first stage: anticipation, in which ideas clash and mix to construct hybrid holiday scenes. It also applies to the combination of scenography, painting, and animation in a unified, immersive network of artworks. This approach is captured by Martin Kippenberger, who proposes that individual artworks should explicitly visualise such networks, suggesting everything in the exhibition space is important, from the floor to the architecture and the colour of the walls (cited in Joselit, 2009, p. 125). In this regard, pastiche is not only used for selecting and manipulating sources but extends beyond the pictorial to create an immersive and unified exhibition environment.

A relevant exhibition in relation to this is Neil Haddon's *The Shore, The Race, The Other Place* (2019)[21] (Figure 17) which combined painting, sound, assemblage and installation in an idiosyncratic vision of place. In it, he used pastiche to explore his mental and physical displacement as a Tasmanian migrant. He did this through a collage-like approach to painting, combining and copying imagery from multiple sources in time and space, all of which had a personal connection to him. Tasmanian apples, a surreal and eerie John Glover tree, elements from Paul Gauguin's painting *Mata Mua* (1892) and racegoers indulging in a bibulous lunch at the Epsom Derby, the town where he grew up, appeared multiple times throughout this exhibition. This collision revealed a turbulent, non-linear depiction of place, that was both new and old, distant and close, Tasmania and somewhere else entirely (Haddon, 2019).

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[21] This work was exhibited in a public space. No special consideration was given by my supervisor Neil Haddon to access this resource.

Figure 17: Neil Haddon, *The Shore, the Race, the Other Place,* 2019

Studio Work

Throughout my investigation, I applied camp and pastiche to a range of practical methods to produce the final outcomes. Many of these methods overlap, as such, I have divided them into three distinct groups for discussion: scenography, painting and animation.

Scenography

Scenography was the backbone of the tourist methodology and is intrinsically tied to my artistic process. Not only was it vital for the creation and collection of source material to make paintings, cut-outs and animations, but it also created a catalyst to navigate my feelings by actively engaging and connecting with place in the holiday scenes. Scenography is "the design and use of scenery, costume and lighting to create an effective performance environment, theatrical design or stagecraft" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021b). I used scenography to create fantasy Tasmanian holiday sets in which I roleplay tourist scenarios within the Tasmanian Gothic mode.

Scenography has a rich history in the creative arts. Australian artist, filmmaker and photographer Tracey Moffatt uses scenography combined with roleplay and characterisation, to create theatrical visions about pain, glamour and identity. In her work *Something More* (1998), a sequence of nine images shot like film stills creates a loose narrative that captures the stereotypes and hardships of

rural multicultural life. In *Something More #1*, (Figure 18) Moffatt uses scenography to disrupt cultural identification and question authenticity (Murray Art Museum Albury, 2019). She does this through a combination of costumes that exaggerate differences between typecast characters. For example, the oriental dress worn by the artist, against the dirty night slip of the female in the doorway or the children's casual shirts in contrast to the traditional Chinese outfit complete with coolie. This difference is intensified by the stagecraft which struggles to reconcile its own identity through a combination of flat, joyful and naïvely painted scenery, a haunting and dimly lit shanty house (that provides a point of entry to psychological space) and red earth that resemble that of Mars rather than the Australian outback. This tension creates a divide that flips between reality and set, authentic and inauthentic, unsettling our perception of identity.

Moffatt provides a clear example of how stereotypes in combination scenography can be used to visually reflect her complex emotions in relations to her personal identity and experiences as a mixed-race Aboriginal Australian in a meaningful and authentic way. By adopting Moffatt's technique of roleplaying cliches through scenography, my work seeks to not only reflect a changing Tasmanian identity characterised by Pop Tasmanian Gothic but express my connection towards the state and my feeling about that change.

Figure 18: Tracey Moffatt, *Something More # 1*, 1989

Similarly, Jacqui Stockdale uses photographic portraits shot against hand-painted backdrops to explore Australian folklore, mythology and ritual (Stockdale, 2020). In her series *The Boho* (2016) (Figure 19) Stockdale playfully mixes exotic postcards with historical paintings, positing a fanciful subject in a make-believe landscape. Her scenography of skilfully painted landscape backdrops and highly considered costumes and masks worn by the celebrity sitters, produces a striking combination of photography and painting in a single image (Stockdale, 2016).

Stockdale tackles the impact of colonialism, mythologising the past, turning it on its head with gentle mockery and humour evident in the jovial costumes juxtaposed against the moody content. In the works, our dark history is captured, yet the details are implied as assumed knowledge as the celebrity sitters take precedent commodifying and hybridising the stories. Her potent combination of humour, roleplay and scenography is utilised in my research as a way to authentically connect with my subject.

Figure 19: Jacqui Stockdale, composite image: works from her exhibition *The Boho,* 2016

In my project, after some initial experimentation with a bush camping scene (Figure 20), I developed three key holiday scenes: Kunanyi from Adventure Bay (Figure 21), in which a camping couple feed white wallabies in a sinister landscape; the MONA ferry bridge collapse (Figure 22), which re-imagined the 1975 Tasman Bridge disaster by replacing the Illawarra cargo ship that crashed into the bridge with the MONA Roma ferry; and Hobart in ruins (Figure 23), a post-apocalyptic future that imagines a lost Tasmanian world as a ghostly holiday destination.

Figure 20: fantasy holiday set, bush camping scene

Figure 21: fantasy holiday set, Kunanyi from Adventure Bay

Figure 22: fantasy holiday set, MONA ferry bridge collapse

Figure 23: fantasy holiday set, Hobart in ruins, a post-apocalyptic future

In the Hobart in ruins scene (Figure 23), I used the process of pastiche to imagine and recall histories, memories and experiences of place, forming a close personal connection when constructing the scenography. For example, the Thylacine hunted to extinction, was reimagined as a menu item at the Ball and Chain Grill[22]; the costume of the tourist as a post-apocalyptic *Mad Max* (1979 – present)[23] inspired survivor (Figure 24) was adorned with an array of references which included disposable face masks, trademark holiday attire such as thongs and singlet and, a convict arrow[24] chest plate, Drunken Admiral[25] shield and Tasmanian Devil shoulder armour appropriated from the defunct Hobart Devils basketball team. In another example, the Pop Goth tourist (Figure 25) with a bored expression on his face is surrounded by exaggerated ghosts from the height of Tasmanian tourism, including a giant red eye and monstrous silhouettes.

Figure 24: the tourist as a post-apocalyptic survivor

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[22] A Tasmanian steak house that trades on its convict heritage.
[23] An Australian action/sci-fi film series set in a dystopian future.
[24] A broad arrow that was used to signify government property in Australian colonies.
[25] A novelty Tasmanian restaurant that plays on dark seafaring tropes.

Figure 25: the Pop Goth tourist

Just as the tourist plans for an anticipated holiday, my planning began by researching Tasmanian holiday destinations and tourist scenarios but expanded to include its chequered history. I digitally compiled and combined images to create a virtual model for each holiday set. This involved designing digital backdrops (Figure 26) and a series of digital cut-outs in a scaled two-dimensional replica of my studio (Figure 27). These models were then made life-size in my studio by hand painting the backdrops and cardboard cut-outs (Figures 28 and 29).

Figure 26: set design process: digital photo collage for backdrop

Figure 27: set design process: virtual 2D installation mock-up

Figure 28: set design process: hand painted backdrop

Figure 29: set design process: completed holiday set with cut-outs and lighting

As I painted, I felt my connection to the motifs; the ephemeral nature of the work resulted in quick, intuitive and playful rendering which amplified their painterly finish. Once the set was completed, I created a range of costumes and props that could be used when roleplaying the tourist within the space. This was aided by controlled and dramatic lighting.

