

# Aesthetics of Change

Multiculturalism and the street art of Footscray

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## Abstract

This practice-based research investigates the relationship between street art and multiculturalism in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray. The aim of this research is to prove the value of incorporating multicultural theory in the development of street art projects. The practice component of the research is the creation of a documentary entitled, *Who made that?* which looks at five case studies of artists that have created a street art piece during the research period 2014 – 2018. This film is created using techniques of collaborative filmmaking through a reflexive practice, based on Sarah Pink's approach to visual ethnography.

Street art is also examined as a cultural practice. There are varied opinions about what constitutes street art and how to define a street artist. In order to contain our research, the documentary focuses on artists who create murals. Through an exploration of their work, techniques and intent behind their art, the documentary presents an understanding of the diversity that exists within the street art community.

Culture and multiculturalism have broad interpretations and this research suggests understanding multiple perspectives from a lived experience to political forms of management and integration. Theoretical literature, from Kymlicka's liberal theories of 'multicultural citizenship to modern day Islamophobia, are reviewed to explore how they are at work in contemporary discourses of government, arts and community.

The setting for the documentary, Footscray, is known as a culturally diverse inner city suburb, that has been reportedly going through the process of gentrification. We examine gentrifications impact on social diversity and also explore the role of street artists as both gentrifiers and activists against gentrification.

Through this research, we investigate street art as a manifestation of the cultural diversity of the community. As such, it demonstrates how an understanding of multiculturalism from different perspectives can provide a framework for the development of future street art projects by artists, communities and organisations.

## Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Master of Fine Arts (Community Cultural Development)

- (i) the thesis comprises only their original work towards the except where indicated in the preface;
- (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and
- (iii) the thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices or that the thesis is 19,062 as approved by the Research Higher Degrees Committee.

Christie Widiarto

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Abstract	1
Declaration	2
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	6
Chapter One: Street Art	9
Defining Street Art	9
Historic research	10
The Evolution of Street Art	11
Chapter Two: Methodology	14
Ethnographic Approach	15
Ethics of documenting street art and graffiti	17
Data Collection Through Surveys	18
Recorded Interviews	19
Documenting Street Art	20
Filmmaking as Research	21
Selection of Documentary Subjects	23
Sourcing Additional Material	24
Chapter Three: Setting the scene	26
Gentrification	28
Chapter Four: Case Studies	32
Case Study 1: Rosie Kalina Kilvert	32
Case Study 2: Antonia Marshall/Trashort	34
Case Study 3: Creature Creature	37
Case Study 4: Larissa MacFarlane	37
Case Study 5: Van T Rudd	38
Chapter Five: Multicultural theory	40
Multiculturalism vs Interculturalism	41
Multicultural policy	41

Liberal Egalitarian approach	42
Recognition	44
Feminist perspectives	45
Multiculturalism and Indigenous Australians	46
Moral Universalism	48
Chapter Six: Findings and Themes	51
Outcomes from the Documentary	51
Outcomes from StreetWORKS	53
Gentrification and the challenges ahead	54
Increased Community Engagement	55
Recognition vs Representation	56
Activism	57
Conclusion	60
Bibliography	62
Appendix	69

## Introduction

Since 2014, many new street art murals have appeared around the Melbourne suburb of Footscray, within the municipality of Maribyrnong. Most were created through participation in the Maribyrnong Council's StreetWORKS program.

Footscray has been described as a multicultural suburb that is undergoing gentrification. Through the making of the documentary, *Who Made That? (Appendix A)* this research looks at the work of five street artists, and how their work has impacted on themselves and the community in which they were. The interviews with the artists not only reveal who created the work but also their intention. This information is then analysed through the application of multicultural theory. This study is intended to provide a deeper understanding of the sociocultural elements of street art projects, which can be used in the development of future street art projects.

Through the creation of the documentary, and further analysis of the case studies presented through multicultural theory, this research addresses the question:

**How can an understanding of multicultural frameworks assist with the development of street art projects by artists, local government and community organisations?**

In 2014, two events took place in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray, which lay the foundations for this research. The first was the development of my first community art project the, *Footscray Animated Wall Mural*. In the same year, Maribyrnong Council also developed a street art program called StreetWORKS. This annual program has now been running for the past four years and has led to the creation of many new murals and works of street art.

In communities such as Footscray, artists can play a vital role in creating public art for community development. "The outside world may only see the role of artist in community development as painting a mural on a completed building, but artists are best engaged at the beginning to bring a fresh perspective and different community connections," (Nicodemus, Engh & Walker, 2017). Through the case studies presented in the documentary, an examination takes place into how a consideration of multiculturalism can be used to develop street art project that has a positive impact on the surrounding neighbourhood. It is recommended that the documentary

(Appendix A) and interviews (Appendix B, C and D) be watched prior to reading further.

An understanding of what is meant by the term, 'street art', is needed in order to contextualise this research. Defining street art can be complex as there are many interpretations depending on the location, the creator and their intent. Chapter two outlines the approach used by this research to define 'street art' as a cultural practice. This also includes an evaluation on the use of graffiti as research and a history of the evolution of the practice.

Despite extensive literature on multiculturalism, there are few examples that links multiculturalism and street art. From a racial perspective, there is the work of Jeff Ferrell (1995) and Maggie Dickinson (2008). Their research looked at youth graffiti in Denver and New York respectively. The graffiti and street art culture in their research developed from the, "poor youth of colour," (Dickinson, 2008) from communities in the 1970s. Their studies examined how youth participants were able to break out of their segregated neighbourhoods to form a new subculture through their graffiti practice.

A history of Footscray is presented in Chapter Three, to provide the setting for the documentary and the works within it. This research acknowledges of the traditional owners of the land as members of the Kulin Nation. The chapter then moves onto Footscray's subsequent development into its current urban development. There is also an analysis of the media reported gentrification of Footscray and the implications of this on the current residents.

This research also builds on current literature on the relationship between street art and gentrification. Tara Foster's (2013) studies in two New Orleans neighbourhoods approached the subject of street art through gentrification. Citing the article, *Gentrification: The new segregation? White Flight in reverse*, by Beaulieu, Foster (2013) describes one aspect of New Orleans gentrification as, "Whites are returning to reclaim their place in the city," (Foster, 2013). Her research, "argues that graffiti and street art signify a culture and aestheticization of gentrification" (Foster, 2013).

The artists featured in our case studies use different forms of materials and tackle different themes in their work that relate to their identity and the community in which they live or work. Also building on the work of Foster and her research in New



Orleans, the artists are also asked about their views on gentrification and the role street art plays in this process. As the artists are interviewed shortly after the completion of the works, the documentary footage provides a visually ethnographic view of the intent behind the works.

Footscray is often associated with the word, 'multicultural' in the media (Brown, Hunt, 2014). Multiculturalism has been applied in a multitude of contexts from political policies to a way of life. Culture as the root of multiculturalism, "is a notoriously overbroad concept," (Song, 2009). From a community perspective, this research examines what culture and multiculturalism means to different people in the community, whether that be through their race, ethnicity, lifestyle or a sense of identity.

By presenting an overview of current multicultural theory, this research presents an understanding of how these theories have translated through to modern day perceptions in the community and in policy. For example, in his book, *Multicultural Citizenship*, Will Kymlicka (1996) talks about multiculturalism as a way to provide equal rights to minorities. Through Charles Taylor's (1996) theory on the need for recognition, he explains how issues can arise from misrecognition. Recognition can also play a role in feminist narratives. Sarah Song's (2013) exploration of multiculturalism through a feminist perspective, provides insight into the challenges of female street artists within their culture. Bringing the research back to an Australian context, Ivison (2008) argues that reparation for past injustices towards Indigenous Australians.

This research shows how street art can challenge perceptions, celebrate diversity and divide opinions. This study shows us that through multicultural theory, street art can provide a deeper understanding of the community beyond the aesthetic. As such, this research can also assist organisations in developing a community engaged framework for public art programs. For arts facilitators and artists who are engaged in public art, this study provides an understanding of how different perceptions of culture and multiculturalism can affect how their art is received, interpreted and celebrated by the wider community.

## Chapter One: Street Art

The difference between street art, graffiti and murals is often argued in media articles and online forums. There is generally an understanding that graffiti is illegal and street art is legal. Street artists are seen as artists who have, “had some formal training in art, design, or graphic arts,” whereas graffiti artists are seen as vandals or anarchists (Molnar 2017). In theory, this distinction makes sense but it is unclear in practice as some practitioners do both. To understand the complexities of street art, this chapter looks at how researchers have recorded graffiti as historical artefacts. This is followed by a look at the history of graffiti and how it evolved into the street art we see today.

### Defining Street Art

Alison Young (2014) defines street art as having its own culture which evolved from the sense of belonging created through participation in its activities. Young (2014) believes, “street art is not just a cultural practice, but a culture in itself, with hierarchies, conventions, forms of inclusions and exclusion.” The meaning of culture is further discussed in Chapter Five.

As the term, ‘street art,’ is very broad, the following parameters were used to explain what and how street art is presented in this research.

- (1) Firstly, this research will only examine street art murals. Murals are more specifically defined by Oxford Dictionary as: “A painting or other work of art executed directly on a wall,” (‘Mural,’ 2017). As the foundation for this research was the Footscray Animated Wall Mural and the StreetWORKS program, which only features murals, the decision was made to only feature murals for analysis through the documentary.
- (2) For ethical purposes, we will be focusing on work that have been legally commissioned or created with permission from the property owner.
- (3) Once the artists were identified, there need to be consideration as to how to label them and their work. With the graffiti and street art community, some practitioners defy their role as an ‘artist’ and defining their work as ‘art,’ (Peiter, 2009). To avoid any misrepresentation, each participant describes

themselves and their work at the start of their interview. We then use these descriptors to reference them and their work throughout the research, whether it be graffiti, street art, mural or other term.

## Historic research

Graffiti and street art have a long history that has been studied by historians and archaeologists from the aborglyphs of Basque migrants in the 1800s to more recent examples of resistance in Australia's Jawoyn Country. Such examples have been recognised as important artefacts for research.

Researchers have been studying the aborglyphs of Basque immigrants in the USA, created around the late 1800s and provide insight into the community at the time (Oliver, Neal, 2010). They are thought to have been created by young sheep herders, who carved them on Aspen trees. Being shepherders, they used trees rather than walls as their canvas. These markings are representative of, "the personal, the intimate, the anguish," (Schuessler, 2017) of these people who fled Spain to create a new life in America.

Historians and art conservationists worldwide are working to preserve historically significant murals. For example, much of the Berlin Wall was covered with graffiti, street art and murals. Therefore, great care was given to prevent parts of the wall from deteriorating. Pieces of the wall were retained in an indoor location to prevent further deterioration (Corda, Graves, 2016).

In Time magazine's article, *Afghanistan's Graffiti Wars*, (Bicker 2010) Reuters photographer, Finbarr O'Reilly recorded graffiti he found in the battlefield walls of Afghanistan through his camera. His photographs of Taliban graffiti alongside that of US and British forces provides an interesting visual juxtaposition to the actual war taking place. Images of battles, propaganda messages and memories of home give us an insight into the minds of the individuals caught up in the war.

In Australia, historians have also looked at graffiti for archaeological research. In their article, *'We've got better things to do than worry about whitefella politics'*, Ralph and Smith (2016) discuss their research into graffiti in Jawoyn Country as signs of resistance to government. The researchers examined graffiti tags that they found at and around aggregation sites such on built shelters, community entrances and

surrounding road signs. They found that the graffiti practice was part of an overall feeling of alienation from government and their wider society (Ralph, Smith, 2016).

