

**REIMAGINING THE INDIGENOUS ART MARKET:
SITE OF DECOLONISATION AND REASSERTION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURES**

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Abstract

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Indigenous art markets in Australia are highly dynamic. Commercial art intermediaries play a pivotal role in facilitating the exchange of art between Indigenous artists and consumers. Current literature on Indigenous art markets in Australia reveals that the majority of art intermediaries are non-Indigenous yet are responsible for dealing with Indigenous cultural art, artists, and communities. The extant literature on arts marketing and art intermediaries argues that art intermediaries take on different roles and form different relationships with artists and the artworks. They also navigate the tensions that exist between art and commerce. In Indigenous art markets, additional complexities exist as both art and cultures are exchanged. Thus, in this study, I ask: How do art intermediaries negotiate the meaning of Indigenous art within a multi-stakeholder art market? How do art intermediaries relationally engage with Indigenous artists and their art works, Indigenous communities, and buyers as they balance cultural and commercial tensions?

Although current consumer research has studied different cross-cultural processes involving various cultural groups, these studies predominantly focused on immigrant consumers who migrate into a dominant host culture. I argue that these consumer acculturation studies have not interrogated the historical legacies and current realities of colonisation when considering Indigenous peoples. Thus, I turn to postcolonial theory as a critical theoretical lens to understand the power dynamics between colonisers and colonised.

Existing consumer research using postcolonial theories is scant. I build on the existing postcolonial consumer literature by introducing the concepts of settler colonialisation and decolonisation to understand the dynamics of the settler-Indigenous relations in the Australian Indigenous art market. Like North and South America, Australia is a settler colonial society where continuous negotiations of tensions between settlers' and Indigenous cultures occur.

To investigate how art intermediaries in the Australian Indigenous art market navigate these tensions, I conducted field work at sites where art intermediaries interact with artists and consumers. I also completed 14 interviews with 12 Indigenous and non-Indigenous art intermediaries. These data were supplemented with archival data to develop a rich understanding of the relational dynamics among art intermediaries, artists, communities, and consumers. I inductively identified three roles played by art intermediaries: cultural conduits, art connoisseurs, and change agents. I conceptualised these roles across five dimensions including the meanings of art, focal relationships and community influence, power relationships with Indigenous artists, important practices for artists and/or communities, and practices with consumers. Based on an inductive analysis of emergent findings, I developed a conceptual framework that explains the power dynamics in reconciling settlers and Indigenous cultural tensions and commercial-cultural tensions through cultural expansion, aesthetics expansion, and political resurgence.

This study contributes to four main areas of consumer and marketing research. First, I contribute to the arts marketing literature by expanding our understanding of the roles of art intermediaries in Indigenous art markets, how they interact with Indigenous artists and their communities, as well as how they navigate the inherent tensions with art markets. Second, I expand the range of post-colonial theoretical concepts that are useful for future consumer researchers interested in post-colonial societies and consumer cultures. Third, I contribute to studies on consumer cross-cultural processes by revealing a different kind of relationships in

which cultural groups collaborate to expand cultures and build communities through sharing cultural stories. Four, I discuss implications for Indigenous art marketing, particularly other kinds of Indigenous arts such as the Native American art and its markets.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

- I. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated in the preface;
- II. due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other materials used; and
- III. the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices

Ai Ming Chow

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It takes a village to produce a doctorate dissertation. I do not think that I could complete this project on my own, neither do I want to do it alone. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the people who have supported me in this journey. On the 28th of August 2020, this thesis becomes a part of history. It becomes a drop in the ocean of knowledge. It is no longer just the culmination of my random thoughts and musings. It becomes part of something bigger, as it should be.

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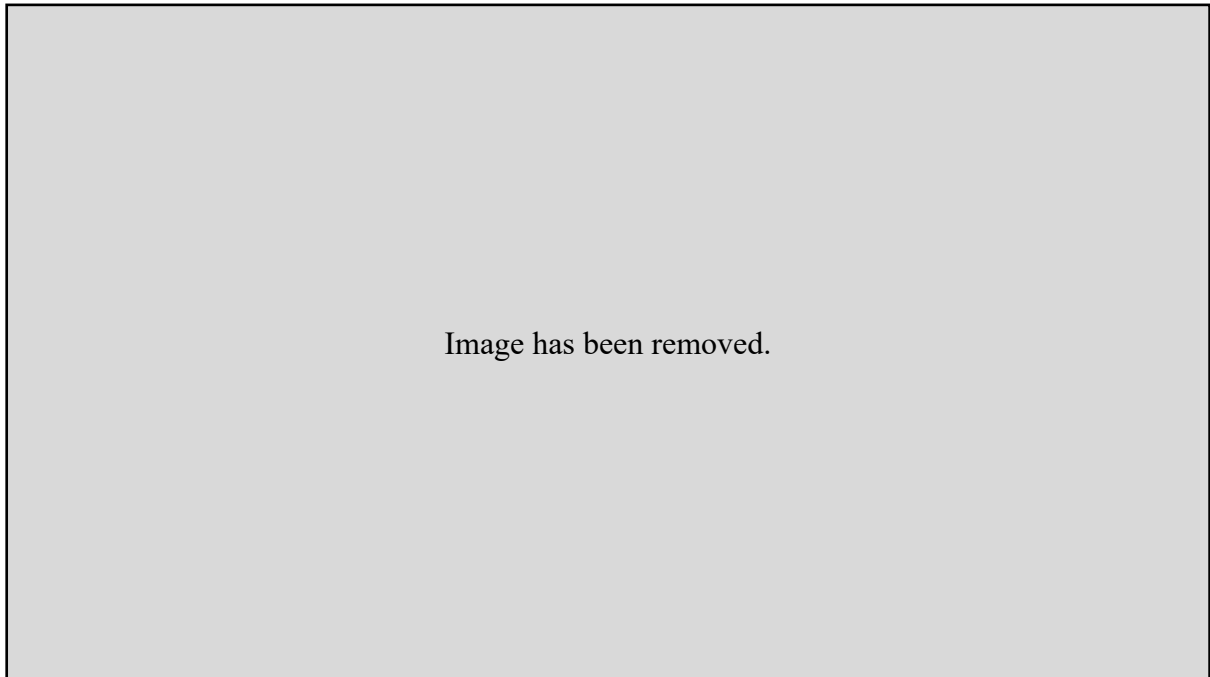
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Chapter 1: Introduction

We are the oldest continuous living culture in the world and if we don't grow and adapt to change, then I believe culture dies. So we are still continuing cultural practices in the 21st century. With 3D printed kangaroo teeth. Hopefully the people who are wearing these [necklaces] will feel the power of the more traditional necklaces. I want them to feel that it's come from thousands and thousands and thousands of years of making and creating. (Maree Clarke, Public online interview)

Figure 1.1. *Indigenous artist, Maree Clarke showcasing her 'Thung-ung Coorang' Jewellery collections (Flynn 2018).*



Maree Clarke is a Yorta Yorta/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung woman from northwest Victoria in Australia's southeast. She is an Indigenous artist, Elder, curator, exhibition manager, and cultural educator. Since the 1980s, Maree has been advocating for the continuation and revival of Indigenous cultures and art practices (Edmonds and Clarke 2013; Thorner, Edmonds, Clarke, and Balla 2018). Maree Clarke is being represented by a gallery in Melbourne and is frequently featured in their social media posts, including Instagram and Facebook. In the gallery's newsletters, directed at potential Indigenous art collectors and art enthusiasts, Maree is often celebrated for winning awards for her artworks and her art

exhibitions are promoted. These news updates that highlight the success of Maree Clarke as an Indigenous artist and curator within the contemporary art space and art markets, help in garnering respect and support of the general public.

Moreover, Maree Clarke was featured in a documentary, “*Our Stories: Cultural Activist - Maree Clarke*” which explores her passion about keeping the Indigenous cultures and stories alive. To this end, she has made kangaroo teeth necklaces that have been sold at the *National Gallery of Australia* shop (see Figure 1.1). This documentary captured the first day of the launch of her jewellery collection, which was sold out – all bought by enthusiastic consumers. At a special screening event of the documentary, some of the attendees donned Maree’s necklaces with pride. As explained by Maree Clarke in an online interview published in *The Design Files* (Flynn 2018), she created these necklaces using modern technologies (such as 3D printing), as opposed to traditional methods. She commented that she wanted consumers to “feel the power of the more traditional necklaces.” Her involvement in the market and in making contemporary Indigenous art demonstrate that Indigenous art as part of a living culture. As Maree Clarke states in the public online interview,

My work is about regenerating cultural practices, making people aware of our culture, and that we are really strong in our culture, identity and knowledge. We haven’t lost anything; some of these practices have just been laying dormant for a while.

More importantly, improvising and adapting traditional Indigenous art practices provide ways for Indigenous people to “speak back” to the dominant culture of colonialists that exist and persist in countries like Australia (Dodson 2003, 39; Thorner 2019). In the very act of creating art for the contemporary market, Indigenous artists challenge the assumption of colonisation that they have been successfully assimilated into dominant—predominantly—European ways of life, with little authentic or living Indigenous cultures remaining (Edmonds and Clarke 2013).

As demonstrated by Maree Clarke, Indigenous artists are producers, advocates of culture, and stakeholders in art markets. The focus of this study, however, is on art

intermediaries—such as gallery owners/directors and curators—who represent and work with artists, such as Maree Clarke. These art intermediaries are important stakeholders in the Indigenous art markets because they engage directly with the Indigenous artists, their communities, the consumers, and the general public. They play multiple roles as they position themselves between the exchanges of art from the artists as producers to the consumers. The main research aim is to explore these roles of art intermediaries within Indigenous art markets. I first reviewed the literature on the history of the Indigenous art markets in Australia to understand the key artistic movements and how these were shaped by the artists, Indigenous communities, and the art intermediaries.

Since European colonisation of Australia, the meanings of Indigenous art have evolved. From being treated as ethnographic artefacts of “dying” cultures in the early 19th century to becoming valued commodities traded within the market by the early settlers, different groups of stakeholders have played different roles and continue to shape the emergence of the market for Indigenous art. These important stakeholders encompass the Indigenous artists, commercial art intermediaries (i.e., galleries and private art dealers), public institutions such as museums, community-controlled arts centres, and governments. Within the Indigenous art market, commercial art intermediaries sit in a relational network, engaging directly but in different ways with Indigenous artists, their communities, community-controlled arts centres, and consumers. Commercial art intermediaries are an important nexus, connecting the artists and the consumers. Given the history of colonisation of Australia, the Indigenous art market is a contested space where the complex relationships between the Indigenous people as the first inhabitants of the land and non-Indigenous settlers in Australia continues to play out (Acker 2016). This is the broader historical backdrop of my thesis that is explored in chapter 2, where I review the history of Australian Indigenous art.

In chapter 2, I also draw on the field of arts marketing to inform the study of art intermediaries and their roles in art markets. In general, arts marketing scholars argue that

marketing the arts requires more than the application of conventional marketing management (Bradshaw 2010; Fillis 2004, 2010, 2011; O'Reilly and Kerrigan 2010). In addition, arts marketing researchers call for a more sophisticated understanding for the underlying tensions between creating art for art's sake versus producing art for business's sake (Fillis 2014; O'Reilly, Rentschler and Kirchner 2014). These insights illustrate the need to interrogate tensions experienced by the art intermediaries as commercial entities within art markets. However, I further argue that within the Indigenous art markets, there are additional complexities, namely the commercial and cultural tensions (Wright and Altman 2000, 6). That is, underlying the debates between art versus commerce, there is also a consistent concern for the authenticity and cultural integrity of Indigenous art when they are being traded in the markets (Acker 2006; Booth 2014). While the arts marketing literature have discussed the art versus commerce tension, there is limited attention on cross-cultural processes that occur when art is being produced, sold, and consumed. Therefore, I turn to the studies in consumer research that look at cross-cultural processes, acculturation agents, and acculturation outcomes.

Consumer researchers have predominantly explored cross-cultural processes of acculturation between immigrant cultures and dominant host culture. In his research on Telfs and Turkish immigrants in Austria, Luedicke (2015) conceptualises acculturation as a relational, interactive adaptation process that involves mutual adaptation of practices in *both* the immigrant groups and the original inhabitants. Consumer researchers have primarily focused on how new immigrant consumers fit into a dominant host culture exploring how acculturation processes lead to different outcomes. For example, as Mexican people immigrate into the dominant Western culture of the United States (US), the process of acculturation has led to a variety of outcomes, such as cultural assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation (Penaloza 1994).

In comparison to immigrants who choose to move into a new country, however, Indigenous peoples have been inhabiting on their lands for millennia. It is the non-Indigenous settlers who are the immigrants moving onto the native lands and affecting the Indigenous cultures through the act of colonisation. Extant studies provide conceptual tools to understand the acculturation processes, identity outcomes, and acculturation agents between two cultures and I review and explore these contributions in chapter 3 (e.g., Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Luedicke 2015; Mehta and Belk 1991; Penaloza 1994; Oswald 1999; Üstüner and Holt 2007). Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the extant consumer research on acculturation falls short on explaining the acculturation processes and outcomes where there is a history of dominant colonisation and power struggles that continue to affect Indigenous cultural practices—such as the British colonisation of Australia and New Zealand, the French colonisation of western Africa, the Chinese colonisation of Tibet, and the Spanish and Portuguese colonisation of Latin America.

Therefore, in chapter 4, I turn to postcolonial theory as a critical lens through which to understand the continuing significance of colonisation on the lives of colonised groups (Banerjee and Prasad 2008; Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman 2008). Postcolonial theory scholars formulate their critique around the social histories, cultural differences and political discriminations that are practiced, legitimised, and normalised by colonial structures and apparatuses (Rukundwa and van Aarde 2007). Consumer researchers have applied postcolonial theory to study contexts such as Ireland (Patterson and Brown 2007) and India (Askegaard and Eckhardt 2012; Varman and Belk 2012). Closely related to the identity outcomes found by acculturation studies, these studies explored postcolonial identity outcomes, such as ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry, as forms of resistance against colonising cultures. However, unlike some postcolonial societies such as India, where colonisers have left the country, in the context of Australia, the colonisers have settled permanently. As such, Australia is a settler colonial nation, much like the US, New Zealand,

Canada, and Latin America. Therefore, I draw specifically on two concepts from postcolonial theory scholarship that are particularly relevant to this study—settler colonialism and decolonisation—to untangle the ongoing tensions within Indigenous-settler relations that continue to affect the cultures of Indigenous people (Maddison 2019).

My research objective is to explore Indigenous-settler relations and how these relationships affect the meaning of Indigenous art as culture. I focus on art intermediaries because they are positioned in a relational network within the art market where they deal directly with Indigenous artists, communities and consumers. I ask: How do art intermediaries negotiate the meaning of Indigenous art within the multi-stakeholder art market? How do art intermediaries relationally engage with Indigenous artists and their art works, Indigenous communities, and buyers as they balance cultural and commercial tensions?

My research approach is heavily informed by insights from critical scholars, researchers of postcolonial and decolonising theories who have interrogated the tensions between Western research methods, and Indigenous knowledge (e.g., Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith 2008; Tuhiwai Smith 2012). Following in their footsteps, I have adopted a multi-method approach to collect interview data, supplemented by field notes and publicly available secondary data to understand the role of art intermediaries in the Australian Indigenous art market. I justify my methodological choices in chapter 5. Overall, I spent 33 months conducting field work by attending public events on Australian Indigenous art and visiting various locations including art galleries, retail spaces and museums that sell or display Indigenous artworks in Victoria, Australia. I have also conducted 14 interviews with 12 art intermediaries which included Indigenous art gallerists, commercial art business owners, art dealers, and art curators. To supplement the data collected through field work and interviews, I collected archival data, including books, movies, news articles, essays published in art magazines, gallery newsletters and art catalogues.

From my analysis, I derived three different roles and patterns of relations played by art intermediaries as cultural conduits, art connoisseurs, and change agents, which are presented and explained in chapters 6, 7, and 8. I conceptualise these roles across five themes. First, I explore how the art intermediaries construct different meanings of Indigenous art. Second, I highlight the focal relationships that are most important to the art intermediaries. Third, I articulate the art intermediaries' role in the art supply chain. Fourth, I explore how the art intermediaries create value through their curation practices for the artists and more broadly, for communities. Fifth, I show how art intermediaries use different practices to create value for the consumers. From these findings, I propose a conceptual framework that summarises my findings on the role of art intermediaries and their power dynamics within the art market.

In chapter 9, I systematically explain the three different ways how the power relationships between the art intermediaries, Indigenous artists and the consumers play out within the art market exchange. Importantly, I have found that across all art intermediaries, cultural stories play an important role in the exchange of art between different stakeholders. Privileging cultural stories in the art exchange offers a pathway to foster reconciliation between the local Indigenous and the settlers' cultures. I then inductively derived three different approaches that art intermediaries engage in this reconciliation of cultures: cultural expansion, aesthetic expansion and political resurgence. Within these three approaches, art intermediaries resolve the commercial-cultural tensions differently as they have different power relationships with artists and consumers. In chapter 10, I discuss the contributions this study makes to the current body of literature, future research and the limitations of this study. Specially, I highlight this study's main contributions to research on arts marketing, consumer cross-cultural processes, postcolonial consumer studies, and to the broader research on Indigenous art marketing.

The next chapter reviews the history of the Indigenous art market and scholarly works on other contemporary art markets. This chapter provides the historical and cultural context for my study on the Indigenous art markets. It also situates my study in the wider stream of literatures on art markets and marketing of arts. These insights are important for understanding the findings and interpretations in this thesis. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the consumer cultural acculturation literature and the various cross-cultural processes and identity outcomes of migrant consumers. In chapter 4, I explain the postcolonial theoretical traditions. I present my methodology in chapter 5. I discuss my empirical findings in chapters 6, 7, and 8. Chapter 9 offers an interpretation of the findings followed by chapter 10 in which I addresses the contributions, limitations, and implications of this research for practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Indigenous Art and the Contemporary Art Markets

Indigenous art—in all its forms—is now Australia’s largest visual art industry. In 2007, the value of Indigenous arts sales was estimated to be between AUD \$400 and 500 million (Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) 2012). In 2007, Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s *Earth’s Creation* was sold at a Lawson Menzies Aboriginal art auction for AUD \$1.04 million. Ten years later, this painting sold for AUD \$2.1 million at an auction in Sydney (Smiley 2017). This sale was the second-highest price paid for an Indigenous artwork after Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri’s 1977 painting, *Warlugulong*, which was sold for AUD \$2.4 million in 2007 (Smiley 2017). The increase in value and demand for Indigenous art illustrates a growing domestic and global appetite for work by Australian Indigenous artists. In addition to these high-profile exchanges within the fine art market, there are also more affordable products adorned with Indigenous art motifs that are in demand among Australian consumers and international tourists. Although a precise estimate of the size of the total Indigenous art market is difficult to calculate due to its complexity and dynamic nature, McCulloch and McCulloch Childs (2008, 5) argue that it is a market demonstrating “growth which shows no sign of abating.” As reported in the *Australian Financial Review*, the Australian Art Sales Digest statistics suggest that Australian Indigenous art continues to maintain its value and interest is growing among international and local Australian buyers (Coslovich 2020). This growth is also fuelled by the new online market where buying and selling are conducted over the internet (Coslovich 2020).

Indigenous art forms range from traditional weaving and painting to new forms, such as works created in digital formats (Acker, Stefanoff, and Woodhead 2013). According to an art guide created by Kluge-Ruge Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia in collaboration with Indigenous curator Nici Cumpston and Indigenous scholar Jilda Andrews (n.d.), Indigenous Australian art is any artwork created by a person who identifies as of

Indigenous descent and is accepted as a member of their Indigenous community. The Indigenous people of Australia include Aboriginal people of mainland Australia and the Torres Strait Islanders, which are distinct groups with their own culture, customs, language, and laws (AIATSIS 2020b). Indigenous people are diverse, as are their art practices, mediums used, and cultural traditions. Similar to other art forms, Australian Indigenous art also continues to evolve and change. These various art forms are produced, traded, and consumed in an evolving market, as artists from around the country explore old and new techniques and experiment with novel materials. As McCulloch (1999, 11) explains:

[while] the cross-hatched barks of Arnhem Land and the multi-layered ‘dot’ painting of central Australia have become the most widely known of the Aboriginal art forms, they are only two among a range as diverse as the people who create it and the vast Australian landscape itself. The ochre coloured-field abstracts of the Western Australia Kimberley painters, the bright ‘naif’ watercolours of Fitzroy Crossing artists and the widely divergent individual expressions of urban artists are the other forms of an art which has become the prolific expression of a revived and richly evolving traditions. New movements spring up continually; new materials are tried as artists of all generations reinterpret both the recent and ancient past.

These “revised and richly evolving traditions” include the introduction of new market players and stakeholders into the Indigenous art market, such as staffs who work at the art centres, gallery owners, private art dealers, collectors, art curators and consumers, art writers, auction experts, journalists, and researchers. These stakeholders are linked together through the complex and interconnected value-creation chains that constitute the market for Indigenous art (Bryceson 2008).

Indigenous artists derive economic, cultural, social and political benefits from the production and consumption of Indigenous art. Importantly, art is an avenue for market participation and income generation (Fisher 2016). Indigenous people also use art to assert their identity and express understandings of their place in the world (Edmonds 2007). Indigenous art, for example, are avenues for political activism and expresses themes of self-determination (Caruana 2003; McLean 2011). Indigenous artists, like Les Griggs (1958-1993) and Lin Onus (1948-1996), have used art to express cultural pride and their desire for

greater political freedoms and rights to ancestral lands (Leslie 2008). Most recently, the Maningrida artists of Arnhem Land have used art to lobby for better local health services, increased environmental protection of their country against fracking, and increasing the number of people who return to live on their homelands (Smith 2018). Yet, while art markets are a significant source of income and cultural benefits, these markets can also be sites of tension, struggle, and conflict for Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

Although the contemporary Australian Indigenous art market has a relatively short history that started in the 1970s, art has been created by Indigenous people for at least fifty millennia (Altman, Ward, and Wright 2002; Caruana 2003; Cubillo and Caruana 2010). This chapter broadly traces the broad history of Indigenous art in Australia and the emergence of the contemporary market. Specifically, I highlight significant historical shifts in the construction of Indigenous art that have continued to influence the production and consumption of Indigenous art today. More detailed and expansive accounts exist elsewhere (e.g., Caruana 2003, 2012; Leslie 2008). I focus on how the meaning of Indigenous art has been contested and how the conflicting interests of various stakeholders have shaped the meaning of the art, which contributed to the emergence of a market structure and specific practices by which art is valued and exchanged. This historical context provides a basis to better understand the contemporary Indigenous art market in Australia and the various opportunities and challenges facing relevant stakeholders. Rather than present a totalising view of the art market, I draw attention to the fluid, dynamic, complex, and multi-faceted nature of this market, whereby various participants have staked their claims and asserted their often-conflicting interests. Importantly, this chapter shows that the Indigenous art market is highly relational—with art intermediaries continuously negotiating their relationships with Indigenous artists, their communities, community-controlled arts centres and buyers.

History of the Modern Indigenous Art Market

The modern history of Indigenous art and the emergence of the art market following European colonisation of Australia can be categorised into three distinct periods: (1) the early period (19th century – 1930s) where Indigenous art was treated as primitive ethnographic artefacts; (2) the middle period (1930s – 1970s) where interest emerged in Indigenous art as *art*; and (3) the most recent period (1970s – present) where Indigenous art is increasingly commoditised as products to be valued, sold, and re-sold (Leslie 2008). The meanings evoked and the stakeholders involved across these three periods have evolved, expanded, and become increasingly conflictual. For example, in the earliest period, interest in the art of Indigenous people was mostly limited to anthropologists and explorers (Caruana 2012; Leslie 2008). Before the twentieth century, Indigenous art was often treated by anthropologists as “primitive” artefacts, having primarily ethnographic value to anthropologists and the field of anthropology (Leslie 2008; McLean 1998, 2011). It was not until the 1950s that the “long-term blindness” of the Australian art world shifted from viewing this work as mere curiosities or souvenirs to being fine art (McLean 2011, 23). Gradually, museums, galleries, community art centres, art collectors, and sellers began to exchange and consume Indigenous art, which gave birth to a modern art market.

The Early Period (19th century – 1930s): Art as Culture and Cultural Artefacts

Art as the Culture of the Indigenous Communities

Indigenous art is based on stories and traditions of the creation of the world, during which creation ancestors took epic journeys and created people, flora and fauna, landforms and celestial bodies. It is from this that laws of kinship and marriage derived and regular ceremonies required to renew growth, protect the land, ensure fertility and health and keep the stories of the ancestor creators and their creations alive (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008, 11-12).

Art is central to the creation and preservation of Indigenous cultures in Australia, which date back to between 60,000 to 80,000 years in Australia (Caruana 2003). The earliest

physical evidence of Indigenous culture in Australia is ancient handprints on rock that were estimated to be 55,000 years old (Leslie 2008). There are also bark paintings, sand paintings, weavings, and carvings (such as carved burial poles of the Arnhem Land and islands) that were originally created for ceremonial use (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). These art forms use symbols and icons to convey important cultural stories and values that were passed down inter-generationally (Morphy 1991). Indigenous artists traditionally used various art forms to convey and preserve vital knowledge of the land, events, ceremonies, and beliefs within their communities and with non-Indigenous people (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). However, during the early period, due to the lack of understanding and prior exposure to Indigenous cultures, the rich meanings of Indigenous art and significance of *creating* art was often overlooked by outsiders (Batty 2011; Boles and Morphy 1999; McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). For example, when these art forms are taken out of the cultural context and placed into a museum setting, these meanings of the art may be lost, distorted or ignored. Next, I provide an extended example to demonstrate this point.

For example, the sand drawing of the Kutjungka people illustrate the practice of art-making within communities as part of their ceremonial practices that reinforce people's connection with traditional lands, ancestral beliefs, laws, and rituals (Leslie 2008; Watson 1999). In Kutjungka culture, natural ochres, wild desert cotton, and charcoal are used in sand paintings, with different kinds of sand paintings serving different purposes (Corbally-Stourton 1996; Mountford 1969). For example, for the practice of *Kuruwarri* (ancestral power) sand drawing, males and females communicate secret information on the sand as a way to prevent the information from being passed onto the members of the opposite gender. This form of sand drawing is also used to convey the deeds of ancestors who are important to the Kutjungka people. Unlike Western conceptualisations and experiences of art, the Kutjungka people believe that *walya* (the earth, dirt, sand, or ground) is saturated with gender

symbolism and the ancestors' bodies, power, bodily fluids, and songs. The Kutjungka people connect with their ancestors and their power by creating sand paintings with the same symbols used by their ancestors. Therefore, the Kutjungka communities experience *kuruwarri* designs as vibrating with the power of ancestral beings as they believe that the symbols used in their sand paintings *are* the ancestors (Watson 1999). These meanings do not exist when the art is moved into a public gallery or exhibit.

While the great variety of artistic expressions and styles reflect the local histories of different regions, the art-making practices among Indigenous communities across Australia share many common purposes. As Boles and Morphy (1999) explain, Indigenous art is a manifestation of the ancestral past, or Dreaming, as it connects the world inhabited by living beings including humans, animals, and plants, while giving meanings to traditional lands. These art forms continue to be practiced through to present day, as Kutjungka artists have translated the markings from the sand onto paintings on canvas (Watson 1999). However, the colonial settlers often overlooked the cultural meanings and significance of these Indigenous art forms (Boles and Morphy 1999). During the early period (the 19th century), the emerging field of anthropology and its practitioners used a different lens to understand the Indigenous peoples and their art.

Art as Ethnographic Artefacts for Anthropologists

During the 19th century, Indigenous paintings and objects of material culture were collected and preserved as important remnants of a primitive culture that was disappearing (Leslie 2008). Anthropologists used the concept of race and Darwin's evolutionary theory to conceptually divide the human species into discrete groups (Cowlshaw 1988); the Indigenous people of Australia representing the nadir of evolutionary development (Elkin 1938; Morphy 1991). Heavily influenced by the framework of evolutionary theory,

anthropologists employed biological ideas of race, whereby the boundary between the cultural and biological is not always clear (McGregor 1993). For example, A. P. Elkin—an influential anthropologist during the early 20th century—maintained a conventional distinction between “primitive” and “civilised” peoples based on arbitrary biological characteristics, suggesting that:

The question 'Are the Aborigines the lowest race of mankind?' is not easily answered. Physically, they have some primitive features, for example, the thickness of the skull-bones, the shape of the face, the retreating nature of the forehead and the comparatively small brain (Elkin 1938, cited in McGregor 1993, 101).

According to Elkin (1932), given that he conjectured that Indigenous peoples have a comparatively smaller brain, they are limited in their capacity to advance culturally and, thus, lack the capacity to adapt to more civilised European cultures. As a result, the Indigenous people in Australia were “... believed to be living representatives of primitive man [to] be exterminated by the progress of civilisation” (McGregor 2005, 173). For example, the Indigenous artists’ use of natural mediums, including stone, wood, and bark, was regarded as evidence of cultural inferiority based on the transitory nature of this art and its crude materials (Leslie 2008).

By categorising the Indigenous people as a primitive race with an inferior culture, the people and their cultures could be ignored; in fact, a popular theory—the “doomed race theory”—asserted that Indigenous culture was in fact dying (McGregor 1997; Morphy 1998). As Morphy (1998, 19) explains, “the early European history of [Indigenous] art is a history of invisibility and denial.” Few references were made to rock art and ground sculptures by early European explorers, with generally thin descriptions of the artwork as being crude and rough (Morphy 1998). Anthropologists deemed Indigenous art and artefacts as primitive and collected *antiquities* of scholarly interest from these exotic and dying cultures—these items were not considered art. While this was the approach among anthropologists in their treatment of Australian Indigenous people’s art, there is evidence that anthropologists have

played a similar role in their study of Indigenous populations elsewhere (Morphy 2001). For example, a Native American anthropologist, Margaret Bruchac explained that, in the late 1800s, Native American materials and objects were often collected by anthropologists for the museums, because it was presumed that Native tribes were “vanishing” (Buckley 2011). This anthropological approach to Indigenous art “created its otherness and separated it from Western art works” (Morphy 2001, 38).

The 19th and early 20th centuries were notable for limited interest of art institutions in Indigenous art (Leslie 2008; McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). Art institutions rejected Indigenous paintings as art because they did not fit with the contemporary European conception of what art objects were and how they should look (Morphy 1999). Indigenous art used materials, such as barks and stones, which are atypical of those found in Western art that used canvases and water and oil-based paints. Thus, Indigenous art was categorised as decorative crafts that do not have a place in institutions like art galleries (Philp 2007). Additionally, Indigenous art was most frequently produced within traditional rituals and religious ceremonies; as such, the art was intended to be ephemeral and, at times, even deliberately destroyed during a ceremony (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). Indigenous ideas stressed the importance of the processes of art production over the finished object, especially when the art connects to ancestral forces in these sacred rituals, such as when sand paintings communicate secret meanings that are taboo among genders and must be destroyed (Morphy 1998). Moreover, many of the more permanent art forms, such as those used in initiation ceremonies, were restricted for private religious use of the communities in which outsiders were barred (Watson 1999). Thus, this narrow understanding of art from Europe, as well as the private and ephemeral nature of Indigenous cultural practices, often rendered Indigenous art invisible and with no market value (Leslie 2008). The meanings attached to Indigenous art continue to expand with the shifting relationships between the

settlers and the Indigenous people. These perceptions of Indigenous art also began to change, however, in the middle period, which is explored next.

The Middle Period (1930s – 1970s): Art for the Public Domain

A Nascent Art Market for Economic and Cultural Exchange Between Missionaries and Communities

Although anthropologists perceived Indigenous art as artefacts and art institutions viewed Indigenous art as crafts, missionaries operating in remote regions of Australia saw the creation of Indigenous art as a way to generate money to support mission settlements and promote the cultures of Indigenous communities (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008; Morphy 1999). These initial efforts were limited in scope and informal. In the early 20th century, missionaries provided Western artistic mediums, such as acrylic paints, pencils, crayons, and paper, and commissioned Indigenous communities to record their traditional designs (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). One of the influential examples was the famous Aboriginal artist, Albert Namatjira, who was born at a Lutheran mission in 1902. Albert Namatjira was one of the first and most critically acclaimed Indigenous artists who painted in European or Western style using Western artistic mediums (Brand and Perkins 2013).

The mission's pastor, J. W. Albrecht, encouraged Namatjira by asking him to carve and decorate wall plaques for the church using a combination of Indigenous and Western iconography. When Melbourne artists Rex Battarbee and John Gardner visited Hermannsburg of Alice Springs in the early 1930s, Namatjira was also introduced to Western-style water colour painting. It started as an exchange of two cultures between local Indigenous people and the non-Indigenous missionaries. While Namatjira was painting in Western style instead of traditional Indigenous style, encoded within his paintings is sacred knowledge and his totemic connections to his country and the land (Brand and Perkins 2013). This intermingling

of Western and Indigenous cultures resulted in the creation of artworks that were then traded and circulated beyond the local Indigenous communities. His water colour paintings were sold out at his first two exhibitions held in Melbourne and Adelaide in 1938 (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008).

Due to the artist's skills and distinctive colouring of desert landscape, Albert Namatjira became known far beyond his Indigenous community at Hermannsburg (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). Although Albert Namatjira's works were first acquired by people outside of the Indigenous communities in 1938, it was only until much later within the contemporary market, that many of Albert's artworks were collected by major galleries, such as the National Gallery of Australia. In the contemporary Indigenous art market, his other small paintings are worth tens of thousands of dollars, such as one piece selling for AUD \$96,000 in 2006 (van der Linden and Penberthy 2015). Although his work is valued in monetary terms in a capitalist market, his work is priceless to his heirs. As a key pioneering modern artist, Albert Namatjira helped shaped the meanings of Indigenous Australian art within both the domestic and global markets. Unlike the previous period when Indigenous art was invisible, his art became valued fine art that was traded and sold beyond his community.

Recognising the potential economic value of Indigenous art, missionaries increasingly supported the production and exchange of Indigenous art by setting up trading posts and church-run art enterprises at mission communities (Altman 2005). For example, in 1954, missionary Winifred Hilliard encouraged the local Indigenous artists at Ernabella to incorporate their own traditional techniques and designs (*walka*) in their art using brightly coloured acrylic paints (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). It is through the integration of materials from two worlds—Western art materials and Indigenous artistic styles and symbols—that Indigenous art gained more visibility beyond local communities. Indigenous

art became commodities to be traded between the Indigenous people and the non-Indigenous people from outside of the communities.

Art as “Art” for Public Institutions

In the 1930s, local and international interest grew in Indigenous cultural expressions as “art” as people became more knowledgeable about Indigenous cultures (Morphy 1998). In 1929, the National Gallery of Victoria held the first comprehensive exhibition of bark paintings and artefacts (Cubillo and Caruana 2010). The Museum of Modern Art held the first international exhibition of Indigenous art in 1941 in New York, which was entitled, *Art of Australia 1788 – 1941* (Smith 1941). This exhibit was curated by directors from leading Australian galleries and drew from art galleries and private collections across Australia.

Nevertheless, evidence of ethnocentrism still persisted in these exhibitions. The Indigenous artist was invisible: all the Indigenous artwork was labelled as being done by an “unknown artist.” The design of the catalogue cover was “re-authored” by a non-Indigenous artist who used Westernised interpretations of Aboriginal symbols. The organisation of the exhibit began with “primitive aboriginal” and culminated in the “progress of European” art providing evidence that the evolutionary theory of culture still held sway. The preface of the catalogue reads: “against the background of the bark paintings left by the world’s most primitive aborigines, the art of the present exhibition records the progress of European, and particularly British, people in this struggle” (as quoted in Casey 1941, 5). Indigenous art was thus conveniently appropriated to promote the idea that modern Western art traditions were the pinnacle of cultural evolution (Philp 2007).

A new theme emerges during this period in which Indigenous cultural work is recognised as art by non-Indigenous people as evidenced by the growth of collections of Indigenous art within Australian galleries and private collections, as well as its international

display. Despite the increased interest in Indigenous art, this work continued to provoke discussions and controversies around the meaning of this art and whether or not an art gallery was the appropriate place to display and exhibit Indigenous art. For example, in 1958, Tony Tuckson—the deputy director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales—placed 17 traditional Tiwi burial poles in the foyer of the art gallery placing “Indigenous art into the fine art domain” (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008, 17). This controversial display was the first time Indigenous art was collected by an art gallery rather than a museum. There were both negative and positive reviews, but the negative reviews questioned whether these pieces were even art (Morphy 1998). State galleries were slow to follow suit. It was not until the late 1970s and 1980s that state galleries followed the Art Gallery of New South Wales and acquired collections of Indigenous art. By the mid-1980s, Indigenous art had broadly moved out of the museums into the art galleries guided by curators of Indigenous art, which spurred the demand and competition for the purchase of major Indigenous art works (Morphy 1999).