During the entire project I created over 20 roleplaying characters. The aim was to capture the stereotypes of the tourist and Pop Tasmanian Gothic characteristics in a single persona. I began by exploring simple stereotypes such as the wilderness tourist and the backpacker, performing tourist activities in a dark setting. This quickly evolved to incorporate Pop Tasmanian Gothic characters such as convicts, ghosts and post punk Gothic subculture (Goths) to create absurd hybrids. The nature of this combination is echoed throughout the entire project, representing a state of flux, or as I see it, a changing Tasmanian identity exemplified by Pop Tasmanian Gothic. This humorous combination, is indicative of my confusion regarding where my home is and where I fit in.

A key aim while roleplaying the tourist was to form an uneasy relationship between the figure and the setting. The Gothic tropes of a menacing environment, isolation, torment and the supernatural were achieved by creating a sense of being watched or watching an unnamed horror (or wonder) off-set while depicting the figure seemingly at ease in the exaggerated Gothic scene; he takes selfies and laughs, oblivious to the darkness that surrounds him, turning the tourist into the monster. In the MONA bridge collapse shoot (Figure 30), an inflated stereotypical tourist poses for a selfie with an exotic cocktail in hand, surrounded by destruction, dark skies, Devils with facial tumours and tombstones based on the Isle of the Dead cemetery at Port Arthur reinforcing the absurdity and humour of the scene. The props were a combination of found and handmade objects that were often exaggerated, playful and darkly humorous. For example, my camera was made from a tissue box and toilet paper roll and the cannibal tourist's meal was a mannequin's leg. For each scenario, I had a list of simple narratives to act out. These ranged from mundane activities such as reading, hiking and taking photos, to extreme or exaggerated narratives such as hiding, crossdressing and cannibalism. These activities were chosen to explore typical tourist activities and to exemplify Pop Tasmanian Gothic characteristics and touristic stereotypes.

Figure 30: digital photograph of stereotypical tourist from the MONA ferry bridge collapse scene

I used photography to capture my presence in each holiday set and to record my fantasy holiday[26]. Although I had created a script or brief for each shoot, they were quick, experimental and uninhibited, allowing for an organic performance. As each session progressed, I became more confident, less rigid and inhibited, becoming the tourist rather than strictly following my prompts. The camera would automatically take 15 shots, allowing me to try a range of poses without having to leave the scene. I collected thousands of raw photographic images from these shoots and by cutting, layering and combining images created over 1500 digital collages (Figure 31).

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[26] Early shoots used other people as models in a photographic setting roleplaying the tourist while I directed. However, due to social distancing restrictions brought on by Covid-19 this was no longer possible. This focused the investigation on myself as the primary protagonist, the expat Tasmanian artist.

Figure 31: *construction number 1173*, digital photocollage

During the shoot, the temporary nature of the scenography meant components could be easily moved into interesting constructions, including hanging from the ceiling, stapled to the wall or held in my hands. This allowed for an intuitive combination of motifs and scenes to unfold during the documenting process. Further experimentation then took place, using digital manipulation and additional exaggeration in post-production. Scale was also considered when designing the sets. Most motifs were kept at life-size, so the tourist could seamlessly interact and merge with the constructed space. However, some cut-outs were enlarged or shrunk to create interesting juxtapositions or exaggerate characteristics; for example, the giant red eye watching the tourist, or the small green Holden Monaro from the bridge disaster, tilting on a tombstone and again as a prop in the exotic cocktail (Figure 30). This variation in scale added to the collage-like effect as well as creating a confusing picture plane.

Lighting was another important component of the scenography. Throughout the various shoots I used a variety of different lighting techniques to explore cinematic qualities, colour and mood that exaggerated the staged nature as well as connecting with Tasmanian tourism, entertainment and branding. Techniques included: low light with high contrast; up lighting which created an unnatural skeletal effect making the most familiar face appear unnatural; low directional lighting, creating prominent and projected shadows; back lighting creating ghostly silhouettes; and spot lighting creating a point of view shot to include the viewer. These techniques were used in combination with coloured gels to evoke dread, psychological distress or a dreamlike quality. A highly saturated red filter heightened the menacing environment. This technique was enhanced when coupled with

another highly saturated colour creating a psychedelic effect adding further confusion to an already distressing scene[27].
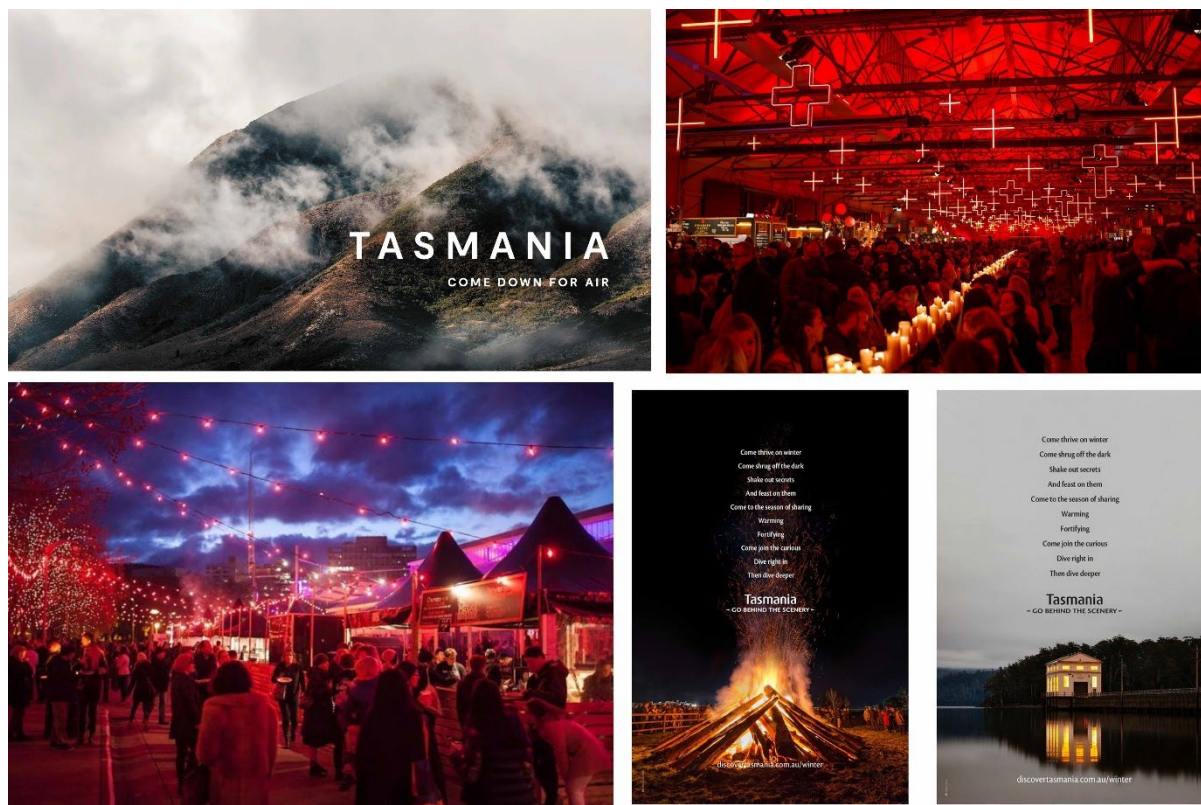
Cut-outs

From the outset of the project, I was interested in what painting looked like as an expanded practice. This allowed me to think of painting as an event or location that I could visit as a tourist. In part, my intention was to extend the constructed nature of the fantasy holiday into the gallery to disrupt physical space as the viewer visits/tours/encounters the work. The cut-outs that I had been using as props in the studio shoots provided an opportunity to do this.