These examples, highlight the value in documenting and researching graffiti, murals and street art to understand social and cultural behaviours and changes within a certain period of time and place. According to Alison Young, "Graffiti is both art and crime. It is also an issue of great significance to local communities, local government, police, public transport agencies, and young people," (Halsey, Young, 2002).

## The Evolution of Street Art

Contemporary street art seen in modern cities today is arguably believed to have evolved from graffiti writing which, "originally took hold in American cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia and New York," around the 1960s and 70s (Young, 2014). The term graffiti is defined by the Oxford dictionary as, "Writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place," ('Graffiti,' 2017). A knowledge of this history is an important basis for understanding its context in current day Footscray.

Maggie Dickinson (2008) examined the birth of New York graffiti writing to current day. According to Dickinson, graffiti emerged around the 1960s and was formed out of, "a transition to a neoliberal economy," (Dickinson, 2008). She identified graffiti as having its own 'culture', that was practiced by youth from all over the city, "often from, "Latino or black neighbourhoods," (Dickinson, 2008). It was their way of creating spaces for themselves, leaving their mark and also communicating with each other.

Through her research, Dickinson (2008) found that graffiti subculture could be used to understand race relations in New York at a time of urban and economic restructuring. The fact that many graffiti writers made their marks on trains and train stations, made them unpopular with the government of the time who were trying to develop the city into a, "corporate mecca," (Dickinson, 2008). Dickinson (2008) found, "the brutality and intolerance with which (Mayor) Koch attacked graffiti writers was a small piece of a much larger attack on poor people of color at this time." She argues that "A truly anti-racist discourse must understand the ways in which political and economic structures relate to cultural representations," (Dickinson, 2008).

Dickinson (2008) also found that Koch's brutality through the police force had an effect on reducing the number of female practitioners who were also at risk of sexual assault. "The result was an erasure of women from the history of graffiti," (Dickinson 2008). Nicholas Ganz (2006) also found that initially, women practitioners faced risk of attack at night or being the victim of scandalous rumours by their male counterparts. Ganz (2006) also noted their work was initially seen as similar to what was established by their male counterparts. However, as the number of women practitioners has increased, there is now a more diverse range of work celebrating their culture and identity.

Ferrell's (1995) research over four years in Denver, Colorado, studied graffiti in a similar setting to Dickinson. He followed the practitioners as they created their illegal work, and was also arrested with them several times as a result. His research found that, "Contemporary graffiti writing occurs in an urban environment increasingly defined by the segregation and control of social space," (Ferrell, 1995). Urban development of high rise buildings and freeways change the urban landscape to appear more friendly to a corporate middle class. Ferrell saw graffiti as a way in which youth were trying to find their space within this environment. Like Dickinson, Ferrell (1995) observed the neighbourhood was broken up into segregated communities. It was graffiti that united youth in each community, "the alternative communities that (graffiti) writers create often violate the city's everyday ethnic segregation by incorporating kids of various ethnic backgrounds," (Ferrell, 1995).

Around the early 1980s, graffiti practice gained popularity worldwide and was more widely accepted in the art world. In 1983, the documentary, *Style Wars*, (Silver, 1983) was released, which was one of the first films to explore graffiti as a form of creative expression and introduced it to a wider audience. Artists such as Jean-Michel Basquiat started gaining recognition in the art world in the late 70s and 80s. He started his practice with Al Diaz and together they used the tag, SAMO (Kane, 2017) to create graffiti around the USA. The fact that his work evolved from tags demonstrates how fluid the practice is, whether it be on a wall on a street or gallery. According to Lachlan McDowall, "Tagging is a prototype for a mural," (Stone, 2016).

Another artist that gained fame around this time was Keith Haring, whose work developed from New York subways to gallery exhibitions worldwide. In 1984, Haring travelled to Australia, creating murals around Melbourne and Sydney. One of these murals was created on the glass entrance of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV).

In, *Keith Haring, the biography*, Haring recalled that when the NGV mural was created, some stories appeared in the press about how he was an American hired to create Aboriginal art. According to Haring, “Australians took real offense at what they considered to be an invasion of their artistic heritage,” (Gruen, 1991). This relationship between representation of Indigenous Australians in street art is further discussed through one of the case study subjects, Rosie Kilvert, in further chapters.

It is unclear how and when the graffiti arrived in Footscray. It may have been through its links to hip-hop music, its increased presence in pop culture and in the art world. Urban graffiti may have also arrived in Footscray via its train network. Colourful graffiti writing, similar to those seen in the New York, can be seen all around the train stations of Melbourne. In an unrecorded interview in 2017, with Dejah Schoefield, a youth worker from Footscray, she said she believed one of the reasons why graffiti tagging is more prominent in Footscray than the surrounding suburbs, is because of the size of its train station. Footscray station services several metropolitan lines as well as regional lines while surrounding stations only serve one or two lines at most. Upon moving to Footscray in 2013, I observed that there were already several notable pieces in place by artists such as Baby Guerilla and Guido Van Helton. Also, many buildings in the Footscray CBD were covered with graffiti tags.

By documenting street art through the process of filmmaking, this research aims to understand and capture the behaviours and mood of the neighbourhood in which the works are situated, as other researchers have through history. Through an understanding of the impact of street art in current day Footscray, this research provides an analysis of how the practice continues to evolve. Building on existing literature, this research aims to provide new perspectives on street art research in the context of multiculturalism.

## Chapter Two: Methodology

Using a reflexive ethnographic approach, a documentary was produced for this research entitled, *Who made that?* (Appendix A). It reveals the stories of five artists whose works were created during the period of this research 2014 – 2018. The film was created in collaboration with the artists, driven by the reflexive approach of the director. This collaborative ethnographic method was used to overcome some of the ethical issues that can arise when documenting street art. As the documentary focused on only five case studies, additional information was collected about the community through an online survey. Also, other community members were interviewed who were not specifically related to the case studies but had some insight into Footscray street art.

Three groups of participants were identified in this research:

**Audience:** Residents or visitors of Footscray who are not involved in any way with the creation of street art. They would provide data about the environment in which the works were created, as well as insight into what impact the work has had on their environment.

**Creators:** Those who create street art and/or graffiti in Footscray.

**Secondary creators:** This covers anyone who was involved in the creation of the work, in a non-creative capacity, eg. business owners/residents who offered their property for the creation of street art, consultants and council members.

Once I determined my target research participants, I identified the following methods for data collection:

- **Documentary:** The Creators would be featured in the documentary which would provide more depth into their individual stories and the stories behind their work.
- **Documenting Street Art:** The nature of street art is transient so I tested several methods to capture the works before they were tagged or buffed (painted over with a solid colour). The principle method was photography but some images were sourced from social media as I was often unable to capture every work at the time of creation or before it was tagged or buffed.

- Recorded Interviews: In terms of 'Creators' and 'Secondary creators', I wanted to understand the cultural practices involved in developing the work. Therefore, recorded interviews would be used.
- Surveys: For the 'Audience,' I determined surveys were suffice to collect data from this group due to time constraints and wanting to allow for complete anonymity. This method would also allow me to collect short responses from a larger number of participants.

## Ethnographic Approach

There are documentary makers who have used an ethnographic approach as well as ethnographers who use video. According to filmmaker, Nandini Sikands (2016), both, "look to document and understand the human experience through careful research and the willing participation of subjects." This research uses an ethnographic approach to documentary filmmaking. Pink (2006) believes a collaborative ethnographic approach can empower participants. Through this process, I reflexively evaluate my role as ethnographer, filmmaker and community artist.

An exact definition of Ethnography is difficult to determine as its meaning has changed over time. "The origins of the term lie in nineteenth-century Western anthropology, where an ethnography was a descriptive account of a community or culture," (Hammersley, Atkinson, 2007). However, the term has been used and reinterpreted in different fields of research. For example, "during the twentieth century, anthropological ethnography came to be one of the models for some strands of research within Western sociology," (Hammersley, Atkinson, 2007).

The interpretation used in this research work, is as a set of methodologies based on Sarah Pink's (2006) approach to visual ethnography. This involves representing the documentary material as closely as possible to the experiences of the participants. According to Pink (2006), this, "may entail reflexive, collaborative or participatory methods." Pink (2006) claims that the collaborative video process can empower participants. For example, the camera may be handed over to the subject to allow them to self-document. The subject may also use the researcher's film for a self-serving or shared purpose such as to bring to attention to an issue that is important to them. In the case of our street art practitioners, they may also want to use the footage as a record of their own practice.



For this research, the empowerment for the subjects was provided through the collaboration process. This collaboration was conducted through the interview, filming and editing process. The participants were able to talk about what is important to them and also ensure the final edit is representative of who they are.

This research evolved from my experiences as the facilitator of a street art project, the Footscray Animated Wall Mural. Through facilitating the street art process, there was a sense of self awareness of my own role as visual artist and filmmaker within the community. This self-awareness is further investigated through the documentary film made as part of this research, *Who made that?* The way in which this is investigated is not so much through the reflexive mode of documentary making, as described by Bill Nichols. Rather, it is through an awareness of the ethical responsibilities of the filmmaker to the subjects, and an understanding of the subject's perspective in representing themselves within their community.

According to Bill Nichols, the reflexive filmmaking mode, "calls attention to the conventions of documentary filmmaking," (Nichols, 2010). A classic example is, "Man with a Movie Camera," where the camera and camera operators are sometimes seen on screen, capturing footage. In *Who made that?* the filmmaker is not seen but their presence and the presence of the camera are occasionally acknowledged by the subjects. For example, the first words spoken are by Antonia Marshall who says, "I've never done this on camera before," (Appendix A).

The reflexive approach utilised through the creation of the documentary is not so much an acknowledgement of the filmmaking methods, but rather through a consideration of 'voice.' It was a self-interrogation of my own street art project that led me to consider my role and responsibility as a filmmaker to the street art practitioners. It was important that they speak for themselves and their work without a voice over. According to Nichols, voice overs, "employed a supposedly authoritative yet often presumptuous off-screen narration." However, it was also important to consider my own 'voice' as director over the film. In her article, "Reflecting on Interculturality in Ethnographic Filmmaking, Laura Catalan Eraso (2006) wrote, "no matter how hard we try to build a subject-to-subject relationship in the film, the voice of the 'other' will always be second to the motives of the filmmaker." My 'voice' is therefore present in the film through the selection of the artists and artworks, filming, editing and final design.

Although the documentary includes my own street art project, I decided to use one of the participants in the film rather than appear myself. The reason is because I achieved my main goal for the project, which was to allow the Footscray community to tell their story through a finished stop motion animation and present the work at the Melbourne International Animation Festival. However, Rosie Kilvert's experience of working on the project was different to mine, and therefore, my project was evaluated through her eyes. Since it was my intention to create the project with and for the community, it was important that I consider the impact of the work on others. In sharing the mural story through Rosie's perspective, this would reflexively allow me to consider my own role as a community art practitioner and filmmaker.

## Ethics of documenting street art and graffiti

As part of the Melbourne University research process, an ethics review was conducted and approved (ID: 1647919.1). This was necessary as careful consideration needs to be taken due to the criminal nature of some graffiti and street art. It would be unethical as a researcher to expose anyone who may be practicing criminal activity. As discussed in the last chapter, Ferrell (1995) was arrested in the process of studying graffiti practice, and this was something I wanted to avoid. However, there are many overlaps to what is considered legal and illegal. One street art practitioner that was not featured in the documentary told me anonymously, street artists often also tag. Therefore, trying to differentiate what is criminal and what is art is problematic in itself.

According to Reavey and Johnson (2008), "When participants are involved in generating the data the researcher also needs to attend to issues of informed consent and anonymity in line with the medium that is used." Therefore, two criteria were used in the selection of the participants. The first was to ensure all participants were over the age of eighteen. The second criteria involved only focusing on legal works. There was also a discussion with each participant before filming commenced so they were fully aware that we were focusing on legal work. If the participant revealed on camera that they participated in illegal graffiti, the footage would be deleted straight away in their presence.