Viewing Indigenous art as *art* provides a potential opportunity for the consideration of Indigenous people as *people* with human needs to express both individual and collective views (Caruana 2012). Redefining Indigenous art as *art* also indicated that Indigenous art was finally being explored and accepted more broadly for its meanings, functions, and aesthetics (Leslie 2008). Unlike the previous period that conceptualised Indigenous art as primitive or decorative, this change in perspective in the middle period also marked the emerging interest in Indigenous art as a commercially successful *product* that could be appropriated and used in non-Indigenous artistic expressions and designs. While non-Indigenous people had started acquiring Indigenous art as objects, it remained unclear as to how they came to terms with the cultural significance of Indigenous art for Indigenous people.

Art as Political Statements for the Indigenous Communities

The potential for Indigenous artists to use art as a political tool grew, as Indigenous art moved from the local communities into the public arena. During this period, many governmental actions came in conflict with Indigenous communities. In 1937, the Commonwealth Government held a national conference on Aboriginal affairs where it was agreed that Indigenous people “not of full blood” should be “assimilated” into the wider population with no consultation with these families (Australian Human Rights Commission 2008, 11). Between 1940s and 1960s, the government introduced policies to assimilate large groups of Indigenous peoples into the wider Australian society. Once again, the government employed biological or racial bases for assimilation, rather than respecting the cultural differences within which Aboriginal children were socialised. The aim of assimilation was outlined in a statement released by the federal and state ministers in 1961, which was to ensure that all Indigenous and part-Indigenous people “... attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians” (cited in Chesterman and Douglas 2004, 48). The most extreme assimilation policy involved the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families and then placing them in predominantly White institutions such as foster homes.

Policy makers assumed that the Indigenous communities must be removed from their homelands if they were to cast off their Indigenous cultural identities and be fully absorbed into the Australian community and achieve the “same rights and privileges” (Lapham 2016, 14). Indigenous people were considered British subjects in which the states and territory sanctioned the control of all aspects of Indigenous life, from prohibition of the use of traditional languages to cultural practices (Watson 2009). Ironically, the places, such as Hermannsburg, Balgo, and Papunya, that were set up to implement the assimilationist

policies became focal points of Indigenous art revival providing hard evidence of Indigenous cultural resiliency (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). Many Indigenous artists, such as Albert Namajitra of Hermannsburg, started painting Indigenous designs with Western art materials, thus creating Indigenous art products that asserted and maintained their indigeneity. Today, these towns are internationally recognised as the wellspring for some of Australia's most influential and acclaimed artists.

From the late 1950s, the growing cultural, political and social movement for land rights brought Indigenous art to the forefront of this battle in asserting indigeneity. Often drawing on newer materials and techniques, Indigenous artists were an important part of this movement by making powerful new declarations of their identity and heritage through art (Altman 2005; Board of Studies NSW 2006). By the 1960s, the Indigenous struggle for equality also gained momentum with the first concerted land rights claims and the establishment of organisations for social advancement. In 1963, North East Arnhem Land people used art to express their connections to their lands and claim ownership. For instance, bark paintings were submitted as evidence of legal title to their land to the Australian Government (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). Known as the Yarrkala Bark Petition, this move became a powerful example of an artwork making a powerful political and cultural statement to the larger society. Edmonds (2007) suggested that, while the imperative remains to produce art for traditional cultural purposes, the contentious and political environment in which Indigenous artists operate creates compelling reasons for Indigenous artists to express the values of their culture to the wider world in which they live and engage.

During the 1960s and 1970s, worldwide Indigenous people asserted their rights to land and compensation. This growing social conscience in Western societies was awakened by the civil rights movements of the US and South Africa and initiatives of Indigenous people. Nevertheless, Indigenous people did not have the right to vote until 1967 because they were previously not regarded as Australian citizens (Hocking, Land, Campo, and Tayton

2016). In 1972, Australia's first labour government for 23 years was led by Gough Whitlam and the government made the issue of land rights a priority reform (Hocking et al. 2016). The Whitlam government brought increased support for Indigenous communities and for the arts in general (Hocking et al. 2016). For example, the Aboriginal Arts Board within the Australia Council was established in the early 1970s and brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to support the production of Indigenous art in remote Indigenous communities (Genocchio 2008; Myers 2002).

Despite significant changes in the political climate that affected the livelihoods of the Indigenous people, art remains central to Indigenous cultures while its meanings and forms continue to evolve. For many Indigenous people, art expresses the reclamation or reinforcement of their indigeneity, cultural stories, native languages, land, and livelihood (Board of Studies NSW 2006). As the art was circulated beyond the Indigenous communities, it has also taken "a key role in social activism, building solidarity [with other civil rights movements] and providing an economic base for self-determination" (Board of Studies NSW 2006, 12). While Indigenous art has been mobilised as valuable resources by Indigenous peoples for political reforms, how does this affect the circulation of artworks for commercial purposes? In the next section, I explain the emergence of the art market as "art machine" (Acker 2016).

Indigenous Renaissance in the Contemporary Period (1970s-now): Art for the Market

The Art Market Machine

Since the 1970s, the Indigenous art market has evolved into an interdependent network of stakeholders who contribute to the production, distribution, promotion, and sale of the art of Australian Indigenous Peoples (Becker 1982). This art market increasingly operates as an "art machine," largely driven by the rise of community art centres supported by

government funding (Rodner and Thomson 2013). The metaphor of the art sector as a machine draws attention to the many interlocking stakeholder cogs, which include artists, curators, community art centres, art dealers, businesses, galleries, and consumers. The combined efforts of these stakeholders often focus on maximising the value—commercial, political and cultural—of an artist’s work (Acker 2016). The products circulated within the Indigenous art market span a broad spectrum from fine art to tourist art. Fine art products are of high monetary and symbolic value, in which demand is high and supply is limited, and are often purchased by public institutions or private collectors (Bendor, von der Heidt and Acker 2013). The tourist or souvenir products consist of works of lesser monetary and cultural value and include paintings and souvenir-type products—such as printed stationery, prints, homewares, clothing, sculptures, trinkets, and so on.

In the next sections, I first provide an estimated snapshot of the size of the Australian and international market for Indigenous art products. Then, I describe the key distribution channels, namely, the primary and secondary markets. This is followed by a discussion of important market stakeholders who are part of the art market machine: Indigenous artists, government bodies, community art-centres, and for-profit businesses, such as galleries and retailers.

The Australian and International Markets

The Indigenous art market encompasses independent artists, artists in government-funded community art centres, and for-profit commercial businesses that operate in both urban and remote areas of Australia (see Figure 2). The buyers of Indigenous art encompass a wide range of consumer groups including private buyers such as tourists, private art collectors, and public or private corporations (Woodhead and Acker 2014). Despite the dynamic and complex nature of the multi-stakeholder Indigenous art markets, several studies

have tracked the growth of the market (Acker 2016; Woodhead and Acker 2014). For example, the few studies that have provided some indication of the value of the Indigenous Australian art market over the years include Pascoe (1981) who estimated that in 1979-1980 the sales of art products totalled AUD \$2.5 million (as cited in Altman 2005). In 1987-1988, Altman (1989) assessed that the sales had grown to AUD \$18.5 million. In 1999-2000, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) appraised commercial sales of Indigenous art at AUD \$36 million (ABS 2006). More recently, Woodhead and Acker (2014) documented an increase in both the value of sales and number of art works. Specifically, art product sales in 2003-2007 were AUD \$46 million and rose AUD \$6 million in 2008–2012 generating AUD \$52.7 million. Artists receive almost 60% of the total value of the sales, which equates to about AUD \$30 million of income to artists (Woodhead and Acker 2014).

The sales estimates also reveal that a limited amount of artwork is traded in international markets in comparison to the volume of Indigenous art being bought within Australia (Acker 2016). Taking into consideration that detailed analysis of the international market is limited, Acker (2016) finds that between 3.3% to 5.5% of the Australian Indigenous art products sold were exported overseas. A recent survey conducted with 126 Australian and international art businesses provides valuable insights about the past and potential markets for Indigenous art, while highlighting some of the evident differences between Australian-based businesses and art businesses from the global arena (Woodhead and Acker 2014). According to this survey (Woodhead and Acker 2014), Art businesses based in Australia report that, from 2008 to 2012, 65% of international sales originate from European consumers, with about three-quarters of sales attributed to consumers in France, Germany, and the UK. The US represents a further 23% of international art sales, followed by Asian markets with 9% of the sales. Although a small number of fine art pieces by high profile Indigenous artists will continue to be sold to these international buyers, for the overwhelming majority of Indigenous artists, the largest art market is Australia (Woodhead and Acker

2014). Thus, this study focuses on the Indigenous art markets within Australia. In the next section, I further explain the distribution channels within Australian Indigenous art market, which can be broadly distinguished into the primary and secondary markets.

The Australian Primary and Secondary Art Markets

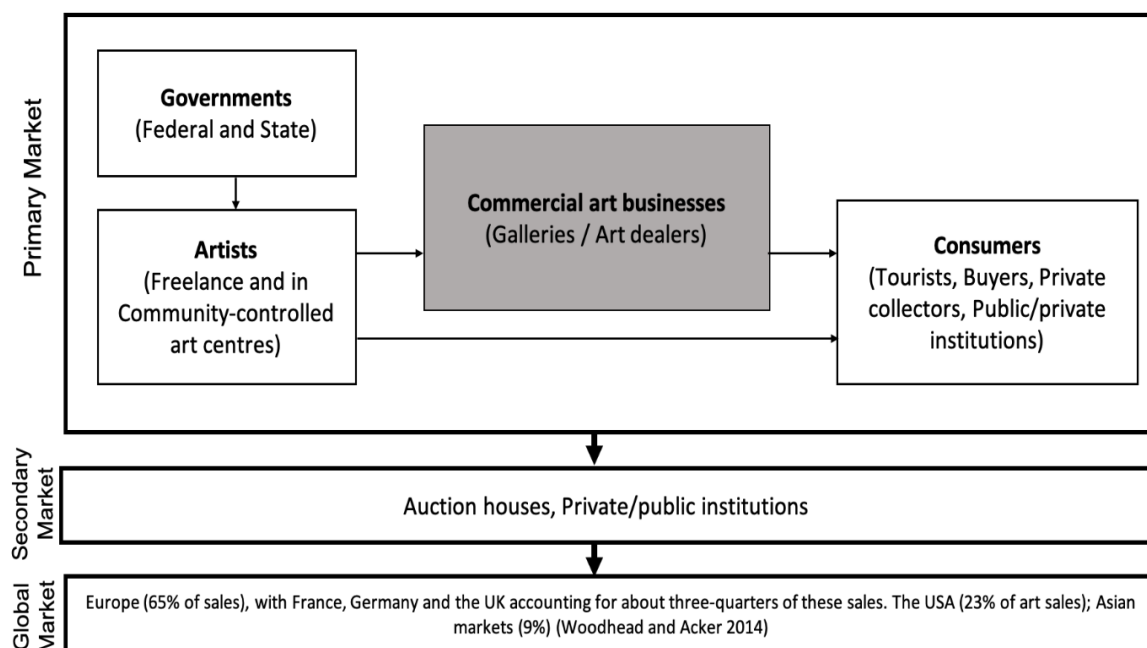
The contemporary Indigenous art market is complex. It is difficult to assess the scale of production, promotion, and sale of Indigenous art products given the dynamic mix of in-person direct sales, online transactions, and some forms of bartering that are undertaken by a wide range of individuals and businesses (Commonwealth of Australia 2007). Nevertheless, there are some more common and established production and distribution channels (see Figure 2). The *primary market* is where the artwork is sold for the first time, whereas the *secondary auction market* involves sales between third parties, such as artworks being circulated by auction houses who take works on consignment (see Coate 2009 for more extensive information on the auction markets). I do not focus on auction houses because this secondary market is a small part of the overall market that concentrates on the most exclusive works of art (i.e., the work of the most famous Indigenous artists) (Wilson-Anastasios 2008). In addition, it is the auction houses that mainly orchestrate these sales while profits obtained from these auctions sales are not returned to the artists, except for resale royalties that are discussed below (Woodhead and Acker 2014).

In this study, I focus on the primary markets in Australia because of the size of this market and its importance to contemporary Indigenous artists. As reported by Woodhead and Acker (2014), the Australian private buyers represent the largest group of art product consumers in Australia, contributing to almost 50% of sales. This primary market is where Indigenous art products are sold directly by the artists or through an agent or intermediary (Woodhead and Acker 2014). Increasingly, Indigenous artists operate as self-represented artists and are selling directly to consumers through Indigenous-run art spaces (e.g., APY

Gallery and Blak Dot Gallery) or art fairs. There are also online sales and promotional spaces such as Bluethumb, which connect Indigenous artists directly to collectors, buyers, and consumers (Daley 2017). Alternatively, artists are also contracted as designers or participants in joint ventures selling their work in arts manufacturing enterprises (e.g., Papunya Tula Artists) (Altman et al. 2002). Yet, independent Indigenous artists are relatively rare in the majority of art market transactions (Acker 2016).

In 2014, Woodhead and Acker (2014) estimated that less than 10% of people operating Indigenous art businesses are Indigenous people. While, this does not diminish the achievements, resilience, and inventiveness of the Indigenous artists in the wider market, it shows that non-Indigenous stakeholders continue to play an important intermediary role within the market. The roles of various key market stakeholders are discussed in the next sections. In consideration of the various stakeholders in the primary market, commercial art intermediaries are important conduits connecting the artists, their communities, and the consumers and are the primary focus of this study.

Figure 2.1. *Stakeholders in the Indigenous Art Markets.*



Government Bodies as Art Market Stakeholder

The Australian government has played a pivotal role in the expansion of the Indigenous art market by supporting art production through the funding of community-controlled art centres (Acker 2016). The wider social changes of the 1970s—such as an increased appreciation for Indigenous cultures—were reflected in government policies of the time (Altman 2005). As Australian politicians in the 1970s became more sensitive to issues of Indigenous rights, they saw support of art as an effective way to further the interests of Indigenous communities (Altman 2005; McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). In particular, the Whitlam Government established the Australia Council for the arts with policy commitments both to the arts and the Indigenous communities (Acker 2016; Altman 2005). In 1973, the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB) and the new Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs financially and vigorously supported Indigenous art production (Altman 2003; Jones, Booth, and Acker 2016).

One of the key functions of the AAB was the promotion and development of demand for Indigenous arts within the wider Australian and international markets (Berrell 2009). The AAB was provided with discretionary resources to fund Indigenous arts promotion, development, and marketing (Jones et al. 2016). For example, an ambitious exhibition program was established to stimulate public interest in Indigenous art in Australia and other countries (Acker 2016; Berrell 2009; Myers 2002). Purchases from such exhibitions provided additional financial support to the arts movements in areas such as Central Australia and Arnhem Land (Altman 2005). Moreover, individual artists were provided additional grants to support their professional and artistic development (Altman 2005; McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008).

During this time, the new self-determination governmental policy supported Indigenous people returning to their homelands (Altman 2005). McCulloch and McCulloch Childs (2008) argue that this homelands movement contributed heavily to the expansion of

Indigenous art. Most of these artworks were created in remote communities that were inaccessible to buyers, such as tourists. New institutional mechanisms—the community-controlled art centres—were subsequently established to collect and distribute the art to consumers, which is explored in the next section. In early 1990s, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) funded art centres under the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS) program (Wright 1999, 2000; Wright and Morphy 2000). Since then, NACIS has supported about 40 community-based art centres (Altman 2000; Mercer 1997). Since the early 1970s, this wide-ranging support from government arts and cultural agencies has fuelled growth of Indigenous art market. In 2016, 90 art centres existed throughout Australia (Acker 2016).

Community-controlled Art Centres as Art Market Stakeholder

Community-controlled art centres are crucial to the growth and ongoing success of Indigenous art markets by providing training to the artists and support (i.e., cultural maintenance programs) to the communities (Altman 2005). These government-subsidised art centres are community-owned and managed cooperatives. As community-based retail sites, art centres offer products ranging from fine art to tourist art, with paintings representing over 90% of sales (Woodhead and Acker 2014). While community art centres have been referred to as “production houses” (Mercer 1997, 77), they mostly function as wholesalers and retailers with the production of the artwork occurring outside of the art centre. Thus, art centres were established to facilitate the production and sales of art in remote regions of Australia, especially for artists who continue to stay in their communities on their homelands (Altman et al. 2002). For many of these remote artists, their artwork can only be purchased at a centralised art centre and are then wholesaled through a commercial gallery. Art centres are

often the only source of externally generated income in remote communities and therefore contribute significantly to local economies (Wright 1999, 2000; Wright and Morphy 2000).

While the principal activity of these not-for-profit organisations is to facilitate the production and marketing of Indigenous art, community-controlled art centres also fill an interesting mix of social, cultural, artistic, and economic roles (Altman 1989; Altman et al. 2002; Wright 1999, 2000). This is partly due to the circumstance where, art centres operate in communities where there are limited educational, enterprise, and employment opportunities. Thus, in addition to their commercial activities, community-controlled art centres fulfil important socio-cultural and training functions as they actively train and foster the next generation of artists. For example, some art centres provide a range of development initiatives which include identifying young artists, cultivating their talents and skills and providing marketing support (Altman 2007).

An ongoing public debate exists that highlights the contested nature of art centres as being primarily *cultural* or *commercial* enterprises (Altman and Taylor 2000; Langton 2003; Myers 2002). This debate focuses on whether community-based Indigenous art centres should focus on protecting and preserving the cultural heritage of the local Indigenous art and the artists; or should they primarily exist to develop art as a means to enhance and strengthen the local Indigenous economies. Some researchers, however, argue that community art centres “are neither entirely cultural nor entirely commercial enterprises; each is a unique and highly variable amalgam of the commercial and cultural” (Wright and Altman 2000, 6). In addition, underlying these debates on art-centres being cultural *and/or* commercial, there is a consistent concern for authenticity and cultural integrity (Acker 2006; Booth 2014). Thus, while community-based art centres play an active role as intermediaries between the artists and the market, there are challenges and tensions in their dealings with the Indigenous artists and art products.

Having acknowledged the contested positionality of the community art centres in the Indigenous art market, it raises the question of how are the art galleries—who source from these art centres—positioned within the market? Since these commercial art galleries are *for-profit* enterprises, how do they balance the cultural and commercial tension in their dealings with the Indigenous artists? How do they manage the trade-offs between promoting and profiting from the cultural work of Indigenous artists? Do art galleries work with Indigenous communities and, if so, how do they influence the art practices of the artist and their communities? How do they then also influence, consult and advise the customers in their buying decisions? In the next section, I further evaluate the role and the position of commercial art galleries in the market.

Commercial Art Businesses as Art Market Stakeholder

Commercial art businesses including art galleries and art dealers are important intermediaries in the Indigenous art market. They connect the artists and their communities with the market. Art produced by Indigenous artists and sold by private commercial galleries between 1999 and 2000 was valued at AUD \$35.6 million, representing 16.4% of the value of total private gallery sales in Australia (Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC), 2012). Yet, private commercial art businesses report significant falls in sales (Woodhead and Acker 2014). Specifically, forty-seven art businesses recorded a decrease in sales, while eighteen businesses recorded an increase in the 2008–2012 period. Of those art businesses that experienced a drop in sales, 50% of the art businesses reported a more than 30% decrease while 25% of art business reported a more than 55% decrease in sales. In response to Indigenous artwork sales declines, more businesses are selling tourist products and lower priced art products (Woodhead and Acker 2014). Despite the forecasted growth of the overall Indigenous art markets in Australia, the significant decrease in the sales of

Indigenous art among commercial art businesses require more detailed investigation and exploration.

In general, these art businesses sourced their art products primarily from art centres (46%), as well as directly from artists (37%) (Woodhead and Acker 2014). 86% of their sales were from the sale of art products and 9% from tourist/merchandise products such as stationary, prints, sculptures, clothing, and trinkets. Over the 2008 – 2012 period, the sales of merchandise products at galleries and private businesses had increased by 16.5%. Particularly, small art products that are priced less than AUD \$1000 are becoming more popular with art buyers and tourists (Woodhead and Acker 2014). These trends demonstrate that the commercial art businesses are situated in a highly complex position as they source from both community art centres and the Indigenous artist, while also adapting and responding to the changes in the buying behaviours of their customers.

Commercial art businesses, including private art galleries and dealers, sit in an influential position within the market, dealing with community art centres, Indigenous artists, and consumers. They also sit in a contested place in which they are also mainly for-profit enterprises that promote Indigenous cultural products. Though playing a significant role within the Indigenous art market, there is currently limited scholarly research on these commercial entities as to how they engage with Indigenous art, cultures, and the Indigenous people. Existing studies on Indigenous art and its markets focus predominantly on the role of community-controlled art centres because of its important implications on government policies and funding allocations (see Altman et al. 2002; Altman 2007; Wright 1999, 2000); but there is limited understanding on the role of for-profit commercial art galleries as vital intermediaries. Do they replicate the model of community art centres as the “amalgam of commercial and cultural?” (Wright and Altman 2000, 6) If so, do they also support the artists and communities in revitalisation of Indigenous cultures?

Overall, the current literature on the history of Indigenous art demonstrates that the meaning of art is evolving and socially constructed by different groups of stakeholders. For example, the original meaning of Indigenous art was to fulfil traditional cultural needs within Indigenous communities (Caruana 2003). Thus, for many Indigenous people, distinct and culturally embedded ways of understanding “art” exist, including the idea of art as a story, a ceremony, or marking (Biddle 2007). Art continues to play an important role in asserting one’s Indigenous identity and understanding one’s place in contemporary life (Edmonds 2007). Indigenous people continue to use art to express pride in their culture and themes of self-determination and political activism, such as rights to ancestral lands (Caruana 2003; McLean 2011). In this context, the Australian government has had a positive effect in recent years through funding community arts centres (Rodner and Thomson 2013) and strengthening policies on copyrights (Acker 2016; Jones et al. 2016; McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008).

Although anthropologists originally treated Indigenous art as “primitive” artefacts with merely ethnographic value (McLean 2011), Indigenous artwork is now constructed as both contemporary art and a commodity to be traded in local and global marketplaces (Langton 2004). Art intermediaries, including art dealers, galleries, auction houses, and community arts centres, play a critical role in this process. Next, I turn to a significant body of scholarly work that explores the marketing of arts and the tensions inherent within the art markets in general. In the next sections, I provide a brief overview of the scholarship of arts marketing to derive insights from existing literature that can inform my study of commercial art intermediaries.

Marketing of Arts in Contemporary Art Markets

Arts marketing research is a developing and evolving domain (Bradshaw 2010; Fillis 2011). Arts marketing as a research area first emerged in the 1980s (O'Reilly, Rentschler, and Kirchner 2014). Arts marketing is defined as the development of strategies and tactics to help the art world achieve market-based goals (such as financial returns) and to attract customers (O'Reilly 2005). Early studies of arts marketing used conventional marketing theories to explain the behaviour of artists as producers and consumers in art markets (see Hirschman 1983; Rentschler 1998) which mainly assumed that there was a customer-driven interaction between art-producers and art-consumers. However, in more recent studies, it has been advocated that the arts marketing activities are driven by the needs of a variety of stakeholders, including artists, investors, shareholders, art intermediaries, policy makers, and the general public (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan 2003; Kerrigan, Fraser, and Özbilgin 2004). As Fillis (2004) emphasises that, by studying the marketing practices of these different stakeholders in the art world, marketing researchers can develop theories that better represent the workings of art markets and also contribute to the success of the artists.

In the next sections, I focus on three key themes in the arts marketing literature that are useful to further understand the roles of commercial art intermediaries in the art markets. First, I highlight the relationships between art intermediaries and the artists where the role of commercial art intermediaries evolves and multiplies. Then, I explore the broader debates on art/market relationships to uncover the tensions between art and commerce inherent within art markets. Last, I evaluate the art machine as a metaphor to understand the workings of art markets and the role of commercial art intermediaries as “cogs” in the machine.

The Relationships between Art Intermediaries and the Artists

Arts marketing scholars argue that marketing the arts requires more than the simple application of conventional marketing management (Bradshaw 2010; Fillis 2004, 2010, 2011; O'Reilly and Kerrigan 2010; Schroeder 2005). Instead, the marketing of arts involve understanding the nature of the relationships between artists and the art intermediaries. Visual arts marketing, for example, puts the artist and the art product at the forefront of strategic planning, unlike conventional marketing activities that are customer-centric. While artists seek out audiences as their consumers, artists' creativity is primarily 'self-oriented' instead of 'consumer-oriented' (Fillis 2006; Hirschman 1983). That is, the artists produce art works to express their personal vision, values and emotions while "the audience will be moved to accept [the artist's] perspective (Fillis, 2006, 32)."

Similarly, Lehman and Wickman (2014) have particularly developed the Visual Artists' Marketing Trajectory Model (VAMT) that demonstrates the differences in the visual artists' marketing orientation and activities in comparison to the assumptions that underpin traditional marketing theory. Lehman and Wickman (2014) have found that the arts marketing activities change in accordance with a visual artist's career stage from being an "unknown artist", to becoming an "emerging artist", then "established artist", and eventually achieving the status of a "famous artist". For example, "unknown artists" only engage in marketing their artworks occasionally on an ad hoc basis through local art shows or amateur art competitions. They remain self-sufficient and independent from being tied to commercial art galleries. However, as they progressed to becoming "emerging artists", there is increased desire and effort to seek out and establish relationships with commercial galleries, particularly to build legitimacy and reputation through the endorsement of art intermediaries. When the artists are more established and famous, they then outsource their marketing activities fully to commercial art galleries or agents. Such findings demonstrate the changing

relationships and dynamic roles of art intermediaries as they engage with the artists and their artworks.

Moreover, in the marketing of theatre arts, the artworks involve a more experiential and collaborative approach whereby the artists, audience, and marketer take an active role in developing and shaping the art performance (Ryna, Fenton, and Sangiorgi 2010). As a result, Ryna et. al (2010) have found that performing arts is more than merely bringing a “product” to market. Instead, the arts marketer also takes on the additional roles of *collector and sharer of stories* from the audiences and the artists, as *network facilitator* who enables audience participation, and as *guide* that supports deep immersion among the audiences. Similarly, Thyne and Hede’s (2016) study of museums, intermediaries such as curators motivate and empower the consumers to co-produce the experience. These various studies demonstrate that, by studying the marketing of different art forms, new insights are generated that build on and/or challenge the assumptions of conventional marketing and the role of art intermediaries as marketers of arts.

The Art/Market Relationships

In addition, arts marketing scholars continue to call for a more sophisticated understanding of arts marketing that aligns with a long debate on the divisions between art and science in marketing (Brown 1996). Art as creative and “imaginative activity” (Brown and Patterson 2000, 9) has been traditionally positioned in opposition to the logical rationality of the marketplace. Bradshaw (2010) argues that conceptualisations that dichotomise art and marketing to be overly simplistic. Instead, researchers argue that the distinction between art and marketing is blurred and can even dissolve (Brown and Patterson 2000). For example, Fillis and Rentscheler (2005) explored the visual arts sector to generate insights for marketing, entrepreneurship, and creativity. Arts marketing scholars (Bradshaw 2010; Fillis 2000, 2002; O’Reilly 2005; Schroeder 2000) encourage the possibilities of

building alliances between art and marketing disciplines to eventually bridge the gap between arts marketing practices and the development of arts marketing theories. As Fillis (2014, 53) aptly suggests, “[t]he art world and the business environment can be visualised as a mutually beneficial permeable boundary where multidirectional connections can be made.”

Bradshaw (2010) proposes different ways of thinking about the relationship between art and market in which the focus could include, for example, the marketing *of* art (i.e., applying marketing strategies to sell art and increase engagement), marketing *in* art (i.e., representing markets, marketing, and consumers in art forms such as movies), marketing *through* art (i.e., the use of art in advertising), marketing *from* art (i.e., when marketers generate strategic insights from artistic practices), and marketing *as* art (i.e., the creative aspects of marketing that cannot be logically systematised). Moreover, many artists are also skilled business people who deploy marketing tools and activities to engage with audiences (Bradshaw 2010; Fillis 2004). Fillis (2014) also alludes to the dual role of artists as marketers and marketers as artists.

While different art/market interfaces exist (Bradshaw 2010) and the roles between artists and marketers are increasingly blurred (Fillis 2014), such multiplicity and crossing of boundaries can also bring about unprecedented tensions. Thus, arts marketing scholars further argue that mainstream marketing theories have not sufficiently accounted for the underlying tensions when boundaries are crossed between creating art for art’s sake versus producing art for business’ sake (Fillis 2014). As Major (2014) reflected provocatively: does the birth of arts marketing mean the death of the artist? Can artists continue to create artworks based on self-expression and creativity when one is creating artworks in response to the demands of the market? Similarly, I extend Major’s (2014) line of inquiry on the tensions experienced by artists to explore how do art intermediaries navigate the art/market relationship. To delve into these tensions and ambivalences inherent at the art/market interface, continuous interrogation of the role of business in the arts and the meanings of arts is needed (Ryna et al. 2010).

The relationship between art and the market is multi-faceted as complexities and tensions arise when boundaries are crossed; different understandings also exist in terms of what art is, what art does, and for whom art is made. For example, looking specifically at the visual arts, they consist of artefacts and images that are rich in multi-layered symbolic meanings making the art open to interpretation (Fillis 2011). Thus, Penrose (1990) also supports that there is no single definition of art, because the meanings of art are subjectively evaluated and defined different market stakeholders including the artists, the critics and the consumers. To illustrate, in a study of museum marketing, vom Lehn (2010) finds that the art intermediaries, such as the curators and managers, are often surprised by the idiosyncratic interpretations of the artworks among the visitors who are guided by their needs, cultural views, and fantasies.

As discussed at the start of this chapter, Indigenous art conveys vital knowledge of the land, events, and cultural beliefs of the Indigenous people within their communities. In addition to the artists, however, external forces such as art intermediaries also play an important role in the interpretation and mediation of art, impacting the process of commodifying art (Fillis 2004). For example, art intermediaries such as gallery owners and agents significantly impact the way in which the art product is exhibited, and the amount of recognition given by critics in terms of style, quality, and suggested interpretation. Fillis (2004) emphasises that the multiplicity of meanings are opportunities for developing more appropriate, complex theory and practice of arts marketing. The adoption of a pluralist or multi-stakeholder perspective that captures the complexities of the art-market relationship can transform how arts are marketed (O'Reilly 2011). This multi-stakeholder, multi-meaning perspective would support the development of more effective practices that align with the needs of the artists, audiences, consumers, and the wider society (Fillis 2011; O'Reilly and Kerrigan 2010).

The tensions arising between the commercial and the art can be observed in arts markets, in general, yet are often particularly pronounced and complex in Indigenous arts markets because they are also entangled within the legacies of oppression and colonisation (Morphy 1998). In particular, art market tensions became prominent with the circulation of Indigenous art beyond Indigenous communities to non-Indigenous people, including early settlers and missionaries (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008), as well as institutions such as art galleries and museums (Morphy 1998). For example, art has been produced for cultural needs by the Indigenous artists. However, initially, the significance of these cultural meanings was dismissed or overlooked by colonial settlers (Boles and Morphy 1999). Subsequently, Indigenous art was recognised by art galleries and museums for its aesthetics, and these stakeholders worked to “elevate” the work to the category of art.

In addition, Indigenous art is created to communicate powerful political statements asserting indigeneity and reclaiming rights to lands (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). For some political art, such as the work by Indigenous artists Mumu Mike Williams (Figure 4.2), this art is marketed, managed, and sold by art intermediaries, yet we know little about how these intermediaries shape the meaning of arts. With this layering-on of alternate meanings (art as culture, art as social change, art as business), art intermediaries in the Indigenous art market must navigate these different meanings against the broader art/market tensions. Thus, studying art intermediaries in the Indigenous art markets has the potential to unravel nuances and complexities in the relationship between the market and art, as art intermediaries are central to selling Indigenous art products, fostering ongoing relationship with Indigenous artists and communities, building relationships with consumers and collectors. In the next section, I further review specific studies conducted on different art markets to understand the dynamics of art markets and how do commercial art intermediaries navigate their position and role.

Art Intermediaries as the “Cogs” in the Art Machine

Arts marketing researchers have studied contemporary art markets in the United States (Joy and Sherry 2003), the People’s Republic of China (Joy and Sherry 2004; Rodner and Preece 2015), Venezuela (Rodner, Omar, and Thomson 2011; Rodner and Kerrigan 2018; Rodner and Preece 2015), Thailand (Rodner, Omar, and Thomson 2011), USA and Europe (Rodner and Thomson 2013), and India and Russia (Komarova and Velthuis 2018). The primary focus of topics include the co-creation of value among stakeholders (Joy and Sherry 2004; Rodner and Thomson 2013), positioning and promotion of artists (Rodner, Omar, and Thomson 2011), intermingling of art and politics (Patsiaouras, Veneti, and Green 2018; Rodner and Kerrigan 2018; Rodner and Preece 2015) and local socio-cultural factors that stimulate market development (Komarova and Velthuis 2018). In this section, I drill down into those studies that are most focused on the role of the art intermediaries, but first I explore the concept of the art machine, which is a powerful metaphor for understanding the art markets.

In studying art markets, Rodner and Thomson (2013) introduce the concept of the “art machine” to shed light on the various roles played by a network of artists, art professionals, and art supporters to co-create value and socially construct the symbolic meanings of art. The art machine maps how the value of art is co-created across a six-stage process that implicates different stakeholder groups and organisations that are identified as “cogs” in the art machine; each cog plays a role at different stages of an on-going, one-way validation process for contemporary art. According to Rodner and Thomson (2013), the first stage involves artists being educated at art schools. The second stage refers to artists working with art dealers or galleries to endorse their works. These art intermediaries are the important “tastemakers” (Chong, 2010, 9) and cultural gatekeepers (Becker 1982; Schroeder 2006) who play the important role of interpreters or mediators in the process of turning art into a product (Meyer and Even 1998). As Becker (1982, 109) explains, the dealers and the galleries focus

on “transforming aesthetic value into economic value” as they position new artists within the commercial market. But they require further validation from another group of gatekeepers, namely the art critics. These insights are valuable as they expose the different and multiple roles played by art intermediaries beyond the core function as the marketers of arts. It appears that their roles are multi-faceted and dynamic.

In the third stage of the validation process, curators and critics establish the meaning and marketability of artists’ works, while being less financially oriented (Rodner and Thomson 2013). Art critics’ credibility is dependent upon their reputation and expertise in making the right value judgements that influence the decisions of other people (Rodner and Thomson 2013). Subsequently, in the fourth stage, the auctions houses establish a secondary market for the artworks. Then, in the fifth stage, art collectors endorse the value of the artworks by acquiring it, reflecting their good taste and higher social status. In the sixth stage, art fairs and art events make art more accessible to general consumers since they are less intimate than art galleries, yet these marketplaces lose the aura of distinction and exclusivity often associated with the art galleries (Thompson 2008). Last, Rodner and Thomson (2013) explain that the artworks exit the market as collectors acquire the artworks as part of their collections.

Applying the metaphor of the “art machine” to the Indigenous art markets in Australia, it is evident that the different groups of stakeholders identified by Rodner and Thomson (2013) also exist within the Indigenous art markets. However, differences exist between the mechanism of the art machine described by Rodner and Thomson (2013) and the Indigenous art markets in Australia. First, in addition to the art dealers, galleries, curators, critics, auction houses, museums and collectors, there are also government funded community art-centres that are involved in shaping the Indigenous art markets. The role of the state is also documented in art studies by Rodner and Preece (2015) as well as Komarova and Velthuis (2018). For example, focusing on the art markets in India and Russia, Komarova

and Velthuis (2018) found that the absence and the presence of the state and its cultural policies affect the emergence of art markets and the actions of art intermediaries. This is similar in the context of this study in which the Australian government's policies have supported the flourishing of Indigenous art centres.

Similarly, focusing on the Venezuelan and Chinese contemporary art markets, Rodner and Preece (2015) highlight the close intermingling of art and politics. Specifically, their study demonstrates how institutional structures, particularly state politics, shape the development of the art market and the art produced within it. In other words, artists cannot ignore the political systems within which they operate, if they are to remain legitimised and valued. Furthermore, artists struggle to establish themselves when there are competing discourses within the macro-context in which they must create and disseminate their work. Rodner and Preece (2015) show how artists navigate the various tensions between: political ideologies and art market practice; the individual creative identity of the visual artist and the collective identity of a national cultural brand; and, between local and global art systems. They pay limited attention, however, to how art intermediaries are impacted by these tensions and how they navigate such tensions as well.

As discussed in the section on the Australian Indigenous art markets, the art dealers and galleries as intermediaries also engage directly with the community art-centres that focus on protecting and preserving the cultural heritage of Indigenous art and cultures. It is unclear how art dealers respond and deal with the art centres and the Indigenous communities who play an active role within the market. Therefore, while Rodner and Thomson's (2013) "art machine" metaphor emerged from their observations of different art markets, there is limited attention to the artists and communities as collectives, particularly, how do art intermediaries engage with this important groups of stakeholders. Therefore, as Thornton's (2009) ethnography of the contemporary art world suggests, the art world is not a smooth functioning machine and is better understood as a "conflicted cluster of subcultures – each of

which embrace different definitions of art (2008, xix).” Instead, each space engages in different form of value creations and the meanings of art are constructed by varying forms of social relationships (Shukaitis and Figiel 2014). These types of tensions likely exist in the Indigenous art market in Australia, which must also contend with a history of oppression, cultural erasure (Philp 2007), and, at times, even genocide (Glenn 2015).