Australian born UK artist David Noonan is known for his large-scale collage-like screen prints and textiles. Noonan also uses free standing figurative sculptures to expand his graphic images into a more theatrical space of display (Chisenhale Gallery, 2008). In *Untitled* (2009) (Figure 33) Noonan reflects on how a space and the figure within it can be transformed. In the work, his dreamlike cut-outs play on a complex network of associations that include experimental theatre, folk culture and literature. Reminiscent of stage sets, theatrical props or classroom dividers, his eccentric cut-outs

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[27] Many, if not all these techniques are used in Dark MOFO branding as well as in broader depiction of Tasmanian advertising (Figure 32). This is supported by Leigh Carmichael, the creative director of Dark MOFO who notes how quickly the direction of Tasmanian tourism changed, to dark images of misty mountains once Dark MOFO began (Watts, 2018).

haunt the gallery, abstracting the figure through stark contrast that encourages a proliferation of possible meanings (Devery, 2013).

Figure 33: David Noonan, *Untitled 2009*

In my project, as well as extending the painting into physical space of the exhibition, the cut-outs set up a tension that reflects my ambivalence about place, juxtaposing the insubstantial artificial facades against the experience of real space. This sat in contrast to the paintings which are a seamless and unified depiction. As with all elements of my work, the cut-outs were exaggerated, enlarging motifs to appear surreal, overwhelming and confronting. The one-sided 'standee' also enhances and abstracts the fantasy and reality divide, flipping between painting and print, exposing its artificial nature.
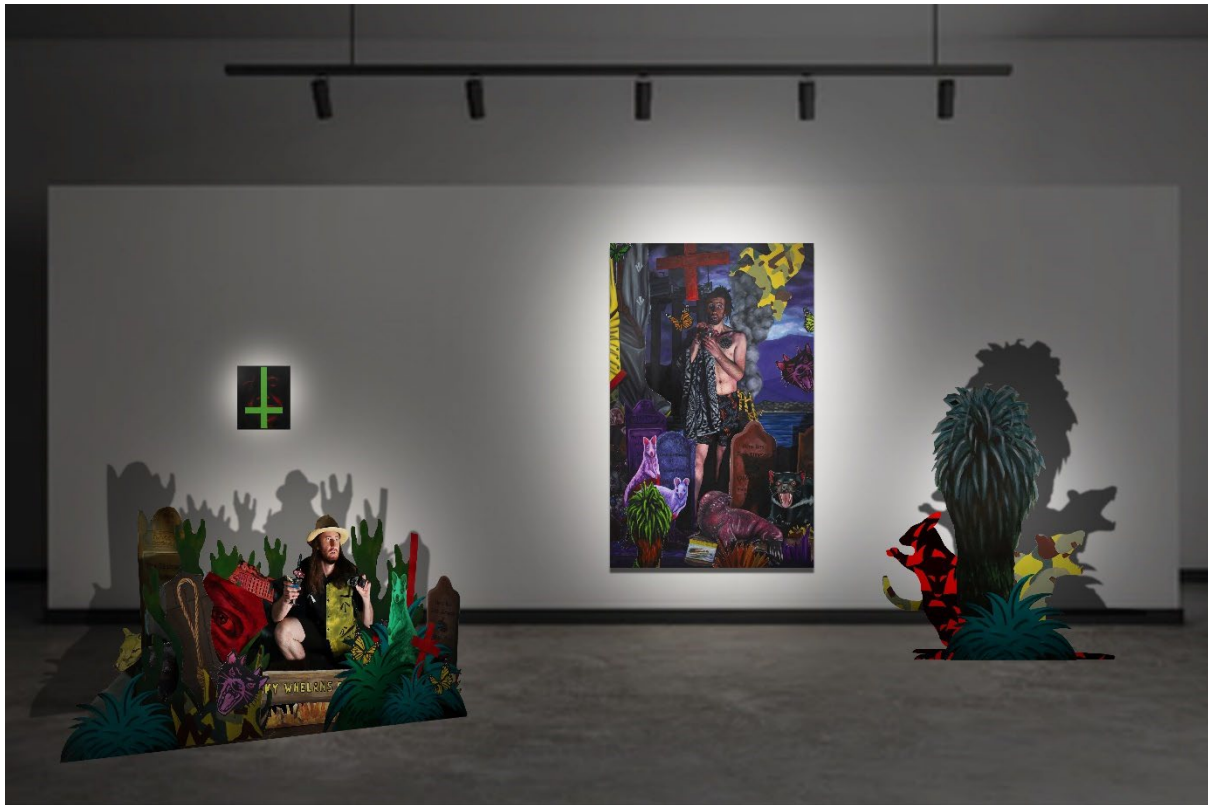
Figure 34: digital mock-up for cut-out installation

Throughout the project, I experimented with a range of display methods and materials for the cut-outs as an installation element. Corflute seemed the most appropriate because of its high finish and close association with tourism and marketing signage. The cut-outs appear to be highly finished, leading the viewer in with a seamless representation, only to be cheated by the exposed obverse and cardboard stand. This flicking between the veneer of tourism marketing and the reality of daily life signals my own ambivalent position as I flip between ideas of return, longing, expectation and nostalgia as I try to reconcile the projected fantasy, made of my own attachments, memories and associations to Tasmania.

The final cut-outs were designed to be viewed as paraphernalia that enrich and disrupt the exhibition experience rather than a straightforward extension of the paintings. This involved printing and combining imagery from my original painted sets to create de facto tourism and marketing signage that orientates viewers, moving them around, providing locational or directional information as if they are in a surreal and abstracted tourist experience, becoming part of the circulation themselves. The variation in the cut-outs echoes the painted works though their absurd conflation and combination (Figure 35).

Figure 35: studio shot of corflute cut-outs installed in front of the painting *Explore the Possibilities*, 2021

All good marketing campaigns have multiple approaches, so the cut-outs are fundamentally different to the grandeur and monumentality of the paintings. They are temporary, hokey and provincial. They are superficial objects that can be endlessly and disruptively rearranged to represent the shifting nature of place in my fantasy world.

Painting

Painting was core to all aspects of this project; it is there in the scenography, animations and the cut-outs. I have always used painting to understand and engage with concerns and interests. In this sense, painting is a very personal activity and occupies a large part of my life. Furthermore, through my arts practice, painting has allowed me to connect with Tasmania, travelling to the State for exhibitions, prizes and research. For me, it has been a reason to return and remember where I came from. This strong connection between paint and place makes it the ideal medium for revealing, searching and connecting with my former home.