Documentaries can often disregard ethics in order to expose something or for entertainment purposes (Koehler, 2012). "Such disregard of ethics tarnishes efforts

to make documentary film a serious and respectable pursuit.” The collaborative approach used ensured that the content in the film was agreed upon beforehand with the subjects before releasing to the public. This also created a sense of trust between my subjects and myself. “Knowledge is produced in conversation and negotiation between informants and researcher, rather than existing as an objective reality that may be recorded and taken home in a note book, camera film or tape,” (Pink, 2006).

One other issue was how to represent the Maribyrnong City Council. Despite the fact that Maribyrnong Council allowed me to interview and film Nicola Vance, Maribyrnong Council’s Public Arts Officer, they did not allow their footage to be included in the final documentary. This meant that the documentary could appear one sided. This was discussed with Vance, who said that government organisations often received criticism anyway. Therefore, the council’s contribution to this research is included in the thesis but not the final documentary film.

## Data Collection Through Surveys

Surveys were used to collect responses from the ‘Audience,’ who were not directly involved with the creation of the street art pieces in the documentary. By using surveys, I intended to obtain an understanding from the general demographic of Footscray, about their perceptions on multiculturalism, street art and graffiti. Ideally, I wanted to go out into the community and perform face to face interviews but decided to use digital methods to save time, reach more people and give them the option of being completely anonymous.

Using Google Forms, an online survey was created that provided full anonymity. All the questions were optional, allowing for the participants to be able to choose what opinions they wanted to provide. Then, using social media methods, the surveys were posted and invited people to provide responses. I primarily used a Facebook group that I had created a few years ago for a street art project. The URL for the group is still on the wall that the project was created on, which is an intersection in the middle of the Footscray CBD.

However, there are limitations to using these methods to obtain my sample. According to Sapsford (2007), “Sampling is about getting a group to survey, which is

enough like the population under investigation that valid generalizations can be made about the population on the basis of the sample.”

The following conditions needed to be met in order for this method to be successful:

1. The audience were people who were engaged with social media
2. The audience were people who saw the mural wall
3. The audience already had an interest in local street art
4. Participants are willing to participate in an online survey

To obtain a more reliable and greater number of responses, I posted in multiple online communities. “Only by conducting multiple online surveys with the same or similar types of Internet communities can researchers gain a reliable picture of the characteristics of online survey participants,” (Wright, 2005)

Past studies have shown minimal difference in response rates based on anonymity. For example, a study by Karsten Mueller, Tammo Straatmann, Kate Hattrup and Marco Jochum, (2014) found, “no significant differences in unit nonresponse and item nonresponse between participants who completed the survey under the personalized and password-controlled implementation strategy compared to those who received an impersonal form of address and were not required to use a password to complete the survey”. However, “A basic standard of ethical research is that prospective participants are able to make informed choices about whether or not to consent to participate,” (Roberts, Allen, 2015). With ethical considerations in mind, I have given survey participants the choice to provide a contact email address when completing the survey.

## Recorded Interviews

The second method of gathering information was through interviews with the intention that most of them will be used for the documentary. As I have already created a community street art project in the past, I already had many contacts in the community that were willing to assist me with the interviews and were able to recommend others to me. The community members chosen had a relationship to either Footscray or the street art featured in the documentary. In order to determine who should be interviewed, a list of key community members was compiled:

- Business owners
- Other artists working in the area
- Residents
- City Council workers

Using this list, the following people were chosen to be interviewed. Only Uncle Larry Walsh, Liana and Stuart's interview feature in the documentary, *Who made that?* (Appendix A). The rest are listed in the Appendix at the end of this thesis.

**Liana and Stuart Lucca Pope:** Owners of the Little Foot Bar and members of the Footscray Traders Association.

**Uncle Larry Walsh:** Uncle Larry is an Indigenous Elder in Residence at the Footscray Community Arts Centre.

**Nicola Vance (Appendix B):** Nicola is the Maribyrnong Council's Public Arts Officer and organised much of the StreetWORKS project.

**Jennifer Tran (Appendix C):** Jennifer lived in Footscray her whole life and is a community artist. She has facilitated several community art and design projects in the area.

**Katelynn Partanen (Appendix D):** Katelynn has also been a Footscray resident all her life. As a teenager, she participated in three local Footscray mural projects.

## Documenting Street Art

As presented in Chapter One, researchers have used varied techniques in order to capture street art including photography, film and in the case of the Berlin Wall, preserving the wall itself. Due to its transient nature, time is also an important factor as works are frequently buffed (painted over with solid colour), tagged or damaged in other ways, unless a process is in place to protect them. As some of the works presented in this research were created as part of the local council's StreetWORKS program, these would be fairly well protected for the duration of the research. However, not all the artists used this channel and in early 2016, the Maribyrnong Council initiated a clean-up program which included legal graffiti. Some of the works

considered for this research, including the Animated Wall Mural project, had been heavily tagged, and were also buffed.

The first consideration in the selection of works to evaluate, was whether they were involved in Maribyrnong Council's StreetWORKS program which legitimises their art from a legal viewpoint. Those that weren't involved in StreetWORKS were chosen based on the fact they were willing to talk publicly about their art and how they obtained permissions to produce it. Works were also chosen that reflected the community in some way or responded to what was happening Footscray or its surrounds at the time of creation.

The next step was to determine the method of documentation. As the ability to preserve the actual walls, such as in the case of the Berlin wall, was not possible, photography seemed to be the primary way to document street art due to its accessibility. Several street art blogs were documenting street art in the area, and helped provide a reference to what was being created and where. Surprisingly, Pokemon Go also became a resource as it became popular at the same time that I commenced my research. It featured street art in the area that I hadn't seen and providing the mapping information for me, proving to be a useful research tool. Within the game, "graffiti and street art are not just a backdrop for the game but rather a template for it and how to navigate urban space," (MacDowall, 2016).

Copyright laws surrounding street art also need to be researched to ensure that all the artists involved were properly acknowledged or compensated. According to the Australian Copyright Council, "you should consider obtaining permission from the copyright owner of the street art. Obtaining permission will reduce all risk of infringing copyright in the street art." (Australian Copyright Council, 2014). However, they also state that, "there are many exceptions in the *Copyright Act 1968*, including 'fair dealing' for the purposes of research or study," (Australian Copyright Council, 2014). Despite this exception, the decision was made to only feature street art in my research and documentary where I could obtain permission from the artist or artists.

## Filmmaking as Research

After considering multiple forms of capturing and presenting the data including short film, animation and multimedia installation, the final decision was to make a documentary. There were several reasons for this decision. First, this allowed me

to develop my own practice in Film and Television and the final film will be entered into film festivals to be shown to a wider audience. Also it allowed a combination of data gathering methods to be used including photography.

The definition of a documentary film can be widely interpreted, but a commonly accepted description by John Grierson is a, "creative treatment of actuality" (Nichols, 2010). In this instance, the actuality is presented through the actual people involved in the case studies and the events that took place. The creativity occurs in the editing process rather than through re-enactments, although there are some short animated sequences that represent what the documentary subjects talk about. However, the film will also have a voice through an interpretation of the information provided. This interpretation is presented through the creative elements of the filmmaking process such as the cinematography, editing and choice of materials.

In his book, *Introduction to Documentary*, Nichols (2010) proposes two ways of categorising documentaries. The first is the, "Preexisting nonfiction model," such as a diary or essay. The second is, "Distinct, cinematic modes," which use the observational or expository methods of editing sound and vision in a cinematic way.

Further classifications are given which can be used to give a, "better sense of the structure of any one documentary film," (Nichols, 2010). Using these classifications we can see how this film uses aspects of each model.

The nonfiction model is used by this film through:

**Testimonials:** The participants recount their experiences.

**Sociology:** The study of subcultures. In the case of this documentary, the primary subculture is graffiti/street art and its relationship and intersectionality with other cultures.

**Visual Anthropology/Ethnography:** The study of other cultures.

The Documentary of cinematic models used are:

**Participatory process:** The participants and filmmaker interact to some extent to shape the story.

**Reflexive:** This looks at the methodologies used in the filmmaking process.

The main method of data collection for the documentary would be through recorded interviews. According to Pink (2015), “interviews can invite ethnographers to participate in multiple sensory ways of knowing by incorporating a whole range of different embodied experiences and emotions into the narratives which are audio-recorded and taken away.” This multi-sensory approach to filmmaking allows more data to be captured than through transcribed or audio recorded interviews, such as expressions conveyed through body language.

The filmmaking process also allowed the participants to speak as practitioners of their culture. “In many ways, films allow the data more space to speak for itself,” (Eraso, 2006). In her article, *Reflecting Upon Interculturality in Ethnographic Filmmaking*, Laura Catalán Eraso writes, “Today, we are witnessing a change within non-fiction cinema in which cultural identities are being analysed and represented very differently from how they were in the past,” (Eraso, 2006). She talks about the shift from colonialist approaches to ethnographic films where, “cultural difference is increasingly freed from tight scientific conceptions,” (Eraso, 2006). Presenting a more fluid representation of cultural difference was important to providing multiple perspectives on multiculturalism.

## Selection of Documentary Subjects

Once a shortlist of artists and artworks was made based on their age (over 18) and legality of their works, the final artists were chosen using the following criteria:

- (1) They all created street art within Footscray within the research time frame 2014 - 2017
- (2) They were all “residents” of Footscray, whether that means they lived in Footscray or they had undertaken an artist residency in this time
- (3) The theme or subject of the work, involved a connection to community

The final artists chosen for the interviews were:

**Antonia Marshall/Trashort:** Antonia has been on the street art and graffiti scene in Melbourne for several years and also runs street art workshops at Footscray



Community Arts Centre. Being a community artist, I also interviewed community members who were part of her projects.

**Creature Creature:** Artist duo, Chanel Tang and Ambrose Rehorek are collectively referred to as one artist case study through this research. Their mural *Nest*, was a successful outcome of Maribyrnong Council's StreetWORKS project and explored the theme of migration.

**Larissa Macfarlane:** A disability artist and activist, Larissa is known for her paste ups of hand stands, detailed prints and putting a spotlight on disability in the arts.

**Rosie Kilvert:** Emerging Indigenous Artist who worked on my project, Footscray Animated Wall Mural in 2014. As a young representative of her community, I was aware of the pressure this would place on her, therefore, I also interviewed Indigenous elder, Uncle Larry Walsh who is her frequent mentor.

**Van T Rudd:** An activist and street artist, Van's work addresses human rights abuses, union rights and reflects his political activism.

The collaborative approach used to create the film ensured that the interviewees were willing participants in the process. Negotiations were conducted with each artist to determine what benefit they wanted from their participation. For some, it was the recording of their practice, and for others, it was the fact that the film would bring attention to their cause. There was also monetary compensation for their time in the form of vouchers or gifts.

## Sourcing Additional Material

A similar method for the collection of footage and images. Material was only chosen that not only complemented what the interviewees were saying but sometimes contradicted them. The intention was to balance their recollections with actual footage and photos to provide a complete story. All the materials were sourced internally to Footscray including using Footscray musicians and images from the Footscray Historical Society. In this way, the film would provide a more accurate representation of the people and places within the film.

As the film was partly retrospective, animated sequences could be created to fill in the gaps in my research. I tested one sequence with Creature Creatures artwork, *Nest* to illustrate their idea of having the birds approach a waratah flower. Testing this animation with the artists, they had a positive reaction to the use of animation but they wanted to ensure that people were clear that it wasn't their animation through the editing process. Animation proved to be an effective way to illustrate key points in an engaging way.