As I acknowledge the different parts and cogs that make up the art world as a machine, the arts marketing literature also calls for an interrogation of the relationship of art and market where the art/market divide is challenged and blurred. To build on the existing arts marketing literature that advocates for a multi-stakeholder and multi-meaning perspective, I focus on the role of art intermediaries who are central to selling and marketing of Indigenous art to understand how they occupy different spaces within the market as they engage directly with the artists, the communities, the audience, the consumers and the wider public. Particularly in the Indigenous art markets, these commercial enterprises also often sit within a contested field of inquiry that encompasses the complicated and often difficult history between the Indigenous people as the first inhabitants and non-Indigenous settlers in Australia where tensions between the cultural and commercial continue to exist (Acker 2016).

Against the context of changing meanings of Indigenous art as a result of colonisation, how do these commercial art intermediaries reconcile the expanding and often contesting meanings of Indigenous art within the market? Thus, focusing on the commercial art intermediaries raises interesting lines of inquiry that motivate this research project to further understand the role of commercial art intermediaries against the evolution of the settler-Indigenous relations within the Australian Indigenous art market. Specifically, it has raised the following questions of:

- (1) How do commercial art intermediaries negotiate the meaning of Indigenous art within a multi-stakeholder art market?

- (2) How do art intermediaries relationally engage with the Indigenous artists and their art works, Indigenous communities, and buyers as they balance cultural and commercial tensions?

Overall, I have found the extant literature of art markets and marketing of art useful in framing the art world as a market where multiple groups of stakeholders co-create value together. While the arts marketing literature has focused on the relationships between the art intermediaries and the various groups of stakeholders, it has not considered the cultural aspects of the art exchanges that happen with the art markets. Given the settler-Indigenous relations that are prominent in the Indigenous art markets, I also turn to the acculturation literature within consumer research that focuses on the cross-cultural processes of immigrants (as outsiders) who move into dominant cultures (as hosts). These studies have investigated how people of non-Western cultures adapt to the dominant Western cultures and societies (i.e., Mexicans in the US, Indians in the US, and Haitian in the US). This particular stream of studies is useful because it conceptualises the market exchanges as a relational cross-cultural processes between the outsiders and the hosts, which also involve acculturation agents. It also reveals that different cross-cultural processes will result in different identity outcomes, which I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Cross-Cultural Processes of Acculturation

Little research examines the cross-cultural dynamics of how the Indigenous people as original inhabitants interact with non-Indigenous settlers in contemporary marketplaces. However, extant research does examine how new immigrant consumers fit into a dominant host culture. This research on consumer acculturation provides a starting point and offers some potential conceptual tools for how groups bridge cultural differences. For example, consumer studies focus on how Mexican and Haitian immigrants adapt to a new culture in the United States (Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1994). The literature documents that immigrant consumers often adapt to the dominant Western cultures through their consumption (Askegaard et al. 2005; Oswald 1999; Penaloza 1994, 1995). These studies also focus on external acculturation agents, such as the media, family, and retail outlets involved in this acculturation process and the kinds of identity outcomes produced.

In the next section, I first discuss the literature on consumer acculturation to explore our current understanding of acculturation agents, outcomes, and processes. From there, I outline the key themes and assumptions of the extant literature that have focused predominantly on immigrants who moved into a foreign Western culture.

Consumer Cultural Acculturation Literature

The majority of consumer studies on cultural acculturation focus on immigrant populations (see Table 3.1). The increasing prevalence of globalisation and migration has led consumer researchers to explore the complexities of migrants' acculturation to Western consumer cultures (O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983, 1984, 1987). With the influx of Hispanic immigrants into the United States since the 1980's, consumer researchers have explored the assimilation of migrants into Western consumer culture (see O'Guinn et al. 1986; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983, 1984). After three decades, a field of

consumer acculturation research has emerged as researchers seek to understand how immigrant consumers acquire the skills and knowledge imperative to engaging in consumer behaviour in a cultural context that is foreign (Peneloza 1994, 1995). This body of consumer acculturation research has commonly revolved around three key domains: (1) migrant identity projects, (2) the acculturation agents involved in the acculturation process, and (3) the types of outcomes (e.g., integration, resistance, or pendulism) that are produced under different national–cultural conditions (e.g., North America, Denmark, or Turkey) (Luedicke 2011). These three key domains and the important consumer acculturation studies are outlined in Table 3.1. In the following sections, these three key domains are further discussed in the context of colonisers and Indigenous people as the traditional inhabitants of the land. I further argue that our current understanding of the cultural acculturation process of colonisers and Indigenous peoples is limited, which justifies my need to explore post-colonial theory.

Table 3.1. *Key Consumer Acculturation Studies.*

Key Authors	Migrant Identity Projects	Actual Acculturation Agents Examined	Acculturation Outcomes	Definition of Key Terms of Processes of Acculturation
Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) – <i>JCR</i>	Mexican immigrants in the US – <i>Analysis of garbage</i>	Not discussed	Mexican-American consumption resembles a unique blending of Mexican and Anglo cultures where their stereotypes of the dominant culture are enacted	Hyperassimilation (over-assimilation): over-assimilation to immigrants' prior perceptions of host country cultural style
Mehta and Belk (1991) – <i>JCR</i>	Indian immigrants in the US – <i>Semi-structured depth interviews</i>	Family, religious and social clubs, specialty retail stores, and national publications	Possession play an important role in the re-construction of immigrant identity as they engage in anti-assimilation	Anti-assimilation: special native possessions were used for hyper-identification with their native cultures which then becomes outdated in a foreign mainstream culture
Penaloza (1994, 1995) – <i>JCR</i>	Mexican immigrants in the US – <i>Critical ethnography</i>	Family, friends, media, and institutions, such as school and churches	Consumer acculturation process leads to the acculturation outcomes of assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation	Assimilation: as a subcultural group becomes more similar to the dominant culture over time Maintenance: as the subcultural group maintains its identity and native culture Resistance: when subcultural group resists the pressure to conform to the mainstream culture Segregation: when the identity of the members of a subcultural group is dominant because they live in segregation from mainstream culture
Oswald (1999) – <i>JCR</i>	Haitian migrants in the US – <i>Ethnography</i>	Family, friends, media, and retail outlets	Haitian migrants used consumption to “swap” between cultures and multicultural identities, rather than occupying fixed identity position	Culture swapping: Use goods to move between one cultural identity and another as they engage in “codes swapping” as a fluid process

Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard (2005) – <i>JCR</i>	Greenlandic immigrants in Denmark – <i>Interviews</i>	Family, friends, institutions, and transnational consumer culture	Greenlandic immigrants “move between” positions of hyperculture, assimilation, integration, and pendulism	Hyperculture: when culture of origin is socially reconstructed as something consumable to anchor one’s identity Assimilation: complete immersion in host cultural identity by abandoning one’s native cultures Integration: allows for a blending of native and host cultures Pendulism: when a person experiences the alienations and attractions to both home and host cultures
Üstüner and Holt (2007) – <i>JCR</i>	Poor migrant women living in a Turkish squatter – <i>Ethnographic case study</i>	Mass media, family, and friends	Migrants’ identity projects and outcomes significantly depended on their economic, social, and cultural capital, leaving some marginalised with shattered hopes and dreams	Reterritorialise the minority culture (Counterhegemonic identity): individuals collectively construct a counterhegemonic identity by recreating their native culture in a new world where mainstream culture dominates Ritual pursuit of dominant culture as myth (Hegemonic identity): individuals collectively developed rituals in which they can experience the mainstream dominant lifestyle and culture as a myth Shattered identity: individuals are <i>stuck in the middle</i> as they are not able to live up the idealised myth of mainstream culture while being disconnected from their native culture
Luedicke (2015) – <i>JCR</i>	Telfs & Turkish immigrants in Austria – <i>In-depth interview</i>	Not discussed	Broadens the conceptualisation of consumer acculturation to include the responses of people in the “home” consumers	Consumer acculturation: a relational mutual adaptation process that involves both immigrant consumers and original inhabitants adjusting their consumption practices

Consumer Acculturation Studies: Migrant Identity Projects

Consumer acculturation research started as field of study that was heavily influenced by cross-cultural psychology scholars. Berry (1980) defined acculturation as the adaptation that takes place as a result of contact with a foreign and dissimilar culture. For instance, earlier consumer acculturation studies, such as those by Wallendorf and Reilly (1983, 1984, 1987), draw on Berry's model of "level of acculturation" to understand the consumption behaviours of Mexican-Americans in comparison to those of Anglo-Americans. They used innovative and unobtrusive methods, such as sorting through garbage to note differences in the food consumption patterns among consumers of different ethnicities (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983).

Consumption-based cultural assimilation involves changes in the consumption patterns of immigrants as they adapt to a new culture. These changes could be expressed, for example, through their dressing styles, food consumption choices, language spoken, and products purchasing decisions (Wallendorf and Reilly 1984). Importantly, Wallendorf and Reilly (1984) challenge the traditional model of cultural assimilation which implies culture as relatively static. In contrast, they demonstrate that culture is dynamic, and an immigrant leaves a culture that is changing and moves into another culture that is also dynamic (which is an important point when thinking about Indigenous art as dynamic creation). Similarly, focusing on immigrant consumers, Penaloza (1994, 33) conceptualised consumer acculturation as a "general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country." This acculturation process is not limited to assimilation but also includes processes such as cultural maintenance, resistance, and segregation (Penaloza 1994).

The dominant emphasis on immigrant consumers in prior studies of acculturation, however, has been challenged. Luedicke (2015) reminds us that, as immigrant consumers are

mobilised across different cultural contexts, the people who inhabit the place that immigrant consumers move into *also* engage in cultural adaptation practices. Therefore, from this broader perspective, consumer acculturation not only exists as a process of adaptation on the part of the immigrants but also include how the original inhabitants of the place adjust to immigrants' consumption choices, behaviours, and ideologies (Luedicke 2015). This re-conceptualisation of consumer acculturation broadens the focus to include the original inhabitants to examine mutual shaping and negotiation of cultural practices. This relational approach to consumer acculturation is important and forms the basis for my subsequent analysis of findings.

There is an important difference, however, in contexts of Indigenous people and the immigration of dominant colonising cultures and people. Recall in the previous chapter that this cultural adaptation process started in the early period of the 19th century when British settlers first colonised Australia, taking ownership over Indigenous lands, and significantly impacting Indigenous cultural practices (i.e., through commodification of Indigenous art and cultures). This intermingling of colonising cultures and Indigenous cultures continue to play out between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within the Indigenous art market. This mutual cultural adaptation process is also affected by external agents of acculturation (such as media, family, and institutions) and results in various identity outcomes, which are explored next.

Agents of Acculturation

Acculturation is not a simple linear progression. Rather, agents of acculturation—such as mass media—can strongly affect immigrants' cultural adaptation process (Wallendorf and Reilly 1984, 1987). For example, by studying Mexican immigrants, Penaloza (1994) demonstrates that acculturation agents (e.g., family, friends, media, and religious institutions)

help immigrant consumers to reproduce Mexican or Anglo-American cultural norms in their new cultural context. These conceptualisations reveal an underlying assumption of consumer acculturation research in which the function of these agents of acculturation is to assist immigrants to “fit in” with the new culture into which they have moved (which is reminiscent of the Australian assimilation policy for Indigenous peoples discussed in the previous chapter). Immigrants may need to reject their native culture to fit in, especially Mexican immigrants who may have internalised the stigma of being an outsider or as the devalued other (Peneloza 1994).

In contrast to this assumption, in the early years of colonisation in Australia, many Indigenous people who are the original inhabitants of the land were *forced* to fit in to the cultures of outsiders who were British settlers. Similar to the Mexican immigrants, Indigenous people were framed as *the other* or, even worse, as *primitive* by these outsiders as part of their strategy to colonise. However, unlike immigrants, Indigenous people may not focus on fitting in, but rather on maintaining the boundaries between cultures and decoupling from the colonising dominant culture. For example, some Indigenous activists used art to help in their battle to reclaim their rights to lands and revitalise Indigenous cultures (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). As discussed in the previous chapter, many Indigenous people then become powerful agents who *resist* this fitting in or blending into the colonising cultures.

Agents of acculturation are important in understanding the relational processes of shaping of Indigenous culture and non-Indigenous cultures within the context of Indigenous art. In the context of this study, sitting within a web of relations with artists, communities, and consumers, the art intermediaries are also key agents of acculturation that navigate this mutual cultural adaptation process. As part of this dynamic and evolving process, different outcomes will likely result.

Identity Outcomes and Processes

The consumer acculturation process leads to various outcomes for immigrants, such as assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation (Peneloza 1994). For example, within the context of Mexican immigrants in the US, they *assimilated* consumption patterns associated with the US consumer culture, yet they also maintained aspects of the consumption patterns they had acquired in Mexico. Products and services were used in ways that allow them to *maintain* connections to their native culture, and in certain conditions to *resist* the US consumer culture. Although they disliked the materialism and discrimination found within the US culture, the study did not discuss any explicit acts of resistance from these immigrants.

Alternatively, Mexican culture and identities were better preserved when immigrants were living in *segregated* neighbourhoods. At these segregated sites that are situated far from mainstream US culture, the Mexican informants inhabited a marginalised consumer culture that allowed the enactment of Mexican culture to remain strong. This research is important because it reminds us that communities respond in different ways and geographic isolation from dominant cultures can help preserve and foster cultural ties. This is similar to the boom in artistic movements documented in some Indigenous communities when many Indigenous people moved back to live on their remote homelands to produce arts at community-centres. This helps this study to focus the inquiry on how art intermediaries engage with the Indigenous artists and their communities, which might be in remote locations far away from these businesses.

Oswald's (1999) research of Haitian migrants in the US added additional nuances to the study of consumer acculturation outcomes; specifically, she illustrated the instability of acculturation outcomes. For instance, rather than occupying fixed identity position, Haitian migrants used consumption to move between cultures to construct multicultural identities. In

this way, ethnic consumers, such as Haitians and Mexicans in America, swap cultures by consuming different cultural goods, agentially moving between worlds rather than blending these worlds into a single homogenous identity. Oswald's (1999) study demonstrated that Haitian consumers suspend and postpone assimilation indefinitely, as they are able to straddle the boundaries between both cultures at once. For example, one of the Haitian informants who had been participating in American consumer culture claims that, "We tolerate Americans, but we'll never assimilate" (Oswald 1999, 307). This shows that people can be adept at switching cultural codes constantly, adapting to the expectations of both home and host culture as the situation demands, yet they can still resist assimilating.

Interesting, when considering the context of Indigenous people, one could imagine that these processes may also be at play, such as when the subordinate group learns the cultural codes of the dominant group in order to move between cultures. For example, Indigenous people may move between dominant colonising and Indigenous cultures to advocate for their rights and their own cultures. Indigenous artists, such as Maree Clarke, move deftly between creating art in their communities and then entering into public spaces (such as museums and art galleries), which have traditionally been dominated by Western ideas and processes. Her agility in crossing between cultures demonstrates her agency and power in advocating for revitalisation of Indigenous cultures. This seems to differ from immigrants in Penaloza's study (1994), where it was found that the native culture is most preserved among immigrants who are physically separate from dominant cultures. Therefore, I focus on how art intermediaries work with artists and the meaning of their art in which the arts' connection to Indigenous culture could be treated in many different ways.

Askegaard et al. (2005) further contributed to knowledge about cultural assimilation by exploring how Greenlandic immigrants in Denmark "move between" positions of hyperculture, assimilation, integration, and pendulism. In their study of Greenlandic

immigrants, Askegaard et al. (2005) identified four identity outcomes that arise from negotiating among the Greenlandic, Danish, and global consumer culture. Askegaard et al. (2005) added two identity outcomes that did not appear in Penaloza's (1994) models or Oswald's (1999) culture swapping. These two new additions are hyperculture and an oscillating pendulism. These authors found that Greenlandic goods are commodified for consumption to anchor one's Greenlandic sense of identity so that one's ethnic identity becomes a sort of a *hyperculture*. Alternatively, Greenlandic immigrants also oscillate between cultures as they experience both alienations and attractions to both Greenlandic and Danish cultures. This persistent biculturalism also gives rise to existential problems experienced by the Greenlandic immigrants that could have important implications on their well-being.

Relating this to the context of the Indigenous art market, when early settlers encountered with Indigenous communities and cultures, Indigenous art was commodified for the market and for non-Indigenous people. However, dissimilar to the Greenlandic immigrants, the Indigenous art was sold by non-Indigenous people for profits, in exchange for a commercial gain. It then raises another question, do art intermediaries in the present-day art market continue to prioritise commercial gains over cultural maintenance? In regard to pendulism as one of the acculturation outcomes, do non-Indigenous people as outsiders of the Indigenous communities oscillate between Indigenous cultures and dominant Western cultures? If so, how do they do so? Recall that with less than 10% of people operating Indigenous art businesses are Indigenous people (Woodhead and Acker 2014), it means non-Indigenous people who are primarily from dominant colonising cultures continue to occupy the market. Do the outsiders who are involved in the market as art intermediaries continue to alienate Indigenous people?

Finally, using an ethnographic case study of poor Turkish migrant women, Üstüner and Holt (2007) analysed the ways socio-cultural structures play a part in shaping consumer acculturation processes. In addition, different identity outcomes and practices from prior studies are documented. These differences are attributed to the distinctive sociocultural structures that pervade the context of these Turkish consumers (Üstüner and Holt 2007). Specifically, these structures are modern consumer culture, ideological conflict, and the lack of capital due to the social class position of the migrants. More importantly, it is found that individuals collectively develop consumer identity outcomes and practices in response to the sociocultural structures in which they live. For example, the first-generation Turkish mothers collectively construct a counterhegemonic identity, which is different from their daughters who have collectively developed rituals to don a hegemonic identity. The mothers recreate and “reterritorialise” their native culture in a new foreign culture (Üstüner and Holt 2007, 47). Nevertheless, for the daughters, they do not align with their mothers’ identity project. But at the same time, due to their lack of economic, social, and cultural capital, they are not able to fully participate or assimilate into the mainstream culture, leaving them shattered and marginalised. This study is an important reminder that stakeholders respond differently, and cultural outcomes depend on having adequate social and economic resources.

By focusing predominantly on immigrant and migrant consumers, these studies reveal that acculturation processes develop various identity outcomes. These outcomes significantly depended on the individuals’ economic, social, and cultural resources, leaving some more committed to their native culture, others marginalised with shattered hopes and dreams (Üstüner and Holt 2007), and some assimilated to an ethnic subculture (Penaloza 1994), while others still continue to oscillate between two cultures (Askegaard et al. 2005). These past studies provide insights into not only the range of resources upon which people draw as

they move between cultures (e.g., home culture, host culture, trans-culture) but a variety of ways in which to create cultural identities.

Given that these studies have focused exclusively on immigrant consumers, this study investigates whether these outcomes and conceptualisations are applicable to the colonising settlers and the Indigenous cultures tensions that play out in the Indigenous art market. That being said, it is important to acknowledge that, the extant acculturation studies have not taken into account of the historical legacies of colonisation when considering cultural adaptation processes. For example, many Mexican American immigrants had also suffered the consequences of colonisation as descendants of those who are indigenous to the Mexican homeland (Moore 1970). While the acculturation literature provides useful insights and conceptual tools in understanding the cross-cultural processes, it has not considered the decades of aggressive expansion by colonisers that work to force other cultures to be assimilated into the colonisers' dominant culture. Therefore, in the next chapter, I turn to the postcolonial theory to help explain the broader geopolitical forces and power dynamics that affect the cultural processes and identities outcomes. More importantly, I draw specifically on the concepts of settler colonialism and decolonisation to understand the dynamics of the settler-Indigenous relations.

Chapter 4: Postcolonial Theory and Decolonisation

This chapter outlines the multi-layered postcolonial theoretical perspectives that guide this research. First, I summarise the central tenets of more traditional postcolonial theoretical perspectives that typically critique and analyse the complex dynamics of modern Western colonialism (Banerjee and Prasad 2008). I also review the key marketing and consumption studies that have applied the postcolonial theoretical perspective, focusing on concepts such as ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry to explore consumer resistance and identities. Next, I explicate settler colonialism as a different form of colonising structure to provide an important backdrop against which to understand the power dynamics that exist within the Indigenous art market in Australia. Then, I draw on the concept of decolonisation to theorise how art intermediaries may engage in different practices with various stakeholders within the market.

The Postcolonial Perspective

Postcolonial theory provides a critical lens through which to understand the continuing significance of colonisation on the lives of previously colonised groups (Gandhi 1998; Said 1989; Spivak 1988). The value of postcolonial theory lies in its ability to conceptualise the complex circumstances emerging in the aftermath of colonial occupation (Gandhi 1998). Moreover, inherent within the tenets of postcolonial theory is the drive to assist formerly colonised peoples to engage in “historical and psychological ‘recovery’” (Gandhi 1998, 8) of one’s past and cultural identities (Bhabha 1994). Postcolonial theorists focus on experiences at the margins of society, such as the experience of slavery, suppression of one’s race and gender (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995). Postcolonial theory largely emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, as countries once governed by colonising

settlers (e.g., India as a British colony or Algeria as a French colony) struggled to gain their political independence (Childs and Williams 2014; Gandhi 1998; Prasad 2003).

According to Young (2001), postcolonial theory involves a critical interrogation of the cultural history of colonialism and analyse its contemporary effects in Western and tricontinental cultures (i.e., Latin America, Africa, and Asia), making connections between the politics of the past and the present. Importantly, it formulates a critique around the social histories, cultural differences, and political discriminations that are practiced, legitimised, and normalised by colonial structures and apparatuses (Rukundwa and van Aarde 2007). For instance, drawing parallels between postmodernism and poststructuralism, Prasad (2005, 212) explains that,

...postcolonialism is fully capable of undermining the central pillars of authority and legitimacy that hold up contemporary society, with their assaults on the existence of a rational human subject, the tyranny of science and liberal values, and the oppressive nature of the nation-state.

Thus, the postcolonial theoretical perspective critiques and analyses the complex dynamics of modern Western colonialism. It also seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of the “ongoing significance of colonial encounters for people’s lives both in the West and non-West” (Prasad 2003, 5). Ultimately, their aim is to expose the harmful consequences of colonialism that often silently seep into post-independence policies and institutions (Prasad 2003). As Rukundwa and van Aarde (2007, 1190), “postcolonial theory raises self-consciousness which revolutionises the minds of the colonised and the coloniser to build a new society where liberty and equity prevail.”

While many perspectives exist, generally postcolonial scholars seek to understand the cultural and institutional legacies of colonialism on colonial subjects and their cultures (Prasad 2005). Postcolonial theorists argue that colonialism does not cease with political independence but resurfaces in new forms (Ashcroft et al. 1995). It is also assumed that colonialism involves more than economic exploitation and political subordination—it also

includes the exercise of *cultural* power over subordinated populations (Barnett 2014). For example, popular press articles discuss how some art intermediaries take financial advantage of the artists that they represent. These art dealers and galleries were engaged in “carpet bagging,” which is a term commonly used to describe outsiders moving into Indigenous communities and economically exploiting locals (Wellington 2018). Therefore, as Barnett (2014) explains, postcolonial scholars critique the use of culture by colonialists when it is used to denigrate non-Western cultures to legitimise its superiority and dominance. Thus, postcolonial theory brings to light, the constant negotiations of cultural representations, allowing people to break free from sociocultural and economic domination to reclaim their space for equality (Rukundwa and van Aarde 2007).

In the next section, I outline the genesis and brief history of postcolonial theory to contextualise its emergence and evolution (for in-depth examinations, see Ashcroft et al. 1995; Featherstone 2005; Gandhi 1998; Loomba 1998; Williams and Chrisman 1994; Young 2001). Since the beginning of anti-colonial movements in the 1950s and 1960s, the study of colonialism fragmented into a variety of discourses and it is important to specify the general methodological approaches and associated terminologies (Fanon 1967; Memmi 2003).

Key Elements of Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonialism is not a unitary theory (Ashcroft et al. 1995; Prasad 2003; Prasad 2005). Postcolonial theory spans different disciplines, including anthropology, cultural studies, and literary theory, and draws on different theoretical, epistemic, and political underpinnings (Barnett 2014; Prasad 2003). Nevertheless, some commonalities do exist. For example, most postcolonial theorists are committed to the complex project of historical and psychological recovery (Childs and Williams 2014; Gandhi 1998). To elaborate, most postcolonial scholars seek to unearth the historical trajectory and social construction of

contemporary inequities and injustices (Young 2001). Many scholars believe that people can free themselves from the past to build more just policies and institutions when they understand the underlying social forces that gave rise to the current injustices (e.g., Bhabha 1994; Spivak 1988). In doing so, these scholars align with the subjects of post-coloniality as agents of transformative change; thus, postcolonial scholars generally share the goal of social change toward greater social justice and equality (Gandhi 1998).

Postcolonial theory has its roots in the work of earlier scholars, including Said (1978, 1993), Nandy (1983, 1995), Bhabha (1994), and Spivak (1987, 1999). In his ground-breaking book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) argued that the West (or Occident) had for centuries defined itself through portraying the East (or Orient) as its opposite. In scores of Western academic texts, literary novels, and artworks during the colonial period, Said (1978) demonstrated various ways that the West and East are dichotomised. Specifically, the West is depicted as civilised and advanced against depictions of Asian and Middle Eastern cultures as barbaric and backwards.

In figure 4.1, Delacroix's painting entitled, *The Death of Sardanapalus*, captures the King of Assyria's suicide. King Sardanapalus would rather die than be captured when his city was under siege (Dorbani-Bouabdellah 2010). As such, he destroys all his "possessions," including slaves, servants, horses, and cherished goods. According to Said (1978), such portrayals stress the East is where emotions reign over reason in the dramatic and wanton destruction dictated by a king who calmly reclines as this barbaric scene unfolds. Given the perceived inferiority of the non-West, they become targets for domination and restructuring for the sake of modern development. Thus, as suggested in *Orientalism*, even though colonialism presents the non-West as inferior, the non-West is also regarded as a highly desirable target for West to exert control, contain, and govern through superior knowledge (Said 1978). This lens views the non-West as "others" when compared to the dominant

group, creating a difference in cultural inequality and power imbalance between the West and the non-West (Said 1978).

Figure 4.1. *Eugene Delacroix, The Death of Sardanapalus (1827), oil painting on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris.*



As expounded by the work of earlier postcolonial theorists such as Said, colonialism designates the unequal relations between the two groups as “the colonial rule of difference” (Chatterjee 1993, 19). This is where colonialism is characterised by its ability to reproduce itself by maintaining difference and inequality in terms of power of the coloniser over colonised (Chatterjee 1993). There is also an economic dimension that arises from this inequality (Rodney 1972). For example, through colonialism, the West not only extracted wealth from the peoples and territories it conquered, it also gave rise to a complex structure of *unequal* exchange between the West and its colonies through industrialisation (Prasad 2003). One of the consequences was that the colonies become economically dependent upon

the Western colonial nations, which created the condition for emergence of European capitalism (Loomba 1998). For contemporary postcolonial theorists, their main work revolves around radical critique to subvert dominant Western styles of thought, imagination, and theorising for the purposes of opening new spaces where the cultural ideas of former colonial subjects can flourish (Gandhi 1998).

Overall, the field of postcolonial scholarship is heterogeneous, yet is united in its programme of investigating the complex and deeply fraught dynamics of colonialism and anticolonial resistance against Western domination (Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman 2008; Prasad 2003; Varman 2018). This critique encourages people to question taken-for-granted approaches as naturalised, which scholars argue is an important first step for resisting cultural domination and advancing Indigenous perspectives that are often marginalised by colonial powers (Barker, Hulme, and Iversen 1994; Bhabha 1990; Thieme 2003). Therefore, the postcolonial perspectives take seriously the call by the Kenyan novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, 16) to “decolonise the mind” through a strong commitment to contesting the primacy of Western categories in various realms such as the epistemologies, economics, ideologies, politics, aesthetics and cultures. In the context of an art market, Indigenous works of art express cultural ideas of the many Indigenous peoples who originally inhabited the land. When the art is removed from the cultural practices that gave them meaning, the art moves in markets as a commodity that is bought and sold. What role do art intermediaries play in this process? Given that Indigenous art was first traded by early settlers for commercial purposes, how do present day art intermediaries shape the meanings of art which was originally intended for cultural expression and maintenance among the Indigenous communities?

Postcolonial Theory in Management and Marketing

Postcolonial theoretical perspectives are gaining some traction in the fields of management and organisational research (Banerjee and Prasad 2008; Calas and Smircich 1999), as well as in marketing and consumer studies (e.g., Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman 2008; Patterson and Brown 2007; Varman and Belk 2009, 2018). In organisational studies, Prasad (2003) outlines the main areas in which postcolonial theory and management theory intersect: (1) the linkages between colonialism and industrialisation; (2) the creation of the submissive worker as the colonial subject; (3) the relationship between colonial and organisational practices; (4) the convergence between colonial and organisational ideologies; and, (5) the similarity between colonial and modern international regimes as systems of domination and control. In addition, postcolonial theory exposes scholars to the darker side of globalisation by focusing on the undercurrents of neocolonialism in contemporary business contexts (Srikantia 2016). Banerjee and Prasad (2008) argue that a postcolonial perspective can productively reveal the neo-colonial assumptions that underpin management disciplines, particularly in specific areas such as international management and cross-cultural management. Management and organisation studies scholars have looked at contexts that span different postcolonial geographies including Africa (deMaria 2008), Australia (Parsons 2008; Sullivan 2008; Tedmanson 2008), China (Lai-Wan Cheung 2008), India (Mir, Banerjee and Mir 2008), Jordan (Al Kharouf and Weir 2008), Malaysia (Chio 2008), and Poland (Śliwa 2008). Similarly, in marketing and consumer research, scholars are applying a postcolonial lens to study the legacy of colonialism in various contexts across countries such as Ireland, France, and India (see Table 4.1).

In comparison to studies in management, however, the use of postcolonial theories in marketing and consumption is scarce (Patterson and Brown 2007; Varman and Belk 2012). Despite the limited use of postcolonial theory in marketing and consumer studies, I identify

the few key studies that do use postcolonial theoretical perspectives to understand consumer cultures, consumer resistance tactics, and consumer identity outcomes. These studies are important because they demonstrate how postcolonial lens are useful in understanding the legacies of colonisation and how the colonised respond to the colonising cultures. Art after all is part of consumer culture and Indigenous art has played an important role in political struggles for self-determination, such as in the movement to return to homelands and revitalise Indigenous cultures (Altman 2005; Smith 2018). In the following sections, I highlight the key theoretical scholars and concepts that these studies use and argue for the advantages of alternative postcolonial theoretical concepts.

Table 4.1. *Key Postcolonial Marketing and Consumer Studies.*

Key authors	Contexts	Postcolonial theorists	Consumer resistance tactics and identity outcomes	Focus of research
Patterson and Brown (2007)	Irish Pubs in Ireland	Fanon (1961); Bhabha (1994)	Ambivalence	A postcolonial analysis of Irish pubs as sites of resistance through reconnecting and reinventing the past
Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman (2008)	Sneakers Consumption in France and America	Fanon (1967); Bhabha (1990); Spivak (1988)	Hybridity	A postcolonial analysis of marginalisation and the attempts among African-Americans in United States and marginalised groups in France to resist through recuperation of self-identity (and power)
Varman and Saha (2009)	Marketing pedagogy and research in business schools in India	Fanon (1967); Bhabha (1994); Spivak (1988)	Mimicry and hybridity	An interrogation of the role of postcolonial ideology in shaping the Marketing discipline in a Third World country
Varman and Belk (2009)	Anti-Coke movement in India	Bhabha (1994); Gupta (1998)	Ambivalence	A postcolonial understanding of reflexivity and nationalism in an anti-consumption movement
Askegaard and Eckhardt (2012)	Yoga in India	Bhabha (1994); Gupta (1998)	Ambivalence	A postcolonial analysis of the globalisation and re-appropriation process of Yoga
Varman and Belk (2012)	Shopping malls in India	Fanon (1967); Bhabha (1994)	Mimicry and hybridity	A postcolonial analysis of consumer identity by examining the different facets of stigma and hybridity

Postcolonial Theory as Praxis of Resistance

Recall in the chapter on consumer acculturation, some immigrants resisted assimilating and even hyper identified with their own culture, such as the older Turkish migrants (Üstüner and Holt 2007) and the Greenlandic immigrants (Askegaard et al. 2005). Similarly, founders of postcolonial theory, such as Fanon, articulated the plight of the colonised and provided insights into the effects of postcolonialism. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon (1961) focused on the resistance of marginalised Africans to French colonisation. This seminal research is a key work upon which marketing scholars draw. Marketing and consumer studies scholars have predominantly used postcolonial theory to analyse the effects of colonialist ideology and domination in different consumption contexts (see Table 4.1). Additionally, Fanon's anti-colonial thought and postcolonial writings, such as *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), are foundational texts and theoretical perspective that guided marketing studies that seek to understand the postcolonial projects.

Drawing from Fanon's (1961) ideas, for example, Patterson and Brown (2017) observed that Irish pubs opened up a space for colonised groups to find a voice and an identity by reclaiming a dispossessed past. Theorising pubs in Ireland as Celtic products, Patterson and Brown (2007, 48) framed the pubs as sites of resistance, which are "paradoxical, parodic, provocative, and performative". Native Irish, who were subjected to centuries-long oppression and cultural subjugation, visit pubs to reconnect to their past, reinvent Ireland's national identity, and create their individual consumer identity projects. Similarly, within the context of Indigenous art market, in the past, Indigenous artists had used art to reclaim their indigeneity. To explore the effects of colonialism, marketing scholars also use postcolonial concepts such as ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. These concepts were emphasised by postcolonial theorists, such as Bhabha (1990), Gupta (1998) and Spivak

(1988), to understand how domination and resistance become intertwined in consumption practices that resulted in different identity outcomes. These concepts are explored next.

Ambivalence

In the chapter on consumer acculturation, some immigrants swapped culture (Oswald 1999) or oscillated between their home and host culture (Askegaard et al. 2005). The concept of ambivalence is different because it is defined as the mix of attraction and repulsion between the coloniser and colonised (Bhabha 1990). Marketing scholars use the concept of ambivalence to study both the complicity but also the resistance that exist in Irish pubs (Patterson and Brown (2007), the ambivalent role of a nationalist ideology in the anti-Coke movement in India (Varman and Belk 2009), and re-appropriation of yoga practices in India (Askegaard and Eckhardt 2012). Importantly, the concept of ambivalence is used to highlight the unstable nature of the colonial power (Prasad 2003).

For example, Askegaard and Eckhardt's (2012) study of yoga's re-appropriation in the Indian context explores the ambivalence that Indian consumers feel when engaging in modern yoga practices. Indian consumers proudly embraced yoga as a contemporary sign of national and cultural identity based on the legitimacy gained through Western adoption of yoga as a technique for self-actualisation. However, the Indian consumers also acknowledged that this newfound acceptance of yoga by the Western world is a form of cultural domination. The repackaging of yoga in India, after being popularised by the Western world, has enabled the Indian consumers to "become more like themselves" as they rediscovered their cultural heritage (Sahlins 1993, cited in Askegaard and Eckhardt 2012, 57). According to Bhabha (1994), such ambivalence (i.e., the simultaneous attraction and repulsion) produces a disruption to the colonial domination. This is due to the two-way, rather than just one-way cultural exchange, that takes place between the coloniser and the colonised. Therefore,

postcolonial scholars like Bhabha provide an analytic scheme to understand such ambivalence that empowered the colonised groups, which are intertwined with mimicry and cultural hybridity that are discussed next (Gupta 1998; Varman 2018).

Mimicry and Hybridity

In postcolonial theory, mimicry is a disciplining process based on the desire of the colonised to emulate the coloniser (Bhabha 1994; Fanon 1967). This is closely related to concepts of cultural hyper assimilation discussed earlier (Askegaard et al. 2005). Mimicry, or the miming and imitation of colonisers by the colonised, is theorised as an effect of the colonisers' power and authority. To elaborate, the colonisers' politic, economic, cultural, and ideological power force the colonised to internalise the norms and values of their oppressor. On the one hand, mimicry is often viewed as proof of hegemonic domination of the colonisers as well as the dependency and subservience of the colonised (Naipaul 1967). However, like ambivalence, mimicry can be a space of resistance when it destabilises and undermines colonial authority (Bhabha 1994). To elaborate, Bhabha (1994, 128) explains, "Mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonisation or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically." This harkens back to the immigrants who swap cultures, moving from their native to their host culture, to fit in and merely tolerate the host culture (Oswald 1999). Mimicry is a performance that creates a surface impression of similarity and is therefore simultaneously a form of colonial control and resistance to it. Moreover, mimicry is often a manifestation of hybridity that threatens the authority of colonial command (Varman 2018).