A brief description of *The Devil's Playground* (Figure 36) illustrates how the overarching methods came together through painting to communicate the concerns of my research. In this dark and playful scene, the isolated tourist stands camera-ready looking at something beyond the picture plane. Glowing, ominous and intriguing, the unseen is indicative of the supernatural. Like the

suffocating Tasmanian wilderness, Gothic and tourist motifs surround the figure, disrupting space to create a menacing environment. These intrusions are an exaggerated combination of past and present. Some are flat as if stuck onto the canvas, others float, lifting off the surface, while others sit comfortably in the constructed scene. The ruins of Port Arthur, the hangman's noose from Hobart Penitentiary and the extinct Thylacine float like ghosts from a haunting past. This surreal conflation of motifs represents an overabundance of choice faced by the tourist, cramming of destinations, and the multitude of experiences projected through marketing and consumed by the tourist. As the expat Tasmanian tourist/artist, it represents my ambivalence towards a shifting perception of place, wondering where and how I fit in. Like the tourist's eye, the viewers' eye wanders around the canvas on a whirlwind trip through a Gothic land.

In the painting representation of the photoshoots, I retained the edges of props, the flatness of the cardboard and the shadows of the forms. The purpose of this was both to reveal and conceal the artificial nature of the scene, flipping between seamless painting surface and the representation of a constructed scene, to amplify the play between the mundane and the fantasy. For example, some areas of the constructed scene are naïve and expressionistic such as the giant red eye and the Thylacine, while others, such as the Tasmanian Gothic Devil are flat and cartoonish. The heightened colour and loose painting of these features sit in contrast to the figure of the tourist which was rendered more realistically. This contrast was especially effective in *Life's a Beach* (Figure 37). In the work, a beach going tourist sips a cocktail looking at something beyond the edges of the canvas. He is surrounded by a comical mix of Gothic and tourist tropes, including a fanciful graveyard filled with morbid references, a sinking MONA Roma ferry and the dilapidated seal that has greeted tourists at Hobart airport for over 20 years. The tourist's exposed skin is fleshy, hairy and even incongruous when compared to the exaggerated and painterly rendering of the rest of the image.

Figure 36: *The Devil's Playground*, 2021, oil on canvas, 193x122cm

**Figure 37:** *Life's a Beach*, 2021, oil on canvas, 193x122cm

This variation of style and form complicates the viewing experience. The viewer is unsure if motifs are cut and pasted, dragged and dropped or props in a theatrical scene. The variation in paint handling draws out the fantasy world of the tourist and captures a shifting perception of place within a unified scene. For example, on the surface, some areas are smooth and others are impasto, some are expressionistic, others are more photo-realistic. These different modes of paint handling heighten a sense of removal from one place to another creating visual displacement to represent my own sense of displacement. This technique intensifies the constructed scene merging components through seamless rendering or exposing the facets through different styles.

Animation

The development of the animation component of this project permitted me to explore mixed and contradictory feelings about place by making things instinctively in a wild and uninhabited combinations that were contradictory, flamboyant and nonsensical. This was achieved by adding motion and sound to a conflation of motifs as I reviewed the thousands of photographic still images captured when roleplaying the tourist in fantasy holiday scenarios. The addition of sound was a crucial element that emphasised and exaggerated movement, motifs and feelings making scenes seem calm and peaceful then jarring and disruptive. Motion allows me to draw more connections between tropes and motifs. The animated work juxtaposed a plethora of scenes into a short period of time, creating a chaotic space that suggests a limitless combination of interchangeable characters, scenarios and motifs. The sequences of bizarre images reflect a destabilising tourist experience and my ambivalent position which fluctuates between love and hate, idyll and nightmare and mockery and longing.

A relevant artist duo who adapts the tourist slideshow to interrogate the relationship between technology, tourism and experience is Heather and Ivan Morison. In their exhibition *Earthwalker* (2006) (Figure 38), a multi-media installation featuring museum dioramas, fanciful tourist slideshows and eerie sci-fi soundscapes disrupted the way things are habitually seen or encountered (Kastner, 2012, pp. 49-50). This was achieved through a combination of natural history and science-fiction to subvert conventions of popular travel. In the exhibition, a slideshow of images featuring natural history dioramas, rose farming and the coastline of the UK, was juxtaposed against strange field recordings and sounds sampled from sci-fi movies (Danielle Arnaud Gallery, 2006).

This curious multimedia work shifts our perception of place by reposition the tourist experience in a heightened and abstracted context. This method is employed in my work to reflect a changing Tasmanian Identity and my place within it.
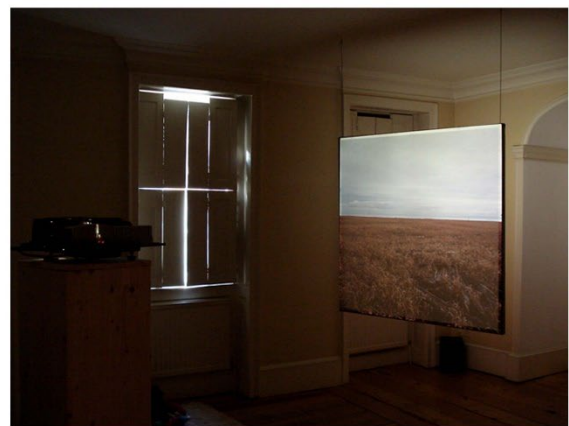
Figure 38: Heather and Ivan Morison, composite image: stills from *Starmaker* (as part of the exhibition *Earthwalker*), 2006

Animation was a vital method in my process. It represented the final reflective stages of touristic activity, providing a novel approach to reviewing and reconstructing digital imagery. My animation functions as a surreal adaptation of the tourist slideshow, wherein pastiched, hybrid motifs get mixed up, creating their own strange language in a combination of painting, photographic realism and the digital image.

Through the animated slideshow, I convey the Tasmanian Gothic characteristics of isolation, wild weather, and a menacing environment. Motion is especially apt, bringing photographic stills to life in an eerie and uncanny way. For example, in the work the rustling of bushes suggests something is hiding in them, or the random movement of usually static objects is unnatural suggesting there is something that is inexplicable.

In the final work *No Ordinary Place*, tourist tropes appear and disappear like ghosts or monsters, motifs rustle and pulse like they are alive and Pandanus multiply consuming the tourist (Figure 39) in

an abruptly stitched sequence where scenes merge and interfere with each other disrupting the viewing experience.

Figure 39: composite image: stills from suffocating Pandani sequence from animated slideshow, *No Ordinary Place*, 2021

The animated slideshow encouraged me to push boundaries and it informed new ideas. For example, the floating and intrusive objects that drift across the pictorial plane (Figure 40), informed the construction of my final painted work, *The Devil's Playground* which approaches figurative space in the same way (Figure 41).

Figure 40: still from animated slideshow, *No Ordinary Place*, 2021, buzzing motif sequence

Figure 41: final oil painting, *The Devil's Playground,* 2021, oil on canvas, 193x122cm

In the animation, high and low culture is merged in a camp play that is tacky and tasteful. This is intensified by the lowbrow, homemade nature of the tourist slideshow which is typically amateur, unrefined and personal. A relevant artist in this lo-fi approach is Heath Franko. He creates screen-based works that attract and repulse through a clash of aesthetics, jingles and absurd performances. His practice is informed by popular culture, chaos, desires, and notions of 'home' (Mars Gallery, 2016).

In his work *Home Town* (2014) (Figure 42), Franko explores the idea of himself as an outsider by revisiting emotional aspects of his childhood, returning to his home town in a loose holiday narrative that references memory, place and popular culture. In the work, he combines cinematic techniques with a home video quality to represent his own displacement and complicated feelings about place. There are moments of joy, laughter and darkness in his absurd mix of characters and places that disrupt the viewing experience. In one scene, uplifting music is played over an impressive sunrise which suddenly shifts to a first-person view with an ominous sense of being watched. This is enhanced by jarring and comical music which constantly flips between joy and dread.