## Chapter Three: Setting the scene

As street art is public art, their environment in which they are situated can add importance to the intent of the work. This research and works are based within the boundaries of the suburb of Footscray, with the exception of a few works within Larissa's Snapshots of Seddon project. This chapter presents a history of Footscray, including the changing demographics and recent gentrification. This history is important to understanding the setting for the documentary and the location of the works that are featured in it.

Footscray is an inner city suburb in Melbourne, Australia, which lies within the municipality of Maribyrnong along the Maribyrnong river. It lies only 5 km from the Melbourne CBD and has a major train station that provides access to the western suburbs. European settlement was established in the area after Charles Grimes first arrived in 1803 ('Footscray, Victoria,' 2018). The suburb was built on the land of the Kulin nation. According to the Maribyrnong Council website, the area was originally home to the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung tribes of the Kulin nation for more than 40,000 years" (Maribyrnong Council Website, 2017).

Footscray has become home to migrants and asylum seekers of many, "Waves of migrants and refugees arrived from Europe after the Second World War, and by 1966 almost one-third of Footscray's population had been born overseas," (Cunningham, 2011). The Vietnam war led to another influx of migrants. Writers such as Alice Pung and Thuy Linh Nguyen, documented their experiences of growing up in the suburb in their work. Thuy, an Australian Vietnamese writer, described it as, "a Western-suburb frontier where people, "speak no English," (Nguyen, 2011). In her book, *Unpolished Gem*, Alice talks about her experiences as an immigrant from Cambodia, growing up in the suburb with her family. Incidentally, the electronic store that Alice's father operates in her story, provided the wall that was used in my project, the Footscray Animated Wall Mural, and Van Rudd's piece that featured Pauline Hanson which can be seen in the documentary.

Various organisations have established themselves in the suburb to cater to the growing diverse population. In 2012, the African Australian Community Centre was opened in response to a growing African community in the area. New student accommodation and facilities are part of a plan by Victoria University to turn Footscray into a university town (Victoria University, 2013). The Asylum Seeker

Resource Centre moved its premises into Footscray in 2014. Footscray Community Arts Centre also attracts artists from all over Melbourne. Events such as the *Laneway Festival* and the *Festival of Live Art*, have led to the Maribyrnong Council calling itself the 'Festival City.'

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2016) census data of Footscray reveal that, "The most common ancestries in Footscray (Western Metropolitan) (State Electoral Divisions) were Vietnamese 13.3%, English 12.9%, Australian 11.6%, Chinese 8.3% and Irish 5.1%." When responding to the question of ancestry, respondents were given the option of choosing two. Under half its residents were born in Australia at 45% and only 20.9% reported that both parents were born in Australia. Those who spoke only English at home consisted of 39.7% of the population (ABS, 2016). According SBS's Interactive online tool, *How diverse is my suburb*, Footscray is "Very Diverse" in Ancestry with a ranking #204 out of 15,305 suburbs listed in Australia ("How Diverse is," ND).

In the media, Footscray is often described as a 'melting pot' (Burin, 2016). The term "melting pot" was made popular by a play by Israel Zangwill who used the phrase as the title (McDonald, 2007). The phrase was used in the play to describe the races of Europe, as well as others, melting together into a new form. This melting of cultures implies that there is an integration of cultures to create the Footscray community. However, often the media articles often refer to the melting pot as a fusion of cuisine (Shanti, 2016). This diversity is also shown in the documentary with scenes showing the juxtaposition of new and old shops and restaurants.

Each of the documentary and interview participants were asked to name three words to describe Footscray. This question was also posed in the online survey, which was published on various online communities. Most participants were either born in or around Footscray or have lived in the suburb at some time. They used words such as 'vibrant' (2 instances), 'passionate' (2 instances) and 'eclectic'. These words reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood. Another common word associated with Footscray is 'Footscrazy' which is a popular hashtag on Instagram and Twitter. 'Footscrazy' stickers can also be found at the Dancing Dog Cafe in the centre of the suburb, alongside 'I love Footscray' merchandise.

One respondent described Footscray as 'scary' and another used the term 'hard edged.' These descriptors reflect the Footscray portrayed in the 1992 film, *Romper*

*Stomper* (Wright 1992). The film featured a neo nazi gang terrorising the Vietnamese community in the area and featured drug use. The area became known for high incidents crime and drug use reported in the media, especially with reports of drug deals at the train station (Byrne, 2015).

The media has also reported on incidents of solidarity within the community. When racist graffiti that appeared overnight on a predominantly Indian shopping strip in West Footscray, the community came together to clean up. The white supremacist, neo nazi, racist messages were quickly removed as residents came together to join business owners in cleaning up the graffiti. Local residents say the clean-up was to show their support for the area's 'multicultural identity' and was a way of 'living out our values' (Millar, 2016).

More recently, the suburb is known for the changes that have been occurring there. "The central business district gets a makeover with each migration wave" (Sidh, 2017). In the documentary, (Appendix A), Liana Lucca-Pope of Little Foot Bar and Footscray Traders Association, talked about how hard it is to define the area because "Footscray has changed so many times throughout its history.

## Gentrification

For the last few years, Footscray has been reported in the media as going through the process of gentrification. This has been observed by the rising cost of property in the area (realestate.com.au, 2018) and even the rising price of a bowl of Vietnamese pho (Hinchliffe, 2018). A 2011 Australian study on gentrification and displacement investigated its impact on community members using Maribyrnong, Footscay's municipality, as one of its locations for analysis. Some of the effects found by the study were a reduction of social diversity and community infrastructure for those who stay, and access to employees, employment and education due to high rent and displacement (Atkinson, Wulff, Reynolds, Spinney, 2011). The following analysis of current literature on gentrification in cities around the world, provides an understanding of the effects gentrification can have on a culturally diverse neighbourhood such as Footscray and the role street artists play as both gentrifiers, and activists against gentrification. As this research uses film the basis of this study, an analysis of films set in Footscray also provide insight to the changes the suburb has undergone.

Gentrification, as described by British sociologist Ruth Glass is described as the displacement of working class due to urban development and an increase in property prices (Glass 1964). Her study is based on demographic changes in London, but other cities such as New York and New Orleans in the USA, and Sydney in Australia have also been reported to have undergone the process as we can see from the examples given below.

Dickinson (2008) attributed the rise of graffiti in New York as a reaction to the restructuring of the city for economic benefit. Cultural projects can be problematic for certain political and economic projects if they cannot be assimilated in some way.” Street art projects initiated by government tend to align with the council’s plan for economic infrastructure. It is sometimes used to attract new investment into the area. In doing so, they may ignore the needs of the existing community.

Tara Foster’s (2013) research looked at the role of street art and graffiti in the gentrification of two New Orleans neighbourhoods. She argues that an ability to interpret street art will enable a greater understanding of the community, how it interacts with outside factors and even the overall global economy. Foster (2013) talks about, is how both street art, and multiculturalism have a cool factor is being used as cultural capital in a gentrifying society. They are used as draw cards to attract people to areas of development and gentrification. Cultural diversity is being treated as a “decorative” element in advertisements to make an area seem more appealing (Misra, 2015).

The publication, *There goes the Neighbourhood: Redfern and the Politics of Urban Space*, is a collection of articles about the NSW suburb of Redfern in Sydney, a hub for Indigenous activism. In the article, *Complexity, Aesthetics and Gentrification: Redfern/Waterloo Tour of Beauty*, Lucas Ihlein (2009) explores the role of the artist in the suburb’s gentrification. “Artists are seen as key gentrifiers. “We are able to invest energy into architectural waste structures, creating a connection between beauty and utility where there previously seemed to be none.” This in turn, “allows the broader property market to wake up to their potential for intensified commodification.”

The role artists play as gentrifiers is further explored in the work of Miguel De Oliver. In his journal article, *Gentrification as the appropriation of therapeutic ‘diversity’*, De Oliver (2016) discusses how cultural diversity was first used as device in

gentrification. He explains how this 'otherness,' becomes a selling point for the area and attracts artists and bohemians. This sets in motion the progression to a less diverse middle class moving into the area.

De Oliver (2016) explains the effect of gentrification on the economic dynamics of a community by further breaking down the steps in which this occurs. At first, public investment provides benefits such as equality and social justice are put in place which gives an advantage to the existing population. Seeing potential in the area, private investors enter the scene, which creates new residencies and businesses. Then state government investment further develops the area which leads to increased property prices and the population changes to a higher social class. With the change in population, investment and development refocuses from social services to more capitalist goals.

Monica Campana, founder of the Living Walls street art program in the USA believes a discussion of the role that street artists play in gentrification is an important one. "This should be a starting place for us to figure out the responsibility we all have as people that do work in the public space and with the public itself" (Rushmore, 2015). In response to the question posed in the title of the article, *Has street art sold out and gentrified our cities?* (Rushmore, 2015), she argues that the causes of gentrification of a city is dependent on its unique nuances. Therefore, we cannot make such a general assumption.

As well as being seen as gentrifiers, street artists have also used their work to retaliate against gentrification. Street artists in Germany are fighting the gentrification of their communities by destroying their art (Henke, 2014). A group of street artists in Bristol are using their work to preserve their culturally diverse neighbourhood (King, 2016).

In Footscray, that retaliation has been in the form of vandalism with local businesses such as 8 Bit Burgers, having their windows broken and insults spray painted on their buildings (Gough, 2017). In their interview, Little Foot Bar owners, Liana and Stuart Lucca-Pope, also reported attacks when they first opened, with accusations of being racist and gentrifying the neighbourhood.

The gentrification of Footscray can further be seen in the way it is portrayed on film. *Romper Stomper* (Wright 1992) showed a grittier Footscray where gangs roam the

streets. Paul Ireland and Damian Hill's (2015) film *Pawno* was also set in Footscray. In comparison, the suburb is presented as a "gentrified enclave." *Pawno* is centred around a pawn shop in Footscray where the main operators of the shop, played by white males, interact with the culturally diverse people around them. The characters that visit the shop are representative of the demographic changes in the suburb, where people from middle class families mix with junkies.

This research paper also uses filmmaking to further explore the relationship between multiculturalism and street art's role in gentrification through the documentary. In particular, we look at how the residents and artists themselves respond to this changing landscape and their role within it. Rather than using a narrative approach, the documentary seeks to understand gentrification directly through the experiences of the existing residents that call Footscray their home.



## Chapter Four: Case Studies

This chapter covers the making of the documentary, *Who Made That?* (Appendix A), which was created as the practice part of this research. It is advisable to watch the documentary prior to reading further. This chapter presents the background to their stories and highlights some of the key moments of the interviews conducted. This deeper analysis of the subjects provides a clearer understanding of their perspectives on street art and multiculturalism.

### Case Study 1: Rosie Kalina Kilvert

Rosie Kilvert (or Rosie Kalina as she describes herself in the documentary) was selected to participate in this study through her involvement in my project, the *Footscray Animated Wall Mura* which was created over 9 months in 2014. As such, this part of my research is also a reflexive study of my own role as a community artist and filmmaker. The documentary cuts between an interview of her in 2017 with images and footage of her working on the mural in 2014.

At the time of her involvement, Rosie had recently graduated from secondary school. Her experiences during and after the project provided the following insight:

- Being a youth representative of an Indigenous Australian community
- Working with an Indigenous elder
- The experience of working on a street art project for the first time
- Working within a collaborative community setting for the first time

First, I want to acknowledge that I am not of Indigenous Australian heritage so I needed to be aware of Rosie's culture and beliefs as well as that of Uncle Larry Walsh who also features in her section of the documentary. The reason why she is first in both the documentary as well as in this chapter is to pay respect to the fact that they are the first peoples of Australia. Also, as the researcher, I acknowledge the literature used in this research is by non-Indigenous theorists and therefore, great care needed to be taken the analysis process to be respectful to their communities. Using the ethnographic approach of collaborative filmmaking, Rosie was involved in all aspects of the filmmaking process from initial conception to final edit.