The acculturation studies also explore the blending of cultures (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983) and cultural integration (Askeggard et al., 2005; Penaloza 1994) resulting in hybrid cultures. But, Bhabha (1994) interprets hybridity as a process of strategic reversal in which

knowledge or ideologies created by the dominated group get combined with marginalised forms of knowledge, which is then appropriated by the colonised to challenge colonial power. Hence, hybridity enables the postcolonial subject to perform their contempt of the coloniser in the process of emulating it in the form of mockery. In the process of forcing the colonised group to conform, mimic, and be compliant, mimicry creates “postcolonial subjects” who are “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha 1994, 122) and thus threatens the position of authority of the colonisers. When compared to the acculturation literature, a postcolonial lens focusses the analysis on the power dynamics that arises from blending of colonised and colonising cultures and is vigilant in looking for spaces of resistance and manoeuvrability. These resistance tactics and outcomes of the colonised groups played out in studying sports shoe consumption among marginalised groups (Brace-Govan and Burgh-Woodman 2008) and in the patronage of shopping malls among young consumers in India (Varman and Belk 2018).

Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman (2008) responded to Fanon’s (1967) call for more focus on colonised voices to uncover a more heterogeneous picture of the postcolonial experience that involves historical and cultural restoration. The consumption sensibilities of marginalised groups, including African-Americans in the US and consumers from French colonies in France were examined, as they consumed sneakers to construct self-identity and claim power. For instance, Black consumers used sneakers, such as the *Nike Air Force 1* white on white sneaker, to express their street savvy difference from white, middle-class America. This consumption was conceptualised by Brace-Goven and de Burgh-Woodman (2008) as a political act to appropriate white symbolism, inject it and transform it with an alternative cultural narrative, turning the gaze on white culture as ‘the other’.

Similarly, Varman and Belk (2012) draw on a postcolonial interpretation of identity emerging from the work of Fanon (1961, 1967) and Bhabha (1994). They examined aspects

of stigma and hybridity in the interactions between young middle-class consumers and shopping malls. Consumption of the shopping mall in India reflects the consumers' quest to be Western, modern, and developed as they attempt to transform themselves by temporarily disguising their Third World realities. As Varman and Belk (2012) observed that, these young consumers manage the stigma of their colonised past and impoverished present by emulating and competing with the West. Therefore, these Indian consumers frame shopping malls as signifiers of Westernisation and modernity, while deploying these signifiers to displace the West from its position of superiority. As the young consumers as Third World subjects return the gaze of the colonisers, it results in postcolonial hybridity (Bhabha 1994). Thus, post-colonial shopping malls in India are regarded as Western spaces in which young consumers simultaneously transform their identities and resist the colonialist ideology in India.

Patterson and Brown (2007), Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman (2008), and Varman and Belk (2012) use postcolonial theory to understand how colonised groups use consumption to reconnect with their past, language, and cultures by re-appropriating the colonialist cultures to transform their identities and resist. These consumers demonstrate how ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity are methods of resistance. These concepts originate from the work of the seminal postcolonial theorists and are clearly helpful in understanding contemporary conditions (Gandhi 1998; Young 2001). Yet, it raises questions about other countries or contexts where consumers may have experienced different forms of colonisation. Specifically, are these traditional forms of postcolonial theory equally applicable to settler colonies, such as Australia (Veracini 2007a), Canada (Barker 2009), New Zealand, and the United States (Glenn 2015), where the colonisers have permanently settled on the conquered territories?

While marketing and consumer research scholars have employed postcolonial theoretical concepts to expose the impact of colonialism on consumers' identities and cultures, these studies predominantly focus on populations such as the Irish, African Americans, and Indians. I argue that these contexts and populations are not representative of the different conditions of post-coloniality and the effects of colonisation on the indigenes. Specifically, for these selected contexts (i.e., Africa and India), the aim of colonisation was to take advantage of the economic resources to benefit the colonisers; for other settler colonies, in addition to economic gain, the colonisers aimed to also migrate to the land permanently and set up new communities on the new homeland (Glenn 2015). As a settler phenomenon, this involves both the permanent movement and reproduction of communities and, importantly, the permanent dominance over the Indigenous groups (Veracini 2010). Essentially, Indigenous peoples experience both colonialism *and* mass migration.

Although scholars argue that many countries are postcolonial, countries and societies are postcolonial in heterogeneous ways (Frankenberg and Mani 1993; Hall 1996; Hulme 1995; Loomba 1998). As Gandhi (1998) highlights, people battling colonial oppression in India and countries across the continents of Asia and Africa are engaging in anti-colonial insurgencies differently. Similarly, for "settler" colonies, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, they are postcolonial in different ways. This view, therefore, sees the state of being postcolonial as a global phenomenon having shared characteristics, while emphasises the necessity of investigating postcolonialism as a historical situation that is embedded differently in specific locations, which call for the use of different postcolonial theorists and concepts that are sensitive to the history of the colonial consequences (Veracini 2007a, 2010).

Given the history and politics of colonisation in Australia where the settlers continue to occupy the land, I propose that an alternative set of postcolonial concepts is required to understand this postcolonial market dynamics. From the general postcolonial theoretical

perspective, the postcolonial project has been to reconnect colonised groups with their past, language, and culture to create a new imagined identity (Bhabha 1994; Fanon 1967; Spivak 1998). This approach assumes that the colonised groups have their cultures, land, and history *returned* to them after achieving political independence from the colonisers. In these contexts, post-colonisation involves creating a way of life and reinventing identities (national and individual) that are different but at the same time interjected by the colonisers' cultures or ideologies. For settlers' colonies, such as Australia and New Zealand, however, the settlers *never left the land*. The traditional owners must then reclaim the land if they are to reconnect to the Indigenous cultures, languages, and powers. Therefore, unlike other forms of colonisation that focuses on resource extraction, settler colonialism is a territorial project that involves contested land (Wolfe 2006). As the following quote by Wolfe (1999, 1) explains,

...what if the colonisers are not dependent on native labour? – indeed, what if the natives themselves have been reduced to a small minority whose survival can hardly be seen to furnish the colonising society with more than remission from ideological embarrassment? ... In contrast to the kind of colonial formation that Cabral or Fanon confronted, settler colonies were not primarily established to extract surplus value from indigenous labour.

Given the different aims between the traditional forms of colonialism and settler colonialism, the engagements with the Indigenous peoples are also different. It calls for a new way to imagine and conceptualise the relationship between the colonisers and the Indigenous groups. Therefore, within settler colonial societies, it raises the question of what are the effects of settler colonisation on the various stakeholders involved within the market? How does settler colonisation affect and shape the settler and Indigenous relations? Current marketing and consumer studies have documented that ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity were used by the colonised to resist and to even challenge the coloniser. But what are the other forms of resistance that could be employed by people in settler societies? What about the colonised who engage with the market to advocate for reconciling and reclaiming of the Indigenous cultures, languages, and land?

In the next section, I draw on two postcolonial concepts that are particularly relevant to this study—*settler colonialism* and *decolonisation*. These concepts help frame the Australian context as a settler society where there are ongoing tensions within Indigenous-settler relations (Maddison 2019). Specifically, the Indigenous art market is powerfully affected by art intermediaries who are predominantly non-Indigenous yet are representing Indigenous artists, which presents a fascinating site of investigation. This site allows the exploration of the role that these art intermediaries continue to play in these market relations, which may involve power dominance, collaboration, or something else. How are Western ideas about art reconciled with Indigenous approaches (Alfred and Cornthassel 2005)? Could a different and more equal, engagement between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people be possible within the settler colonial structures? Specifically, this study explores how art intermediaries work within the legacy of colonisation by navigating the tension between culture and commercial, in shaping the meanings of Indigenous art. This study also explores how art intermediaries engage in different practices with artists and consumers, which might cause more harm or might bring about positive transformations within the Indigenous art market and the wider society.

Settler Colonialism

Postcolonial studies examine the lingering impact of colonialism that persists even after the formal end of colonial rule (i.e., Bhabha 1994; Said 1978; Spivak 1985). Traditionally, colonialism refers to the practice of countries invading other lands and territories for extraction of resources (Maddison 2019; Wolfe 2006). However, settler colonialism is a distinct type of colonisation that functions through the *replacement* of Indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that develops a distinctive identity and sovereignty over time (Barker 2015; Veracini 2015; Wolfe 1999). Settler colonialism

refers primarily to the intentional erasure of colonised subjectivities rather than reproducing their subordination (Veracini 2010). In other words, traditional forms of colonialism reinforce the distinction between colony and metropole while settler colonialism erases it by eliminating the Indigenous occupants of the land. This erasure is usually accomplished through a variety of techniques ranging from genocide and forced removal to confinement to reservations and biological and cultural assimilations (Glenn 2015). For instance, settler colonialism is used as an analytical framework to understand contexts such as the Jewish-Palestinian conflict (Shafir 1996), race and gender formation in the US (Glenn 2015), the history of American Indians in the US (Hoxie 2008), and the Occupy Movements in North America (Barker 2012).

A growing body of literature characterises settler colonial phenomena as distinct from other forms of colonisation (e.g., Banivanua-Mar and Edmonds 2010; Cavanagh and Veracini 2017; Wolfe 1999). Settler colonialism as a topic has witnessed a noticeable resurgence in recent years (see, for example, Elkins and Pedersen 2005; Evans et al. 2003; Russell 2001; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995). For example, although both colonisers and settler colonisers assert their dominance over their destination locales, settler colonialism seeks to take over land in a foreign country, while traditional colonialism focuses more on the control of the natural resources and labour (Veracini 2014). The settler colonialists treat the new destination as a settlement, even though the new homelands were already inhabited by traditional owners of the land.

In the settlement process, two types of colonisation are relevant (Tuck and Yang 2012). *External colonisation* is when the colonisers take ownership of native land, natural resources, and even the Indigenous people to make profits and benefit the colonisers. In this external exploitation, all native resources are commodities to be extracted and traded for the advantage of the colonisers. In contrast, *internal colonisation* is the “biopolitical and

geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the ‘domestic’ borders of the imperial nation” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 4). Internal colonisation uses apparatuses, such as prisons, ghettos, schools, and policies, to segregate and control colonised people. These two forms of colonisation may overlap, and both are used by settlers who occupy the Indigenous’ lands as their new home.

Therefore, settler colonialism is a totalising approach that operates through the integration of external and internal colonisation as these forms of colonisation require “total appropriation of Indigenous life and land, rather than the expropriation of profit-producing fragments” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 5). As such, settler colonialism is a territorial project with the accumulation of land as the objective (Wolfe 1999). Wolfe (1999) further argues that settler colonialism is premised on the logic of extermination. Therefore, effective settler colonialism requires the continuous erasure of Indigenous people and their way of life in the advancement of the colonisers’ way of life (Cavanagh and Veracini 2017). It requires the extinguishment of Indigenous people’s sovereignty, self-determination, and culture (Haebich 2016).

Settler colonialism is a pervasive structure and ongoing process rather than a one-off event (Wolfe 1999). The idea that settler colonialism is a *structure* underscores its ongoing and organising force within the society. As Tuck and Yang (2012, 5-6) explain:

...[w]ithin settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation.

As settlers continue to occupy the land that belongs to the original inhabitants, they replace the Indigenous ways of life by legitimising their own colonial social structures and apparatuses, such as rules, policies, laws, and organisations. These repeated and ongoing

settler colonial formations hold the power to perpetuate the legacy of colonisation through territorial acquisition of the land and denial of the Indigenous cultures and governance systems of the Indigenous people (Veracini 2010, 2015). As a result, Indigenous ontological, epistemological, and cosmological relationships to land involve continual erasure of Indigenous people from the land to make space for the settlers to call home and engage in commercial activity (Edmonds and Carey 2017; Veracini 2011). As Wolfe (2006, 388) asserts, “settler colonialism destroys to replace.”

Australia is an example of a settler colonial nation-state where the Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as traditional owners of the land, have been subjected to over two centuries of external and internal colonisation (Edmonds and Carey 2017). Despite fierce resistance from the traditional owners of this land, over the course of the 19th century, the British settlers laid claims to the vast majority of the land and aggressively administered systems of assimilation to remove and replace Indigenous people and their traditional culture from the land (Edmonds and Carey 2017). To understand the consequences of settler colonisation, we must consider the implications of ongoing settlement of Indigenous land, the persistent presence of Indigenous people and culture, and the relationships between human and non-human lives on that land (Tuck and Yang 2012). Instead of applying postcolonial theories or concepts born out of the traditional forms of colonialism, it is important to apply this specific concept of settler colonialism to understand its working and the relationships between the settlers and the colonised.

A Settler Colonial Nation-State: Australia

Like Canada and the United States, Australia is a settler colonial state in which control over land is used to assert power over the Indigenous people (Maddison 2019; Wolfe 2006). Indigenous people in Australia are the descendants of people who began to occupy

Australia more than 50,000 years ago. It is estimated that between 770,000 and 1.1 million Indigenous Australians occupied the continent just prior to British arrival (Clarke 2003). Aboriginal ways of life were as diverse as the landscape and shaped by the natural environment. Importantly, the land was the source of spiritual life and complex systems of law (Edmonds and Carey 2017). In 1788, Captain Cook—an English explorer—arrived on land occupied by the Indigenous people, which he declared to be *terra nullius* (i.e., no one's land) (Havemann 2005). At that time, the British settlers disregarded Indigenous ways of life and ignored their land rights (Moreton-Robinson 2007). Rather, the British occupied the land—initially as a penal colony to ease the overcrowding of British prisons—but this marked the beginning of permanent European settlement in the land now known as Australia (Broome 1988).

This settler colonisation was devastating—75% of Indigenous peoples died through systematic extermination, incarceration, wars, diseases, and forced removal from traditional lands and food sources (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015). One of the dramatic incidents was the Black War in Tasmania between 1828 and 1832, whereby a military-style campaign was launched against the Indigenous people (Ryan 2013). After years of extensive frontier violence, by 1847, the number of Indigenous people on the Tasmania island had plummeted from an estimated population of 6000 to 8000 to just 47 (Ryan 2013). Over the years of frontier violence, many Indigenous people were removed from their land so it could be used for farming and grazing, the primary economic activities of the settlers (Edmonds and Carey 2017). Some Indigenous people were separated from their families when relocated to Christian missions and reserves. One of the darkest chapters of Australian history included the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families in an attempt to fully assimilate them into the dominant culture of the European settlers (Haebich 2016; Silburn et al. 2006).

Despite the settlers' intentions to eliminate the Indigenous populations, the continuing presence and strength of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia attests that such settler ambitions were never entirely realised (Cavanagh and Veracini 2016). In the traditional postcolonial societies, the natives' successful resistance would result in the colonisers leaving the country, so the Indigenes could be politically independent and re-imagine a new identity (Gandhi 1998). But for settler societies, how do people respond to the dominance of the settlers who have migrated permanently to the land? While a settler colonialism theoretical framework helps bring to the forefront the effects of colonising structures in the settler society, the question remains: how do Indigenous people maintain its presence and flourishing within the settler colonialism that is aimed at eliminating Indigenous groups? Specifically, within the context of Indigenous art markets, how do art intermediaries respond to the growing presence of Indigenous art and advocacy of Indigenous people within the market? Also, recognising that settler colonial theory has the tendency to overshadow Indigenous voices (Maddison 2019), I turn to literature on *decolonisation* to help illuminate how some Indigenous and non-Indigenous people respond to the settler colonial structures.

Decolonisation: A Movement towards Self-determination

Similar to the postcolonial and settler colonisation literatures, the concept of *decolonisation* has garnered intense scholarly interests and debates among political historians and social scientists (Betts 1998). In Table 4.2, I have outlined the differences in goal, focus and logic for traditional forms of colonisation, settler colonisation and decolonisation. The long history of decolonisation began following the First World War, when anticolonial unrest grew and colonial rule itself was challenged (von Albertini 1982). Jansen and Osterhammel (2017, 1) defined decolonisation as “the disappearance of empire as a political form, and the end of racial hierarchy as a widely accepted political ideology and structuring principle of world order.” In other words, decolonisation is the process of ending colonial

rule, breaking free from the colonials' way of thinking and from their oppressive power structures (Betts 1998; Jansen and Osterhammel 2017). Historically, this process began at different points in various colonised contexts. However, there are some agreements among scholars and historians who have attributed the ultimate fall of European colonial empires to the end of World War II and the subsequent declarations of independence in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa for the span of twenty years (Ginio and Schler 2010). A global transition of countries and societies occurred moving from foreign rule to sovereign status. However, in the case of Indigenous groups in settler societies, this would involve a different process of self-determination (Veracini 2007b), recognition, representation, and reconnection to land (Maddison 2019).

Table 4.2. *Characteristics of Traditional form of Colonisation, Settler Colonisation and Decolonisation.*

	Traditional Forms of Colonialisation	Settler Colonialisation	Decolonisation
Primary Goal	Extraction of economic resources	Extraction of resources and permanent migration	Self-determination of the colonised groups including Indigenous peoples
Focus	Maintain unequal power between the colonisers and colonised to extract labour and resources	Settle on new land and erase Indigenous people	Resist colonial control and reassert existence of Indigenous people
Approach	Economic and cultural domination through dissemination of Western knowledge systems and ideologies	Assimilation through government policies, prisons, and education (at the extreme, annihilation)	Repatriation of land, reclaiming political rights and flourishing of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and art
Logic	Colonial rule of difference	Extermination and erasure	Refusal and resurgence

There are as many different modes of decolonisation as there are modes of colonisation and ways of conceptualising them (Pieterse and Parekh 1995). For traditional forms of colonisation, decolonisation meant having the colonisers leave the land (such as British leaving Ghana) while for settler colonisation, to decolonise means that the relationship of coloniser dominating the colonised should be replaced by a relationship of greater equality (Veracini 2007b). Therefore, settler colonialism ends with permanent presence and flourishing of the Indigenous people, such as peoples returning to their ancestral lands and having their art, culture, and society flourish (Veracini 2010).

Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012), however, cautioned that decolonisation is a messy, dynamic, and a contradictory process. In fact, in some instances, this process is violent, such as the partition of India in 1947, the Algerian war of 1954–62, and the 1946–54 war in Indochina (Jansen and Osterhammel 2017). Veracini (2007b) argues that discontinuing settler colonialism requires conceptual frames and supporting narratives of reconciliation that have yet to be fully developed. Therefore, it is not my intention to totalise or oversimplify the process of decolonisation. Instead, I draw upon decolonial analytical perspectives to understand the local power shifts in the settler-Indigenous relations that impede or enable Indigenous thriving. As Mehrez (1991, 258) pointedly stated:

Decolonisation comes to be understood as an act of exorcism for both the coloniser and the colonised. For both parties it must be a process of liberation: from dependency, in the case of the colonised, and from imperialist, racist perceptions, representations and institutions ... in the case of the coloniser.

Such perspectives bring into focus the potential power dynamics among both the settlers and the Indigenous people who engage in this “process of liberation,” such as within the Indigenous art market (Mehrez 1991, 258). It involves both settlers releasing their hold on paternalistic apparatuses of power that oppress, and the Indigenous people reclaiming the rights to assert their indigeneity and revitalise their cultures. Importantly, the key in Indigenous struggles for land rights, self-determination, and economic independence is a

critical and committed support network of settler Australians (Land 2015; Veracini 2007b). Particularly, for the settler contexts (e.g., the US, Canada, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, South America (Spanish and Portuguese), Taiwan, Vietnam and Indonesia), the repatriations of land is central to the decolonisation process, which is enmeshed with the domain of the arts, cultures, and politics (Martineau and Ritskes 2014; Tuck and Young 2012).

Decolonisation through Repatriation of Land

The desired outcomes of decolonisation are represented and reflected in Indigenous sovereignty over land and sea, as well as over culture and knowledge (Sium et al. 2012). Strictly, decolonisation in a settler colonial context would involve repatriating land to Indigenous peoples and recognising that Indigenous relations to the land must be respected (Tuck and Yang 2012). Similar to Canada, Indigenous people in the south-east of Australia maintain the longest running political movement in Australia (Simpson 2010). At the heart of these political movements, is control over land—which is crucial for the survival of the Indigenous people, practices, and knowledge systems (Land 2015). For example, in describing his relationship to country and his homeland, Aboriginal David Passi states: “It’s my father’s land, it’s my grandfather’s land, it’s my grandmother’s land. I’m related to it, which also gives me my identity” (as quoted in Sharp 1996, 156). To David Passi, the land represents his cultural identity and heritage that is to be protected and respected (Sharp 1996).

As Martineau and Ritskes (2014, II) emphasise, “[l]and and place must remain at the centre of decolonial thought and practice....” The privileging of land stems from the recognition that the logic of elimination drives settlement of the new territory to create an economic base for colonial wealth generation (Maddison 2019). Such possession of Indigenous lands by settler colonial societies has wrought continuing damage to Indigenous people and communities (Edmonds and Clarke 2013). This harm occurs because the

dispossession of Indigenous people from their traditional lands (i.e., their country) would then result in the loss and disruption of cultural knowledge, languages, and ceremonial practices (which include Indigenous art practices) (Edmonds and Clarke 2013). As a result, land is often at the centre of the troubled relationships between the Indigenous people and the settler colonialists. Furthermore, this conflict is mainly due to the crucial differences in their relationship to land (Maddison 2019).

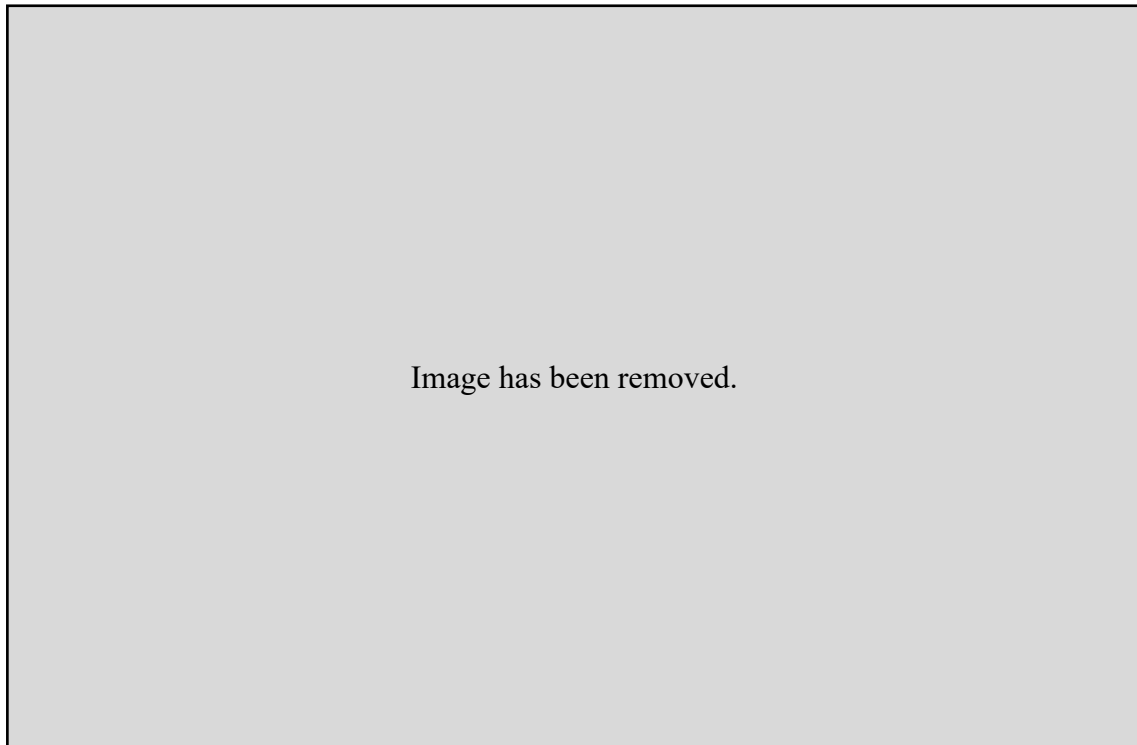
In settler society, land is both a source of economic resource and the markings of the boundaries of sovereign authority over the territories. Settler colonialism seeks to turn land into a commodity providing power and profit for the settlers (Maddison 2019; Tuck and Young 2012). For many Indigenous people, however, land is what sustains their communities and identity, and forms the basis of their livelihood (Lowman and Barker 2015). This deep Indigenous connection to land challenges the settlers' access to the land as a source of economic resource and complete sovereignty over the territory. Thus, "land is central to Indigenous resurgence" (Maddison 2019, 97), and "[Indigenous] ownership and control of their lands is a true model of self-determination" (Moran, cited in Guivarra 2016). In essence, Indigenous revival and self-determination requires reconciliation of the marked differences between the settlers' and Indigenous peoples' relationship to the land. To fuel this goal for decolonisation, Indigenous people often use art to capture their relationship and rights to land. These art products often get circulated and sold through the markets by art intermediaries, which are then eventually purchased by art collectors, consumers, and institutions.

Decolonisation through Art

Against the settler's colonialism, Indigenous people also use art in their decolonising struggles (Assefa 2015; Martineau and Ritskes 2014; Martineau 2015). For the Indigenous

artists, art is where they “re-center Indigenous land, communities and cultures as the force that energises decolonisation and provides fugitive possibilities for movement and creative expression” (Martineau and Ritskes 2014, II). Indigenous scholar, Martineau (2015) further argues that Indigenous art making is inseparable from decolonial struggle because art gives Indigenous people power to assert their presence and fuel their cultural and political resurgence. For example, Indigenous artists, such as Mumu Mike Williams (Figure 4.2), use art to send powerful statements about Indigenous land ownership and the injustice or betrayal endured by Indigenous people. In referring to his artwork, *Postbag Painting*, which was painted illegally on canvas mailbags from the Australian Post, he explains: “Pampuntja Wiya: that means don't touch! Don't touch Rockhole, don't touch our dreaming. I'm talking to politicians, to the government (Moodie 2017).” In doing so, he forms a hybrid art using symbols of oppression (i.e., the mail bag with the ominous statement—“theft or misuse of this bag is a criminal offense, penalties apply”) and his cultural symbols to challenge the government and place the settler society in the position of outsider.

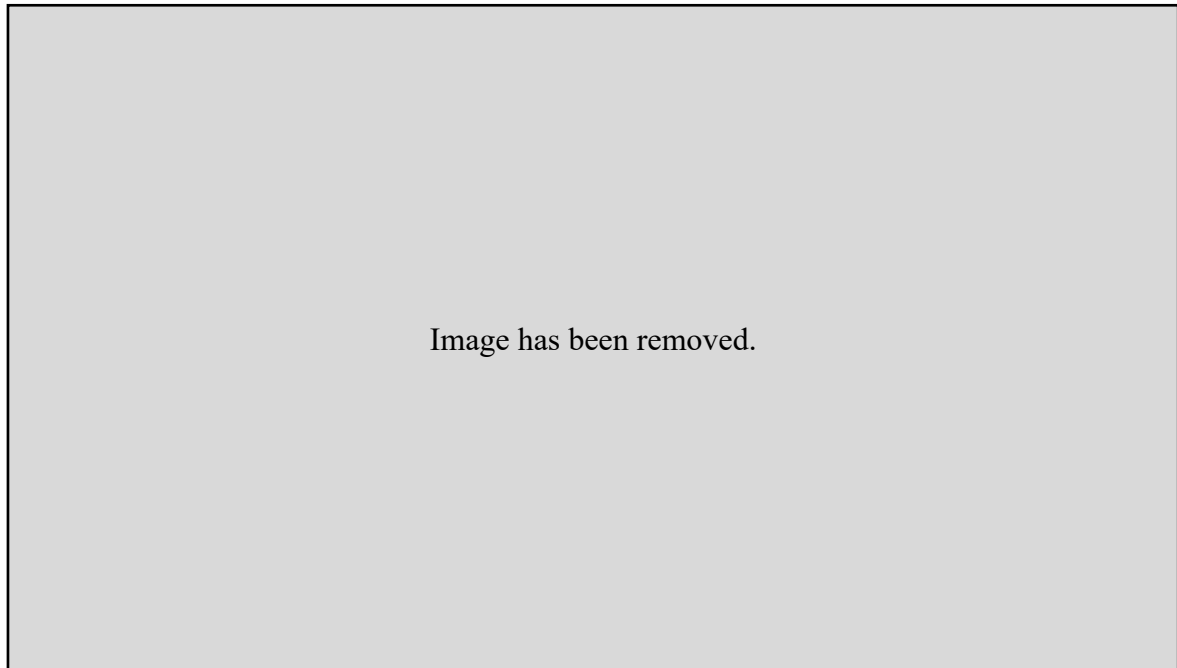
Figure 4.2. Artist Mumu Mike Williams, *Postbag Painting*, (2016), acrylic on Australian canvas mailbag, 111cm x 111cm.



Another example is Indigenous artist Ray Thomas who painted a piece called, *A Shameful History* (see Figure 4.3). Here he depicted a former professional Australian footballer, Adam Goodes, who is of Aboriginal descent with a dagger in his back and drops of blood. The handle of the dagger features the Australian flag and there are emotive words on a background of Collingwood's (Australian Football League team) black and white stripes spell out the painting's title: 'Australian Society Humiliates Aborigines Mostly Everyday F---ing Unintelligent Liars. Hiding Indigenous Stories Terrorising Oppressing Raping Yearly.' This painting responds to a racial slur that occurred during an Australian Football League match (Carbone 2015). The title, *A Shameful History*, explicitly draws out connections to a long history of incidents colonisation and marginalisation. This painting was shortlisted for the \$30,000 top prize of Victorian Indigenous Art Awards and the Deadly Art Award (Premier of Victoria 2015). Ray Thomas intermingles themes from the past and present to

raise viewers' consciousness about the Indigenous culture and identity within a colonising culture.

Figure 4.3. Artist Ray Thomas, *A Shameful History* (2015).



In the face of colonising forces, Indigenous art not only confronts and reveals structures of power within the settler colonialism, it fights to resist colonial confinement and containment (Martineau and Ritskes 2014). Decades of ongoing suffering and pain inflicted upon Indigenous people by the violence of colonialism become the fuel for the Indigenous people as they funnel it into creative contention (Simpson 2011). Indigenous people engage in art to realise the collective freedom found in their creative transformation of the world. This is because art-making enables Indigenous people to disrupt dominant colonial discourse, histories, and practices of colonialist representations or narratives that have normalised the erasure of Indigeneity (Simpson 2011). Art-making is “creating a space of storied presencing, alternative imaginings, transformation, reclamation” (Simpson 2011, 96). From the perspectives of Indigenous artists, art creating becomes the pathway for Indigenous people to

disrupt the logic of elimination and to perform decolonial potentialities. Essentially, through the lens of decolonisation, art-making becomes “a critical, decolonizing political praxis when it provides us with new ways of visioning the world, reclaiming our presence, and creatively transforming reality” (Martineau 2015, 5).

For Indigenous people, repatriation of land and art-making are at the heart of decolonial struggles for freedom and liberation. The decolonisation literature documented wide-ranging perspectives of Indigenous people who use art to assert their presence. However, recall that art intermediaries place a central role within the art markets. Specifically, art intermediaries such as commercial art businesses, art galleries, and art dealers, connect the artists and their communities with the market. They also work directly with consumer groups, including art collectors, art buyers, and private and public institutions. In response to this call for transformation of the settler/Indigenous relationships and reassertion of Indigenous cultures, how do art intermediaries shape the meanings of Indigenous art as they engage the different groups of stakeholders within the market? This is an interesting question because decolonisation involves re-centering of Indigenous people’s relationship to land and connection to cultures, but art intermediaries also aim to make a profit. Besides, decolonisation is also a process that requires commitment of both settlers/non-Indigenous and Indigenous people (Maddison 2019; Mehrez 1991). Therefore, in negotiating the meanings of Indigenous art within the market, how do these art intermediaries engage with the Indigenous artworks, the artists, and the Indigenous communities as they balance the inherent cultural and commercial tensions?

Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter explains the study's objectives and the research design. This research broadly aims to understand the dynamics and complexities of the Australian Indigenous art market. Focusing on commercial art galleries, this project asked:

1. How do art intermediaries negotiate the meaning of Indigenous art within this multi-stakeholder art market?
2. How do art intermediaries relationally engage with the Indigenous artists and their art works, Indigenous communities, and buyers as they balance cultural and commercial tensions?

This study sought to understand the role of commercial art intermediaries in the Indigenous art market. In chapter two, I highlighted the complicated legacies of colonisation in Australia and problematic engagements with Indigenous peoples and their art and culture. As such, it is important in this study for me to be respectful of and acknowledge Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural perspectives, and artistic approaches. While not specifically seeking research participants of Indigenous descent, I acknowledge the historical, cultural, and political contexts in which the Australian Indigenous art market is enmeshed (see chapter 2 on the history of the Indigenous art market). Moreover, my research approach is informed by insights from critical, postcolonial and decolonising research scholars who have recognised and explored tensions between Western research and Indigenous knowledge, as I explored in chapter 3 (e.g., Denzin et al. 2008; Land 2015; Mutua and Swadener 2004; Tuhiwai Smith 2012).

I take a critical approach that emphasises the selection of data gathering methods that are aimed at maintaining trust, transparency, respect, and reciprocity between the researchers and the research participants (Smith 1999). The data collection methods were shaped and informed by my knowledge gained through extensive and extended immersion

within the communities of Indigenous artists, art intermediaries, and art experts. For example, through informal conversations, I started establishing connections with potential gate keepers beginning in February 2017 and continuing through to October 2018 when I did my first interview. These gatekeepers included art experts and art historians who passed on their wisdom and insights from working with the communities of artists and commercial art intermediaries. Some of their suggested practices were based on their personal experiences in the field, such as listening, staying open-minded, and acknowledging the diversity of Indigenous cultures. Similarly, these practices guided my interactions with the research participants.

Importantly, these gatekeepers then introduced me to other art intermediaries, artists, and art experts in the field. I also realised that it was important to develop a holistic understanding of the Indigenous art movement in Australia to show my respect and gain trust among the participants. Therefore, the archival data were purposeful in this regard. I was able to use this understanding to help build rapport with the participants and initiate deeper conversations about the role of art intermediaries. For example, from the archival data, I developed a better understanding of the range of artistic styles and painting materials commonly used by different communities of Indigenous peoples living in various regions of Australia. I was also exposed to Indigenous artists who are both well-known and emerging. With this knowledge, it helped me to probe art intermediaries on how art intermediaries represent the diverse range of Indigenous artworks and artists.

More importantly, this research approach also requires active interrogation of my own standpoint, worldview, positionality, and research practices as a non-Indigenous researcher (Land 2015). In all my interactions with the participants, I shared openly about the research project and my journey of challenging my own biases and naivety. I approached every interaction with a beginner's mindset, making clear to the participants that I am not the

expert, but they are. The interview became a co-learning process between me and the interviewee as we exchanged stories about our experiences of navigating our positionalities and identities within the art worlds. This facilitated a shift in power dynamics in the researcher-and-researched relationship, which I had found to be crucial to maintaining respect and trust among the participants.

In general, critical, postcolonial and decolonising researchers are not bound by rigid methodological edicts. They tend to use a wide variety of data gathering approaches and sources such as government documents (Neu 2000), business press reports (Priyadarshini 2003), and participatory community engagements (Land 2015) to name a few. These studies try to go behind the taken-for-granted status of seemingly normal social processes to expose the enduring colonial legacies that undergird our common sense view of the world (Prasad 2003). Following in the footsteps of these critical post-colonial researchers, I adopted a multi-method approach to collect interview data, supplemented by field notes and publicly available secondary data. Through the triangulation of multiple data sources, I seek to capture the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants within the Indigenous art market.

In the following sections, I first broadly explain the critical research paradigms and key assumptions. Then, I describe the postcolonial and decolonising research methodologies, which privilege and respect Indigenous peoples' cultures and perspectives (Denzin et al. 2008; Land 2015; Tuhiwai Smith 2012). Then, I outline the culturally appropriate protocols and data gathering techniques used in this study. For this study, I used a qualitative research design to capture the rich political and cultural context in which potential tensions in the Indigenous art market could be critically examined.

Critical Research Paradigms

Critical research paradigms are best characterised as “a set of intellectual positions that examine social arrangements through the lenses of power, domination, and conflict” (Prasad 2018, 125). In comparison to interpretive research paradigms that assume society is socially constructed (Berger and Luckman 1967; Glaser and Strauss 1967), critical researchers also hold that these constructions are mediated by power relations and competing interests that are often embedded and hidden in societal structures (Prasad and Caproni 1997). Importantly, critical scholars critique widespread assumptions and social practices with the goal of improving the overall social system to be more just (Prasad 2018). Through a systematic critique of the constraining societal structures that reveals the “dark side,” the aim is to help people reimagine a better future (Murray and Ozanne 1991). To put it simply, critical researchers aim to fully acknowledge context (cultural, historical, and political) and promote dialogical relations of equality between the researchers and participants and within society at large (Prasad 2018).

For example, when considering the history of settler colonialism of the Australian Indigenous art market, Patrick Wolfe (2006, 402) cautioned that settler colonialism is “a structure, not an event.” Many Indigenous peoples—including artists—are subject to these structures. As mentioned earlier, fewer than 10% of commercial art businesses are run by Indigenous owners (Woodhead and Acker 2014). Within the Indigenous art world in Australia, the Western worldview is still dominant in discourses of contemporary art where concepts of indigeneity are negotiated and contested (McLean 2013). It is important to acknowledge the continuous negotiation between the colonial worldviews and the Indigenous worldviews inherent within the research context in which most positions of power are held by art intermediaries who are non-Indigenous (Woodhead and Acker 2014). Thus, I needed to be critical and sensitive to how these intermediaries represent the artists and their work.