Figure 42: Heath Franco composite image: *Home Town*, 2014 (digital stills)

My animated slideshow adopts many of Franko's techniques such as his absurd mix of characters and places, low-fi aesthetic and irreverent content to form a fraught connection with place, unearthing complex emotions about my former home in a surreal sequence of events and motifs that are prankish, gaudy and kitsch, with an undercurrent of darkness.

Duration[28], disruption, absurdity, conflation and the representation of Pop Tasmanian Gothic characteristics were critical considerations when making the animations. In the work, I did not want things to sit easily. When the viewer gets comfortable, things shift and abruptly change, communicating ambivalence and dislocation through searching. This is at the core of my project, shifting perception of place and a new understanding of the tourist experience. For example, in the animated sequence (Figure 43), tourist and Gothic motifs fall from the sky like rain, or buzz around like flies. Abrupt and dramatic music signals the cannibal tourist devouring a mannequin leg. Suddenly the pulsing landscape beats as if alive. A ghost moves in silence, like a carnival carousel, across a windswept seascape. There are moments of silence and respite, followed but sudden noise and abrupt motion, combining comic sounds and motifs with nature and horror.

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[28] Duration refers to the length of time between clips in the animated slideshow. In the final work, some clips are long and some are very short, creating a disruptive viewing experience.
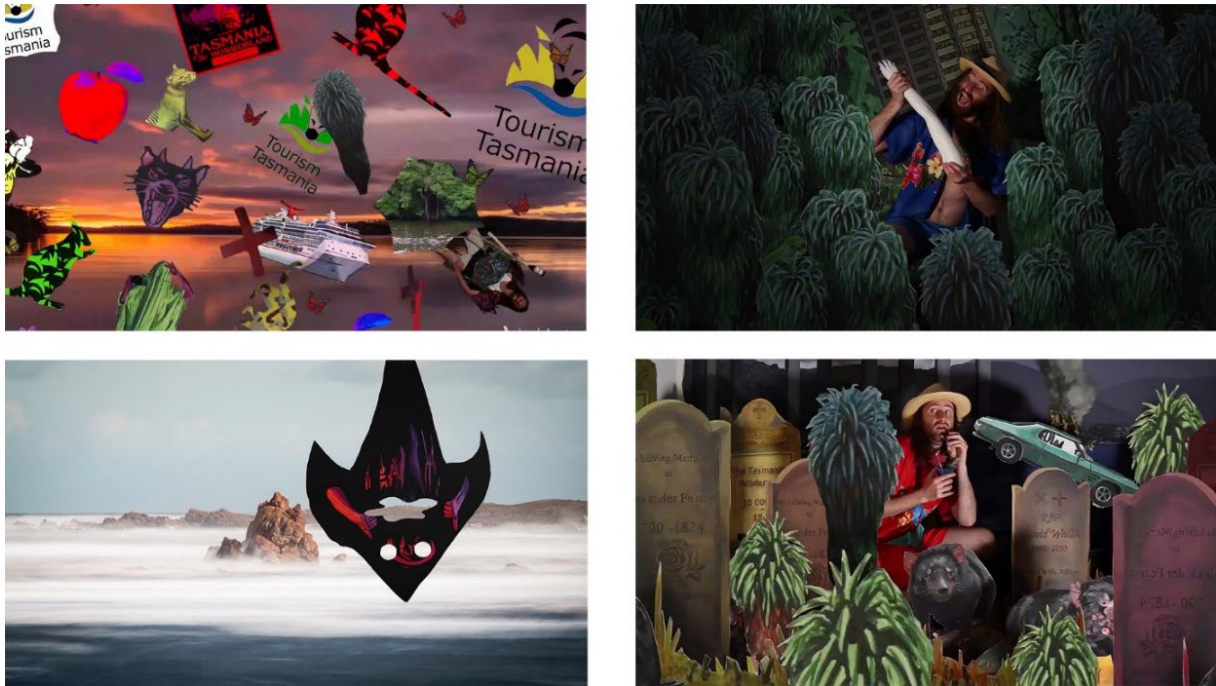
Figure 43: composite image: stills from animated slideshow, *No Ordinary Place*, 2021