### **Background to the Footscray Animated Wall Mural project**

The Footscray Animated Wall Mural project was initiated in 2013 as part of my participation in the Footscray Community Arts Centre's Emerging Cultural Leaders program. As I was new to Footscray and as it was my first project involving Indigenous Australians, this consultation with the centre was key to ensuring as much community involvement as possible.

When I first requested permission to use the wall, an agreement was made with the owner of the property that the mural only needed to be on the wall for 12 months, after which, they could do what they wanted. This proved problematic later as this was included in some of the documentation for the project but for those who came later (such as Rosie), she was not fully aware of the agreement made.

Rosie came on board the project through the recommendation of Paola Balla, a Wemba Wemba & Gunditjmarra artist and activist, and Uncle Larry Walsh, an Indigenous Elder in Residence at Footscray Community Art Centre, who were consultants on the project. Rosie is the daughter of Paola Balla.

At the same time that Rosie was painting her Bunjil, another Bunjil was being painted on a different building. I found the artist who was commissioned to create the piece. We discussed the project, but in the end, he refused to participate in the research or the documentary. He expressed concern that it was my first documentary and also that I might raise controversial issues that be harmful to his reputation.

### **Interview**

The interview was conducted twice due to time limitations and noise issues on the first round of filming. The second round was conducted in her home which allowed her to relax more in a familiar setting. As we had worked on the Animated Wall street art project together, we discussed what topics we would cover within the interview. Using the collaborative approach discussed in Chapter Two, we determined the most important events in the project history and how she wanted to present her side of the story.

For Rosie, the destruction of our mural and the fact that the other Bunjil is well maintained, represents the continual fight by her community since colonisation.

Although she was quite candid in her interview, she did express feelings of disappointment and frustration. To quote her directly, “it’s not that surprising but it is disappointing,” (Appendix A).

We both made the decision not to name any other artists directly as she did not want to direct blame away from the council. Instead she used her interview as an opportunity to express frustration at a government system that does not allow her and members of her community to express themselves their way. As she said in the documentary (Appendix A), “the council prefers one aesthetic to the other.”

She was able to view the final edit of the video and only gave the comment to cut out a comment about the lack of Indigenous public art in Footscray because since the interview, she recalled that there were some examples she hadn’t thought about.

### **Uncle Larry Walsh**

Uncle Larry Walsh is the Elder in Residence at the Footscray Community Arts Centre. His contribution to the wall mural proved invaluable to Rosie as a young Indigenous representative. Rosie did not want the responsibility of representing the Indigenous community, so it was also important to have an elder that supported her. Upon hearing about this research, he recollected the story in the documentary about a non-indigenous artist commissioned to create a mural representing the Indigenous community. The story proved to be a perfect accompaniment to Rosie’s section of the documentary. Through Uncle Larry’s involvement, Rosie was able to have the support she needed from an elder in her community.

### **Case Study 2: Antonia Marshall/Trashort**

Antonia Marshall/Trashort (she refers to herself as Toni in the documentary) was one of the early artists selected for this project. She also participated on my project, the Footscray Animated Wall Mural project. This pre-existing working relationship proved beneficial as this was a collaborative documentary process.

Furthermore, Toni had experience working as an independent artist as well as had experience on several community street art projects including StreetWORKS. As she had varied experiences to share, several of her works is presented in the documentary. It was important to show the different ways she has engaged with diverse community members.

## **Interview**

Toni was filmed during a street art workshop she was running at Footscray Community Arts Centre. The workshop, Can Control, was for adults interested in learning spray can art. Since she is a community minded artist, this allowed me to get footage of her in action.

Upon conclusion of the workshop, Toni sat down for the interview. It was run very casually, allowing Trashort to direct the topics discussed. She primarily wanted to discuss three street art projects. The first was a youth project which was also a StreetWORKS project called, 'Creative Pathways'. Another was a StreetWORKS project she created with Little Foot Bar. The last was an International Women's Day mural.

### Project 1: StreetWORKS Creative Pathways

According to Nicola Vance, Maribyrnong Council's Public Arts Officer, StreetWORKS Creative Pathways was developed as an additional activity to the main StreetWORKS project. The project was run by Toni, working with young participants at Phoenix Youth Centre in Footscray. The youth centre services youth aged 12 - 25 in the community by offering activities such as music, sports and visual arts.

The main issue Toni raised was getting professionals involved as other artists didn't want to be associated with bad work by novices. Her theory was that, "the professionals should be able to guide the novices to make the final outcome work" (Appendix A). One of the participants, Katelynn Partanen, talked about the importance of having a clear vision and direction by a leading artist. Toni was able to direct the group to create a cohesive mural that both she and Katelynn were proud of. Katelynn also gave the example of another project where the participants were allowed to lead the project, creating what she described as, "all over the place" (Appendix D).

### Project 2: StreetWORKS

The second work Toni talked about was her involvement with the main StreetWORKS program where several artists are chosen to create a piece of work in a specific location. This part of the documentary led to some editing challenges because the perspective of the business whose fence she painted and the perspective of the artist were very different. Little Foot Bar signed up for the

StreetWORKs project to create something for their back fence that represented their love of community. Toni's original StreetWORKS project was to work with the local African community on a collaborative mural. She saw the community as a missing piece in the street art landscape of Footscray.

I interviewed the Little Foot Bar Owners first, Stuart and Liana Lucca Pope. This couple were already established in the Footscray community, running a coworking creative space, The Idea Collective. However, when they opened Little Foot Bar, they were vandalised and accused on being gentrifiers (Gough, 2017). More recently, they became committee members for the Footscray Traders Association, with Stuart being President.

Both parties expressed surprise when they first learned they were paired the two together for the StreetWORKS project. The bar had no association with the African community and Toni did not frequent the bar due to its prices and attacks by graffiti vandals for being a 'hipster' business (Gough, 2017). Liana, who is a graphic designer, had provided mood boards to council which did not fit Toni's style.

The decision was made from an ethical perspective that this information would be excluded from the documentary. This is because the vandalism caused great distress to Liana. According to Stuart, "My wife was very, very hurt by it because, if they took the time to know us, they would know that's not what we are about," (Gough, 2017). Its inclusion could be seen as breach of trust and also cause additional hurt to the couple and business. This editing decision was raised with Toni and we both agreed to focus on the council instead.

### Project 3: International Women's Day

This was the project Toni was most keen to talk about. It was early 2014 and StreetWORKS had only just started. Toni proposed a mural to the International Women's Day (IWD) event organisers rather than the Arts and Culture department of council. For this project, she collaborated on the design with other female street artists.

Problems arose when Arts and Culture became involved and directed her to follow the style of the other street work being created in the area by males. This direction was contradictory to the original purpose of the mural. In the end she took the

advice that was in her mural design to 'Stay strong,' and refused to give in and walked away from the project. The IWD organisers regained control of the project and Toni was able to create the mural as originally intended. This example represented the challenges women artists face in the industry.

### Case Study 3: Creature Creature

Chanel Tang and Ambrose Rehorek who form the artistic duo, Creature Creature, were involved in StreetWORKS in its third year. They are the only artists who have not lived in Footscray and are also not originally from Victoria. Ambrose moved to Melbourne from South Australia and Chanel came from New Zealand.

#### **Interview**

Due to sound issues, their part of the documentary was also reshot which allowed the pair time to think about what they wanted to express about themselves. They decided to focus on duality and collaboration which worked well for the documentary as their story represented union within diversity. As Chanel said, "this kind of philosophy of dualism and balance," (Appendix A) are themes they want to continue to explore. They only informed me they were getting married as they were being interviewed, and this event proved to be a perfect ending to their story.

The pair did not have a consultation session with the community but were asked by council to acknowledge the community in their concept. Initially they did come up with an idea involving images of residents of different backgrounds. However, after some consultation with council, they decided to go with the more abstract concept of migration, represented through several foreign birds being drawn to a waratah flower. The idea was to celebrate the diversity of Footscray by recognising the impact of migration. This piece, *Nest*, was created on the wall of the Milking Station Cafe, which is located away from the Footscray CBD. Overall the couple had a positive experience with many community members complimenting them on their work. Any tagging by graffiti vandals of StreetWORKS pieces has been removed by council cleaners but the piece has also rarely been tagged.

### Case Study 4: Larissa MacFarlane

When I arrived to interview Larissa, she excitedly tells me she has reached maturity in her new life at the age of 18. According to her birth certificate, she is older, but since her accident, she has started her life again as an artist. Having only

started practicing art since her accident, she has found used her street art as a way to create, “safe spaces,” (Appendix A) for herself.

Larissa came on board quite late in the project. Having already secured four participants, I was keen to keep the project contained. However, when talking to Larissa, I mentioned that I felt I covered enough angles. Larissa then said pointedly to me, “have you covered the disability angle?” Most of this research has focused on ethnocultures. However, for Larissa, she wanted to talk about creating a, “culture of disability,” (Appendix A).

### **Interview**

As a community artist, I understand the considerations needed when working with someone who has a disability. Therefore, she was able to choose the location of the interview, which was her home, to maximise comfort. Also we reviewed the topics and questions to be asked so there were no surprises. A more structured interview approach is what was required in Larissa’s case so that she could express herself clearly.

In her interview, Larissa mainly talked about her project, *Snapshots of Seddon* and her desire to give an identity to those whom she felt were unseen by the community. She identified the need for this recognition after failing to see any for the disability community in her local Seddon Festival.

During the editing of the film, Larissa had an artist residency at Footscray Community Arts Centre. As part of her residency, she put together a wall of paste ups for disability pride as part of the, ‘One Night in Footscray,’ arts event. The work was created to celebrate International Day of People with a Disability (IDPD). However, as shown in the end of the documentary, the wall was cleaned within a few days so it is uncertain if it lasted until IDPD.

### **Case Study 5: Van T Rudd**

Van T Rudd is a regular contributor to the Melbourne Street Art scene and is known for his controversial political works. We first talked via Facebook messenger and then organised to meet for the filming. He was very communicative, and sat down with me for a coffee first to get to know me and just talk ‘art.’

### **Background to Rudd's work**

The reason I first contacted Van was to talk about his mural of a bulldog urinating on the face of politician Pauline Hanson. The mural was censored by council who painted over Hanson's face but left the dog. The mural was a response to Hanson's recent rhetoric towards the Muslim community. She has made comments such as calling Islam, "a disease Australians need to vaccinate themselves against," (Remeikis, 2017).

According to the 2016 Census data, 6.1% of Footscray residents identify as Muslim. This is almost double the total percentage of Victoria which is at 3.3%, and higher still than that of Australia as a whole at 2.6%. Therefore, the positioning of Rudd's work within Footscray shows how street art can reflect community attitudes, opinions and values.

### **Interview**

Van's interview was the longest interview, simply because Van was very passionate about his political views. He expressed frustration that although he has received wide media attention, a lot of his views are edited out by journalists. When editing his video, I had to balance what was important to his work and not get too distracted by anything that wasn't relevant.

We discussed what topics we could cover at the start and I reassured him that I will do my best to get his points across. Through this discussion, a shared intent was determined for his interview. For him, the intent was to express his political views and for myself as the researcher, the intent was to show who he was as an artist and what drives his activism.

When I finished editing his video, I sent him a copy to review. He just had some comments about how he wanted the whole artwork to be seen instead of being zoomed in too much, but overall he was pleased with the result. Once again, using a collaborative process enabled a shared intent to the interview.



## Chapter Five: Multicultural theory

Multiculturalism as the plural of culture, is a word that has been used by politicians and theorists to describe a range of societal interactions. This chapter reviews these different approaches from the lived experiences of those in the community to the work of multicultural and intercultural theorists. These theories are then applied to the case studies in the documentary to understand how these theories can affect such projects. We then examine how these theories have formed current interpretations of multiculturalism in the community and in policy.