Particularly, interview questions were designed to encourage reflexivity among the art dealers regarding their positionality within the Indigenous art world. For example, I prompted the participants to describe some of the unique challenges and opportunities arising from their position as intermediaries between artists and buyers. I then asked them to reflect on the lessons they had learnt from their past mistakes and how did these lessons or consequences change their involvements in the market. I also asked further reflexive questions related to how did their practices and involvement in the art market change over time. As Prasad (2018) explains, given the overarching goal of critique and change, the critical research paradigm often focuses on oppression and exploitation of different groups whether they are women, the poor, or specific ethnic minorities. In addition, it also holds a concomitant interest in creating knowledge with emancipatory potential for groups who are currently not thriving within existing social structures (Murray and Ozanne 1991).

Essentially, the critical research paradigm requires a commitment to engaging in ongoing critiques of prevalent assumptions and social practices with the wider intent of changing the overall system. Other paradigms exist that seek social change, including the feminist research (Bristor and Fischer 1993; Ozanne and Fischer 2012), participatory action research (Greenwood and Levin 2007; Ozanne and Saatcioglu 2008); and Indigenous research (Denzin et al. 2008; Smith 1999). Given that this study concerns the matters of Indigenous people living in a settler society, I draw on post-colonial and decolonising methodologies to inform my choice of research techniques that are attuned to Indigenous cultural practices and perspectives. These postcolonial approaches are capable of undermining, critiquing, and resisting the central pillars of authority and colonial practices by conducting research within the postcolonial society (Prasad 2018).

Postcolonial and Decolonising Methodology

The postcolonial research tradition came into being as a result of both internal critiques of Western imperialism (e.g., Karl Marx and Raymond Williams) and the numerous decolonisation movements that swept across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in the twentieth century. Aligned with the critical research paradigms, the postcolonial tradition focuses its critique of colonialism and its continued persistence in contemporary social arrangements (Prasad 2018). Prasad (2018) also goes as far as to suggest that European colonialism went hand in hand with industrial capitalism; she argues that the two are, at an ontological level, inseparable from one another. Seeing the market as the product of capitalism, it is important for me to be critical and reflexive of potential residual effects of colonial relations inherent within the research context of the Australian Indigenous art market. Overall, the postcolonial research methodologies constantly emphasise and critique the West's relationship to those groups who are *othered*, particularly the peoples of its former colonies and the Indigenous populations.

In addition to critiquing the colonising structures that are oppressive and constraining, decolonising research requires acknowledgment of Indigenous ways of thinking, to build research knowledge that is culturally appropriate, respectful, honouring, and careful of the Indigenous communities and their cultures (Datta 2018). A sensitivity towards Indigenous cultural systems is crucial because, despite well-intentioned interests, accomplishing altruistic goal for change is neither straight-forward nor apolitical. When conducting research within the context of Indigenous people, extra care is required to avoid privileging western conceptualisations or ideas that could end up disregarding the interests or wellbeing of Indigenous people. For example, Tuhiwai Smith (2012) critiqued how knowledge about Indigenous people is collected and created, suggesting that it is often the case that knowledge

extracted from Indigenous people may hurt Indigenous people instead of improving their living conditions or well-being. As Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 1) dramatically states:

From the vantage point of the colonised, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term *research* is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, *research*, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 1).

Researchers are often complicit in the removal and commodification of knowledge about Indigenous people (Denzin et al, 2017; Tuhiwai Smith 2012). Referring to research conducted within Indigenous contexts, Tuhiwai Smith (2012) makes a powerful case about how research is not an innocent academic exercise. Instead, she argues that we must understand the power relationships between the researcher and the researched. For example, when research methods used do not respect indigenous ways of knowing, this gives power to researchers who may misrepresent and stereotype Indigenous people, often denying them a voice in the production of Indigenous knowledge (Tuhiwai Smith 2012). In the case of Maoris, for example, they have a naturally occurring way of sharing knowledge through oral narratives, or testimonies, that have an internal logic and rules; thus, Tuhiwai Smith (2012) encourages the use of more naturally occurring ways of collecting data that are culturally sensitive.

For this study, I engaged in extensive immersion and engagement with the relevant stakeholders in the field. I frequented galleries, artists' talks, and exhibitions. I also visited a community in the Northern Territory. Although this community is not representative of all Indigenous communities, I made a priority of engaging in informal dialogues and conversations with the Indigenous people, prompting them to share stories as they felt comfortable and at ease. I also observed when artists were speaking and sharing stories about their artworks and communities. Therefore, I worked to adopt a critical lens towards how research methodology is also a "site of struggle" between the interests of researchers and Indigenous communities (Henry et al. 2002, 3).

Instead of using research as a colonising tool, decolonising research methodologies focus one's effort to re-frame research as a site where "...Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars interact, share experiences, take risks, explore alternative modes of interpretation and participate in a shared agenda, coming together in a spirit of hope, love and shared community" (Denzin et al. 2008, 12). Therefore, this study employed a multi-method research approach that captures different types of data sources, ensuring that I looked beyond any single perspective through exploring different and multiple data sources. On a practical level, through purposeful sampling, I dedicated extra attention and care in ensuring that I sought out both Indigenous and non-Indigenous gallery owners, while amplifying the voices of Indigenous people in different data sources collected, such as collecting Indigenous artists' writing in their websites, interviews, and press releases. I also followed Indigenous artists and activists on social media platforms (such as Instagram) where they express their views, stories, and voices. Having both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants involved in the research is important because, as Guerin (2010) explains, decolonisation requires shared commitment by both the colonised and colonisers. There is a need to capture how non-Indigenous people working within the colonial structures think and act towards Indigenous people, as well as how Indigenous people view themselves in the world.

As a non-Indigenous researcher, I also actively reflected on my positionality in the research and my engagement with Indigenous research participants during my fieldwork and interviews by keeping a personal journal. In my journal, I documented how I felt when I first visited Indigenous communities at Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory. I caught myself feeling anxious when I was interacting with community members. I asked myself, is this because of my lack of understanding and exposure to Indigenous people and their cultures? Or, is this fear a reflection of how Indigenous people have been portrayed and represented by the media? In recording my experiences, I was able to reveal these

preconceived views that I might have brought into my research of Indigenous people.

Through my continuous reflections recorded in my research journal, I worked to transform my feelings of anxiety and fear of the unknown into feelings of curiosity and respect for the research participants and their stories. The journal was instrumental in dispelling misinformed judgements and preconceived biases about Indigenous people as research participants. Over time, I also became more open-minded in learning about Indigenous people and their cultures through these interactions as well as interviews.

Similarly, when I first started attending art exhibitions at galleries, I initially felt uncomfortable being one of the youngest people in attendance. I had the fear that if I were not the targeted customer groups of the galleries, I would find it hard to engage in conversations with the gallery owners and the other seasoned art collectors. The journal provided me with a safe space to work through these feelings and build confidence. Increasingly, I became more confident in engaging with the art experts and art collectors. I also organised informal dialogues with selected Indigenous scholars and activists throughout my data collection process to avoid privileging Western academic assumptions about research. Particularly, I organised meetings with Indigenous scholar, Dr Michelle Evans as we reviewed my sampling procedures and interview protocols. She also suggested relevant reading materials that served as exemplars of research on Indigenous peoples and cultures to expand my perspectives of Indigenous knowledge systems. I also had informal dialogues with Indigenous activist who shared their experiences of being *researched on* by non-Indigenous researchers. These dialogues were helpful because they provided insights on how to conduct research that acknowledge and respect Indigenous cultures and ways of life.

Datta (2018, 2) argues that, “decolonisation is an on-going process of becoming, unlearning and relearning regarding who we are as a researcher and educator and taking responsibilities for participants.” Essentially, decolonising research calls for a research

agenda that is “sympathetic, respectful, and ethical from an Indigenous perspective” (Louis 2007, 49), privileging a “two-eyed seeing framework” (Bartlett, Marshall, and Marshall 2012, 335) of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. It is also important to acknowledge that decolonising research does not mean a rejection of all colonial methods and theories, rather it involves exploring a reconciliation of colonial and Indigenous knowledge. On a more practical level, it requires researchers to be reflexive of our traditional research processes and be open to making appropriate changes when Western methods are inappropriate or disrespectful towards Indigenous knowledge systems. In the next section, I explain the multiple sources of data collected throughout this iterative research and learning process.

Research Design: Data Collection and Methodological Procedures

As part of this study, I employed a multi-method research design that combines analysis of online forums/blogs, conducting participation observations at public art events (i.e., art talks and lectures, art exhibitions, and museums openings), and interviews. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the data sources and their usage. As such, I collected a combination of three forms of data to understand the dynamics of the Australian Indigenous art market: (1) archival data; (2) field notes and participant observation data; and (3) interview data. In line with the critical postcolonial research approach, the research design was emergent, allowing the underlying assumptions of the research methods to be critically examined and challenged iteratively. This was also important to ensure that I let emergent findings inform the collection of new data. Lastly, the constant comparative method was used to guide the data collection and the analysis (Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Suddaby 2006).

Table 5.1. Summary of Data Sources.

Items	Sources	Data Set	Purpose of Usage
Archival Data			
Contextual Data			
Books on the history of Indigenous art and Market	<i>Aboriginal Art</i> (Morphy 1998), <i>The Dealer is the Devil: An Insider's History of the Aboriginal Art Trade</i> (Newstead and Hessey 2014), <i>Aboriginal Art</i> (Caruana 2003, 2012), <i>Aboriginal Art: Creativity and Assimilation</i> (Leslie 2008), <i>Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art: Collection Highlights: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra</i> (Cubillo and Caruana 2010), <i>We Don't Do Dots: Aboriginal Art and Culture in Wilcannia, New South Wales</i> (Lorraine 2013), <i>Contemporary Aboriginal Art: The Complete Guide</i> (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008), <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria</i> (Ryan 2015) and <i>Aboriginal Art and Australian Society: Hope and Disenchantment</i> (Fisher 2016), <i>Rethinking Australia's Art History: The Challenge of Aboriginal Art</i> (Lowish 2018)	• 11 books	• Capture historical understanding of the evolving Indigenous artistic movements of Indigenous communities in Australia
Movies and documentaries on Indigenous art	<i>The Australian Dream</i> (2019), <i>Gurrumul</i> (2018), <i>Sweet Country</i> (2018), <i>We Don't Need A Map</i> (2018), <i>Namatjira Project</i> (2017), <i>Emily in Japan</i> (2009), <i>Samson and Delilah</i> (2009)	• 7 movies	• Understand the historical, cultural and political context of Indigenous art practices
Newspaper articles on Indigenous art intermediaries (i.e., art dealers and gallerists)	<i>ABC News</i> <i>The Age</i> <i>SBS New</i> <i>The Guardian</i>	• 38 articles • 29 articles • 12 articles • 30 articles	• Understand the societal constraints of making and selling of Indigenous artworks • Understand the tensions and debates around ethics and business practices of art intermediaries

Online art magazines	<i>Art Almanac</i> (Period: July 2017 – June 2020) <i>Art Guide Australia</i> (Period: May 2016 - June 2020) <i>Art Collector Magazine</i> (Period: March 2002 – May 2019)	• 137 articles • 213 articles • 126 articles	• Understand the background of art galleries who deal with Indigenous art • Gain knowledge about the art events, art fairs, art awards, exhibition openings, emerging artists in Australia.
Archival Data			
Secondary Data of Art Intermediaries			
Publicly available information of art intermediaries (i.e., art web	Published interviews of art intermediaries (text, audio and video) Articles published on gallery websites Essays published in exhibition catalogues collected Books	• 47 articles • 128 articles • 20 articles • 12 books	• Understand the perspectives of art intermediaries on meanings of Indigenous art • Understand how Indigenous artists and artworks are represented
Field Work			
Events on Indigenous art and cultures held at university campuses, galleries, museums, and retail shops	Seminars, exhibition openings, panel discussions, art intermediaries' talks, presentations at conferences, and guided tours	• 50 events	• Understand art intermediaries' practices • Understand art intermediaries' engagements with different groups of stakeholders
Interviews			
In-depth Interviews	12 art intermediaries (including art curators, gallerists and art businesses and art dealers)	• 14 interviews	• Understand meanings of Indigenous art from the perspectives of art intermediaries • Understand art intermediaries' engagement with different market stakeholders

Online Archival Data Sources

I collected archival data for two main purposes. First, the archival data provided contextual insights and understandings of the historical, political, and cultural context of the Australian Indigenous art market and its stakeholders. Second, I collected supplementary archival data (online and print) specific to the art intermediaries including the art businesses, galleries, art dealers and curators who were key participants of this study. These secondary data are important in providing richer insights on art intermediaries' representations of Indigenous art and the artists. Overall, archival data are especially useful to help researchers develop understandings of the research context and sensitise them to important issues (Fischer and Parmentier 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). In the next sections, I further explained the online contextual data and the art intermediaries related data collected from February 2017 to June 2020.

Contextual Data

To better understand the broader context of Indigenous art industry, I sought out books, movies, and news articles and essays written by Indigenous and non-Indigenous art intermediaries published in key-insider online magazines. These collections of archival data provide a contextual understanding of the market, highlighting the shifting, often contested meanings of art and its production among the Indigenous artists and the non-Indigenous market actors (see chapter 2 for the historical shifting of these meanings). By collecting data across various archival sources and platforms, I sought amore holistic image of the Indigenous art world.

Importantly, I needed a deep understanding of the historical and political contexts of the Indigenous art market. Therefore, I reviewed 11 books published about the history of Indigenous art and the artistic movements in Australia. These key texts provided an historical

account of the colonisation of the Indigenous people of Australia, their lands, and their artworks. In addition, the texts documented the genesis of a market for the Indigenous artworks through the joint efforts and collaborations among the Indigenous artists and the non-Indigenous art intermediaries.

I reviewed 7 movies about the lives of Indigenous artists and Indigenous peoples' relationships with non-Indigenous people. For example, *The Namatjira Project* (2017) is a documentary about the renowned and pioneering artist, Albert Namatjira and the family's quest to reclaim the copyrights to their grandfather's works and. The film also unpacks the relations between the Namatjira family and the art intermediaries with whom they had engaged. In chapter 2, these historical accounts set the context in which this research project was positioned and further shaped the sampling of participants and interview questions used in the in-depth interviews conducted with the participants.

I collected an additional set of archival data that focused on the contemporary Indigenous art market. I searched online for articles drawn from the news coverage in the mainstream media in Australia about Indigenous art. These included articles from the *ABC News*, *The Age*, and *SBS News*, and *The Guardian* (see Table 5.2). Using search terms such as "Indigenous art," "Indigenous art market," "Aboriginal art market," "buy Indigenous art" and "sell Indigenous art," it generated 566 articles from June 2015 to June 2020. I excluded articles that focused on other expressions of Indigenous arts and cultures such as Indigenous music, performing arts, and fashion textiles. I also excluded articles that focused on other general issues concerning Indigenous art such as communities-related initiatives and projects that were not directly related to the making, buying and selling of Indigenous art for the market. In the end, I retained a total of 109 articles that were most relevant to understanding the contemporary Indigenous art markets, its societal constraints on Indigenous artists and

communities as well as the tensions around the ethical (and/or unethical) practices of art intermediaries in Australia.

Table 5.2. *Articles Collected from News Media from June 2015 to June 2020.*

News media	Articles generated	Articles retained
<i>ABC News</i>	280	38
<i>The Age</i>	101	29
<i>The Guardian</i>	77	30
<i>SBS News</i>	108	12
Total	566	109

To further supplement the contextual data on the Indigenous art markets in Australia, I also searched for relevant articles from key industry-insider magazines and websites on art in Australia such as *Art Almanac* (<https://www.art-almanac.com.au>), *Art Guide* (<https://artguide.com.au/>) and *Art Collector* (<http://www.artcollector.net.au/artnews>).

Although these websites cover news and updates on the general art market, similarly, I employed search terms such as “Indigenous art,” and “Aboriginal art” to narrow down the most relevant articles. Because these are platforms that focus on art, the search generated more articles than the news that span across a longer period. In total, the search generated 137 articles from *Art Almanac* (July 2019 to June 2020), 213 articles from *Art Guide Australia* (May 2016 to June 2020) and from *Art Collector Magazine* (March 2002 to May 2019). These articles are important because they focused on the various Indigenous art exhibitions, art fairs and art events across Australia. They also provided reviews and background information about art galleries that sell Indigenous art. Importantly, they also informed their target audience on influential Indigenous artworks and key artists who won art awards.

I also subscribed to their email newsletters (i.e., *Art Almanac* sent out weekly newsletters) that enriched my understanding about contemporary artistic movements of the Indigenous art market. They also kept me up to date about the upcoming exhibition openings at different galleries which assisted me in identifying relevant sites for field work and

potential art intermediaries (i.e., galleries and curators) who would be important to talk to. Subsequently, I also searched through these art magazines and websites for further archival data on the art intermediaries whom I had interviewed. To supplement the archival data, field and participant observations were conducted at various relevant art galleries and interviews were conducted with art curators and gallery owners.

Secondary Data: Art Intermediaries

In the second stage of archival data collection, I focused on collecting publicly available information about the art intermediaries I had interviewed to capture the nuances in their representations of Indigenous artworks and artists (see Table 5.3 for the different sources of data collected). These data included 25 interviews published as news articles, 128 published articles on gallery websites, 20 essays published in exhibition catalogues, 17 video and 5 audio interviews, and 12 books. I also signed-up on the mailing lists to receive newsletters, marketing materials, and emails circulated by these art galleries that also form part of my data. Of the 12 art intermediaries participated in this study, 2 galleries sent out email newsletters frequently. These newsletters were most important in keeping me updated on the important art events, such as artists' or curators' talks, public events, and exhibition openings and many of these events became my field work. They also provided insights on the art intermediaries representations of Indigenous artworks and the artists. Overall, the archival data collected on the art intermediaries was crucial to providing further insights about how artists and artworks are represented by these art intermediaries. This form of data provided rich insights from which to understand both the marketing practices of the art galleries as well as their perspectives towards Indigenous art.

Table 5.3. *Archival Data of the Art Intermediaries.*

No.	Art Intermediaries		Archival Data Sources
1	Luke	Gallery owner	• Gallery website (11 articles from June 2014 – May 2018) • 12 essays published in exhibition catalogues (from May 2018 – January 2020)
2	Daniel	Art dealer and business owner	• Gallery website (51 articles from March 2016 - May 2020) • 2 news articles (published interviews) • 4 essays published in exhibition catalogues (from May 2018 – June 2019) • 2 gallery newsletters per month
3	Amy	Gallery owner	• Gallery website (16 articles from June 2018 – May 2020) • 2 news articles (published interviews) • Commentaries in 2 documentaries on Indigenous art in Australia • 3 – 4 gallery newsletters per month
4	Harry	Lead art curator and art historian at art gallery	• Website (48 articles from 2006 – 2019) • Personal blog (7 articles from September 2013 to May 2015) • 5 news articles – published interviews (March 2011 – July 2018) • 10 video interviews (July 2013 –) • 3 books on Indigenous art (2015, 2016 and 2019)
5	Helen	Lead art curator at art gallery	• 2 audio interviews • 3 video interviews • 1 essay published in exhibition catalogue in 2018 • 3 news articles (published interview)
6	Barry	Art curator at art gallery	• Gallery website (2 articles 2019)
7	Keith	Gallery owner	• Gallery website (5 articles from September 2018 – January 2019) • 8 online exhibition catalogues • 2 news articles (published interviews)
8	Nicole	Art curator at art gallery	• 3 essays published in exhibition catalogues • 5 news articles (published interviews) • 1 book on Indigenous artist (2017)
9	Josh	Art curator at art gallery	• 4 news articles (published interviews) • 8 books on Indigenous artists
10	Malcolm	Art business owner	N/A
11	John	Art business owner	• 4 video interviews • 3 audio interviews
12	Kevin	Indigenous art shop keeper	N/A

Field Work and Participant Observation

Another data source of this research is fieldnotes collected during fieldwork at key sites where Indigenous art stakeholders engage with each other. These key market actors include Indigenous artists, art curators, art historians, art gallery owners, and art collectors. I carried out both informal and formal field work during the period of February 2017 and October 2019. Overall, I attended 50 different seminars, gallery openings, talks, presentations, panel discussions, and conferences (see Table 5.4).

Informal Field Work

The purpose of the informal field work was to educate myself by immersing myself in Indigenous cultures and engaging with communities of Indigenous peoples, artists, scholars (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), and art intermediaries. For example, in February 2017, I was enrolled in a field work subject called “Indigenous Perspectives on Development.” As part of a group of student researchers, we visited a town in the Northern Territory of Australia, called Alice Springs, with a population of around 27,000, a third of whom are Indigenous people mainly of the Arrernte language group.

For one week, we also lived in a community called Ntaria (also known as Hermannsburg). The community in Ntaria (Hermannsburg) was an interesting place for conversations and field work because of its complex history of contact between Indigenous people and settlers. More importantly, it is also the birthplace of the famous Indigenous artist, Albert Namatjira. Therefore, through this field trip, I revisited one of the key places where the art market emerged and where the Hermannsburg watercolour movement began. During this field work, I also visited the local institutions including the local schools, aged care centre, youth centre, as well as the famous *Hermannsburg Potters*. I had in-situ conversations with the artists about their art practices, stories and cultures. The potteries made by these

famous potters were seen being sold at prominent galleries across Australia. In addition to conducting field work at an Indigenous community in remote area, I also attended seminars, lectures, panel discussions, and talks by Indigenous artists in the urban area of Melbourne. At these events, I took detailed field notes to capture multiple perspectives, from Indigenous scholars, art historians, to Indigenous artists. These events provide rich social context to understand the different ways meanings of Indigenous art are constructed by various stakeholder groups involved in the market.

Moreover, this informal field work was an important opportunity to network and identify the key galleries and prominent actors within the field of Indigenous art market in Australia. For example, I attended 12 weekly seminars of a university subject called, “Contemporary Aboriginal Art.” Through attending these seminars, I met an art curator, who then became one of the interviewees. In addition, as part of the subject, I attended an interactive seminar with an Indigenous artist who is a curator, Indigenous Elder and activist. During this seminar, he highlighted the differences between Indigenous knowledge systems and Western systems. He explained how these gaps and tensions had impacted some cultural practices and wellbeing of people in his communities. Subsequently, at other gallery openings, I met the two non-Indigenous curators whom this Indigenous artist has been collaborating closely with. These two art intermediaries also became interviewees for this study. Given that the Indigenous art world is a relatively small community, attending these events was crucial for me to meet the relevant market actors, including art curators, gallery owners, and artists. I was also able to learn about important issues and the trends in Indigenous art market, such as the prevailing issues with copyrights that affect the livelihood of many Indigenous artists.

Formal Field Work

I also conducted formal field work at specific Indigenous art galleries and openings of new exhibitions across Victoria, Australia. I was a participant observer at these events and also conducted informal interviews in-situ. The focus of this data collection was to understand the art intermediaries' practices in engagement with different groups of market stakeholders including the artists and the consumers, trends, movements, and shifts within the Indigenous art market and to observe key stakeholders within these sites of commerce, art, and culture. Through the newsletters I have subscribed to as part of my archival data collection, I received frequent updates from galleries and art magazines (i.e., *Art Almanac*) about openings of new and exciting exhibitions.

At the exhibition openings, art curators and artists often provided more in-depth explanations of the artworks in the exhibitions. These openings generally attracted around 20 to 50 people and last about 2 hours. Alcohol and finger food are usually served during the opening to encourage socialising among the attendees. The majority of attendees are art collectors and potential buyers who are interested in the artists' work. The artists are often present to interact with the buyers and answer any questions. During these exhibition openings, I took detailed field notes on how the artworks were presented by the art curators to unpack the positionality of the art intermediaries as well as their relationships with the artists. I also collected printed and online exhibition catalogues of the exhibitions I have attended. Most of the exhibition catalogues are publicly available online. These catalogues explain artists' works and art practices. Some of them also include essays by art curators and/or the gallery directors.

These openings and public events are social spaces where collectors, artists, curators, and gallery owners interact. Visitors must opt into the gallery's mailing list and often the people at the opening know one another. The people attending these openings were

welcoming and many were incredibly passionate and wanted to share their love of art. Therefore, I generally found it easy to strike up a conversation about the artworks and their experience in collecting or buying Indigenous art. Also, given that artwork is on display, the art becomes the perfect conversation starter to engage with the collectors. I often prompted the conversations with simple questions such as, “What do you think about this piece?”, “Is there any particular piece that you are interested in?” and “What do you think about the artists’ works in the exhibition?” These interactions were recorded in detailed fieldnotes immediately after each opening and public event.

These events provided me with the opportunity to enter the field and familiarise myself with the art market. I was able to become more familiar with emerging and topical issues considered important among the key market actors. I was exposed to the important and emerging artists and art intermediaries within the local Indigenous art world. Moreover, I was invited to additional networking events, such as Indigenous artist’s documentary screenings and talks, where I was able to recruit research participants for additional in-depth interviews.

Table 5.4. *Field Work Conducted from February 17 – October 2019.*

Informal Field Work (Public Seminars, Lectures, Panel Discussions, Artist's talks)			
Date	Field Site	Art Intermediaries and artists present	Data
17 th – 25 th February 2017	Visits and engagement with Indigenous community, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Alice Springs, Northern Territory	Indigenous scholars and activist, Dr. Elise Klein, Indigenous Elders, and Indigenous artists	Field notes, photos
4 September 18 – 9 th October 18	Contemporary Aboriginal Art seminars (12 sessions), University of Melbourne	Lectures by author, curator and art historian, Dr. Susan Lowish on the Indigenous artistic movements in Australia	Field notes
12 th September 18	Special Public Lecture: “Ochre, Bark, Brush: Material concerns in Australian Indigenous art,” University of Melbourne	Talk by Indigenous artist and curator, Wukun Wanambi on the “ <i>Fake Art Harms Culture</i> ” marketing campaign	Field notes
13 th September 18	Public lecture and book launch: <i>Rethinking Australia's art history: The challenge of Aboriginal art</i> (Lowish 2018), Ian Potter Museum	Speeches by Professor Ian McLean, Hugh Ramsay Chair of Australian Art and author, Dr. Susan Lowish	Field notes
11 th November 18	Public talk: “Curator's Perspective: Lee Darroch's Possum Skin Cloak,” National Gallery Victoria.	Special talk by Indigenous art curator, Myles Russell-Cook,	Field notes, photos
4 th December 18	A Special Screening of documentary: “Cultural Activist - Maree Clarke,” Monash University Museum of Art	Opening speech curator and director of MUM, Charlotte Day	Field notes
5 th – 7 th December 18	Attended 8 presentations at <i>Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference 2018</i> , RMIT University	Keynote speakers by Indigenous curator, Genevieve Grieves, Gabi Ngcobo (South Africa) and Ema Tavola (Fiji) on curatorial practices that democratise and decolonise art institutions such as art galleries and museums; Presentations by art curators such as Djon Mundine, Dr. Natalie King, Dr. Henry Skerrett	Field notes

24 th January 19	Guided tour of exhibition “From Bark to Neon: Indigenous Art,” National Gallery Australia.	Private talk given by the curator on the stories and backgrounds of the artworks	Field notes
24 th January 19	Exhibition “From Bark to Neon: Indigenous Art,” National Gallery Australia.	Talk by Indigenous artist, Reko Rennie	Field notes
15 th March 19	Seminar: “Economic Prospects for Indigenous Lands: ‘Developing the North’ to Avoid Accumulation by Re-dispossession,” University of Melbourne	Seminar by scholar, Professor Jon Altman	Field notes
21 st June 19	Guided walking tour by the Koorie Heritage Trust	Tour by guide who shared about Indigenous stories, cultures and languages	Field notes, photos
23 rd June 19	Panel discussion: “Celebrating Culture: Contemporary Indigenous Art,” Glen Eira City Council Gallery	Panel discussion moderated by Director of the Shepparton Art Museum, Dr Rebecca Coates. Panelists include Director of Vivien Anderson Gallery, Vivien Anderson; collector of Indigenous photography Craig Semple, Senior Curator of South Eastern Aboriginal Collections, First Peoples Department, Melbourne Museum, Kimberley Moulton (Yorta Yorta), and Victorian Artist, Hayley Millar-Baker (Gunditjmarra).	Field notes
28 th June 19	Artists’ talks at exhibition: “Celebrating Culture: Contemporary Indigenous Art,” Glen Eira City Council Gallery	Talks by Indigenous artists Kent Morris and Hayley Millar-Baker	Field notes, photos
9 th October 19	Public lecture, “The Colonial Fantasy: How Progressive Australians Perpetuate Colonialism in 21st Century Australia,” University of Melbourne	Public lecture by Professor Sarah Maddison on the settler-Indigenous relations within the modern society	Field notes

Formal Field Work (Gallery visits and exhibition openings)			
Date	Field Site	Art Intermediaries and artists present	Data
16 th October 18	Private guided tour of exhibition “Barring-bul,” The Professor Sir Joseph Burke Gallery	Special private art curator’s talk on the Indigenous art exhibition	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue, online website
3 rd October 18	Opening of exhibition: “Hubert Paperoulja – West Macdonnell Ranges Country,” Vivien Anderson gallery	Opening speech by art curator and author, Ken McGregor	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue and price list, gallery newsletter
31 st October 18	Opening of exhibition: “Nyuntuni: The Artists of Tjungu Palya,” Vivien Anderson Gallery	Opening speech by the gallery owner, Vivien Anderson.	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue and price list, gallery newsletter
14 th November 18	Opening of exhibition: “Alice and Beyond: New works by Janet and Mike Green,” Lauraine Diggins Fine Art	Opening by Rodney James, independent curator and writer	Field notes, exhibition catalogue, gallery newsletter
22 nd November 18	Opening of exhibition: “Nonggirnga Marwili Baratjala: Sea Spray and Lighting Strike,” Alcaston Gallery	Opening by author, art historian and curator Dr. Henry Skeritt	Field notes, photo, exhibition catalogue, gallery newsletter
28 th November 18	Opening exhibition: “Patju: New paintings by Patju Presley,” Vivien Anderson Gallery	Opening by the artist Patju Presley, and coordinators of Spinifex Arts Project (community arts centre in Western Australia), Amanda Dent and Brian Hallett	Field notes, photo, exhibition catalogue, gallery newsletter
31 st January 19	Opening of exhibition: “Confined 10,” The Torch gallery	Opening by Gunditjmara (Indigenous) Elder, Uncle Jim Berg, speech by the CEO, Indigenous artist and curator, Kent Morris	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue and price list
1 st February 19	Opening of exhibition: “laka-wan ngeerang woorroong,” Black Dot Gallery	N/A	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue
13 th March 19	Opening of exhibition: “The Women’s Show,” Vivien Anderson Gallery	Opening speech by Indigenous scholar, Professor Lynette Russell (Wotabaluk)	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue

			and price list, gallery newsletter
20 th March 19	“Meet the Artist” event for exhibition: “Voices from the Land I,” Alcaston Gallery	Talk by Indigenous artist, Judy Holding	Field notes, exhibition catalogue
17 th April 19	Opening of exhibition: “Ralph Rogers: Byamee Brewarrina,” Deakin University Downtown Gallery	Opening speech by The Hon Jeff Kennett AC and chairman of The Torch gallery	Field notes, exhibition catalogue
1 st May 19	Opening of exhibition: “Timothy Cook – Kulama,” Vivien Anderson Gallery	Opening speech by Indigenous scholar and artist, Dr Brian Martin	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue and price list, gallery newsletter
30 th May 19	Opening of exhibition: “Significant,” William Mora Galleries	Art dealer, D’lan Davidson	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue, curators’ essays, and price list, gallery newsletter
15 th June 19	Opening of exhibition: “Nganampa Walytja – Our Family,” Alcaston Gallery	Gallery owners and artists	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue
25 th July 19	Opening of exhibition: “Sally Gabori: Juwarnda Black Dolphin,” Alcaston Gallery	Opening speech by gallery owner, Beverley Knight and Indigenous artist, Deborah Cheetham AO	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue, gallery newsletter
21 st August 19	Opening of exhibition: “Deme Ngayi – My hand,” Vivien Anderson Gallery	Opening speech by artist, Regina Pilawuk and coordinators of community arts centre, Durumu Arts	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue, gallery newsletter
10 th October 19	Opening of exhibition: “Dhumbadha Munga: Talking Knowledge,” Metro Gallery	Opening speech by The Torch gallery CEO, Kent Morris	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue
12 th October 19	Opening of exhibition: “Kent Morris - Barkindji Blue Sky,” Vivien Anderson Gallery	Opening speech by Indigenous artists Kent Morris	Field notes, photos, exhibition catalogue, gallery newsletter

Research Participant Recruitment: Sampling

Before identifying the relevant Indigenous art galleries, I first reviewed the business directory websites and *The Aboriginal Code* database available online that contain information about Indigenous art galleries in operation in Melbourne, Australia. From there, I looked up individual Indigenous art galleries and collected data on these galleries. I reviewed their official websites, social media pages, forums, and blogs to develop background knowledge and history of the individual galleries. I also identified and approached prominent art intermediaries for interviews when I meet them during my field work. Not all owners or directors of galleries I had visited as part of my formal and informal field work (see list of sites and galleries in figure 5.4) participated in this study as interviewees.

Additional research participants were recruited through snowball sampling method. The participants would refer me to other art intermediaries they know who would be interesting to talk to and who might be interested in being interviewed. In the end, 12 participants were recruited to conduct interviews with two participants agreeing to be interviewed for the second time. In total, 14 in-depth interviews were conducted and recorded. All participants were referred to using pseudonyms. These pseudonyms were chosen and assigned randomly to minimise the chance of identifiability due to the relatively small sample size. The details of informants are included in table 5.5.

In-depth Interviews

In this study, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with research participants. The interview questions were exploratory and open-ended to allow participants the freedom to share their expertise and perspectives (see Appendix 1 for the list of interviews questions). Most of the interviews were conducted at their offices or in display areas of the gallery. For some informants, interviews were also conducted in coffee shops

where recording was possible. With some participants travelling frequently to meet with Indigenous artists and art collectors from different parts of Australia and from overseas, these interviews were conducted over Skype or phone. These remote interviews were with art curators whom I had previously met in person during field work at the galleries. To build rapport during the in-person interviews, the participants were prompted to offer their perspective of the artworks in the office or gallery space. Occasionally, they would refer to specific artworks hung on the wall and these artworks were also used as prompts for the participants to share stories and experiences associated with the artworks, the artists, and their local communities. For those interviewed over Skype or phone, I built rapport by having conversations about the recent art exhibitions in which the participants had been involved in. The interview questions were designed to encourage the participants to reflect on their positionality and experiences in engaging with the various key stakeholders, particularly, the artists, the collectors/buyers, as well as the community art centres.

The interview participants were articulate individuals who are passionate about their work. Many of the participants are experts in the industry who are comfortable being interviewed by journalists and researchers. Therefore, they ended up taking command of the interviews with little probing and interjections being required from me. This resulted in interviews with dense text filled with extended stories and rich details from the participants. However, on the flip side of this, it was more a challenge to control the interview and I had to interject intentionally but subtly to steer the interviews to cover topics in the interview protocol.

Table 5.5. *Informants Information.*

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Indigeneity	Current Position and Interview Locale	Past Experiences	Industry Tenure	Number of Interviews
Cultural Conduit							
1	Helen	Female	Indigenous	Art curator, cafe	Art galleries, museum, community arts centres	20+	1
2	Barry	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, on site	Museum sector	10	1
3	Keith	Male	Non-Indigenous	Gallery owner, on site	Community arts centres and museums sector	20+	1
4	Nicole	Female	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, cafe	Private and public art sector, International galleries and Museums	10+	1
5	Josh	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, on site	Art collector, community arts centres, Australian and International art galleries	20+	1
Art Connoisseur							
6	Luke	Male	Non-Indigenous	Gallery owner, on site	Art collector	13	1
7	Daniel	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art dealer and business owner, on site	Art collector, artist, and auction market	20	2
8	Amy	Female	Non-Indigenous	Gallery owner, on site	Art collector, secondary auction market, Australian and International art galleries	31+	1
9	Harry	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, online	Australian and International art galleries	10	1
Change Agent							
10	Malcolm	Male	Indigenous	Art business owner, cafe	Art business	20+	2
11	John	Male	Indigenous	Art business owner, phone	Art business	5	1
12	Kevin	Male	Indigenous	Indigenous art shop keeper and walking tour guide, on site	Indigenous art retail shop and exhibitions, cultural education programs	10	1

Data Analysis

Analysis of data focused on interview transcripts and field notes, supplemented by archival data (including websites, catalogues, marketing and promotional materials). This analysis conducted was hermeneutical and iterative with two interrelated levels of analysis: *intra*-textual analysis and *inter*-textual analysis (Thompson 1997). These levels make up the hermeneutical part-to-whole iteration approach to interpretation, in which analysis moves in cycles to derive themes and categories from coded data in an iterative and evolving process (Thompson 1997).