A variety of presentation platforms were explored for the final exhibition including screen, and as part of a ready-made installation (on a broken iPad) surrounded by props from the photoshoot (Figures 44 and 45), and projection including at obscured angles across paintings and objects (Figures 46 and 47). In the final installation a large-scale projection obscured by corflute cut-outs was considered most appropriate, making it an immersive spectacle that disrupts the circulation between objects and lodging the viewer in an expansive tourist world.
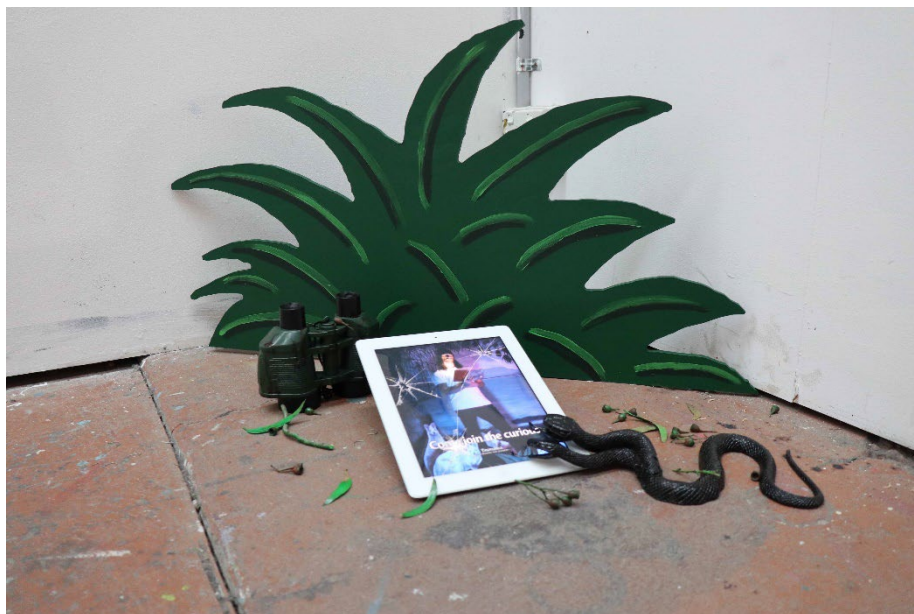
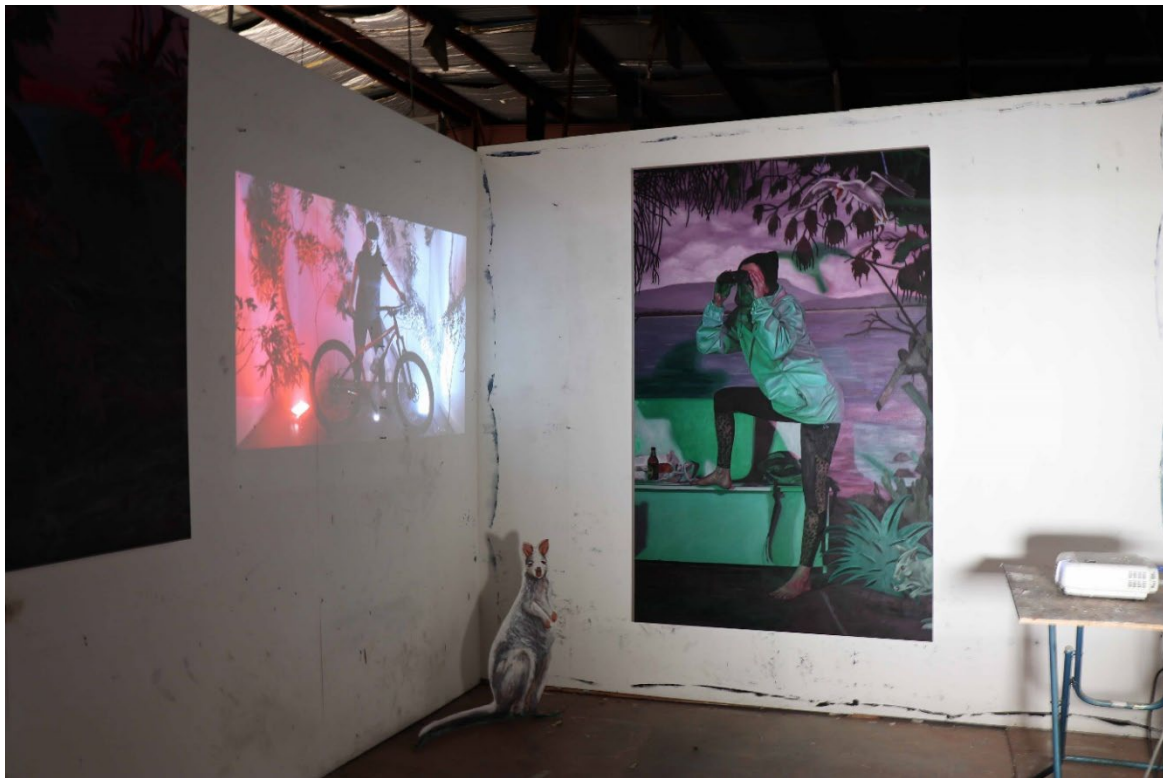**Figure 44:** broken iPad, animation display experiment
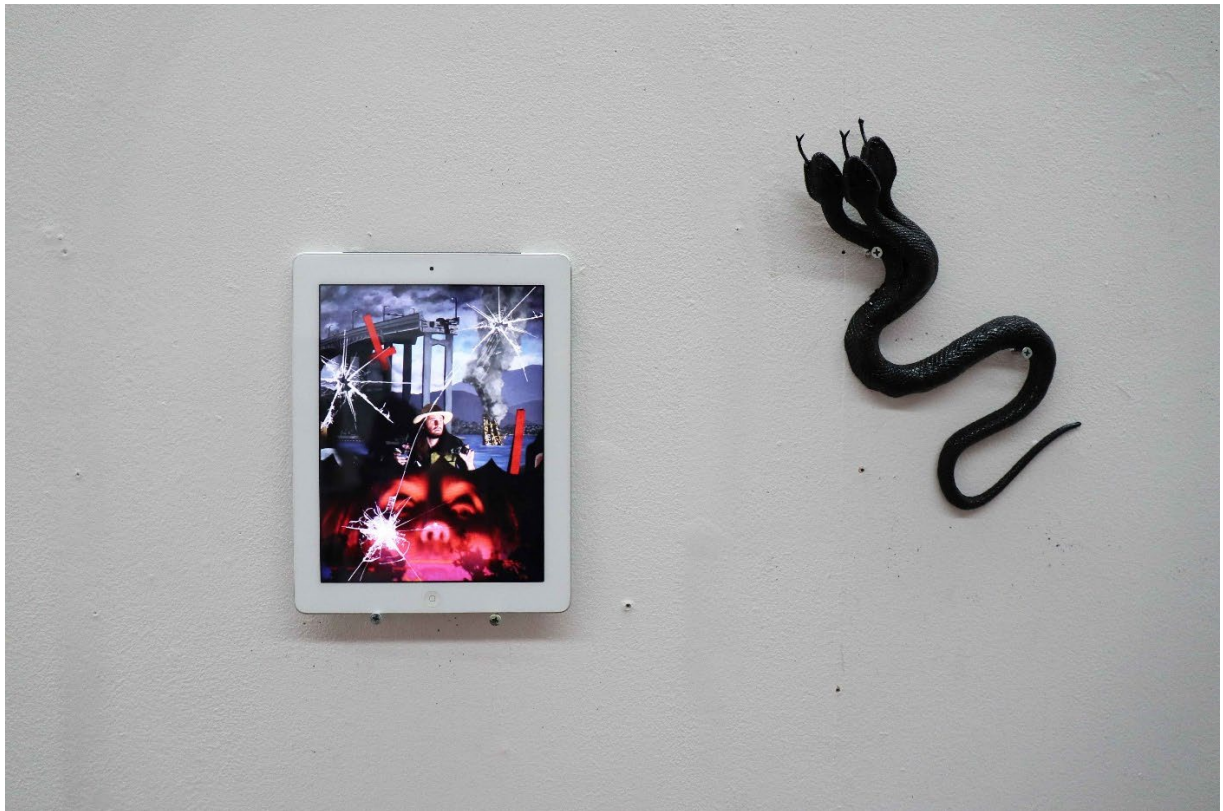
Figure 45: broken iPad, animation display experiment

Figure 46: obscure projection, animation display experiment

Figure 47: projection, animation display experiment

Installation

The final installation of the exhibition was designed to be viewed as one work with a variety of components. Throughout the project, I experimented with a range of installation techniques to achieve this. This included, dramatic and low lighting and juxtaposing works in a way that created an immersive environment. For example, sitting back lit painted works on the floor to create a series of theatrical encounters that encouraged the viewer to tour around the space (Figures 48 and 49). In the final exhibition, this was resolved with a combination of lighting and the abstracted tourist marketing cut-outs that circulated the motifs of the works around the room, leading the viewer between animation and painting. Here I draw on David Joselit who understands painting as an expanded practice in a network of objects defined by their circulation around each other creating new contexts and meanings. He suggests the transitive passage of action from a painting to a social network and back again forms a translation resulting in infinite dislocations, fragmentations, and degradations that cannot be quarantined (Joselit, 2009, pp. 125-134).

The circulation between works is also relevant to Barbara Bolt's notion of materialising practice which suggests there is ongoing performative engagement and productivity both at moments of production and consumption. In other words, new knowledge can emerge from human involvement

with the final exhibition (Barrett & Bolt, 2014, p. 143). In this sense, the works become activated by the viewer/participant who navigates the space revealing ideas and drawing connections between objects as the presentational forms emerge in a dynamic circulation between artworks. This performative notion of display aligns with Pop Goth performance which creates an immersive consumer and fantasy world that physically engages the spectator beyond the mere telling of a story (Edwards & Monnet, 2013).