Culture is a complex term that has been used to describe shared characteristics such as ethnicity, race, gender and religion. Kymlicka (1996) writes, "If culture refers to the 'civilization' of a people, then virtually all modern societies share the same culture." Parekh (2006) describes culture as a, "system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives". According to Kenan Malik (2012), Multiculturalism has, "come to have two meanings that are all too rarely distinguished. The first is what I call the lived experience of diversity. The second is multiculturalism as a political process, the aim of which is to manage that diversity."

My experience is based on the former. As a Chinese Indonesian migrant who grew up in St Kilda, 'multicultural' to me was a way to describe my identity. When I moved to Footscray, I was twice mistaken for a local Footscray Market worker in the first week. It was the first time I wasn't asked where I was from and was instead mistaken for a local. This experience led me to understand multiculturalism as a lived experience in the community.

As part of this research, an online survey was sent out to online community groups. One of the questions was: 'Define what "multicultural" means to you?' Almost all the responses talked about the co-existing of cultures. Most of the respondents referred to the peaceful coexistence of people from different cultures or backgrounds. Only a third specifically referenced 'ethnicity.'

However, when politicians such as UK former Prime Minister David Cameron (Taylor, Wright, 2011) and Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel (Weaver, 2010) state that multiculturalism has, "failed," in their respective countries, they are using Malik's second definition of multiculturalism as a political. Their comments were

directly in response to immigration, and to some extent, terrorism. They both talked about the need for immigrants to integrate into the majority culture. This distinction between lived experience and the political approach can be explained by comparing multiculturalism and interculturalism.

## Multiculturalism vs Interculturalism

According to Charles Taylor (2012) multiculturalism is the recognition of difference whereas interculturalism focuses more on integration. He believes Quebec has an intercultural story because of its long line of ancestry and integration of its two languages, French and English. However, Taylor (2012) describes the rest of Canada as more multicultural where there is a recognition of difference.

Furthermore, many people in today's society have a multicultural identity. "Faced with such diversity, multicultural individuals need to manage and organize their different and possibly clashing cultural identities within their general sense of self," (Yampolsky, Amiot & Sablonniere, 2017). In these instances, a person cannot be easily placed into a one culture or another. Therefore, when describing identity within a person, multicultural is more practical a term than intercultural.

Interculturalism would be better used to describe the policies that assist with the integration of one group to another. It is therefore clear that multiculturalism and interculturalism, though inherently the same, are to be used in different context, depending on the subject that is being addressed and the location that the terms are used. For the purposes of this research, we will focus on existing multicultural theory as a whole as the multicultural identity is important to understanding the artists and the Footscray community.

## Multicultural policy

To understand how this more political form of multiculturalism within our documentary, we need to look at how the Maribyrnong Council has defined multiculturalism in their policies.

This review of their policies provide a basis for understanding the council's understanding of the topics explored in this research. This also provides a background to how the StreetWORKS project has been run and also the council's role in my case studies.

There are four Maribyrnong Council documents included in this review:

- The Maribyrnong Council Plan 2017 - 2021
- Multicultural Policy 2012 – 2017
- Indigenous Policy 2013 - 2018
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2016/2017

According to the council's Multicultural Policy (2012), culture is defined in the glossary as, "The way of life of a particular society or group; its customs, language and values." The focus of this definition is on ethnicity. Multicultural society is defined as, "one that respects people's right to their culture, faith and identity and where people are treated as equal regardless of their cultural background." Within the definition of 'multiculturalism,' the council states that, "cultural diversity is recognised, celebrated and does not require assimilation." The last three words already separates their view of multiculturalism from that of Europe. Unlike Europe, this policy states that Maribyrnong Council does not recognise the need for integration.

Within their Multicultural Policy (2012), the council also acknowledge, "Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are an important part of our City's multiculturalism." However, they refer separately to a 4 year Indigenous Policy (2013) and a two year Reconciliation Action Plan (2016). We further evaluate the Reconciliation Action Plan and Indigenous Policy below under 'Multiculturalism and Indigenous Australians.'

This research has found some clear links between Maribyrnong Council's policy and multicultural theory. The following are a further exploration of how these theories have influenced policy makers, politicians and the documentary case studies.

## Liberal Egalitarian approach

Multiculturalism has been used by liberals as an egalitarian approach to the rights of minority groups. The Canadian philosopher, Will Kymlicka (1996), relates minority rights to whole groups, "group rights," and identifies others as, "individual rights," which relate to individuals within a minority. In his book, *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka (1996) identifies two forms of minority groups based on race and nationality. "National Minorities," who live their own lives alongside majority culture, such as indigenous groups. The second is, "Ethnic groups," who integrate into the

majority culture, ie. immigrants. He argues that these rights are important to address injustices against minorities that are born into their situation without choice. However, there are problems with using the term minority and majority to categorise people of multicultural identity. However, the overall intent of the approach to providing equal rights can lead to more opportunities to engage in activities such as street art.

Religion is often used to define cultural differences between the majority and minority culture. Once again, this homogenises the religion and disregards difference. For example, the rights and behaviours of Islamists in Indonesia are very different to those in other countries such as Saudi Arabia (Song, 2009). Grouping all those of Muslim faith together into a 'minority' group ignores these differences within the religion and can lead to Islamophobia. According to Gabriel Marranci, "Islamophobia is a 'phobia' of multiculturalism," (Marranci, 2004). It is this lack of differentiation amongst Muslims that has driven artists such as Van to create his work to fight against such injustices.

People of mixed ancestry or backgrounds also can't be neatly categorised into 'majority' and 'minority' groupings. For example, Van T Rudd has parents of different ethnicity where one belongs to a 'minority' group and the other belongs to a 'majority.' Also, according to the latest ABS Statistics (2016), the top ancestry in Footscray is Vietnamese. Therefore, Van's Vietnamese mother could be considered a majority in Footscray but a minority in other parts of Australia. The complexities of mixed heritage are too difficult for these groupings.

Taking out the minority/majority component, egalitarian theory does have positive outcomes in that the goal is to achieve equality for all. In his critique of multiculturalism, Brian Barry believed that looking at multiculturalism through a process of political management and policy would, "only benefit those who benefit most from the status quo." Instead he suggests an egalitarian approach to multiculturalism where the goal is freedom, equality and liberty (Barry, 2001).

Applying Barry's egalitarian approach to the art world, Young (2013) believes that street art and graffiti are egalitarian in nature where the artist may be trying to, "avoid the often exclusive institutions of the art world." Artists, Larissa Macfarlane and Van T Rudd have both quoted this as one of the reasons they moved from gallery spaces to the street. They both said that by exhibiting on the streets, their costs to install the

work are lower and they can share the work with a greater audience. In this instance the egalitarianism of street art transcends class systems.

We can also apply egalitarian theory in the way Larissa practices her community art. She identified that some people with a disability may not be able to participate in programs like StreetWORKS because they have lost their writing skills. Through her work Larissa wants to provide a means for these people so that they can still be able to participate in street art. This approach is reflective of the intent behind Kymlicka's (1996) liberal egalitarian theory in providing inclusive rights.

## Recognition

In his work, "*Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition*, Taylor (1994) discusses the theory of recognition. According to Taylor, in cases of oppression, such as that of "blacks," indigenous people or women, "misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need," Taylor (1994). This recognition gives them a sense of value or worth. It enables them to demand rights and equal treatment from their oppressors by recognising in themselves, that they are worthy of such equality. He also identifies different forms of recognition such as group recognition and self-recognition.

Taylor (1994) also refers to the writings of Rosseau about the importance of morality in oneself and our inner voice while also acknowledging that self-recognition involves interactions with others. This includes self-expression of both body language and speech. This interaction also overcomes the, "difference-blindness," to some extent in that it includes how we behave with those around us as a recognition of ourselves in others, despite our race, gender or religion.

Misrecognition is one of the driving forces behind Larissa's work. In her interview, she talks about how people with a disability are often misrepresented in modern Australian society. She wants society to recognise, "There are many ways to be disabled," (Appendix A) Larissa's self-expression is through body language. More specifically, it is through her ability to do handstands that she is able to self-recognise. Her 'Disability Pride' wall and 'Snapshots of Seddon' project reflected her desire to give an identity to the disability community who she felt were unseen by the community. This aligns with the need for recognition for her community. She

identified the need for this recognition after failing to see any representation for the disability community in her local Seddon Festival. She also sees this self-recognition as a way of understanding her interaction with others. Her practice allows her to reflexively understand her own disability identity as well as her identity as part of her disability community.

## Feminist perspectives

Many theorists have discussed the relationship between multiculturalism and feminism, such as considering which should take precedence when they come into conflict. Susan Moller Okin (1999) argues that feminism should take precedence where a group is given the freedom to practice cultural traditions which may oppress women. However, theorists such as Kukathas (2001) and Song (2013) present alternative perspectives, arguing that Okin's theory does not consider the similarities between multiculturalism and feminism, and makes generalisations on culture. Song suggests new feminist approaches to multiculturalism that enables female practitioners of a culture to have a greater voice. One of our documentary participants, Toni also highlighted the issue of the gender wage gap in street art. Although there is little data to show how multiculturalism affects the gender wage gap, other studies have shown multiculturalism as having a positive effect on gender equality as a whole.

According to Chandran Kukathas (2001), the multiculturalism and feminism are not mutually exclusive as, "Both have their roots in certain enlightenment ideas about the value of individual freedom, the importance of human dignity, and the need for toleration rather than the suppression of difference or disagree." He also acknowledges the tensions between the two but argues against government domination of culture to conform to a majority culture. His argument is that monocultures can cause more harm to freedom than multiculturalism, which in turn could also affect the freedom of women within that culture.

Song (2013) also presents counter arguments to Okin's, "generalizations about such cultures," (Song 2009). For example, the wearing of a veil by Muslim women can be seen as oppressive but, "Many Muslim feminists see veiling as an empowering practice" (Song, 2013). In the street art scene, Shamsia Hassani defies generalisations about Muslim females by practicing her art on the streets of Kabul (Hassani, 2018). Song (2013) argues that using examples of oppression within

minority cultures feeds into stereotypical views of those cultures, rather than considering the diversity and nuances within them. Song presents several new feminist approaches to issues in multiculturalism instead. One argument is for, “drawing on the voices of those affected by the practices in question.” Also those who are directly affected should have a greater voice.

In our documentary, Toni (Antonia Marshall/Trashort) gives a feminist perspective of her culture. Although street art may not be considered an oppressed culture, she has still experienced oppression within it. She gave an example where the council directed her design to be more like the ‘boys.’ This example is reflective of Kukathas’ (2001) argument against allowing government domination of culture but instead allowing for freedom within it. Toni applied Song’s (2013) approach by demanding a greater voice for herself as a woman who was creating a work for women. By speaking up for her rights, she gave a voice to the people who would be directly affected by the work.

Toni also touched on the subject of economic inequalities. In the Australian Council for the Arts report, *Making Art Work*, (Throsby, Petetskaya, 2017) those identifying as female artists in Australia in the financial year 2014/2015 achieved a mean income of \$41,600. This was 25% less than their male counterparts who earned a mean income of \$55,100.

There is little research to show what effect multiculturalism has on the gender wage gap but there is some research on how it impacts gender equality. A study in the US examined the impact of multiculturalism on the division of labour in the household and found that in multicultural countries, living in multicultural societies created, “more egalitarian gender ideologies,” (Kwon, Mahutga and Admire, 2017). This in turn led to, “dramatic reductions in housework for immigrant women.” Although this does not directly address the gender wage gap, the study does argue for a consideration of the impact of multiculturalism on gender equality.