First, *intra*-textual analysis of the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and archival data associated the art intermediary was read and analysed as a whole. This allowed for a development of a rich understanding of the art intermediaries' experiences, perspectives, and approaches in doing business with the Indigenous artworks and the artists. As part of the analysis process, the data were coded into major themes and categories. Coding continued as an iterative activity as themes were identified and began to stabilise across art intermediaries (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Spiggle 1994). To aid coding, I used the qualitative data analysis software *Nvivo*. Then, *inter*-textual analysis was conducted across all art intermediaries to identify similarities and difference within and among their perspectives and business approaches to interact with Indigenous artworks and the artists, communities, and consumers.

Researcher Positionality

I am not a person of Indigenous descent. I was born and grew up in Malaysia, a country that is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. However, Malaysia and Australia were both once controlled by British settlers between the 18th and the 20th centuries. Unlike the settler colony of Australia, in Malaysia the land was returned to the original occupants of the country, when the Federation of Malaya achieved independence on the 31st August 1957. It

was during the British colonial Administrators in the 18th and 19th centuries, my ancestors migrated from China to Malaysia to work in tin mining factories and rubber plantations, in support of the colonisers' aim to extract resources from the land. Therefore, in terms of my ethnicity, I am a third-generation Malaysian Chinese who grew up in the postcolonial society of Malaysia. Despite being a person of Chinese descent, I grew up participating in native Malaysian culture. For example, *Bahasa Malaysia* ("the language of Malaysia") is the national language of Malaysia. It is widely used in professional, legal, educational, and commercial contexts. In school, I became proficient in *Bahasa Malaysia*, English, and Chinese. I grew up learning about the native Malay culture while celebrating my own Chinese traditional customs. Growing up in a postcolonial society like Malaysia, my positionality may help me stay open because I have lived through the decolonisation process of the traditional owners of the land reclaiming their cultures and languages post-colonisation.

I moved to Melbourne Australia for higher education in 2006. Throughout my education in Australia, I have learned little about the culture of Indigenous people. But when I studied the topic of smoking, I soon learned that high rates of alcoholism and tobacco consumption exist within some Indigenous communities. At the start of 2017, I participated in a field trip to the Alice Springs, Northern Territory with academics and research students from the Faculty of Arts. The field trip at Hermannsburg opened my eyes to the various challenges faced by the Indigenous community. However, despite constraints placed on their livelihoods, Indigenous communities remained strong and resilient. Growing up in an independent postcolonial society Malaysia that celebrates and honours the cultures of different ethnicities, I became extremely curious about the evolving relationship between the Indigenous people and the settlers who never left the country.

Reflecting on my own cultural background and ethnicity, I am neither Indigenous nor non-Indigenous Australian. However, I approached this study with the desire to find the pockets of hope where Indigenous people are resiliently preserving their culture and actively maintaining their connection to the land. As Teila Watson, an Indigenous youth, courageously declared in a 2017 article for *The Guardian*:

...our culture has always been resiliently dynamic in its ability to thrive, even among the depression of colonialism and attempted genocide. We may not now know all of our languages, songs, dances and stories, but many of us have had our knowledges translated and interpreted to us, and through us, our whole lives.

I am coming from a place of openness, with some naivety, but I seek to use my research to understand contemporary opportunities and tensions around Indigenous peoples' expression of cultures in the market, by extension, the society. This intention focused my approach in collecting archival data, conducting field work and sampling of participants for this study.

However, given the limited of exposure and understanding on Indigenous people and their cultures prior to conducting this research, I found myself struggling to reach out and connect with Indigenous people. It felt like there was a great divide between me (as a research) and them (as the researched). I realised that my view towards Indigenous people and their cultures was shallow and influenced by hearing about the persistent problems (such as addiction and alcoholism) in media news outlets and policy reports. While I was opened to learning, I was problem focused on how could I offer solutions to these problems. Instead, I became aware that I needed to challenge and expand my perspectives of Indigenous people by educating and immersing myself in understanding the histories of the Indigenous people and their arts. I also needed to remind myself about the resilience and strengths demonstrated by Indigenous people for millennia. In short, I needed to be more asset focused.

As a person who was unfamiliar with the art market and Indigenous cultures, I started by reading extensively on the history of Indigenous art market in Australia. To be able to engage in meaningful conversations, interviews, and interactions with the key market actors,

I needed to be aware of important historical moments and or shifts in the history of the Indigenous art in Australia. Also, I still needed some basic knowledge of the key artistic and stylistics movements that had emerged from different Indigenous communities across Australia. For example, informants casually referred to some significant Indigenous communities, such as the Yirrkala and Yolngu people from the Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia, or the key exhibitions that were game changers within the industry. This is where the archival data formed the foundation in which further insights were built upon and allowed me to delve deeper in conversations in the field and formal interviews.

Another important observation that I learned in the process is that these key informants were also curious about my positionality and stance towards the political and historical aspects of Indigenous art in Australia. Given that I am neither Australian nor a person of Indigenous descent, my ethnicity and cultural origins had positioned me in a peripheral space. I often felt like an outsider or an imposter in the room. I also had to manage the meaning of my younger age, within openings of exhibitions full of more senior attendees. I believe that being in this position helped me enter the site with naivety and openness. I was not weighed down by some of the political and historical baggage often associated with non-Indigenous Australians or in being perceived as the “colonisers.” I managed my age by dressing more formally when I was attending these gallery openings and events to better fit in with the more mature crowd.

Importantly, I had to constantly reflect on my positionality as a researcher trained within a Western educational institution, in which I had limited prior exposure and experience to conducting research on Indigenous cultures and livelihoods. Therefore, with the intention to *decolonise my mind*, I sought out support from Indigenous scholars at my department by organising meetings with them. I also sought guidance from non-Indigenous

scholars who have gained trust and friendships in their engagement with Indigenous artists and their communities.

Chapter 6: Art Intermediaries as Cultural Conduits

The next three chapters provide an in-depth description and conceptualisation of the different roles played by art intermediaries within the Australian Indigenous art market. Indigenous artists use their art in different ways, such as directly resisting the historical processes of settler colonisation or through the decolonising processes discussed in chapter 4. For the Indigenous artists, art is an expression of their culture. Art is also a powerful platform for Indigenous people to assert their Indigeneity and reclaim their connection to lands. But, what does Indigenous art mean for market intermediaries? And, how do art intermediaries balance commercial and cultural interests as they represent the artists' work and engage with different stakeholders—consumers, artists, and their communities? The next three chapters explore how groups of art intermediaries take different approaches to negotiating the meaning of art, their positions of power within these stakeholder relationships, and practices in the art market.

Within the arts marketing literature, Patsiaoras et al. (2018) examine protest art to demonstrate the potential of arts promotion in raising awareness of social injustice and exposing power relationships. While Patsiaoras et al. (2018) explore the role of protest art by highlighting injustice through spatial aesthetics, and engaging and educating audiences on social issues, I focus on the role the art intermediaries who navigate these social, cultural, and political tensions in art promotion. I inductively derived three different roles played by these art intermediaries that I call cultural conduits, art connoisseurs, and change agents. These three roles were conceptualised by focusing on each groups' priorities with the cultural conduits stressing culture, the art connoisseurs stressing high art and aesthetics, and the change agents stressing political transformations. These groups emerged through thematic patterns that were inductively derived by an analysis of interviews with art intermediaries. For example, the three groups of art intermediaries each construct a different meaning of art.

In table 6.1, I conceptualise these roles across five dimensions. First, I explore how the art intermediaries construct different *meanings* of Indigenous art. This theme was guided by the literature review on the history of Australian Indigenous art in which the meanings of Indigenous art evolved over the years as they were also socially constructed by different groups of stakeholders in the markets, including the artists, the communities, the missionaries, museums, and art dealers. Second, I highlight the *focal relationships* that are most important to the art intermediaries. This theme was important as I have highlighted in the review of the arts marketing literature that limited attention is given to the artists and communities as collectives. These relationships formed between the art intermediaries and the artists and their communities are nuanced and complex within the Indigenous art markets (Caruana 2003). Therefore, as emerged inductively from the data, I have found that different art intermediaries also work with the artists and the communities differently. Third, sensitised by the postcolonial and decolonizing theoretical perspectives, I examined the power relationships that play out between the art intermediaries, the Indigenous communities, and the consumers within the art market. Fourth, further informed by the art markets study by Rodner and Thomson (2013), I explore how the art intermediaries create value through their curation practices for the artists and/or larger communities. Finally, I explicate how art intermediaries use different practices to create value for the consumers as they navigate and balance the tensions between cultural and commercial.

This chapter investigates art intermediaries as “cultural conduits” in the Indigenous art market. Chapter 7 and 8 explore the art connoisseurs and change agents.

Table 6.1. *Understanding Cultural Conduits, Art Connoisseurs, and Change Agents.*

Themes	Cultural Conduit	Art Connoisseur	Change Agent
1. Meanings of Art	Art as cultural education	Art as culturally legitimised by experts through intellectual labour	Art as political transformation
2. Focal Relationships and Community Influence	Artists and their communities Invest long-term emotionally and financially in the artists and their communities (e.g., scholarships, cultural exchange and wellness programs)	Community of experts, individual artists, and art collectors - Invest long-term intellectually in the community of art experts through education, experience, and scholarship - Little direct involvement in the Indigenous community other than as a source of cultural understanding	Society at large and anyone interested in Indigenous cultures Direct member and representative of the Indigenous community
3. Power Relationships with the Indigenous artists and consumers	An equal collaborator (i.e., trusted business advisor)	A powerful gatekeeper (i.e., expert cultural influencer)	An unyielding activist
4. Important Practices for the Artist and/or Communities	- Develop close relationships with the artist and communities to better represent diverse cultures and values - Share power and release control by trusting the artist and community; balanced power relationships (e.g., representative steering committees, foregrounding artists and communities' interests) <u>Exemplar</u> is co-curating with Indigenous partner a commissioned project with the Tjanpi Desert Weavers	- Select and develop artists' portfolios and careers using their network - Provide space for artists' voice and vision in exhibits that they have carefully curated; stress cultural stories to forge connections between artists and consumers - Promote the artists' vision and accolades in public presentations <u>Exemplar</u> is the expert curation of a New York exhibit using the best desert artworks for a select group of collectors	- Advocate for the rights of artists by creating awareness on the potential threats of legal contracts - Protect artists' rights through licensing and leasing <u>Exemplar</u> is commissioned corporate art on mentorship as a culturally appropriate way of leading

5. Important Practices for the Consumer	• Tell cultural stories and share historical knowledge on the communities • Share first-hand stories about the artists and communities • Advise on authenticity and ethicality of art dealings • <u>Balance the cultural-commercial tension</u> by honouring cultural stories and encouraging ethical purchases	• Guide collectors on their buying decisions based on their reputation as trusted expert • Influence collectors' aesthetic preferences to become more omnivorous of diverse styles and mediums • <u>Balance the cultural-commercial tension</u> by elevating artistic work using their aesthetic expertise to justify financial investments and greater involvement	• Challenge colonial biases based on stereotypes of Indigenous art, cultures, and people • Offer a window into Indigenous' worldviews and livelihoods • <u>Balance the cultural-commercial tensions</u> by prioritising cultural integrity over profit
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Art Intermediaries as Cultural Conduits

Art intermediaries who are cultural conduits emphasise Indigenous art as education. The cultural conduits' approach stands in stark contrast to the way Indigenous artists and art were first understood and presented in museums in the early 19th century. Recall in chapter 2, initial outside interest in the art of Indigenous people was mostly limited to anthropologists and explorers. Indigenous art was treated by anthropologists as “primitive” artefacts of a dying culture (Leslie 2008). Indigenous people were also viewed as primitive people with doomed cultures that were supposedly inferior to Western civilisations. Even as recently as the period of 1930-1960, evidence of ethnocentrism and colonists' bias persisted at exhibitions of Indigenous arts held by galleries and museums (McCulloch and McCulloch Childs 2008). Indigenous artists' names were not included next to their artworks. Moreover, the cover of an exhibition catalogue was re-authored by a non-Indigenous artist who used Westernised interpretations of Aboriginal symbols (Casey 1941).

In contrast, this study reveals that some contemporary art intermediaries act as *cultural conduits* who seek to foster a broader appreciation for the diverse Indigenous cultures and arts (see the informant Table 6.2). The informants who are cultural conduits tend to assume the position of art curators in art galleries and museums. These cultural conduits look for opportunities to celebrate the cultural stories of Indigenous people in their artworks. Similar to the role of art curators identified by Rodner and Thomson (2013), these cultural conduits focus more on the cultural and less on the commercial. With the profits gained from the sales of arts, these financial earnings are redirected back to benefiting the communities. Therefore, the cultural conduits prioritise relationships with artists and communities. Unlike art connoisseurs or change agents (who are discussed in chapters 7 and 8), these cultural conduit intermediaries do not claim power. Instead, they encourage power-sharing

relationships with artists and communities to better understand them so they can educate consumers on Indigenous cultures and Indigenous peoples' connections to land.

Table 6.2. *Informants Information of Cultural Conduits.*

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Indigeneity	Current Position and Interview Locale	Past Experiences	Industry Tenure	Number of Interviews
Cultural Conduit							
1	Helen	Female	Indigenous	Art curator, cafe	Art galleries, museum, community arts centres	20+	1
2	Barry	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, on site	Museum sector	10	1
3	Keith	Male	Non-Indigenous	Gallery owner, on site	Community arts centres and museums sector	20+	1
4	Nicole	Female	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, cafe	Private and public art sector, International galleries and Museums	10+	1
5	Josh	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, on site	Art collector, community arts centres, Australian and International art galleries	20+	1

The Meaning of Art as Cultural Education

Art intermediaries as cultural conduits foreground the diversity of Indigenous cultures that are represented in each work of art. For the cultural conduits, selling art is foremost an opportunity to share the different cultural stories and perspectives of Indigenous communities. In a published dialogue of art curators, for example, Boles (1999, 1) explains the cultural meaning of art and the role of cultural conduits in establishing connections between Indigenous cultures and non-Indigenous cultures:

As a manifestation of the ancestral past, or Dreaming, Aboriginal art provides a link between the world inhabited by humans, animals and plants and the spiritual dimension underlies it. Yet for a long time, the evolutionary eye of the European tradition overlooked the richness of Aboriginal art. The prevailing ideology rendered Aboriginal people nearly invisible... Aboriginal people have used art to convey their cultural values and political aspirations to others... Collectors, museums and art galleries and exhibitions have played important roles in this dialogue with the outside world, by increasing public awareness of the power of Aboriginal art.

Like Boles, cultural conduits are translators of “the richness of Aboriginal art” to an “outside world” that includes not only consumers and collectors, but also the general public.

Moreover, they believe that artworks are vehicles for artists to communicate their cultural, economic, and political aspirations. This intermediary orientation is aligned with the perspective of arts marketing scholars, such as Navaie and Safak (2004) as well as Patsiaouras et al. (2018), who emphasise the potential of arts marketing as a platform for community development and the education of audiences. Thus, as I have found in this study, cultural conduits perceive that their role is to disseminate the Indigenous artists’ arts that reflect their aspirations for Indigenous cultures and communities, to the market.

Consistent with their focus on community development and consumer education, the cultural conduits prioritise culture, and direct their commercial returns toward benefiting the communities. For example, although Helen looks for opportunities to embed the art within the cultural contexts in which the art was created, she also acknowledges the importance of selling art for the financial benefit of the artists and their communities:

In a gallery... **that was a commercial space and everything that we sold, went back to the community. So it was really important that we were selling lots of works.** And so, you have discussions amongst the staff there about, who these artists were and fitting them into, the Papunya art movement in the 70s. I suppose creating stories around it.

And being able to talk about the work behind, just the application of the paint, or something, **you are putting it in a context of, you know, this cultural history that is ongoing and this is a part of that ongoing expression of culture.** So, I think that was always an important angle to have selling work.

For cultural conduits like Helen, selling Indigenous art is a way to share a cultural tradition that is both rooted in the past but also is an important “part of the ongoing expression of culture.” The art continues to evolve and is affected by current events. For example, Helen explained that the artists’ work is affected by significant events in the community, such as key artists passing away or changes in the art centre leadership. The artworks tell stories about Indigenous experiences and cultures, and cultural conduits like Helen help share these stories of the communities.

In addition, at an exhibition curated by Barry, his goal was to celebrate the different cultures and arts of the various Indigenous communities represented. In this exhibition, curator Barry ensured that he sampled different kinds of arts that represent different traditions so he could educate the consumers on the diversity of local cultures and artistic styles. One group represented was from the Tiwi Islands. During field work, when I attended Barry’s talk about the exhibition, he explained that the artists from the Tiwi Islands are renowned for their use of limited colour palettes of mostly red, yellow, white, and black. The artists’ colour choices mirror the land where they live, such as the use of red reflects the red sands of the desert where the Indigenous people have lived for thousands of years. As a cultural conduit, Barry highlighted the stories of the land where the art was created. He also educated by comparing the artworks from Tiwi Islands to those from the Papunya and central Australia; the latter are more colourful because the artists were introduced to acrylics and canvases by missionaries. In our interview, Barry contextualises and celebrates that, “the art is an

explosion of colours, telling the stories of the exchange that happened between Indigenous cultures and Western art practices”. For cultural conduits like Barry, the Indigenous artworks communicate the cultural stories of the communities that are interwoven with Western art styles and he wants consumers to understand these deeper connections.

In particular, cultural conduits, such as Barry and Helen, illustrate artworks as expressions of Indigenous peoples’ cultural connection to their traditional lands. Recall that Indigenous relationships to land were disrupted when settlers took Indigenous land as their new home and source of capital (Tuck and Young 2012). Decolonisation scholars also emphasised the importance of acknowledging and recognising Indigenous people’s connections to land that fuel Indigenous resurgence (Martineau and Ritskes 2014). Helen’s close interaction with Indigenous artists sensitises her to better understand and communicate this tie. Helen recollects an experience of working with a famous Indigenous artist at an arts centre in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. Despite Helen being Indigenous, this close collaboration with the artist transformed her understanding of Indigenous’ connections to land:

I was talking to him about what he was painting and what country¹. I said to him, “I will take you back to Melbourne and you can paint some country down there.” And he laughed and he was like, “I’m not just painting what I see! That’s not how it works!”

You know, there is this just kind of moment that changed my understanding of cultural connection to country and the land is alive and all these things existed but that was a big connection between the art and cultures for me.

Of course, he’s not painting just what he sees. It may be a Western style, or water colour, but it’s loaded with relationships and connections that are existed since the

¹ As explained by *Common Ground* (an Aboriginal-led organisation), for First Nations people, “country” encompasses an interdependent relationship between an individual and their ancestral lands and seas. This reciprocal relationship between the land and the Indigenous people is sustained by developing cultural knowledge in maintaining the land. The interdependence between Indigenous people and the land is based on mutual respect. It is because of this close connection between the Indigenous people and the land, Indigenous people acknowledge that when the land is disrespected, damaged, or destroyed, the wellbeing of Indigenous people is also affected. Many Indigenous people maintain a deep connection with *country* (land) to sustain every aspect—spiritually, physically, socially, and culturally—of their lives. Furthermore, framing the land as “a second skin” is central to a lot of Indigenous art.

land has existed.

Here, cultural conduit Helen uses art to express tacit understandings of the land that have existed for millennia. Cultural conduits shape consumers' understanding of Indigenous cultures and are shaped themselves. As I explore next, the cultural conduits' sensitivity to culture meanings increases with the quality of their relationships to Indigenous artists and their communities.

Focal Relationships and Influence: Artists and Communities

The cultural conduits focus on building and maintaining relationships with artists and their communities that are based on community care, engagement, and development. For the cultural conduits, they collaborate closely with the Indigenous artists and communities as collectives. This community-centred approach influences and shapes their practices as art intermediaries in the market. Overall, the cultural conduits invest time and effort in contributing to the wellbeing of the artists and their communities so the artists can “tell the story that they want to tell” (Helen, interview).

For example, Josh has invested much time and energy in fostering close relationships with the Indigenous communities with whom he works. At one of the gallery openings I attended as part of my field work, Josh identified himself as a *close friend* of the Indigenous artist whose artworks were being sold at the gallery. During his opening talk, he shared stories about how the artist created the artworks based on an aerial view of the land where the artist lives. As cultural conduit, Josh uses these personal stories about the artist and the artist's relationship with the land to engage consumers and art enthusiasts. As a cultural conduit, Josh's dedication to improving the wellbeing of the Indigenous communities that he works with is also reflected in his fund-raising initiatives. For example, he completed a 27-day trek from Alice Springs in the Northern Territory to a remote community in Western

Australia to raise over AUD \$100,000 for maintaining a mobile dialysis facility for the remote Indigenous communities with which he works. As part of funds raising initiative, Josh used this platform to share stories and first-hand experiences about the lives in communities. As a cultural conduit, Josh is deeply committed to the communities creating not only financial benefits but also being concerned with the developments and wellbeing of the community.

Barry also works at an institution that has nurtured close relationships with artists and their communities. He co-curated an exhibition with an art teacher who works with Indigenous children to raise funds for a scholarship that supports Indigenous students who study in urban schools. An additional purpose of the exhibition was to educate people about the importance of cultures to the wellbeing of Indigenous people inter-generationally. Similarly, Keith, a director of an Indigenous art gallery, works in close consultation with Indigenous communities to deliver cultural programs that help promote cultural exchanges between Indigenous artists and non-Indigenous people. These programs include hosting a residency program for non-Indigenous artists to share artistic knowledge with communities in remote areas. These joint initiatives between cultural conduits and Indigenous communities are evidences that, these art intermediaries' interest encompasses not only the artist and their work but the flourishing of the Indigenous communities. Moreover, many of these programs highlight and foster Indigenous art and culture as dynamic and vibrant.

Fostering long-term relationships with artists and their communities is central to the practices of the cultural conduit intermediaries in this study—Helen, Barry, Keith, Josh and Nicole—who are intimately involved with Indigenous communities in different ways. These relationships have been fostered by the cultural conduits over an extended period. Cultural conduits cherish their relationships with artists and their communities. Importantly, cultural conduits' connections with the artists and communities are important resources allowing

them to offer insights into the community that are valued by consumers and collectors in making informed buying decisions.

Cultural Conduit as an Equal Collaborator

Cultural conduits are reflexive of their positionality when working with artists and their communities, to maintain equality as collaborators in the Indigenous art market. They are sensitive that they do not perpetuate stereotypical biases that assume art intermediaries' hold more power than the artists. For example, Keith challenges the title "art advisor" as an inaccurate description of the role of an art intermediary. Moreover, the title of art advisor suggests that the art intermediary is in a more powerful relationship to artist. As Keith explains in our interview, their advisory relationship is far narrower:

...we are not advising people on what colour they should use! We might be advising on where they might sell their artworks or, who they might sell it to, or what kind of commissions they might be involved in. But we are not saying, you should paint like this because you're just going to sell more paintings, you're going to make more money. That's not what we do.

In his most recent project that involved curating an international touring exhibition of bark paintings, he worked in a curatorial team that was led by the Indigenous artists. Thus, cultural conduits work with artists and communities as equal collaborators with the aim of promoting art for the cultural and financial benefits of the communities. Keith argues that the relationship between art intermediaries and communities should be collaborative. He explains:

The path forward is actually us working together... There's capacity for people who aren't from the Indigenous culture to be involved and be beneficial for that culture... You don't have to be of that language group to help Indigenous people or you don't have to be of that language group to be trusted by Indigenous people. We could all be advocates. You don't have to be Aboriginal to advocate for Aboriginal people. I think that's very important.

Other cultural conduits like Keith, including Helen, Barry, and Nicole, used terms such as “collaboration” and “cross-cultural work” to describe their relationships with the artists and their communities that share power.

Cultural conduits form deep and long-term relationships grounded in mutual understanding and equality. For example, as art curators at galleries and museums, Helen, Barry, Keith, and Nicole curate in close collaborations with Indigenous artists, focusing on sharing stories from the communities. In an essay that Helen had written for an exhibition she curated, she reflected on her role as an art curator by explaining:

In this exhibition, I aim to convey the pervasive and undeniable strength, courage and resilience of Australia’s First People by focusing on our everyday lives and asking the question: what sustains us?

The more we [Helen and the artist] talked, the more ideas flowed; as their work evolved, my ideas for the show became richer and more nuanced. This is the joy of curating in collaboration with Aboriginal artists – sharing experiences, insights and findings commonalities.

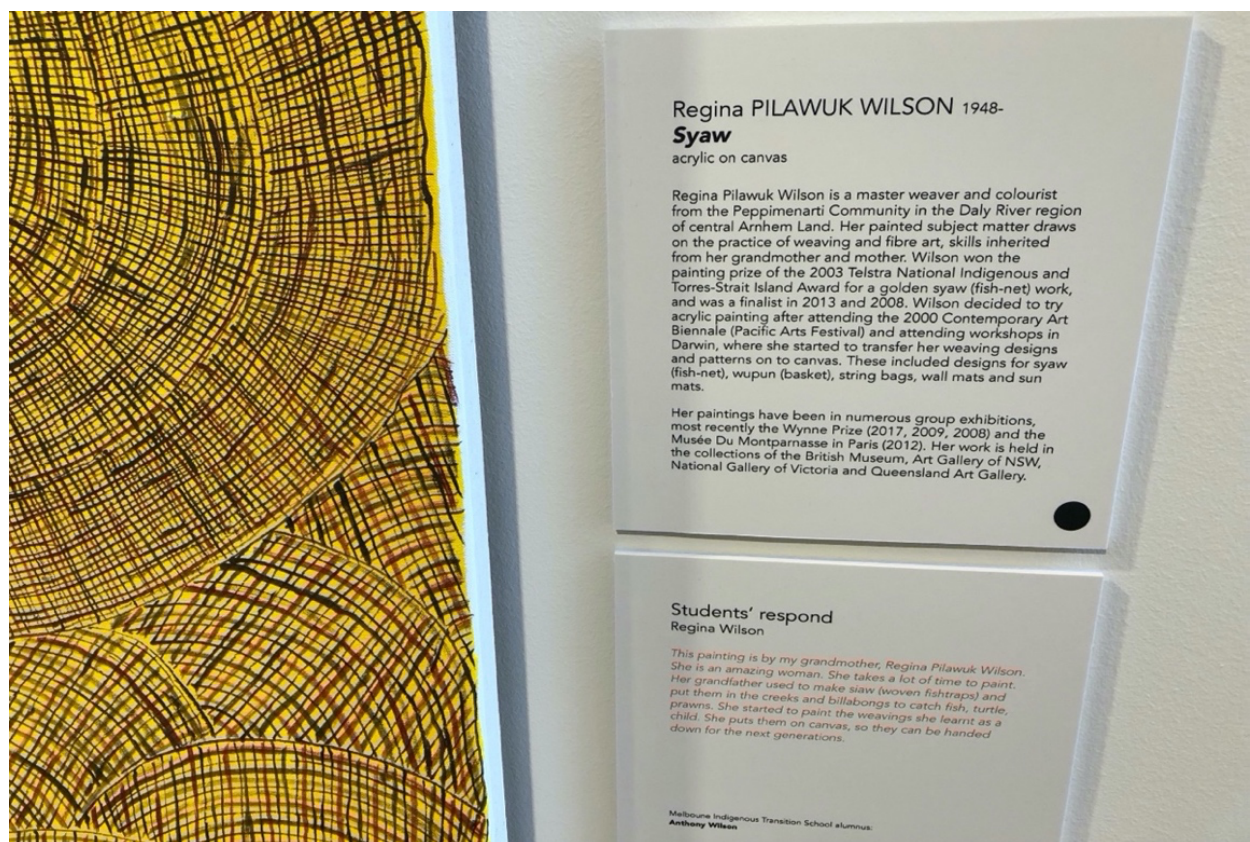
Cultural conduits like Helen respect and privilege Indigenous perspectives. Helen was adamant about keeping the communication channel always open between her and the artists because the artist’s ideas enrich her understanding and improve the exhibition. The artists shape the decolonisation process of self-determination (Veracini 2007b) and reconnect to land (Maddison 2019; Veracini 2007b) while the cultural conduits honour and channel this understanding to advance a shared agenda for decolonisation.

Like Helen, Barry, Keith, and Nicole also spend months building relationships and consulting with the communities When curating artworks for exhibitions. These cultural conduits are open to learning and listening to the voices of artists; their agenda is to foreground the artists’ agendas and their cultural stories. Importantly, they continue to acknowledge and respect Indigenous relations to the land (Tuck and Yang 2012). They maintain close relationships with the artists and communities as equal collaborators who inform and shape the production and promotion of art.

Important Practices for the Artists and Communities

Cultural conduits work to collaborate with Indigenous artists and their communities by sharing power and releasing control (see Figure 6.1). Barry, as an art curator, provides an example of sharing power with the communities in the art exhibition that raised funds that support Indigenous students studying at a transition school². Firstly, Barry formed a “steering committee” for guiding decisions about the exhibit that had Indigenous representations from the artists’ community. This steering committee consisted of a group with Indigenous curators as the majority. For all the artworks on display, they provided a description of the artist, her techniques, and awards, but they also included the perspective of the artists’ grandchildren (see Figure 6.1, grandchildren’s perspectives labelled in orange).

Figure 6.1. *Photograph of the Labels taken at the Exhibition (Field Notes).*



² Transition school provides a program for Indigenous students from remote Indigenous communities to help them with the transition to attending high schools in urban areas, such as Melbourne.

As a result, it became an exhibition that spanned generations of the Elders and the youths, which was an interest that was important for the Indigenous members of the steering committee. For example, artist Regina Wilson had her granddaughter, who is a student at the transition school, telling her stories about the artwork:

This painting is by my grandmother, Regina Pilawuk Wilson. She is an amazing woman. She takes a lot of time to paint. Her grandfather used to make siaw (woven fishtraps) and put them in the creeks and billabongs to catch fish, turtle, prawns. She started to paint the weavings she learnt as a child. She puts them on canvas, so they can be handed down for the next generations.

When Barry forms a steering committee, his voice becomes just one voice of many and so the exhibition evolves toward greater inclusivity with more members of the communities telling their cultural stories. Barry emphasises that “this wasn’t going to a non-Indigenous cohort that made decisions on behalf of Indigenous people in Australia.” As a result, the exhibition was able to communicate the cultural significance of art for the larger community.

As a cultural conduit, Barry uses a range of techniques to rebalance power, such as using steering committees with Indigenous representation, providing cultural stories, and sharing the communities’ pride of ownership. In our interview, Barry further explains how the curator-community balance of power is shifting:

...at a lot of levels, we have really shifted the balance curatorially, that we were removed from the picture or we were *lessened* from the picture that the Indigenous voice was put at the front and centre of the room. And that was very important for us, but also to really showcasing the pride and ownership of the communities in the exhibition. That their voices are on display and their stories and their cultures are on display. And again, it was just part of us stepping back and facilitating the space where they could come to the fore.

Instead of the art intermediaries wielding their expertise in controlling the exhibit or in “labelling the artworks,” the cultural conduits work collaboratively with the artists and the communities, ensuring that it is the artists and communities who are being represented at the forefront of the exhibit. In chapter 7, I explore how the art connoisseurs take central stage as they orchestrate the presentations of artworks to the consumers and only include the artists at

the end of a process in which they take charge. Cultural conduits “step back” and are in the background at every step of process as they try to foreground the artist and community.

To maintain a power-balanced relationship between the art intermediaries and artists, cultural conduits also release control to maintain power-sharing relationships with artists and communities. Cultural conduits ensure that the Indigenous people decide how the art is produced, promoted, exhibited, and sold. This is evident in the practices that Nicole uses when she curates Indigenous art exhibitions. For Nicole, it is very important for her to work closely with an Indigenous curator, recognising that many complexities exist with protocols, language, and different cultural understandings. The relationship upon which these exhibits is based is a long-term and trusting one in which they have been colleagues and friends since the early 1990s. When they have projects that involve publishing a book, producing a film, or curating an exhibition together, they communicate daily. She sees their relationship as “thinking partners” and working together with him is “a form of cultural reconciliation” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures.

One of the significant examples is their work together in curating an art exhibition in which they commissioned the Tjanpi Desert Weavers. The Tjanpi Desert Weavers is a dynamic social enterprise of weavers who are composed of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, and Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council (NPYWC) (see Figure 6.2). NPYWC was formed in response to the land rights struggles of the 1970s when women realised that they had little political voice or visibility (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women Council, 2020). Despite the government policies that displaced many Indigenous communities from their homelands and disrupted their cultural practices in the 1950s and 1960s, these women weavers continued to tell stories about their cultures and lands through their art practices. As Martineau and Ritskes (2014, I) argue, “[a]gainst colonial erasure, Indigenous art marks the space of a returned and enduring presence.” Maintaining their art practices, these artists have

kept their cultures strong while also generating income and employment for women so they can provide for their families and community on ancestral land. In an article published in *The Canberra Times*, Indigenous curator at the National Gallery of Australia, Warumungu/Luritja woman, Kelli Cole (2020) described the weavers' art practices and their connection to land:

As the sun sets and the heat abates, the Tjanpi Desert Weavers are still working, the campground alive with laughter.

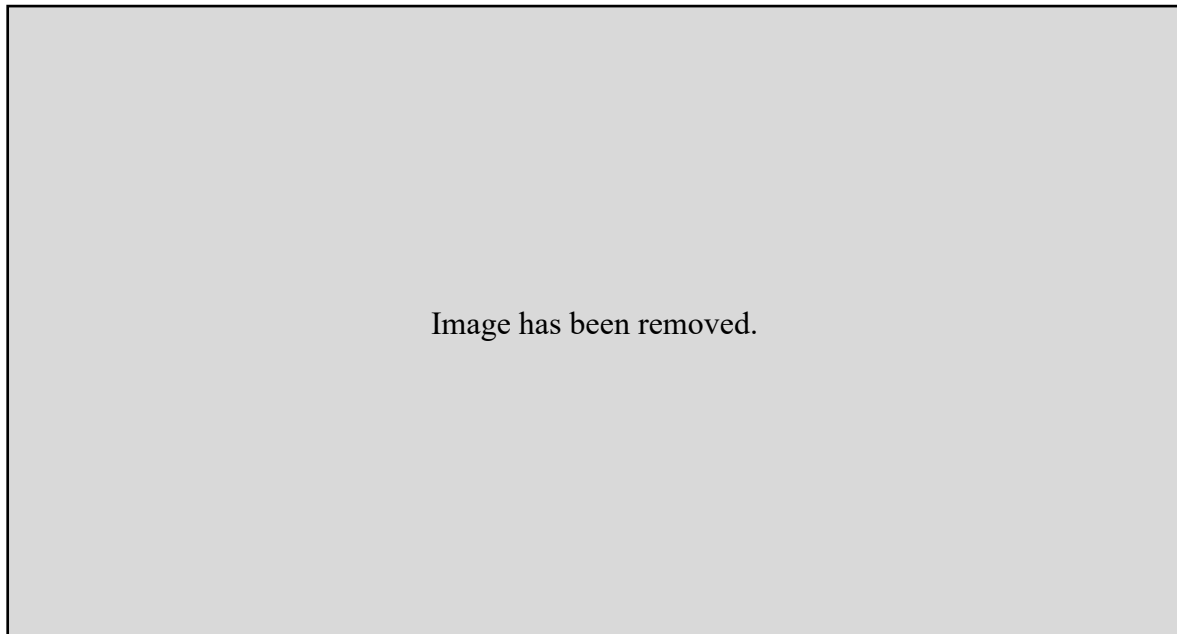
Being on Country gives the woman the energy to continue the flow of weaving, replaced by *inma* (cultural song and dance) once night falls. Having spent numerous weeks working side by side collecting, gathering and hunting, the women draw on their experience and cultural knowledge as they work on the large *Kungkarangkalpa* (Seven Sisters) [art] installation.

I watch as their hands move without much thought, as if they retain the muscle memory embedded in the past.

These artists continue to stay connected to country because this relationship is vital to their wellbeing and fuels their art practices that are centred on respecting and caring for the land.

In honouring the spirit and essence of this coalition of female weavers, Nicole respected their creative processes as she chose to “expect the unexpected” and “leave all [her] preconceptions aside and listen.” In the photos (see Figure 6.2), it shows the art-making process that took place in the bush near Wingellina in Western Australia. The artists shared their materials, including native grasses and emu feathers, to weave sculptures of Australian animal species that are in danger of extinction. These pictures show that the weavers continue to make art in the way they have traditionally done it, even as their weaving creates a new form of social organisation based on greater female empowerment. By showcasing these stories of the artists, the exhibition catalogue communicates to consumers the resilience and strength that Indigenous people possess as they continue to create art on country. The artists are presented as a strong collective that takes pride in their cultures and connections to land.

Figure 6.2. *Tjanpi Desert Weavers* (Exhibition Catalogue 2014).