Figure 48: theatrical installation experiment

Figure 49: theatrical installation experiment

An example of immersive and circulatory display comes from Ronnie Van Hout's exhibition *No One is Watching You* (2018) (Figure 50), a captivating installation that spanned sculpture, video, photography, embroidery and text. In it, he combined personal childhood narratives with science fiction, art history and popular culture to evoke a strange but familiar interior world. This was realised through unsettling human sculptures, dream-like cinematic spaces and absurd videos that simultaneously made the viewer want to laugh and cry as they drew connections between one another (Buxton Contemporary, 2018).
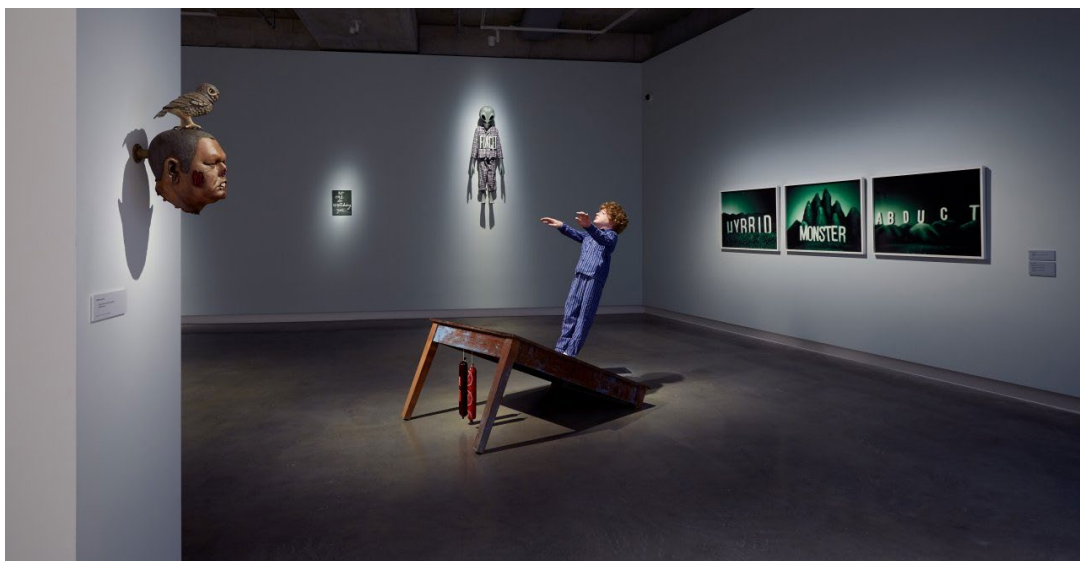
Figure 50: Ronnie Van Hout, *No One is Watching You*, 2018

Conclusion

Throughout my studio investigation, I used the roleplaying of touristic cliché, stereotype, pastiche and multi-media studio practice to reflect a changing Tasmanian identity characterised by Pop Tasmanian Gothic. I applied overarching strategies of the tourist methodology, which adapted the stages of tourist activities to the creative process; camp, which formed a meaningful platform to express my ambivalence through fun and artifice; and pastiche, which allowed for different tropes from tourism and the Tasmanian Gothic to co-exist in the one space. The practical work resulted in a series of large paintings that communicated the staged and fanciful nature of the tourist reality; scenography (encompassing set design, performance, photography and the installation cut-out) which formed an armature for the entire project, transporting me into the world of the tourist; and animation which explored and communicated my mixed and contradictory feelings about place resulting in a darkly humorous and surreal animated sequence. The outcomes and conclusion of my research are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

My practice-led research project investigated how artistic practice brings new understanding to, and provides critical perspectives on, the relationship the tourist has to place. Exploration was done through the lens of a fantasy Tasmanian holiday played out in elaborate sets from my Melbourne studio. In this scenario, I used a fictional character, the tourist, to reveal my ambivalent connection with place as an expat Tasmanian inserting him into pastiched versions of Tasmanian Gothic tropes and more recent tourism marketing tropes, known as Pop Goth.

My key research question: how do forms of artistic practice, including roleplay of touristic cliché, stereotype, pastiche and multi-media studio practice, reflect a changing Tasmanian identity characterised by Pop Tasmanian Gothic, dictated this approach. Furthermore, how can I use the figure of the tourist to reveal my ambivalence towards this changing identity?

The project was shaped early by the impact of Covid-19. Lockdown restrictions meant I could not travel to Tasmania for research or use live models in my photoshoots. Covid-19 shifted the nature of the tourist experience, and the focus of my project. I became the primary model within a constructed fantasy holiday, one that was both grounded in reality and experience and constructed by imagination, fantasy and limited interaction. As a result, my research considered the impact of Covid-19 travel restrictions asking how we might tour when we can't travel and what this imaginative touring might express through a visual arts practice.

I developed an overarching tourist methodology which I used to gather source material for investigation in the studio by adopting the role of the tourist. I combined and adapted the stages of touristic activity identified by sociologists Clawson and Knetsch: anticipation, travel, experience and recollection to the creative studio process. This process was applied within a fantasy Tasmanian holiday, roleplaying the tourist through a self-portrayed fictional character. I became the tourist, travelling vicariously through my own fantasy. The fantasy was revealed through the tourist methodology where narratives, emotions, characters, and motifs were constantly shifting, changing and flipping between a grounded reality and an elaborate fantasy. Flipping was a signal that was reflected by the tourist's multiple guises, a combination of tourist and Gothic clichés. Throughout my investigation I found roleplaying a fictional character amalgamated from several personalities, character traits and clichés to be an effective strategy which revealed my true feeling, and concerns, about my connection to place. It allowed me to be both myself and someone else. I acted out my ideas in a truly absurd and cathartic way, always locating my emotional self at the centre. The outcome was a character at odds with his surroundings, confused, overwhelmed and saturated by

change, choice, and spectacle – he was unable to settle, constantly flipping between a reality and fantasy. This approach revealed as much about me and my relationship with Tasmania, as it did about the constructed nature of the tourist.

Specifically, it revealed that I like being the tourist, returning to Tasmania on whirlwind trips jam packed with activities, re-experiencing the State with a fresh eye on every return. In this regard, my personal relationship with my former home is echoed succinctly in the interactions of the tourist, caught in a cycle of anticipate, travel, experience and recollection when journeying back and forth between Melbourne and Hobart. It also revealed that despite my affection for Tasmania, a part of me prefers the fantasy world, the liminal space between dream and action where the mundane, the domestic and the monotonous can't creep in to taint my romanticised memories and idealised expectations of my former home. It also taught me that I don't have to live in Tasmania to form a deep and meaningful connection with place and that it can be achieved through art, and my tourist-like relationship with the State.

Due to the confines of the pandemic, many decisions were made that put an emphasis on fantasy, construction and play within the project. Inevitably this led to the work being underpinned by Hennig's tourist reality which he defines as a liminal space that is both fantasy and reality. To emphasise this, special attention was paid to the first stage of touristic activity – anticipation. Dreaming, fantasy, and expectation are most active and were realised in the project through the planning and creation of the holiday scenes. During this stage I felt most inspired and excited about what was to come, echoing the excitement of a travel experience. The heightened state of fantasy led to uninhibited creativity and combination when designing the sets, planning roleplaying activities and creating characters, allowing a rich tapestry of motifs from tourism, entertainment, and the Tasmanian Gothic to emerge within each scenario. Once the set was complete, I travelled to, and experienced the location by roleplaying and documenting my fictional character on set. This stage was important as it led to photographic source material for artistic creation. However, at best it was an abstracted experience that never really compared to the tangible feeling of real travel. Once completed, a prolonged period of recollection and reflection of the travel experience commenced. During this stage, a sense of play and fantasy re-emerged as I revisited and reinterpreted the scenarios by viewing and manipulating the source material for the creation of new works. This studio practice provided further opportunity to process, refine and navigate my ideas, recapturing feelings about place offering a distinctive and heightened form of reflection.

Within the tourist methodology, motifs circulated through camp, pastiched scenography, animation, and painting. The camp humour that emerged from a satirical take on dark tourism became a way to

express my ambivalence towards a shifting perception of place. The pastiche combination of Tasmanian motifs allowed me to explore the affective dimension of my ties. Together these approaches forged a meaningful platform to explore my feelings as an expat Tasmanian, using art to reconnect. The outcome also facilitated a reflection on the use of the Gothic or Pop Goth mode in tourism and entertainment. Although the humour of my work might be seen as mocking, the fact that I insert myself into a pastiched Tasmanian vision defined by change, spectacle and entertainment suggests that I want to be a part of that change and the future it proposes for the State.