## Multiculturalism and Indigenous Australians

According to Duncan Ivison (2008), while some countries may use the term, ‘multicultural,’ to include their Indigenous societies, “‘multiculturalism’ is not generally used to refer to the situation of indigenous peoples in Australia. This is because there is a prior question about the legitimacy of the state.” Ivison believes that

reparation for past injustices must be addressed first in order to move forward towards a multicultural society. This lack of atonement is evident through Rosie's case study. Citing the case study of the Dene people of Canada, Coulthard argues for self-determination as a way to empower people of Indigenous cultures.

For Indigenous communities in Australia, Ivison (2008) believes that the history of past injustices must be addressed through some form of reparation such as recognition of those injustices. Ivison argues that this form of recognition is necessary for "preserving and maintaining a democratic way of life" (Ivison 2008). Also by attempting to understand how these events shape today's society and policies, this may better enable us to understand ourselves and how we treat others who may be different to us.

A current day example of this is the debate surrounding Australia Day. Continuing to celebrate on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January is seen by many as a disregard for those injustices. Indigenous Australians have employed street art and graffiti techniques to decolonise, such as the, 'no pride in genocide,' tags seen around Sydney in the lead up to Australia Day in 2017 (Mokak, 2017).

Self-determination is recognition that comes from within the group, and is acknowledged by the dominant authority such as a government body. If the dominant culture is to one to determine how a culture is recognised, this can be seen as another form of oppression. Coulthard examined the politics of recognition through the case study of the Dene peoples of Canada in their *Agreement in Principle between the Dene Nation and Her Majesty the Queen, in Right of Canada, 1976*. In this agreement, they outlined a set of principles for recognition, self-determination and self-governance over their land, economy and way of life (Helm et al, 2000). Coulthard uses Fanon's view of self-determination to argue, "the colonized must initiate the process of decolonization by first recognizing themselves as free, dignified and distinct contributors to humanity" (Coulthard, 2007). By instigating the recognition in themselves first, this empowers them to demand recognition in others.

According to Rosie Kilvert, "there has been no treaty" and therefore, she sees urban development in Australia as the effect of colonisation on stolen land. This relates to Ivison's theory that some form of 'reparation' is needed by Indigenous Australians for past injustices. Uncle Larry Walsh also gave the example of a street artist that was commissioned by the council to represent their community. In this example, the



recognition came from a government body without any consultation, and therefore was seen as a form of oppression.

Rosie argues for more street art to be employed by the Indigenous Australian community to decolonise urban spaces, such as the 'no pride in genocide' tags. In the Justice for Elijah march in Melbourne, she observed that political statements such as the red paint spilled on the ground, are met with arrests. This conflict of space and ownership still exists because of the lack of atonement for historic injustices. "Whether it be a small tag, an engraving of the Aboriginal flag in wet concrete, or a large scale mural cascading down the side of a city building, it will always be a reminder to the viewer that they are on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land, that sovereignty was never ceded, and we always have and will continue to fight" (Mokak, 2017).

These theories for reparation, recognition and self-determination can already be seen within Maribyrnong's policies. Within their Indigenous Policy (2013), there is a strong focus on participation and self-determination. Within 'Relationships,' one point is to, "Encourage Indigenous Australians to participate in public consultations". In the section for 'Opportunities,' several points start with, "Support Indigenous Australians to express and share their culture....". These point reflect to the self-recognition that the Dene people of Canada asked for. As with the Indigenous Policy (2013), The Reconciliation Action Plan (2016) states as one of its points, "Increase participation and representation by Indigenous people on Council committees and other decision making structures".

These policies exhibit the council's intention to provide a means of reparation with the local Indigenous community through engagement and opportunities for self-recognition. However, based on the experiences of Rosie and Kilvert and Uncle Larry Walsh, it seems these policies are not flowing through to their public art programs.

## Moral Universalism

Some theorist argues for more universal approaches to managing cultural difference and multiculturalism. According to Parekh (2006), society should not tolerate anything that is against the morals of the majority cultures, such as arranged marriages or polygamy. He instead argues for the use of 'universal human rights'

such as protecting others from harm. Kukathas (2008) argues for a less governed and more peaceful approach, whereas Bhabha (2012) argues for the use of art and literature as a way to navigate difference. This application for universal rights has been employed by council in their policies and the artist duo, Creature Creature, through their work.

In his article, *Moral Universalism and Cultural Difference*, Kukathas (2008) argues that the application of global morals goes against Coulthard's argument for self-determination and decolonisation. He believes an application of universal rights may diminish diversity by enforcing global restraints on cultural practice. Kukathas (2008) warns against taking a too aggressive approach in the pursuit of a universal justice and instead suggests working towards the, "preservation of peace," Kukathas (2008). This argument for peace aligns with the descriptions of multiculturalism by the Footscray community. Most online survey respondents talked about living alongside other cultures in harmony.

Bhabha (2012) wrote that art and literature, as an exploration of culture and difference, highlights how art can be used to navigate that space between differences in a more fluid way. Bhabha (2012) believes the interstices of culture is what fosters creative invention. That "in-between" of the classifications of race, religion and gender are being constantly redefined in modern day. His approach is the acknowledgement of our differences rather than our grouping. Trinh (2013) also sees difference as something that, "should be understood within the same culture, just as multiculturalism as an explicit condition of our times exists within every self."

Creature Creature's exploration of duality looks at that fluidity and difference between cultures described by Bhabha and Trinh (2013). Their creativity comes from both within themselves, but also through their collective identity. Their inquiry into the space between cultures is evident in the subject and themes of their work where, east meets west and creatures come into conflict but also harmony.

Maribyrnong Council's Multicultural Policy (2012) draws upon international and national conventions of diversity, human rights and discrimination and reference the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, they mention their commitment to rights such as "recognition", "equality" and "freedom." We can apply the theory of moral universalism to their approach as they reference universal human rights conventions as a basis for this policy.

It seems universally agreed upon to some degree, that culture is based on humanity, and as such, we could imply that multiculturalism is the recognition of our diversity as humans. According to Parekh (2006), multiculturalism is, “best seen neither as a political doctrine with programmatic content nor as a philosophical theory of man and the world but a perspective on human life.”

## Chapter Six: Findings and Themes

In the last chapter, we have reviewed how multicultural theory can be applied to our case studies and has shaped policy that affects such projects. This chapter reviews some of the key findings of the ethnographic documentary process as a reflexive practice, and the council's evaluation of the StreetWORKS program. In light of the challenges to the Footscray community through gentrification, this chapter also examines how street art can be used as a positive response to this change through activism, increased community involvement, and recognition instead of representation.

### Outcomes from the Documentary

The multicultural theories discussed in the last chapter not only apply to the case studies but to the documentary itself. Applying Taylor's (1994) theory of recognition, the collaborative documentary process empowered the participants to self-recognise and self-determine. The methods used also provided insight into the collaborative filmmaking process. The needs of each participant took precedent over traditional techniques of directing the way the participants responded to camera. Reflexively, the documentary also enabled me to consider my own practice as artist and filmmaker within the community. For some of our subjects, "it is not only the results of the research that impact on the lives of the participants, but also for the process becomes empowering," (Pink, 2006).

As Rosie Kilvert and I had a shared experience of working on the Footscray Animated Wall Mural project together, collaborating on the documentary was a natural next step. Through using a reflexive ethnographic approach, we were able to predetermine the content to present for mutual benefit. For Rosie, she was able to address issues that were important to her and also to showcase her talents as a visual and makeup artist. As a researcher, her case study allowed me to understand multiculturalism from an Indigenous Australian point of view. Also, I was able to address the injustice that Rosie encountered through my project, where her work was painted over in favour of another work by a non-Indigenous artist.

The approach used for each interview was very informal and each artist was asked to think about what they want to say about their work. The questions were very open and invited discussion, a story or anecdote from the participant. The same technique

was used for the non-artists such as Nicola Vance from the council and the owners of Little Foot Bar.

The participants could also direct the questioning. For example, Creature Creature talked about their work, 'Nest,' representing an issue in the community. When asked for more information about why the theme of migration was considered an issue, they quickly dismissed the topic. I allowed them to change the direction of the interview and did not press the matter. They later admitted that they avoid any politics or controversy in their work and instead want to focus on making work with a positive impact. I respected their view and incorporated this positivity into their part of the documentary.

As Rosie and Larissa MacFarlane expressed more discomfort or vulnerability at being filmed, they chose to speak to me rather than the camera. This produced some inconsistency as other participants looked directly at the camera. However, this produced a more natural result as Larissa and Rosie were more comfortable and conversational. I made sure to maintain eye contact with them during the interview, while still checking the footage through the camera display. As the camera had a viewfinder, this provided a non-intrusive way to check the footage.

For Van T Rudd, Toni Marshall (Trashort) and Creature Creature, the intentions for their participation was to engage with other artists about their work. This may be the reason they look directly at the camera more than the others. For Van, his intention was to encourage other artists to engage in activism. Toni wanted other female artists to stand up for themselves. Creature Creature's intent was to promote collaboration and exploration of duality through their work. In their interviews, my camera presented a way for them to promote both their work and their ideas to others. For their interviews, I looked more at the footage through the viewfinder. Through using this technique, I played the role of filmmaker and audience member.

The fact that I am a female filmmaker may have played a role in the selection of artists featured in the documentary. It was not my intent to choose mainly female artists and I actually did approach three male artists initially. One male artist was keen to collaborate but wasn't situated in Melbourne. The second didn't reply and the third questioned my ability to create a documentary. Had I been a white male documentary maker, perhaps the final artists presented in the film would be different.

Trinh (2013), describes the relationship between filmmaker and subject as outsider looking in. When I changed my role from a street art practitioner to a filmmaker documenting street art, I did not see my role change to an insider looking in, but rather one that is both. According to Trinh (2013), when an insider steps out, “She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside. Like the outsider, she steps back and records what never occurs to her the insider, as being worth or in need of recording.”

As a person who is considered by some to be a ‘minority’ or an ‘other, I reflexively evaluate my place within both the filmmaking and the broader community. In the last chapter, I identify myself to be multicultural and therefore, my work is culturally diverse. To quote Trinh (2013), “Whether we choose to concentrate on another culture, or on our own culture, our work will always be cross cultural,” (Trinh, 2013). I see my role not as a female non-Western street artist turned filmmaker, but as a community artist with a responsibility to represent the community. I present this research as an artist who works on Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri land and wants to pay respect to the people of the land as well as show others how to navigate this space. As an ethnographic filmmaker, my intention is to present the stories in a way that is true to the experiences of the subjects.

## Outcomes from StreetWORKS

As the council did not participate in the documentary, their findings have been presented separately. Some of the key issues that we have raised are already being addressed by council. Nicola Vance has managed the StreetWORKS program at the council, and had put together some findings from the program which she shared with me to include in my research.

The fact that the project ran over several years allowed the council to make necessary adjustments to the program and improve it from year to year such as increased community engagement requirements and having clear objectives and guidelines. They recently ran a public art forum, inviting any interested community members to be involved. This shows their willingness to increase community engagement.

The council listed both the Bunjil work they commissioned, and a paste up of a portrait of Uncle Larry Walsh as the two works they have received community praise

for. Attempts to recognise the Indigenous community has had a positive outcome for them. By employing their Reconciliation Plan more effectively, and employing theories of self-determination, projects such as the one that Uncle Larry Walsh protested, could be a form of reparation with the local Indigenous community. This reparation can help with overall social cohesion at a time when the original residents are being moved out due to gentrification.

In their analysis of the StreetWORKS project, Maribyrnong Council also found that there is a benefit to supporting local artists. However, as mentioned by Jennifer Tran, many of the artists selected are not from the area. According to Vance, there were not many entries from local artists. But she was open to the idea of possible mentoring of local artists. Jennifer also expressed interest in being partnered with a more professional artist.