In our interview, Nicole explains how, as curators, they release their control by trusting the expertise and respecting the cultural processes of the artists and their connections to country:

When we did this commission with the Tjanpi weavers, we funded for them to go and do a camp because that's how they could make their weavings. We didn't know what they would make. But because the community often works collectively so when we want it to work with the weavers, **we couldn't say which one whom we wanted to work with. They decide who they would send on the camp and they give different groups opportunities.**

So when the bus and the plane picked them up, we didn't know who was going to go. We just have faith and expect the unexpected. The results were outstanding and then the work went to receive International recognition at the Venice Biennale. We could never have anticipated that!

The photos (figure 6.2) demonstrate the way the artists create together as a collective of women. Significantly, these women work together on country in which they continue to maintain their connections to the land and their livelihood. They are preserving their cultures and practices as they are making art pieces for a museum collection. Significantly, the artists and the Indigenous women decided who they want to be represented and who had opportunities to create the artworks for the exhibition. Cultural conduits respect and honour

the artists' connections to country without interjecting with their own agendas and perspectives.

The cultural conduits are trusted collaborators who in turn trust the artists. Cultural conduits share power and surrender control by privileging stories about the Indigenous ways of life, Indigenous people's deep connections to country, and cultural practices. They do this willingly and openly within the relationship of trust and respect which they have nurtured over an extended period of time. They do not impose pre-conceived notions of how art should be made or what is considered "good" art. Thus, Indigenous artists and communities exercise their autonomy in maintaining cultural practices and stories in the creation of artworks for the market.

Important Practices for the Consumers

Cultural conduits also play a significant role in providing end consumers with a deeper understanding of the art, the communities, and the culture. This understanding is the basis upon which they advise the consumer on the sources and authenticity of the artworks. This understanding is borne out of their close relationships with the artists and communities, which allows them to share the stories so that consumers can make better decisions in buying Indigenous artworks. For example, Josh advises potential collectors to buy from sources that honour the Indigenous people and their cultural practices. Upon reflecting on his practices with the consumers, he said, "I tell people to be careful where you buy from. When you go to a place and you see the Aboriginal people really, really happy working there with their families and they're getting paid well, then buy the work from there and enjoy it."

Due to the collaborative relationships that cultural conduits have with the artists and communities, cultural conduits strive to provide consumers with first-hand experiences and insights of the communities. These cultural conduits relay and privilege stories about the

lives of Indigenous people and their communities over individual artist's accolades. For example, when I attended an exhibition opening for artworks created by a famous Indigenous artist, Josh was invited to share his experience of living in the communities with the artist. He recounted the practices of the artists in creating the artworks and also offered his insights on his relationship with the artist. Similarly, when Helen advises consumers, she shares stories about the communities and the histories of the local artistic movements. Cultural conduits situate arts and artists in communities and on country because these connections are sacred to the Indigenous people and fuel their art practices. From the perspective of the cultural conduit, omitting these stories of communities would be akin to dispossessing Indigenous people from their country and distorting Indigenous cultures. Therefore, while advising the consumers on the authenticity of the artworks, the cultural conduits ensure that the consumers are also aware of the communities and country where the artworks were created.

Therefore, cultural conduits are valuable sources of information about what is going on in the communities. Especially due to the widely reported news of unethical dealings of art intermediaries (Davidson and Allam 2019), consumers are sometimes confused and forgo buying art, or even accidentally buy "fake art." Upon reflecting on this situation, Keith says, "the more we highlight the negative things about carpetbaggers and fake art, are we actually scaring the consumers away? Are they just standing back going, 'I don't know what I'm allowed buy! Because is it fake?'" Keith has decades of experience working with communities and is a frequent speaker at galleries openings. He gets regularly approached by potential consumers and art collectors seeking advice as to whether they should buy certain artworks. In response, he would warn them, "Absolutely not! Absolutely not!" He elaborates:

There are things that get into major collections around the world, around the country, that are of dubious provenance. That worries people! If I am trying to navigate the world that I know nothing about and all I keep seeing is, *Fake! Fake! Fake! Fake! Fake! Fake!* I mean, are we actually scaring the consumers away? I get approached and challenged by all the time. From what I gathered, it comes down to trust.

Cultural conduits, such as Keith, leverage their cultural relationships and knowledge of the cultural stories in Indigenous communities to advise consumers on *who* to buy from and *what* to buy. Cultural conduits steer consumers to authentic art produced ethically. They place the consumers' focus on whether buying the artworks would harm or support the maintenance of cultures among Indigenous artists and communities. This is important because Keith further explains in our interview that:

...the art of painting for the Indigenous people is not just the commercial thing, even though it would be sold. But it's also an act of cultural maintenance. If people didn't paint those paintings, they will lose the stories. So there's some really important factors that come into play that, have to happen so that people would continue in producing work for cultural reasons.

Essentially, the role of cultural conduits is to inspire the consumers to support economically the cultural maintenance of the artists and communities. Cultural conduits seek to balance commercial and cultural tensions by honouring cultural expressions and encouraging ethical purchases. They do this by being active in educating interested consumers by giving talks at exhibitions openings and reminding the public about the importance of buying art from trusted and reputable sources. For cultural conduits, the value of the art lies in honouring the cultural expressions of the artists and the communities. By selling the art and introducing the artworks to consumers, the promotion of Indigenous art educates consumers and the general public about the significance of Indigenous cultures, communities, and their connections to lands. Similar to the role of art curators and art critics explained by Rodner and Thomson (2013), the cultural conduits are also less financially oriented. Overall, cultural conduits reconcile the tension between commercial and cultural by understanding and sharing stories about artists' communities on the basis that these stories would encourage the consumers to buy Indigenous art from the right places that focus on fostering power-balanced, caring and respectful relationships with the communities.

Chapter 7: Art Intermediaries as Art Connoisseurs

Art connoisseurs are the “experts” in the Indigenous art market. During my field work, the art connoisseurs were evident. They play pivotal roles identifying and legitimising Indigenous art as valuable cultural resources within the larger society. They advise consumers and collectors on what is “good art” by advocating for specific aesthetics as worthy for investing and collecting. They are trusted by collectors because of their close relationships with esteemed Indigenous artists and their access to gatekeepers who control access to art collections. Consistent with Rodner and Thomson (2013), these art connoisseurs are also more commercially driven, as they are usually the owners of art galleries, while most started as art collectors and have experience in secondary and international markets. In sum, art connoisseurs are influential because they have a long history within the market, a wide network of relationships with artists, experts, and collectors, and extensive knowledge of the Indigenous art world.

Given their position of influence within the market, both Indigenous artists and art collectors seek out art connoisseurs for access into the Indigenous market. Drawing upon their expertise of Indigenous art and extensive social networks, they exercise significant influence in selecting which artists to represent and art to buy. The art connoisseurs closely resemble the role of art dealers identified within the arts marketing literature as the “tastemakers” (Chong, 2010) or gate keepers (Becker 1982; Schroeder 2006) who turn art into a commercial entity (Meyer and Even 1998). However, from the perspective of post-colonial theory, the power dynamics between art connoisseurs and Indigenous artists are important as they may also impede or facilitate the dissemination of Indigenous cultures. While the art connoisseurs endorse the artists and the artworks as identified by Rodner and Thomson (2013), their positionality in the art market, however, is a delicate balancing act. That is, the art connoisseurs oscillate between standing in the spotlight as active marketers of

the artists and then retreating backstage so Indigenous artists can take centre stage. In addition, although the art connoisseurs in the study are mainly art dealers and gallerists, they also simultaneously take on the traditional role of art curators and art critics' whose credibility is dependent upon their reputation and expertise, which then influence the buying decisions and tastes of the consumers (Rodner and Thomson 2013).

In the next sections, I explore the meaning of art from the perspective of these art connoisseurs. I also explain the focal relationships for these art connoisseurs as well as the different practices they use in dealing with the artists and the art collectors and enthusiasts.

Table 7.1. *Informants Information of Art Connoisseurs.*

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Indigeneity	Current Position and Interview Locale	Past Experiences	Industry Tenure	Number of Interviews
Art Connoisseur							
1	Luke	Male	Non-Indigenous	Gallery owner, on site	Art collector	13	1
2	Daniel	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art dealer and business owner, on site	Art collector, artist, and auction market	20	2
3	Amy	Female	Non-Indigenous	Gallery owner, on site	Art collector, secondary auction market, Australian and International art galleries	31+	1
4	Harry	Male	Non-Indigenous	Art curator, online	Australian and International art galleries	10	1

The Meaning of Art as Culturally Legitimised by Experts

Art connoisseurs play a prominent role in legitimising Indigenous artworks as valuable cultural resources within the larger market. From the perspective of art connoisseurs, the value of Indigenous art extends beyond its economic returns. Instead, connoisseurs use their wealth of knowledge to enhance and extend the cultural value of Indigenous art. For example, Harry explained that,

If you just want to hang things on the walls because they're pretty, that is not going to have a very long future. And the reason that Aboriginal art has done so well in Australia is that I think is that there has been a small but very dedicated group of scholars and curators, scholars and curators ranging from Fred Myers [Anthropologists and published authors], Hetti Perkins [Indigenous art curator with 30 years of experience], and Brenda Croft [Associate Professor and Indigenous art curator], and Ian Mclean [Professor in Indigenous art history] and Terry Smith [art curator, Professor of art history] who have managed to create this really sophisticated acknowledgement of the depth and complexity of what's going on in aboriginal art.

So in the short term, collectors buying the work, because I think it's pretty, and it has the affinities to modernist abstraction. That's great in terms of pushing the prices up, pushing the international growth up, but it'll only be short lived if that's not backed up with really, really solid intellectual work from curators, artists, historians.

The various scholars mentioned by Harry collectively form a network of Indigenous art experts who collaborate with one another to create a body of knowledge about the art of Indigenous people, which is the “solid intellectual work” that enhances the long-term value of Indigenous art. The art connoisseurs like Harry, are influential agents who have claimed authority and power in the evaluation of art within the market. Based on their experience and influence, they have control over what is considered “good art” that is worth acknowledging and collecting.

As art connoisseurs, they leverage their experience in the Indigenous art world and their educational training in art history to develop a “sophisticated acknowledgement,” so others will appreciate and buy Indigenous art. This approach is unlike cultural conduits who release much of their control over the curation of art to the artists and their communities—such as the Tjanpi Desert Weavers who decide which art is displayed and which artists are

showcased. Instead, art connoisseurs take a central role in selecting the art and artists to be propelled into the market and doing the intellectual labour to legitimate the chosen art. For example, Harry is an art historian who also works as a gallery manager and art curator at an international museum outside of Australia that has collected more than 1900 artworks. He has a doctorate in art history and has edited books on Indigenous art and culture. His writings have also appeared in art journals and magazines including *Artlink*, *Art Guide Australia*, *The Journal of Curatorial Studies*, and *Art Monthly Australia*. During my field work, I attended his presentation at a conference about the contemporary art industry, as well as his other public talks at the opening of galleries. During his talks, he took centre stage showcasing his skills in analysing artworks and deep understanding of the histories of various Indigenous artistic movements. He also contributed essays in a gallery catalogue published by another art connoisseurs, Daniel, who is also one of the informants in this study.

Daniel has been active in creating and publishing knowledge on the Indigenous art market in his personal blog and print catalogues. Daniel was professionally trained as an artist and later started collecting Indigenous artworks. Daniel turned to selling his collection when he ran out of storage space. We conducted our interviews at his office where his walls are adorned with Indigenous artworks that he has collected for years. In an essay he wrote for an exhibition catalogue, Daniel explains,

Each year I will hold three exhibitions of the most exceptional works available. The exhibitions will be accompanied by a printed catalogue with supporting content that will educate new audiences and continue to support the maturing market.

Printed catalogues [of the Indigenous artworks] become important historical resources that endure well beyond my short time in this larger picture. Bringing you only the finest artworks and presenting them in this format provides a deeper level of understanding that is crucial to the success of the market long term.

Daniel exerts his influence and control over categorising which Indigenous artworks are “the finest artworks” and, by default, which are not. In other words, the meanings and cultural and financial value of Indigenous art is constructed through his intellectual work before they were

presented to the consumers in galleries. Therefore, for both Daniel and Harry, the value of Indigenous art is partially validated by the activities of art connoisseurs who are the creators of enduring catalogues of work that they deem as “the most exceptional.” Beyond its material form, selected Indigenous art is privileged, legitimised, and considered worthy of acquisition by these group of art connoisseurs.

Recall in chapter 2 that when Indigenous artforms were taken out of the communities and placed in galleries or museums, the meaning of the work may be altered or lost. Art connoisseurs, like Harry and Daniel, play a central role in re-constructing the meanings of art within the commercial spaces of galleries. In this process, they exert their power in legitimatising select Indigenous art as valuable resources. As the perceived experts of Indigenous art, they also construct the knowledge, in the form of essays, articles, and catalogues, for these artworks. Of course, these experts work with artists within a community of experts, and the co-construction of meaning is explored next. Within the context of the Indigenous art markets, these art connoisseurs wield their power skilfully to maintain their position of influence and expertise—often somewhat covertly.

Focal Relationships and Influence: Community of Experts, Artists, and Art Collectors

Among the art connoisseurs, the focal relationships are the community of experts, individual Indigenous artists, and art collectors who are their main target consumers. Art connoisseurs have influence and power, in part, through their associations with other art connoisseurs. Within the close-knit communities of Indigenous art collectors, gallerists, and curators in Australia, only very few well-known and respected art intermediaries exist. Their status and reputation give them “taste credentials” and are validated by the art machine, which grant them the authority to qualify a work as *art* as well as to shape the taste of the consumers (Rodner and Thomson 2013, 62). Art connoisseurs were usually present at

exhibition openings, talks, and lectures that I attended during field work. They were also frequently invited to participate at panel discussions by private and public institutions. Through my field work, I recognised them because their presence at gallery openings was publicised and they were highlighted as important speakers in the event newsletters. Their names would often be recommended in my informal conversations with attendees at gallery openings, especially after I introduced myself as a student researcher of Indigenous art markets. Having established rapport with some of these art connoisseurs at events, they then encouraged me to leverage their connections within the communities to reach out to other experts for interviews. These art connoisseurs support, perpetuate, and legitimise one another's positions as knowledgeable experts of Indigenous art.

But the art connoisseurs also privilege the Indigenous artists' who they represent and present within their gallery spaces. They draw on their experience, training, and understanding of the art market to decide which artists to represent. At the same time, they also exercise their power by veiling their position of influence within the market in order to maintain legitimacy. This is reflected in Harry's interview that highlights the key Indigenous artists who have been successful within the market:

People often like to talk about the markets driving Indigenous art and driving what Indigenous artists do. And I think that is generally incorrect. I think it shows a relative ignorance of what goes on, on the ground. I think that when the market was very, very hot, it definitely was directing, what artists did in some respect. However, the great artists, the real breakthrough artists have always produced works that there was no market for prior to them.

You know, there wasn't any market for massive abstract stuff before Emily [Kame Kngwarreye]³. There wasn't any market for the kinds of wild bark paintings during 2007, 2008. So, the people like to think that the market drives it that actually, more often than not, **I mean what's been extraordinary with Aboriginal art is that it is the artists who are driving it and, and we should never forget that.**

³ Emily Kame Kngwarreye was an Australian Indigenous artist from the Utopia community in the Northern Territory. She is one of the most prominent and successful artists in the history of contemporary Indigenous Australian art. In 2017, her painting has been sold for AUD \$2.1m at an auction in Sydney which it was the second-highest price paid for an Indigenous artwork after Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's "Warlugulong," which sold for AUD \$2.4m in 2007 (Smiler 2017).

Harry was quick to challenge the common and naive assumption that artists merely produce artworks to meet the current tastes and demands of the consumers. Instead, from his perspective as an art connoisseur within the Indigenous art world, he calls for the public's attention to focus on the artists who are the trailblazers who are breaking the traditional boundaries and expectations. Importantly, he does not highlight his powerful role as an expert who also co-constructs the meaning of art nor does he note his role as someone who selects the next promising artist to promote.

According to Rodner and Thomson (2013), traditionally, the process of turning the artist's vision into a commercial success needs further symbolic validation from less financially oriented gatekeepers within the art machine, such as art critics. In the context of the Australian Indigenous art markets, the art connoisseurs have to play the dual role of art dealers/galleries who are profit-making enterprises and art curators/critics who are less financially oriented (Rodner and Thomson 2013). Unlike the art curators and critics who are "unburdened by the commercial commitments of a gallery" (Thompson 2008, 229), I have found that the art connoisseurs in Australian Indigenous art markets need to balance both roles. As a result, to fulfil their role as experts who validate the symbolic or cultural value of the artworks, they also need to hide part of their role as commercial art intermediaries who co-construct the meanings and value of the art for the markets.

Art connoisseurs also prioritise their relationships with consumers who are collectors and enthusiasts. The art connoisseurs work with select clientele who seek their guidance in collecting valuable Indigenous artworks. For example, in an essay published online, Daniel describes his approach and experience of curating an Indigenous art exhibition for collectors:

My client and I had a clear goal in putting together an exhibition in New York exhibition.

We brought together a strong, cohesive group of desert artworks from his collection, including major works by Makinti, George Tjungurrayi, Warlimpirrnga and Bill Whiskey, hung them in this state of the art viewing facility, and invited a select group

of his influential art world contacts to enjoy them in a relaxed, intimate, and non-commercial setting.

We wanted to blow their minds. And it worked... Watching seasoned collectors and leading art world authorities experience Indigenous art up close for the first time, completely out of their comfort zone, and seeing their thirst to know more about the artists, the work, and their culture – has strengthened my resolve to make some changes in the way I do things.

Daniel handpicked and curated the key artworks and presented these to an elite group of collectors, exposing them to artworks that were avant-garde and “out of their comfort zone.” Clearly, Daniel curates a unique experience in this exhibition through the artists selected, the choice of venues, the ambiance created, and the collectors invited. This was an event that was socially constructed to be exclusive.

Art connoisseurs are selective in their association with elite Indigenous artists to maintain their reputation and garner respect among the consumers within the market. Amy receives praise, for example, on the Facebook page of her gallery, for her curations of well-known artists.

I am awed by the display of Omie tribes of Asafa, Northern Province in PNG. My very own people’s artwork has reached Melbourne the place where I got my VCE. Great work, Amy. It will be good to keep in touch. (December 18, 2015)

What a magnificent gallery holding the culture of those before us and today sharing with us their heritage and beautiful Art. Bravo Amy. (June 19, 2014)

Using their knowledge and expertise of the market, art connoisseurs act as an important central node that connects art collectors to the *best artists*, as appreciated and determined by them. The art connoisseurs maintain their close association with the best artists as talented individuals; they are not actively involved in the Indigenous communities other than drawing on the cultural and historical knowledge necessary to interpret and promote the art. In contrast to the cultural conduits who proactively care for the wellbeing of communities, these art connoisseurs focus on artists’ individual development and success. These art connoisseurs are interested in the individual artist who is the “next best” in producing the most exceptional

work. Thus, they play a role as a power gatekeeper that promotes the artists' artistic merits to a selective community of art experts, art enthusiasts and art collectors.

The Art Connoisseur as a Powerful Gatekeeper

Art connoisseurs are well known and have significant reputations. They are approached by Indigenous artists because they are gatekeepers who can use their expertise to promote artists and their work. But the art connoisseurs are selective in the artists that they represent. They want to represent artists who are innovative and have strong artistic visions. Amy is clear that her role is not to guide the artists on how to create artworks but to promote their vision:

I was talking to an artist the other day here at the opening and she was saying how she... has got a whole lots of ideas and she doesn't know what to do with her work and she needs to work it out and all the rest of it. She would like to be represented but I said, "You can't be represented because you're not even sure what you're doing. I'm not here to tell you what you should be doing."

[That being said,] there are so many exciting arts out there and I would be happily representing them too. Like Hillary (pseudonym) who is just so professional! They have just been so switched on to exactly what they want to do. Exactly clear about their pathways. And, they are delightful to deal with and their ideas are really strong.

The art connoisseurs all have reputations and they do not have to select fledgling artists who have not solidified their aesthetics nor developed their artistic voice. They work with more experienced artists who are developed in their artistic approach, meaning, and style.

These art connoisseurs are skilful in wielding their power and influence within the market while still giving space for the voices of the Indigenous artists they choose to represent. For example, it is common practice for art connoisseurs to carefully curate an exhibition and provide an opportunity for the Indigenous artists to present their art, share their stories, and meet collectors. The art market is highly relational, and the art connoisseurs foreground the artists in these public events as the most important relationship in their exhibitions. Luke has set up an art studio in his gallery so artists from remote areas can travel

to work and produce art as they meet with potential buyers. Art connoisseurs work to close the distance between the artists and collectors by trying to create a connection. In turn, this legitimises their positionality and reputation for being able to represent remote Indigenous artists as they present their work in urban hubs. Similarly, Harry argues that when artists talk about their art, it “brings the work to life and it lets people add this human dimension to it, because it's very easy to kind of read an essay, but to actually have a person there telling you what this art is about and it is really important.”

Although art connoisseurs capitalise on their expertise when endorsing the artists and fostering relationships between artists and collectors, artists are also actively engaged. The artists also exercise their power when they explain the meaning of their work in presentations and conversations. During one of Harry's presentations at an Indigenous art conference, he set up a video call with the Indigenous artists who was unable to travel. When probed about this arrangement during our interview, Harry clarifies that,

... we had plans for the artist to come down, but he just was just in ill health. He couldn't, he couldn't fly. But we're trying to use things like technology to make these gaps smaller. The time differences were also really hard.

When we started that project, the artist said that he was only going to do it if the Yolngu were the bosses. And that was really, that was really important to us, that the story of bark painting in Yirrkala, that's not my story to tell. That story belongs to the Yolngu. And, having the artist tells it is a much, it's going to be a much richer and much more important story when he tells it.

This quote highlights the subtle power dynamics between the artists and art connoisseurs.

The art connoisseurs are intentional about exercising their power to place the artists at the forefront, at exhibitions, in art studios, or in video calls, especially because artists are the experts on their cultural stories. As Daniel explains that, “I don't think it's my job to talk for an artwork. I just became sort of a servant or a vehicle to the work. The moment I put myself before the artwork, that's a moment we failed.” This is a nimble balancing act in which connoisseurs slip into the background highlighting artists as the local cultural authority of his

or her work yet masking their roles as the art authority who selected artists to promote within the market.

Important Practices for the Artists

Art connoisseurs play an important role in creating venues and outlets to promote artists and to sell their artworks. Unlike the cultural conduit who prioritises the artists as part of an Indigenous community, the art connoisseurs focus on the individual artist and their success within the art market by drawing more on their expertise and network within the art world. Art connoisseurs' reputation depends on having a track record of representing successful artists and they are invested in the success of the artists with whom they work. Therefore, they actively work to expose their artists to local and international audiences and active art collectors. Art connoisseurs do so by organising exhibitions to showcase the artists' artworks to collectors and enthusiasts. As Daniel exclaims, "[t]he annual exhibitions are just purely showcase what we've done... so people can see [the artworks] physically and go, "Wow, that painting was sold for, \$120,000 dollars!" His most recent March 2020 exhibition was held at an art gallery in the trendy art district of New York City where art works were acquired by collectors from New York, Los Angeles, Europe, and Australia. The art connoisseurs work hard to create interest and intrigue among the collectors towards the work of their artists to maximise sales.

As an agent for the artists, art connoisseurs help their artists develop a portfolio of work and advance their careers. An important practice for the art connoisseurs is to share their network of followers and clients with the artists that they represent. By tapping into other art connoisseurs and networks of influence, the artists increase the exposure of their work out to the right target consumers. Art connoisseurs also host exhibition openings and events where the artists can meet potential buyers. I also observed that some of these

openings, the artists engaging with other Indigenous artists, which further expands their networks. For example, leveraging her expertise and existing connections to the art collectors, Amy regularly introduces these artists whom she represents, using newsletters and social media, to potential collectors. One of award-winning Indigenous artists represented by Amy's gallery is Hillary. Through Amy's efforts as her agent, artist Hillary's works have been acquired by private collectors as well as major institutions including Melbourne Museum, State Library of Australia, and Monash University Museum of Art. Hillary has won multiple awards and her works have been included in exhibition in various galleries in Australia and overseas.

Art connoisseurs promote the accolades and recognition received by the artists that they represent. For example, in one of the Instagram posts by Amy's gallery, she celebrated Hillary's selection as an artist-in-residence at a prestigious institution. The accompanying description to the post states: "The three-month residency will allow [Hillary] to explore her family connection to Italy through her practices." As part of her residency, Hillary will be delivering a series of artist talks in Italy and Melbourne. In a news article, the artist explained that, "[t]hese talks will allow me to connect with community and local audiences, and will be a platform for me to share my research, and the stories and histories that have informed my work and current practice." Amy expresses her power and influence by associating herself with Indigenous artists who are successful and promoting their successes.

Art connoisseurs also promote artists' vision by organising talks to showcase their ideas and stories to consumers. They have found that the artists' cultural stories are most effective in captivating audiences and making sales. But at the same time, these stories need to be told by the artists themselves. As Harry emphasises in our interview that, as art connoisseurs who represent the artists and their artworks, the priority is in "making sure that you put indigenous voices at the forefront of everything you do." He further added, the art

connoisseurs need to have the Indigenous artists “presenting the work in their words and shaping the discourse in their own way.” This is because “the artists could speak for themselves, and that doesn't matter whether it's Kent Morris or Regina Wilson... all of these artists, they are the best ambassadors to their own works”. At majority of artists’ talks I have attended, I observed that artists are often very open in sharing about their art practices, techniques, stories, and their connections to their Indigenous heritage that inspired the artworks. Might it be through social media platforms or public talks, the stage was set and orchestrated by the art connoisseurs so the artists can freely share their stories and inspirations.

Such practices raise the profile for the artists. More importantly, these practices also elevate the reputation of the art connoisseurs who represent them, further legitimising the art connoisseurs’ influence within the market. Therefore, within the relationship between the artists and the art connoisseurs, there is a graceful dance in assuming positions of power. The art connoisseurs skilfully manoeuvre between being at the central stage to promote the artist and shifting into the background when the artists are left to tell their stories. These artists like Hillary then tapped into the art connoisseurs’ extensive networks and influence to increase the exposure of their profile. Then, the artists further capitalised this as the platform tell powerful stories of self-determination, connections to one’s lands and cultures.

Important Practices for the Consumers

Art connoisseurs are like trusted and expert guides who help navigate the art world for collectors. Collectors turn to them for advice on what is the best artworks to invest and acquire. For example, Amy is an avid art collector and gallerist with 31 years of experience in the Indigenous art industry. In my field notes, I recorded my recollection of a conversation I had with two art collectors who attended the opening of an exhibition at Amy’s gallery:

The female of the two started asking if I'm a collector myself because she identified herself as an art collector and she sworn by Amy (gallery owner) as the person to buy from. She said that you would not go wrong buying from Amy because she has the eyes for the best art.

Consumers like these follow Amy's recommendations demonstrating her significant influence. Through her experience in collecting artworks and cultivating award-winning artists, she is an influencer of aesthetic tastes. Amy has developed a reputation for having "the eyes for the best art". Her clients like the collectors I met at her gallery, endorse Amy's expertise and tastes, expressing their trusts on Amy's recommendations.

Consumers rely on art connoisseurs' expertise to guide their preferences and choices. Recall that art connoisseurs create knowledge to inform and influence consumers on art market trends. Daniel writes a popular blog that he updates regularly, which is an important way that he connects to potential buyers. On the website of his Indigenous art business, he promises that, "I can help you build an exciting collection". During art functions, he is contacted by individuals who follow his blog to learn about the market. During our interview, Daniel shares that,

[People tell me] we just love your blog and I would love to see what's happening and what's going on [in the Indigenous art market]. And I was like, really? Um, so people were listening. And now if I miss one [blog update], I get people asking, where's is it? Where's the next one?

People like to know what's going on. I mean, how can you, give confidence to a market, if they don't know that this Joseph [referring to an artwork in the room] just sold for 120,000 dollars, you know? If we don't kind of publicise that, people just aren't going to know.

Art connoisseurs like Daniel use their insider knowledge to shape consumers' preferences and legitimise the value of the artworks.

Art connoisseurs use their expert power to influence and shape consumers' aesthetic tastes. Amy talked about "pushing" collectors to try new forms of Indigenous paintings and explore more unconventional art forms. In describing her experience in working with different kinds of consumers, Amy explained that, "sometimes, the buyers are very

prescriptive, and a lot of people initially are very strong on narrative.” Her clients would say to Amy, “I want to know the story” and “I want you to tell me what they all mean.” As I discussed in the last section, the art connoisseurs (like the cultural conduits) know that the cultural stories are potent tools for connecting their client with the artists. Ultimately, however, the art connoisseur wants the client to become more omnivorous of different artistic aesthetics, which is the territory in which the art expert holds sway and has power.

She further describes another group of buyers, in which, “sometimes they really throw themselves into the deep end and buy somethings that are very challenging, and you think, good on you! Most of the times, it’s kind of like a tap in the water and then they start going, “Oh, I need to push myself.” In both instances, Amy provides not only guidance but encouragement for collectors to explore different styles of Indigenous artworks, which of course expands the potential for a broader range of art products. At her gallery, she curates artworks from different regions of Australia that reflect diverse artistic styles. She also represents artists who use different mediums, including canvas paintings, bark paintings, watercolour paintings, sculptures, and photographs. Her focus is on highlighting the aesthetics and the artistic styles of different individual artists. This is further reflected in how the artworks are presented in her gallery. The artworks are hung against blank white walls without any descriptions of the communities and the stories associated with the artists or artworks. This is in significant contrast to cultural conduits like Barry, who ensured the gallery space has warm lighting to reflect the sense of warmth experienced in the community while he also included the voices of the artists and the communities.

Similarly, Harry explains that consumers tend to start acquiring artworks that are considered “safe” before they broaden their aesthetic range:

I think that what you see happening in general is that people begin collecting what I would consider fairly safe work. The work that looks most like Western abstraction.

That's what people will begin to collect. But I think most collectors as their eyes sharpen, as their tastes mature. I suppose as their knowledge of Aboriginal art increases, you do increasingly find people broadening out.

In our interview, he provided the example of an esteemed art collector whose earliest collections were comprised of Indigenous artists whose works are considered abstract and very similar to Western modern art. Subsequently, this collector expanded to collect more provocative work by artists like Nyapanyapa Yunupingu who is experimenting with non-traditional materials (i.e., white paint pen on acetate) or Lena Yarinkura who creates sculptures of animals using soft fibre and metal. This collector later expanded into bark painting, again with Harry's encouragement, which means that he is developing clients who are more omnivorous in their tastes and who may be interested in future artists selected by the art connoisseur.

Amy also describes how she strives to expand the horizons of the consumers who might have a narrow understanding of emerging Indigenous artists:

Then there are buyers who do the museums hunting for certain artists. You would go, "No no no, look at this!" Because they could be very a bit isolated from everything that's going on [now in the art world], and you really have to keep feeding them new things, new ideas, getting them to meet the artist, etc."

She encourages the collectors to explore artworks that are new and avant-garde. She exposes the collectors to diverse artworks by artists that she endorses. She also explains that some collectors are intimidated because of their lack of exposure to the diversity of Indigenous cultures. For these clients, "it's been an overwhelming journey for them to actually undo everything they were taught" (Harry, interview). Then, as these collectors move away from Indigenous stereotypes by following the writings published by art connoisseurs, they end up having "a better idea of what [kind of art they are] looking at, and [the consumers are] in better position to see the trends for [which artist is] going to be successful" (Harry, interview). These art connoisseurs are encouraging consumers to be more eclectic and open

to the range of styles, which interestingly make them potentially better clients as the art connoisseurs discover new artists on the cutting edge.

These consumers make buying decisions based on the guidance and nudging of the art connoisseurs. Given the complexity of the Indigenous art evaluations that requires one to become more knowledgeable about the Indigenous art and markets over an extended period of time, collectors rely on art connoisseurs to navigate this process. They rely on the art connoisseurs' expertise, but they too start to become more experienced and knowledgeable by attending artists' talks and reading relevant publications by art connoisseurs. Eventually, "their eyes sharpen, and their tastes mature" (Harry, interview), and some collectors develop more independent aesthetic preferences. But this maturing of aesthetic, in turn, makes the art connoisseurs' access to the larger market even more valuable.

Thus, art connoisseurs balance the cultural and commercial tension by using their aesthetic expertise to elevate Indigenous artists and artwork to justify financial investments. Moreover, they help develop and expand the tastes of collectors to broaden the diversity of styles and medium that can be commercially successful.

Chapter 8: Art Intermediaries as Change Agents

Art intermediaries who are *change agents* advocate for the transformative potential of Indigenous culture and art for all stakeholders. Martineu (2015, 5), an Indigenous scholar, argues that Indigenous art-making is inseparable from decolonial struggles; art-making for Indigenous people, is “a critical, decolonising political praxis when it provides us with new ways of visioning the world, reclaiming our presence, and creatively transforming reality.” Martineu and Ritses (2014) argue that Indigenous art operates by disrupting the status quo and giving rise to alternative understandings. Similarly, within the arts marketing literature, Patsiouras et al. (2018, 78) find that protest art “provides a form of criticism towards social injustice and conveys messages and statements designed to influence or cause positive change in society.” In the context of the Umbrella Movement, for example, through spatial aesthetics, audience engagement and arts-infused education events, art was used to express the protesters’ critique of the Chinese government, highlight injustice, and prompt audiences to embrace social change (Patsiouras et al. 2018).

All of the change agents in this study are also Indigenous people. Tapping into the transformative potential of art, these change agents challenge existing structures in the art market to change how Indigenous peoples engage with the marketplace and interact within society broadly. These art intermediaries work to circumvent the traditional settler colonising structures that were put in place to subjugate, repress, and assimilate Indigenous people into a position of passivity and inferiority (Martineau and Ritskes 2014). Instead, change agents operate from a position of power within the marketplace affirming and encouraging Indigenous resistance and resurgence (Martineau and Ritskes 2014). As change agent Malcolm describes: “the way we go about it is actually quite disruptive to the market.” In the next sections, I further describe the meaning of Indigenous art as political transformation and

then tease out practices that the change agents use with all potential stakeholders to advance transformations.

Table 8.1. *Informants Information of Change Agents.*

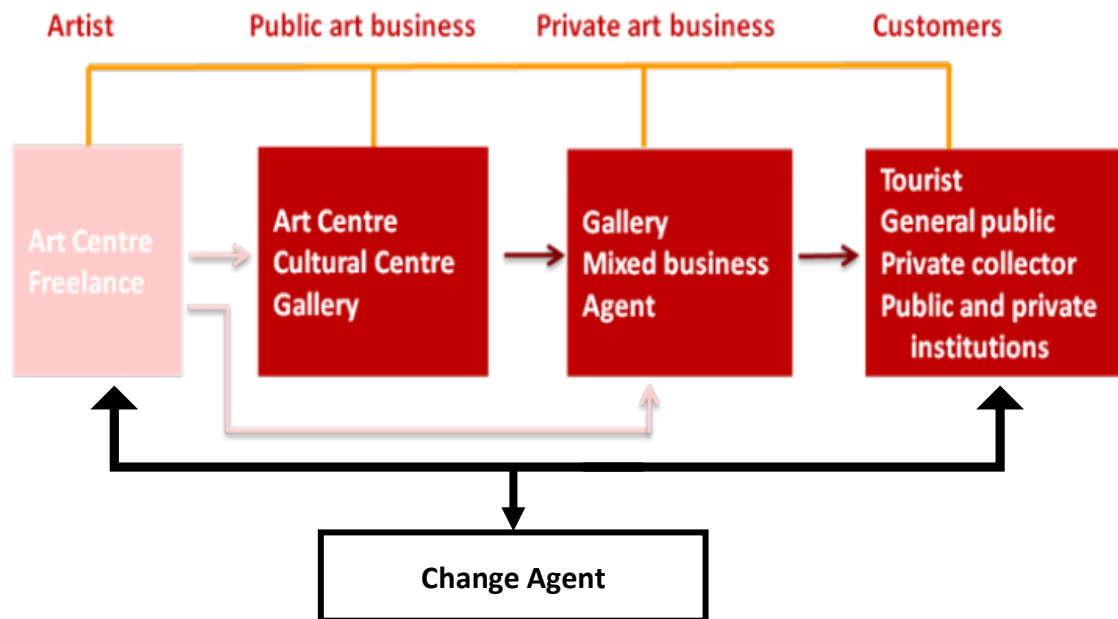
No	Pseudonym	Gender	Indigeneity	Current Position and Interview Locale	Past Experiences	Industry Tenure	Number of Interviews
Change Agent							
1	Malcolm	Male	Indigenous	Art business owner, cafe	Art business	20+	2
2	John	Male	Indigenous	Art business owner, phone	Art business	5	1
3	Kevin	Male	Indigenous	Indigenous art shop keeper and walking tour guide, on site	Indigenous art retail shop and exhibitions, cultural education programs	10	1

The Meaning of Art as Political Transformation

Change agents believe that Indigenous art is important for transforming how Indigenous people participate in the market and influence broader society. Indigenous art is mobilised as an energising force for decolonisation movements (Martineau and Ritskes 2014). Approximately 14,000 artists generate some income from art production in remote Australia (13,196 in Art Centres and 875 freelance artists); art products are the only source of income for many artists and Indigenous communities in remote areas (Woodhead and Acker 2014). But artists cannot transform the world if they do not have access to markets. Moreover, the Indigenous art market is dominated by high-end galleries and museums that often restrict artists' access to audiences and consumers (Altman et al. 2002; Woodhead and Acker 2014). Indigenous art intermediaries who are change agents are nimble in working around these barriers to entry to connect artists to end consumers (see Figure 8.1).