The final exhibition was designed to be viewed as one work with a variety of components which interact with each other. This results in a cacophony of motifs that circulate between, painting, cut-out and animation in a dimly lit immersive spectacle. The hangman's noose, butterflies and stylised Tasmanian Devils reappear between works as the sound from the animation radiates through the space disrupting and overwhelming the experience. These recurring motifs are hybridised, commodified and exaggerated to reflect Pop Tasmanian Gothic characteristics. This component of the works locates traditional Tasmanian Gothic motifs in a Pop Goth setting, positing Pop Tasmanian Gothic as a conduit for the tourist to form new understandings about place through dark tourism.

In the space, large paintings draw the viewer into a pastiched vision of Tasmanian Gothic motifs creating a fantasy holiday snapshot that slowly reveals the illusionary nature of the tourist world through its variation of style and form, locating the tourist at centre stage. This reflects Chris Hennig's Tourist Reality as a liminal space between fantasy and reality. The overwhelming scale of the motifs in the projected animated sequence draws attention to their presence in the painted works; they continuously reappear in an expansive animated tourist world of endless combinations. The animation (an abstracted interpretation of the tourist slideshow) is awkward, whacky and abruptly stitched together in an unsettling way. Surrounded by paintings and obscured by cut-outs, the animation is disruptive and playful, presenting a tourist experience that is nothing like the real thing. In this way, the animation establishes a key finding of the project; its limitless combination of interchangeable characters, scenarios and motifs reflect the shifting nature of the tourist experience and my ambivalent position which fluctuates between love and hate, idyll and nightmare, mockery and longing, in relation to Tasmania. Animation also adds to the multi-media experience forming a key component to understanding what painting looks like as extended practice. In the animated slideshow, painting comes to life in a network of artworks that are intrinsically linked and circulate between one another. This network or pastiche of artworks abstracts and disrupts the tourist experience presenting it in a new way providing critical perspectives on, the relationship the tourist has to place.

The installation cut-outs form a vital component to the overall exhibition that extends the paintings into physical space and sets up a tension that reflects ambivalence about place by juxtaposing the artifice of marketing that seem to advertise the 'real' experience of the paintings. Throughout the gallery, the abstracted tourist marketing cut-outs operate as de facto signage that orientates viewers, moving them around, providing locational or directional information as if they are in a surreal tourist experience, becoming part of the circulation themselves.

A close examination of the cut-outs unveils the thin corflute veneer, a shiny and highly saturated disposable frontage that can quickly be removed or changed; the close association with tourism, marketing signage of the one-sided standee is divulged. Its flimsy, temporary but durable nature creates the ultimate façade, misleading the viewer with a seamless representation, only to be cheated by the exposed obverse and corflute stand reducing the fantasy as a marketing ploy. The 'Flipping' of signals establishes a key finding of the project reflecting Hennig's fantasy tourist world and my own ambivalent position as I flip between ideas of return, longing, expectation and nostalgia. The obvious façade also prompts a closer examination of the painted and animated works, exposing cracks in their more seamless finish, revealing and extending the constructed nature of the fantasy holiday into the gallery to disrupt physical space.

A variety of conclusions can be drawn from the final installation disclosing new perceptions and critical perspectives of the relationship that the tourist has to place in a contemporary visual arts context.

My work provides an opportunity to reflect on the emergent tropes of Pop Tasmanian Gothic in visual art and in the Tasmanian Gothic at large. It has been over a decade since Roslynn Haynes first wrote about the Tasmanian Gothic in visual art. The State and depictions of the Tasmanian Gothic have changed dramatically in that time. My work reflects that change.

In the final exhibition, additional tropes emerged that amplify and build on those of the Tasmanian Gothic. These additional tropes circulate around the emergent nature and application of Pop Goth in a Tasmanian context and include spectacle, garish exaggeration and an oversaturation of colour, tone and contrast within the motifs. Tourism, entertainment and popular culture are now influencers on the Tasmanian Gothic that were not pertinent and therefore not considered in Haynes's analysis. Furthermore, these tropes have the potential to contribute to research beyond visual arts and may be useful to Gothic scholars investigating its application in different fields such as music, literature and even tourism.

Upon completion, several questions have emerged from the project that have potential for further investigation. Firstly, the scope of my interpretation of the Tasmanian Gothic was limited to my personal story, and confined to tourism, entertainment and painting. Therefore, it is not a full investigation of the Tasmanian Gothic in relation to visual arts. It does not fully consider First Nations people and their story which plays a highly significant role in the emergence of the Tasmanian Gothic. The challenges I faced in sincerely communicating and aligning the indigenous connection with the Tasmanian Gothic and my own personal story, only emerged during the process of my investigation. Early studies included indigenous motifs form the infamous aboriginal diorama that was on display at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery from 1931 to 1995 (Norman, 2013). However, I felt my strategies of exaggeration, humour and campness could not appropriately convey the complexity and gravitas of indigenous presence in the Tasmanian Gothic. As a result, no indigenous imagery was included in the final body of work. These personal and cultural challenges present a key finding of the project, paving the way for further investigation into the relationship the Palawa people have with the Tasmanian Gothic and the impact of tourism on their land. Julie Gough's works *Observance* (2012) (figure 9) provides an avenue to explore this positioning tourism as another form of colonialism.

Secondly, many of the stories, tropes and characters could be developed and explored further. This may reveal the pervasiveness of Pop Gothic's influence on contemporary Tasmanian culture. Other stereotypes and motifs that could be explored include loggers, protesters, the cable car developments on Kunanyi/Mount Wellington or zombies marching on MONA.

In conclusion, this project has taken me on an exciting and divulging journey that has revealed as much about myself and my connection to place through art, as it has about the tourist reality and contemporary Tasmanian Gothic. In the work, a series of tropes emerged that are relevant to contemporary Tasmanian Gothic depictions including spectacle, exaggeration and oversaturation. These depictions emerged by recontextualising existing Tasmanian Gothic tropes in a contemporary context through Pop Goth filters. The project also presented a sociological methodology adapted for artistic creation that could be applied in different circumstances with different methods to reveal new ways of encountering a sense of place. Finally, thanks to the impact of Covid-19, the project encapsulates the idea of a traveller who doesn't travel, confined to a fantasy, an idea or a dream of a place that remains out of reach. My work pertains to an age of restricted travel brought on by a pandemic, or indeed any circumstance when one cannot travel but desires the imaginative stimulation of the tour.

Beyond this project, I anticipate that I will continue to explore an expanded painting practice, especially in the combination of moving and painted imagery. This unconventional approach expands painting into the virtual realm to explore new and critical perspectives on contemporary painting in a digital age. I am also interested in Pop Goth application in relation to Australian Gothic, specifically how it informs and contextualises depictions of place in my new home state, Victoria. From Joan Lindsay's classic Australian Gothic novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1967)[29] to the sci-fi adventure film *Mad Max* (1979) to Albert Tucker's dark and uneasy modernist paintings, the Gothic mode is entrenched throughout the State ready to be explored through Pop Goth filters.

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[29] The mysterious disappearance of three school girls and their teacher from Hanging Rock, a rare volcanic formation and sacred indigenous site in central Victoria.

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