The removal of Larissa's Disability Pride mural was in conflict with the council's Multicultural Policy (2012) which states, "Council represents a multicultural City where cultural diversity is part of everyday life and everyone feels part of the community and is free to express their culture and identity." This shows that not only do the policies need to be in place, they also need to be active within each department. According to Vance, they did not reference Maribyrnong Council's Multicultural Policy when developing StreetWORKS. In Larissa's case, even though the policy is in place, it also needed to be actively enforced throughout all the departments and with the contractors they work with.

## Gentrification and the challenges ahead

Although gentrification as defined by Glass is about economic changes, "For many displacees what they saw going around them was emblematic of a broader loss of diversity and the intrinsic interest and social authenticity of places that they had made their homes," (Atkinson, Wulff, Reynolds & Spinney, 2011).

In the case of Footscray, the StreetWORKS program has been criticised by local residents such as Larissa Macfarlane and Jennifer Tran in relation to who was chosen by council to create the street art. In a couple of the documentary interviews, the fact that external street artists were coming in to create work was seen as a consequence of gentrification. If Footscray is to retain its diversity, the council will need to address gentrification.

Larissa's work is all about space, connection to that space and creating safe spaces. According to Larissa, she didn't feel a connection to the work created by artists outside of the area because, "I want to know that person has either personal connection to the space of connection via other people," (Appendix A).

Rosie commented on how the removal of her Bunjil over the one the council commissioned was an example of the how the council, "prefers one aesthetic to another," (Appendix A) without consideration of the meaning behind the work. She believes the reason for this is that gentrification brings increased income to the area and therefore, "they would definitely want the artwork to go along with it," (Appendix A).

One of the key things to note the current Maribyrnong Council Plan (2016) is that it includes a Health and Wellbeing Plan. One of its core goals is, "A vibrant, diverse and progressive city striving for a sustainable future." If they are committed to sustaining diversity, they should consider addressing gentrification as a threat to that diversity.

## Increased Community Engagement

A balance of community involvement and artistic intervention was seen as important by both Nicola Vance and workshop participants such as Katelynn Partanen. Community consultations can provide insight to how the community will respond to the work and can help generate support for the work. Partanen was involved in three community murals and in her interview, she highlights the importance of having a clear plan and an experienced artist to guide the project. Community murals can also be a way to enhance community cohesion in the face of gentrification.

Welch (2016), who lived and worked in several cities around the USA and participated in community art projects in these areas believes, "community based organizations, churches, and schools are ideal agents to help reclaim marginalized urban spaces through murals," (Welch, 2016). She saw first-hand how the act of working together created a sense of community ownership and investment. This implies that a sense of "self determination" was felt among the community to reclaim this space as theirs. She also talks about how the *Aqui y Alla* mural in South Philadelphia, USA by Michelle Angela Ortiz, allowed youth participants to express



their connection to their Mexican heritage and families. The work, “engaged the voices of many teens in similar situations, who feel torn between two countries,” (Welch, 2016). This addresses cultural identity without categorising the teens as a ‘majority’, ‘minority,’ or ‘other.’

Langdon’s mural at the Bryant Centre, was situated in Omaha, USA where there was, “a rich community heritage that tells stories of resistance against discrimination and class disparity amidst struggles for civil rights, survival, and hope,” (Langdon, 2016) The artist found that the youth that she was working with at the Centre to create the mural were the descendants of the activists from the 1960s. Murals such as this could be used as a way to address injustices of the past, by providing means of recognition and self-determination among young people in the area.

Something else that enable community members to be involved in street art is space. Both Larissa MacFarlane and Jennifer Tran talk about Madden Square in Footscray being a hub for local street artists. The egalitarian nature of the space allowed people of all skills to create. Unlike group murals, this allows the participants to express their individuality. According to Larissa, it’s important to have a space where people can, “learn how to make marks so they can get better.”

Workshops such as “Can Control” with Trashort and paste up workshops with Baby Guerilla, by the Footscray Community Arts Centre(FCAC), are other examples of how organisations can provide space for skill development. However, FCAC are independent from council and there is a cost involved in participating in their workshops.

Without space, programs such as Can Control and community consultations, local residents wanting to be involved in creating street art in their neighbourhood, may not be able to achieve the level of skill they want to develop their art. In reference to what he calls ‘bad art’, Duncombe (2016) states, “Without the power to attract and challenge the audience, such art is useless.”

## Recognition vs Representation

Many well intentioned art projects have been created to represent communities. However, such as in the case of Larry Walsh’s story, representation can be seen

negatively as a token gesture or form of misrecognition. Taylor (1994) argued for recognition, not representation, in support of a cohesive multicultural society.

'Representation' is, "The action of speaking or acting on behalf of someone or the state of being so represented" ('Representation, 2017). Recognition is about "identification" and validity of "existence" ('Recognition', 2017). By creating work without community consultation, this representation of others can be misinterpreted. Uncle Larry's letter to council outlined some of the harm this representation could bring to his community such as the portrayal of a stereotype of Indigenous Australians as 'desert' people. These misrecognitions can be overcome through community consultation and self-determination such as through participation in a community mural, created for and by the people.

However, there are instances where representation can be effective. For example, Creature Creature's developed two proposals for their mural. The first was to show faces of Footscray. This representation of individuals they recognised in the community could have proved to be problematic as the population of Footscray is made up of many unique individuals. Therefore, they decided to use birds to represent the theme of migration. Although they identified individual countries in their work, they used statistical data to determine the countries. By representing a theme of what makes Footscray unique through animals, rather than a representation of specific individual community members, the work was positively received by the community according to the artists.

## Activism

There is a history of activists and community members who use street art to spread a message. One of the most famous is Mouawiya Syasneh, whose anti-Assad graffiti is cited to have started the Syrian war ("The boy who...", 2017). Activism has been used by council and artists to promote tolerance and peace. However, careful consideration is needed to ensure the effectiveness of activist art such as selecting who will create the work.

The Maribyrnong Council has supported activist graffiti in the past. A public artwork was commissioned by the council back in 2006 in response to a popular graffiti piece, *The West Welcomes Refugees*, that was located in central Footscray. Their chosen artists, Michael Brennan was awarded the \$30,000 commission. However,

there were some in the community that felt that the council's choice was not in the spirit of the piece. Hoang Trang Nguyen put forward the following objections. "(i)The panel contained no one from a refugee background, nor anyone with any demonstrated professional knowledge of refugee communities, or the specific refugee communities in the City of Maribyrnong. (ii) The call-for-interest had no strategy for attracting submissions from Professional Artists from non-English speaking backgrounds, nor did the decision-making process have a strategy for managing submissions from such artists," (Low, 2006). Researcher Danielle Wyatt (2013), also notes other critiques by Trang Nguyen and others about the process in which the selection was conducted. "They dismissed the artwork on the grounds that the council's processes of selection excluded the perspectives of the very people whom they sought to represent. They considered the artwork an 'image' in the sense that it promoted the idea of creative engagement with place without any substantive engagement" (Wyatt, 2013). Low (2006) argues that such projects are, "more about ticking boxes on paperwork than truly engaging with locals."

Although art has played a role in activism, its value as an activist tool to encourage social change is harder to determine. According to Stephen Duncombe (2016), there is a, "recurring inadequacy of the conceptualization of the relationship between activist art and social change." However, he argues that this lack of ability to measure its worth does not mean it doesn't work. Duncombe (2016) states that good art can, "stimulate a feeling, move us emotionally, or alter our perception."

Artists such as Van T Rudd use their work on the street as acts of public activism. His work, *Trump Tank* (2017), captures the current political climate in the USA, with President Donald Trump and his feud with Colin Kaepernick, the American footballer, who refused to kneel for the national anthem to highlight black rights. His mural of a bulldog urinating on the face of politician Pauline Hanson is in response to racism in Australia ("Pauline Hanson's face...", 2017). These works show how Van uses his art to address injustices he sees in society and therefore, provides an important voice for the community.

In Van's case, his use of politicians is what led to this censorship. His criticisms of government and the social systems in place prompted action by the local government. This shows a clash between Malik's two views of multiculturalism, Van's perspective comes from his lived experience of growing up in Nambour and subsequent exposure to racism. His art is in response to the second view of the

management of multiculturalism through governance. Van's intention was to unite the people to fight for their rights as he encourages at the end of the video although critics of multiculturalism could point to works such as these as examples of divisiveness. Former CEO of Footscray Community Arts Centre said that gentrification is a challenge for the community as, "With gentrification, quiet voices get quieter," (Bifield, 2013). Activists such as Rudd can provide a loud voice for the community and as such, still have an important role to play in Footscray.

## Conclusion

Through the case studies presented in the documentary, this research argues for the value of using multicultural theory in the development of street art projects. The application of multicultural theory to these case studies has magnified their significance in a wider societal context. Using an ethnographic filmmaking process provided a reflexive study in collaboration and the role and responsibilities of an artist and filmmaker within the community. This collaboration allowed the participants to share their experiences in an empowering way. The film also shows that consultation, engagement and space to create are other important factors in developing street art.

Using an ethnographic approach, both filmmaker and participants were invested in the outcome of the documentary. Participants such as Toni were able to direct the interview to bring light to issues that were important to them such as empowerment of women artists. Larissa's egalitarian approach to projects enable any person with a disability to participate in street art. Rosie's case study highlighted the lack of empowerment her community felt in being able to express themselves on their own land. Van was given a platform to express his political views. Creature Creature were able talk about the themes of their work.

As discussed in Chapter 5, there are many approaches to multiculturalism, with each bringing unique perspectives. By applying different multicultural theories to our case studies, this research has shown the value of understanding multiple perspectives. Rosie's case study showed us how Australia is still a long way from addressing the historical injustices of its past. Larissa demonstrated how an egalitarian approach has allowed her to develop a culture of disability that overcomes misrecognition. Larissa and Van's transition from gallery to the street shows how street art has an egalitarian quality that breaks the boundaries of traditional exhibition spaces. Through Toni's case study, we explore the experiences of women within culture and how multiculturalism and feminism can coexist through their shared goal of freedom. Also, we reviewed how the application of universal human rights can be a way to navigate cultural difference through art such as Creature Creature's exploration of duality.

Furthermore, this research has presented outcomes from the StreetWORKS program as presented by Maribyrnong City Council. Overall the project has been a

success for the council, and the ability to review the project over several years has provided invaluable experience that they can share with other councils. Nicola Vance emphasised clear objectives and guidelines as a key finding from the project and a willingness to engage with community.

However, as the suburb continues to gentrify there are more challenges ahead for the community and council. Findings from the analysis of the documentary and multicultural theory reveal that increased engagement such as community murals can provide means of self-determination and recognition within the community. Also projects that recognise rather than represent can overcome stereotyping of cultures. And finally, arts activists such as Van can give a voice to those marginalised by changes that can occur through gentrification.

As our documentary participants have shown, culture is intrinsically linked to so many aspects of our lives that multiculturalism as the plural of those cultures is part of our everyday reality. Understanding multiple perspectives of multiculturalism is needed to fully appreciate its value in research, policy and everyday experience. The works presented in the film embody the role each artist plays within their culture as activists, educators and storytellers. Consequently, not only does street art contribute to the aesthetics of the neighbourhood, but they are also manifestations of the community's cultural diversity. This understanding of how multicultural theory can provide a framework for street art, can assist artists and organisations to develop more meaningful work that engages, inspires and emboldens their community.

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## Appendix

- A. *Who Made That?* (2018) Documentary Movie
- B. Interview with Nicola Vance, Maribyrnong City Council (2017)
- C. Interview with Jennifer Tran, Resident and artist (2017)
- D. Interview with Katelynn Partanen, Resident and street art project participant (2017)



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