Rather than accepting that their market positions as determined by the existing supply chains, change agents devise different and alternative pathways for artists to bring their art to market and consumers. For these change agents they work to reassert their cultures and art, in opposition to market actors who might appropriate and assimilate the art. By extension, these change agents wrestle with the “process of liberation” (Mehrez 1991, 258) from their dependence on the marketing structures, such as restrictive supply chains. Instead, they create fugitive possibilities within the market to assert their indigeneity and fuel the resurgence of their Indigenous cultures by injecting art and cultures beyond traditional market spaces.

Figure 8.1. *An Adapted Supply Chain of the Indigenous Art Industry based on the Stakeholder Map Proposed by Woodhead (2014, 2).*



For example, John, who is both an artist and change agent, is particularly clever in providing less traditional products for sharing Indigenous art in the market. He produces and distributes accessible and affordable artworks using lapel pins, silk ties, mugs, and plates with his own designs inspired by his culture. These inexpensive artworks that have authentic cultural designs are a positive reaction to the proliferation of mass-produced art and crafts with inauthentic “Aboriginal style” that currently dominate the market. According to the Arts Law Centre of Australia (2017), around 80% of the artworks available in the market, such as in retail shops, are fake and inauthentic. The Arts Law Centre of Australia (2010) defines authentic Indigenous artworks as made by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. Conversely, fake Indigenous artworks are made by non-Indigenous people as reproductions that appropriate these cultural designs (Arts Law Centre 2010). While there is increase demand for artworks that are inexpensive (Woodhead and Acker 2014), unfortunately it is the reproductions that dominate this market opportunity. In an online interview published on ABC News (Vanovac 2017), the CEO of Indigenous Art Code, Gabrielle Sullivan suggests,

“A fake didgeridoo is selling for \$400, but you can get a genuine yidaki from Buku-Larrnggay Mulka (Art Centre) in Yirkala for \$400, or from Beswick for \$200. In many instances there is an authentic alternative.” Therefore, by making and selling accessible Indigenous art at affordable prices, John creates a pathway for all consumers, regardless of their incomes, to own authentic Indigenous art.

Change agents like John use opportunities in the market to assert Indigenous cultures and traditional art-making practices. Instead of being the victim of malpractices within art markets, he reasserts his voice by using the market as a platform fostering a greater appreciation for Indigenous art and sharing knowledge of how the artefacts and artworks are made traditionally. On his retail website, he has included videos of himself making the artworks that showcase behind-the-scenes footage of his workshop, the tools he has used, and his techniques in making these traditional artworks. John explains in our interview:

I show others how do men and how do women within our group make them, what the different timbers, what are the different timbers do, the different barks do, you know, different parts of the barks... You know, it's seeing it in modern context, I suppose, trying to understand the ways that our people still use them in some ways and the kinds of knowledge and shared ownership.

John also includes an explanation of the cultural stories attached to the designs of his products. This sharing of cultural stories is similar to the cultural conduit who gets close to the community to better understand the stories and the art connoisseur who encourages artist to share their stories. But John is the direct fount of this knowledge. He is expressing his own voice without being dependent on other intermediaries. He is the medium and the message. For example, for the eagle lapel pin, he describes: “Bunjil the Wedge tailed eagle created the Earth and all the living things in it. All creatures follow Bunjils’ Law and wear his markings. With Culture Compliments.” In an online interview, he clarifies that these designs come from cultural stories of the past as he tries “to portray it like sort of a vibration of us, of the earth,

of the animals.” Then, he continues, “the exciting part was to give and take of our symbols and of our stories from the past... to breathe some life back in them again.”

For John, sharing these stories and his knowledge of these artworks directly with the consumers allows him to share Indigenous cultural practices within a contemporary market. Therefore, the purpose of distributing his art and knowledge through the market is so that “it remains strong in our [Indigenous] culture”. Unlike cultural conduits who translate Indigenous cultures to educate non-Indigenous people, change agents like John exercise their position of power within the market to revitalise and expand understanding of Indigenous cultures among the broader Australian community. Through the continuous production and circulation of art within the market, it “recuperates the spirit of ancestral memory and place and forges new pathways for re-emergence and return” (Martineau and Ritskes 2014, X). Indigenous peoples have been denied agency and presence in the colonising marketplace—change agents such as John resist these constraints on creative expression and production.

Another change agent, Malcolm, is an independent business owner within the Indigenous art world. He emphasises that “we are not a gallery and we don’t associate with any gallery. We definitely don’t do business like a gallery.” Instead of selling artworks like other intermediaries, Malcolm uses practices that bring artists and Indigenous cultures directly into the market and the consumers. For example, he describes:

We have had a lot of artists going into corporate settings and do presentations. The feedback we get from clients is, at first, they are shocked, but then secondary to that, they are amazed. You just need to watch them.

And you just see in their heads, you just see them internalise the ideas and start picturing towards, “hang on, I thought it was this, now I understand it is this”. You start seeing all their thinking, you can see it shifts, you know. I just think that’s really powerful. You will never get that experience, just selling a painting for art’s sake.

Malcolm sees artworks as a transformative experience for the consumers to connect with Indigenous cultures and perspectives. As he emphasises, “[when] we can take that buyer’s experience from visualising the artwork to make them understand, what [are the] cultural

resources that sit behind it and draw a connection directly to the buyer, then it creates a whole lot more value to the artworks.”

Within the arts marketing literature, Patsiaoras et al. (2018) found that by adorning public spaces with protest art, it prompts the audiences to embrace the social change and consider the unconventional and artistic viewpoint of the city. Similarly, in the context of Indigenous art, change agents harness the transformative potential of art to express cultures and advance their change agenda. To do so, change agents such as John and Malcolm seek to break away from conventional channels of distribution (i.e., art galleries and museums) that have traditionally restricted Indigenous artists voices and their access to the market. Instead, change agents circumvent these pathways by working directly with clients through commissioned and leased work. They also work with different groups of stakeholders to transform how artworks are commonly acquired by consumers and how artists should be protected. Change agents further use art to directly challenge the status quo, disrupting the marketplace and institutional power (Patsiaoras et al. 2018). Consistent with the perspectives of arts marketing scholars (i.e., Rodner and Preece 2016; Schroeder 2010), the findings from this study supported that art is as complex platform that communicates the interrelationships between social, historical, and cultural forces to wider audiences.

Focal Relationships and Influence: Society At Large

The change agents work with different groups of stakeholders to transform other people’s perspectives of Indigenous art. They most fundamentally want Indigenous culture and history to be widely appreciated so change agents consider a wide range of potential stakeholders. Malcolm explains that this move to a more inclusive marketplace needs to spread “across the board so that it becomes a collective voice.” Change agent Malcolm’s art

business focuses on corporate clients, as he uses the artworks to “create opportunities and platforms to put the conversation about culture on the table.” He explains:

When we talk about the artworks, it opens up a conversation about Indigenous cultures that extends into different areas within the organisations. We would touch on corporate social responsibility, people and culture, marketing and communications... and that’s five different departments that sit in an organisation of 5000 people. Talking about these artworks starts to become a bigger leverage point to embed Indigenous cultures within the organisation.

To further support his stance, he shares that:

It’s easier to change a group in corporate setting, because to me, it’s the same energy that’s being used to talk to one person. So, if we could go and talk to organisation and talk to a bigger setting, there are more chances that people can internalise ideas and start to shift their behaviours.

Malcolm seeks to use his art business to extend beyond just selling one piece of artwork to an individual consumer. Instead, he uses artworks to expose an organisation and the thousands of people who work there to Indigenous cultures. He expresses that, “what we do is not easy to do, but any stretch of imagination, it’s probably the hardest... it’s easy to just open up a gallery and sell a painting and it’s easy to just supply artworks to the industry and that’s it.” Therefore, change agents such as Malcolm work with different types of client groups, such as corporations, to advocate for Indigenous’ perspectives. Even more so, he uses art to indigenise non-Indigenous spaces.

Change agents use art to create space for Indigenous’ perspectives in domains that are dominated by non-Indigenous worldviews. Malcolm shared an experience with “one of the hardest clients.” He had a client who wanted to commission the artists to create artworks based on preconceived ideas of leadership that did not align with an Indigenous worldview of leadership. To resolve this tension, Malcolm consulted with the community, but some artists were resistant to participating in the project. Moreover, some community leaders found that the strict hierarchical notion of one person leading another to be a “white concept” that was antithetical to their cultural views. Malcolm’s prowess in working with different groups

emerged when he got a senior artist to mentor an emerging artist thereby using the art-making process to communicate Indigenous leadership as a process of knowledge transfer between an elder and a less experienced person. When the artworks were presented at a handover ceremony with the client, it moved the client to tears. Malcolm describes:

.... the client was crying. It's a male. He's crying! ... And the exchange of ideas and values that was able to make a grown-up man sort of tear up and started crying... it's like it becomes this epiphany to people. So I think that as a business, we are able to have that kind of effect on our clients. A lot of good things could come from it. You know, it creates a desire to understand more and want to learn more things about us.

For change agents like Malcolm, they focus on political transformation through wider appreciation, understanding, and acceptance of Indigenous culture. In our conversation, he asserted that, “the artworks are the by-products” of a process that is more focused on sharing and asserting Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in the wider society. In this case, Malcolm transformed the client’s preconceived idea of leadership to one that is in line with Indigenous knowledge systems. For Malcolm, “that’s a win for us!” because through the artworks, he has inspired another person to question their preconceived ideas and to appreciate Indigenous’ perspectives.

This broader goal of reconciliation is also consistent among other change agents, such as Kevin and John. For Kevin, he operates an Indigenous art retail space that is located at the centre of an iconic tourists’ attractions of Melbourne CBD. The retail space also offers services such as guided walking tours, cultural competency training, and programs developed specifically for schools and educators. I participated in the guided walk as part of my field work. During the guided walk, Kevin would bring the participants to different significant landmarks and tell cultural stories. When prompted about his role as a new generation Indigenous person, he emphasised the importance of having his voice heard. He acknowledges the battle that the Indigenous Elders had fought for them so they could carry out simple everyday activities so he “could go to the bar, for example.” Now, he speaks to the

general public about “the minor details, correcting the general perception about the nuances in the Aboriginal worldviews, art and cultural practices.” Therefore, while the retail space sells Indigenous art, his main focus is this educational cultural tour that transforms non-Indigenous people’s perspectives of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, there is great significance in sharing the stories and traditions of Indigenous people with the general public for the purpose of extending Indigenous cultures and perspectives into the broader society.

In addition to producing and distributing affordable Indigenous art products to the market, John also designed jerseys for the one of the clubs that play in the Australian Football League (AFL) (see Figure 8.2). Every season, the AFL honours and celebrates Indigenous players and cultures through the “Indigenous Round” when every AFL club competes wearing a special Indigenous-designed jersey. AFL is Australia’s most watched television program with 7.83 million Australians (41.0%) seeing the game (Ray Morgan Research, 2014). In an online interview, John explains the story that inspired his design,

The section that surrounds the Magpie represent panels of a possum’s skin cloak, which articulates the diversity and complexity of all the Aboriginal groups throughout Victoria and Australia... We belong to this land and have a deep affinity with it.

The possum skin cloak was worn every day for warmth and in ceremonies, by Indigenous people in south-eastern Australia. In an online article published by Museums Victoria (2019), an Indigenous senior curator of South-eastern Australia Aboriginal collection, Kimberley Moulton explains that, these cloaks hold significant cultural value for many Indigenous peoples as the cloaks are “markers of identity.” According to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (2020a), these possum cloaks were traditionally used to wrap a baby. Then as the baby grows, more skins were added to the cloak, so the cloak grew with them. The cloak is also filled with designs that tell the stories of the cloak wearer’s journey, and connection to country. Some etchings and carvings on the cloak can also be linked to a topographic map. However, during the invasion of early settlers

in the mid-1800s, this cultural practice and tradition was disrupted. Therefore, in the present day, participating in this cultural practice of making and wearing the cloak in the contemporary society is a “powerful reconnection back to their ancestors” (Couzens and Darroch, 2012, 63).

Here, John adorned these AFL players with a modern adaptation of a significant Indigenous cultural artefact. By doing so, he demonstrates that Indigenous arts and cultures have a place in the popular media and culture. Through featuring John’s art on the jerseys worn by the AFL players, his designs and cultural stories are widely visible and acknowledged. By extension, his connections to his cultures and lands are expressed through the artworks he created, which is then disseminated into popular cultures and non-Indigenous spaces. Like John, many different artists have designed the AFL jerseys every year. The images and videos of the AFL players are shared and circulated through various social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter (see Figure 8.3 for examples). Different groups of Indigenous artists share their cultural stories with the general audience, while embedding Indigenous cultures into popular cultures that have traditionally been dominated by non-Indigenous cultures.

Figure 8.2. *AFL Jersey Designed by John.*

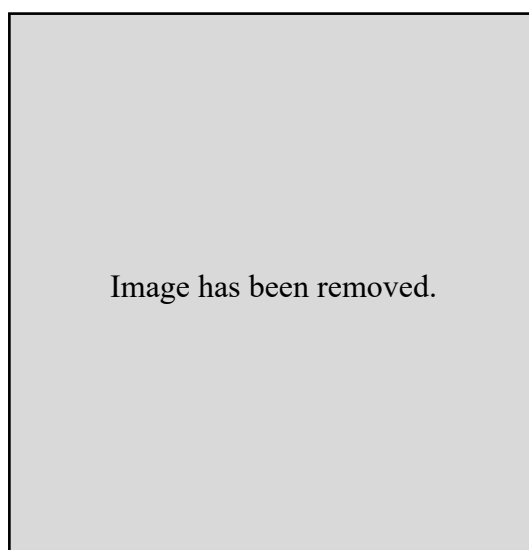
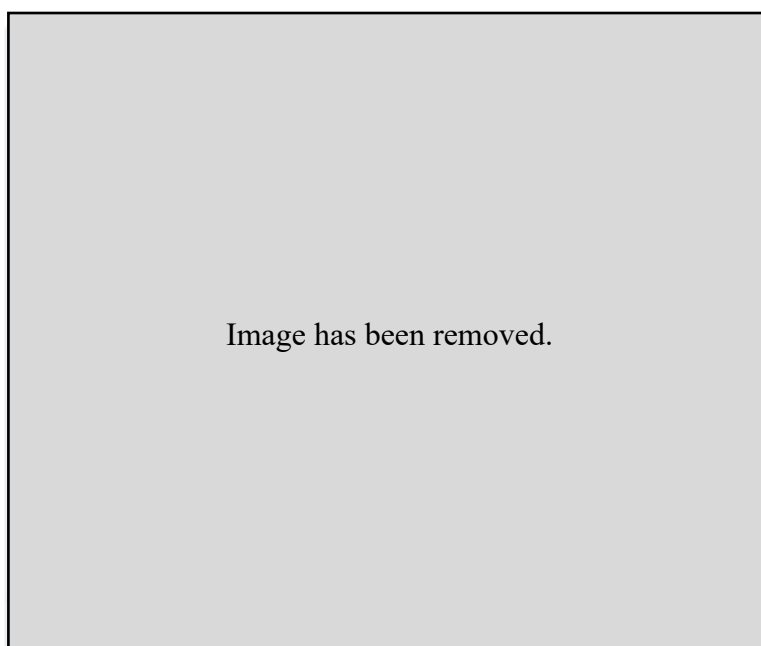
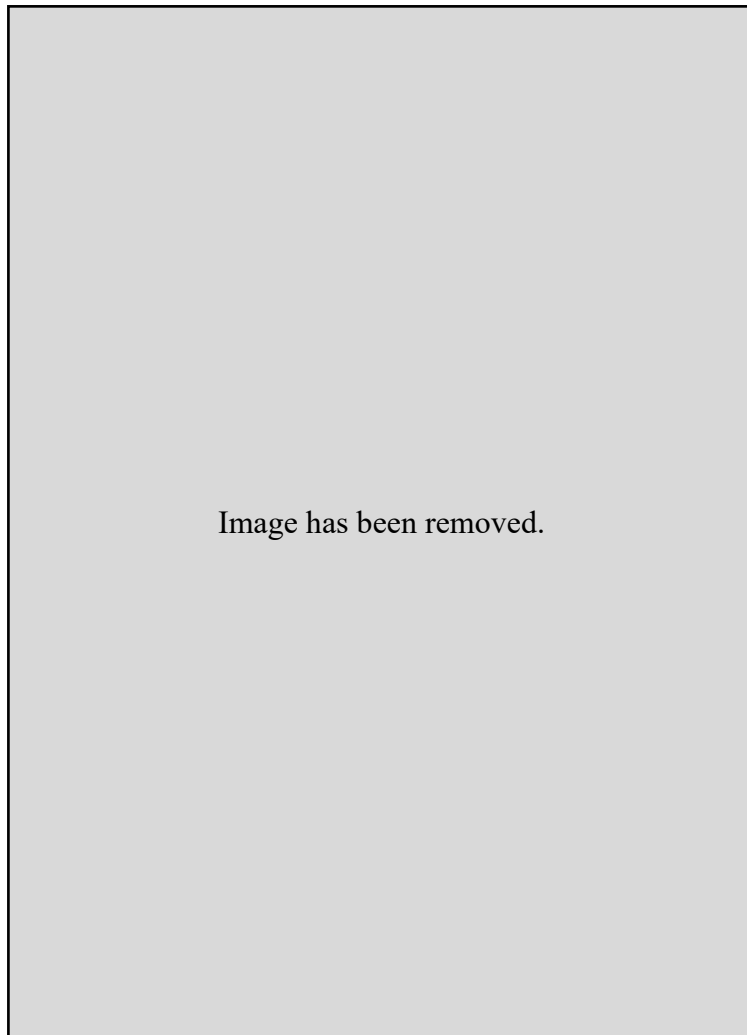


Figure 8.3. *AFL Team Players in Indigenous Designed Jerseys on Social Media Platforms including Instagram and Twitter.*



Change Agent as an Unyielding Activist

Although change agents work with anyone who is open to Indigenous culture, they share the common purpose of protecting Indigenous artists and their cultures from exploitation. Their advocacy for the rights and welfare of the Indigenous artists distinguish them from cultural conduits. Cultural conduits focus on sharing cultural stories of artists and communities, but change agents are most concerned about the needs and rights of the artists. The artists are the most important stakeholders within the market because through cultural production, artists preserve Indigenous culture. But they may also be vulnerable if they are not paid market rates or lose control of the ownership of their art. All the change agents were Indigenous (see Table 8.1 [informant table]). To protect their cultures, change agents emphasise looking after the best interests of the artists and the communities that they represent.

Malcolm observes that, “the voices of the artists have to resonate the loudest on their own. But today, the voice that resonates the loudest is probably the art dealers... I think that needs to be wrestled to turn it around. I think the power needs to be placed on the artists.” Malcolm, John, and Kevin all argue that artists are still being mistreated or misrepresented because they lack knowledge about how the market works. For example, John, who owns an art business and also being an artist himself, exposes the challenges confronting the artists during our interview, as he explains:

You have to educate yourself as you get more experienced. Make sure you are not selling copyrights, or not selling licenses to different people who may make things for you, or you're selling licenses for artworks to be used on certain things. But really, making sure that, you keep the understanding of what license is and how it works, and what it should do when someone proposes a license to you... Making sure that you're clear about what the use of the artwork is, what it's going to be used for, how big is the volume, how many years, you know... make sure that you protect yourself against people who are just use you to make money.

Change agents become activists when they can disrupt the status quo and power relationships between dealers and artists so that the artists retain control over their art, their

cultural stories, and their long-term profits. As an art intermediary, Malcolm recognises that many consumers of Indigenous art, including federal, state, local governments, and corporate clients tend to offer unfair compensation for the artwork and its usage. For example, when artists sign a contract to sell their artwork to a client, the client is then allowed to reproduce the artwork for economic gain without paying royalties to the artists. More importantly, the artist loses control over how artworks are used as well as the ownership of the cultural resources. In this instance, Malcolm emphasises that from the Indigenous cultural perspective, “it shouldn’t be allowed. It should be illegal!” He argues these are contracts created within the settler’s society that do not protect Indigenous rights. Therefore, through educating the artists about their rights and the ways to protect their cultures, more artists can self-advocate, without falling prey to malpractices.

Another key example is a well-respected Indigenous Elder, curator and artist, Timothy, who is an advocate for protecting Indigenous cultures from being copied and mass-produced in the market. In my field notes taken at his public talk, he highlights the severity of the problem with copyrights:

He steered the conversation towards the topic of copyright. It is one of his passions to protect the copyright of artists and their cultures, advocating against fake art. However, he revealed that copyright is a foreign concept to the Indigenous communities... Historically, within the Indigenous communities, artists are not aware of how copyright works because it is a Western concept.

In the past, within the Indigenous cultures, if someone were to reproduce stories or ideas from another community, the person could be charged with a death penalty by the community groups. This is because of the great respect for the sacredness of stories, art, cultures, and traditions within the Indigenous communities. And such respect is tied to the kinship structures within the Indigenous community.

These examples reveal the differences between Indigenous perspectives and settlers’ perspectives when it comes to selling of artworks through the market. This gap has also been reported in an article published by IP Australia (Janke and Sentina 2018), “Indigenous Knowledge: Issues for protection and management,” which discussed the short fall of

intellectual property laws in protecting Indigenous people's cultural expression, knowledge, and heritage. Therefore, in recognition of the lack of market-related knowledge among a lot of artists and the inadequacy of laws or policies that prevent misappropriation of cultures, these change agents engage in insurgent activism to protect the welfare of artists and their communities. They work to strike a difficult balance between protecting the welfare of artists while also fostering a greater appreciation for their art within the wider society. In the next section, I discuss the specific practices that change agents use to protect the cultures and the wellbeing of artists.

Important Practices for the Artists and Communities

Change agents protect the artists' rights to their artworks by advocating for *retaining ownership of cultures* and *being compensated fairly*. In acknowledgement of the prevalence of unfair compensation of artists and misappropriation of Indigenous cultures, the role of change agent is to ensure that the artists are aware of the ways the current legal systems—as settler colonists' apparatuses—might not protect their ownership of cultural resources. In other words, change agents help artists to be more aware and savvy in identifying the potential traps and threats in legal contracts that might take away their control over how the artworks would be used for generating profits. For example, Malcolm explains that:

You can't expect an artist to go through a legal contract and you can't expect an artist to be going through the contract and be creative doing what they do. I can assure you that, in the 70-page legal contract, there are going to have items in the contract that has to do with ownership, with moral right, intellectual properties, copyrights. And each time, at the end of the day, it's the artist that's getting screwed over if they are not aware.

Therefore, the change agent becomes the steward in dealing with legal protections and copyrights, ensuring that the artists retain control over how their artworks and cultural resources will be circulated through the different market channels.

For Malcolm, his art business works closely with the artists to educate them about protecting their intellectual properties. His business also rarely sells artwork. Instead, they generally lease the artworks to clients, so the artists retain ownership. John also shares his knowledge with other artists. He adds, “Unfortunately, the whole issue of copyrights and all those things in modern world just tries to steal away our knowledge. So, I am always sharing not just my [art] techniques but also, sharing my knowledge in terms of how do you go about licensing your work.” Through employing various mechanisms to protect the artists’ artworks, the artists gain more freedom and independence to work within the market sharing their cultures.

In addition to creating awareness among artists about their rights and the potential threats of legal apparatuses, change agents also advocate for artists to receive fair payments for their works. As Malcolm explains that artists need to understand the importance of “getting paid royalties.” Kevin, who runs a retail shop that sells Indigenous art products, explains that he does research to make sure that the artists are being compensated fairly and that their copyrights are being protected. In the past, there was an instance when his retail shop was unable to validate the authenticity of the artworks. They discovered that the manufacturers of the artworks were fraudulently using the Indigenous’ designs because they did not own the copyright to reproduce the artworks. As result, they pulled the artworks and products off the shelves. He also describes the common practices of other retail shops in which they would pay the artists a fixed price for artworks or designs but would reproduce the work without paying royalties. Therefore, he explains that, “we make sure that either we buy directly from the artists or that for the artworks, the artists are being properly compensated.” For art intermediaries such as Malcolm, John, and Kevin, they continue to advocate for the rights of the artists through creating awareness on retaining ownerships through copyrights as well as negotiating for fair compensations.

Important Practices for the Consumers

When dealing with the buyers, corporate clients, governments, and other stakeholders, change agents also take on the responsibility of challenging the stereotypical biases of Indigenous people and the art being produced. For example, consumers patronising Kevin's Indigenous art retail shop are often looking for stereotypical dot paintings; he must explain that this artistic style does not exist in Melbourne, Victoria. Often times, he ended up turning consumers away because the shop does not offer "stereotypical" Indigenous art. He even joked that, in response to these incidents, they had created a range of products including t-shirts, bags, and mugs with the message "we don't do dot paintings" printed on them. Kevin wants to change consumers' narrow view of Indigenous art. Instead, change agents expose buyers to the different painting styles and art forms of the different Aboriginal clans in Australia to broaden their understanding of the diversity of this genre.

In challenging the stereotypical view of Indigenous people and cultures, change agents proactively expose consumers to Indigenous art to reduce the social and psychological distance between the Indigenous people and the wider public. These change agents use Indigenous art and artists to offer the consumers and society a portal into accessing the richness of Indigenous' perspectives and culture. Like a trusted shepherd, they bring consumers into the Indigenous world and assist them in forming a connection with the Indigenous cultures in a way that is respectful towards Indigenous cultures. For example, Malcolm explains,

Art becomes the exposure to Aboriginal life... whether it's self-determination, whether it's any struggles, whether it's racism... whatever it looks but it just exposes life and opportunities for other people to understand around what's going on for us.

As Malcolm further clarifies,

...if it doesn't stack up to our values, our own belief systems, not only as Aboriginal peoples but also our business ethics and values and our morale, we don't want to be a part of it. What our clients don't get us today, doesn't mean they would never get it.

For me, it just means it's not the right time. I mean, we could revisit 3, 4, or 5 years' time because we're not going anywhere.

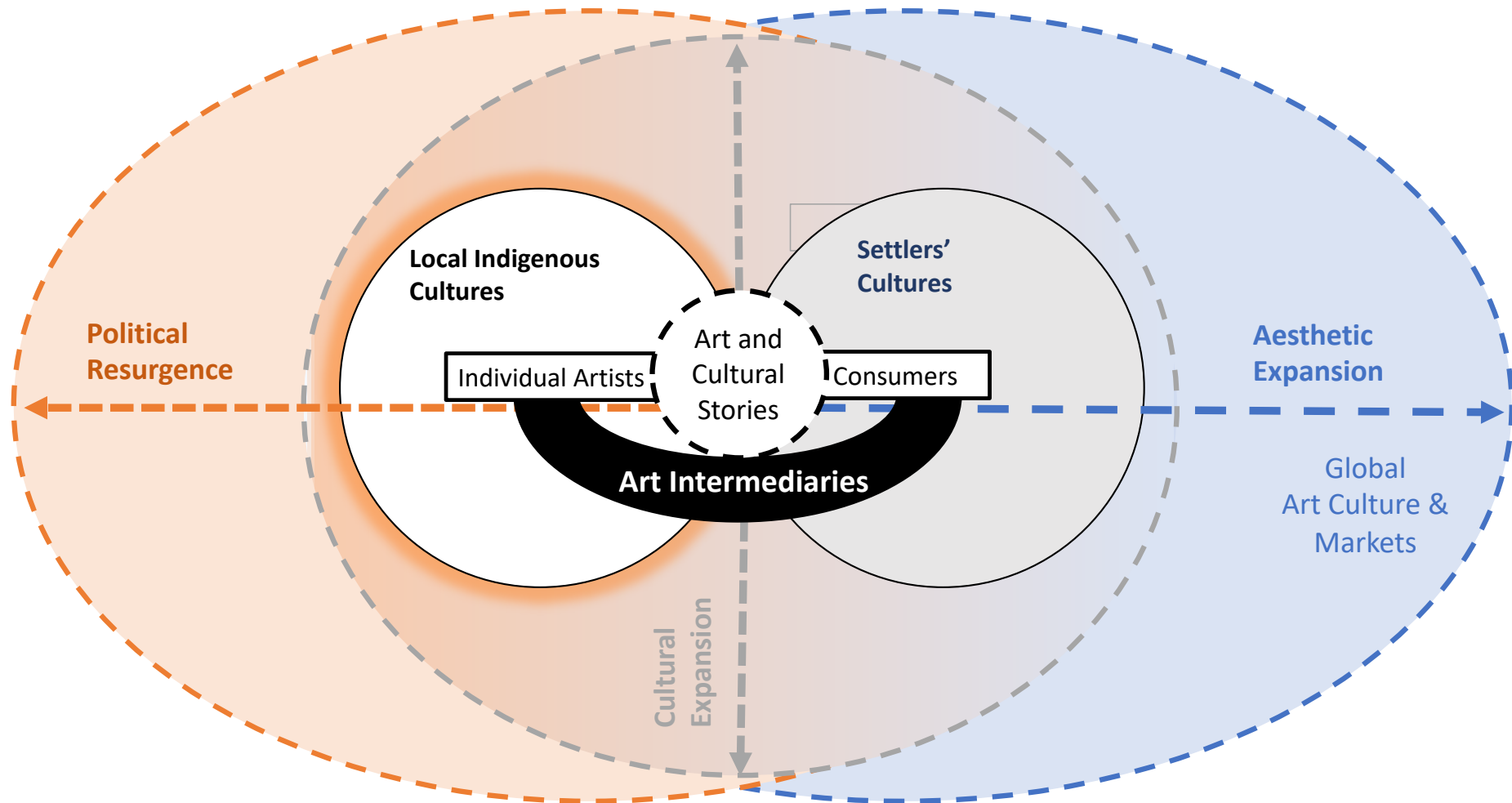
For change agents, the interactions and exchanges with consumers possess greater significance than merely closing a deal. Malcolm highlights his personal tenacity and patience based on a longer-range vision. In addition, he poetically reminds us that his culture endures, he can wait for clients to come around, "because we're not going anywhere." In response to the pull between commercial and cultures within the market, change agents prioritise honouring cultures over the financial gains that Indigenous art would bring. When being pressured to into a position to choose between selling cultures or maintaining ownership of cultures, change agents "don't want to be a part of it."

Chapter 9: Conceptual Framework of the Dynamics of Power in the Indigenous Art Market

In this chapter, I present the organising framework that summarises my findings on the role of Indigenous art intermediaries as cultural conduits, art connoisseurs, and change agents. Recall that the research questions asked in this study are: How do art intermediaries negotiate the meaning of Indigenous art within the multi-stakeholder art market? How do art intermediaries relationally engage with Indigenous artists and their art works, Indigenous communities, and buyers as they balance cultural and commercial tensions? Therefore, I propose a framework that organises the emergent findings into a conceptual model. Specifically, I explore the three power dynamics that the art intermediaries use to balance the cultural-commercial tensions through either cultural expansion, aesthetic expansion, or political resurgence (see Figure 9.1).

This study examined the focal relationship of the art intermediaries, between the artists and the consumers, as they exchange the art. This relationship is placed at the centre of the figure. Across all art intermediaries, cultural stories played an important role in this exchange; thus, in the conceptual framework, I have centred the exchange on both the art and its cultural story that connects the artists, the consumers, and the art intermediaries. Obviously, the artists and their art emerge from the local Indigenous cultures (see Figure 9.1 and the white circle that is labelled local Indigenous cultures). Similarly, the consumers primarily arise from the broader Australian culture with its roots in settlers' cultures (as represented by the grey circle). In the model of the power dynamics in the Indigenous art market, I explore three different ways of reconciling differences between the local Indigenous cultures and the settlers' cultures (represented by the dotted arrows in orange, grey and blue). In the following sections, I explain each part of this conceptual model in greater details.

Figure 9.1. *Conceptual Framework of the Power Dynamics in the Indigenous Art Market.*



The Centrality of Cultural Stories in Indigenous Art Exchange

One of the key debates within the arts marketing literature is the tension between art and commercial interests (Bradshaw 2010; Brown and Patterson 2000). The relationship between art and the market is multifaceted (Bradshaw 2010). Especially with the increasingly blurred roles between artists and marketers (Fillis 2014), crossing boundaries between creating art for art's sake versus producing art for business's sake becomes more salient. Market stakeholders, including the artists, the intermediaries, and consumers are constantly navigating the conflicting demands between the creation of profound aesthetic experiences that art provides and the commercial success that the market exchange promises (O'Reilly and Kerrigan 2010). Using Damien Hirst and his artworks as an illustrative case, Bradshaw, Kerrigan and Holbrook (2010) argued that arts marketing must look beyond the commercial benefits of arts to also embrace its inherent aesthetic quality as a valuable experience. Ultimately, arts marketing scholars such as O'Reilly and Kerrigan (2010) view arts marketing as more than money, focusing on understanding the connections among the art intermediaries, artists, and consumers. In this study, I have further explored these connections and identified the centrality of cultural stories in Indigenous art exchange.

Indigenous cultural stories are at the heart of the exchange of art between artists and consumers. All of the art intermediaries understood the importance of cultural stories in making the Indigenous art relevant to consumers. These stories connect the artists and the consumers because the artists use their works to express important cultural meanings and their connections to lands. For the consumers, the art thus offers them a window into various Indigenous' worldviews and cultural knowledge. But I have found that the art intermediaries also played important roles in foregrounding the cultural stories to the consumers. Importantly, all three groups of intermediaries maintained that they do not exert control over how the artists and the communities want to tell their stories. Instead, the art intermediaries

play a mediating role in how these cultural stories are framed and communicated.

Specifically, the art intermediaries identify opportunities within the art exchange to share cultural stories with the consumers. For some intermediaries, they also create alternative pathways to share cultural stories with wider society.

For example, cultural conduits develop close relationships with the artists and their communities over time. Through intimate contact, they develop an understanding of the art and its meaning. They see that the importance of using stories is to provide “cultural context” for the artworks. According to the cultural conduits, this cultural context refers to such topics as the histories of the communities in which artworks were created and the artists’ connections to their lands. In addition to trying to be a conduit to help explain the cultural meaning of the art, they work to include the artists’ interpretation through various power-sharing strategies, such as foregrounding the stories as told by the Indigenous people. Cultural conduits prioritise sharing stories about the livelihood of communities to educate the consumers to make ethical purchasing decisions and developing greater appreciation for the significance of Indigenous art for the Indigenous people.

Art connoisseurs are generally perceived as experts in the art world who recognise the powerful effect of having the artists directly telling their own stories to the consumers. Art connoisseurs share their networks of other experts, art collectors, and art enthusiasts with the artists. In return, these collectors and art enthusiasts also want to hear directly from the artists. Therefore, art connoisseurs exercise their expertise and resources in organising talks where artists share their histories and the inspirations behind their artworks to vetted buying audiences. They also advertised artists’ works through social media platforms and their galleries websites. In some instances, they even travel with artists to present their stories to international audiences. Art connoisseurs recognise that their expertise lies in orchestrating the right space and platforms for the artists to tell their own stories.

As for the change agents, they play the most powerful role of all in terms of being the direct source of cultural stories. Change agents tell cultural stories in their interactions with consumers and the wider society interested in Indigenous cultures. As Indigenous people, they felt comfortable being the direct spokespersons from many Indigenous communities beyond their own. They use every opportunity in the exchange of art to assert their Indigenous perspectives and privilege Indigenous cultures. They further challenged stereotyping and the limiting views imposed upon Indigenous peoples, their cultures, and their role within the markets. The change agents also play an important role in protecting the control of cultural stories through alternative arrangements to purchasing, such as leasing and licencing artworks. They advocate for protecting the rights of the artists so that cultural stories are not distorted or appropriated and artists can participate in the market with greater freedoms and confidence. This also ensures that the artists can maintain ownership of cultural stories within the marketplace.

The importance of cultural stories for understanding Indigenous art has also been documented by Belk and Groves (1999) in their study of Indigenous art in Australia. Belk and Groves (1999) started collecting data from 1993 to 1995 after they spent less than two weeks conducting field work in different Indigenous communities. Belk and Groves (1999) interviewed directors/owners of art centres and galleries as well as curators at art museums. In addition, they interviewed and observed art collectors, artists, and people who worked with artists such as nuns, priests, administrators, and art instructors. Belk and Groves (1999) discovered a “dark side” of story-sharing through Indigenous art. They found that art intermediaries recognised that Indigenous artworks with a story are more profitable and easily sold to consumers in the market. As a result, some of the art intermediaries in their study restricted the artists to tell certain stories and paint in particular artistic styles more popular among consumers. Belk and Groves (1999, 29) argued that the meanings of art were

“diluted” through channels of distribution and glossed over by art intermediaries when art moved from Indigenous cultures to the commoditised contexts of largely non-Indigenous consumers.

Although the Belk and Grove’s study was conducted more than 20 years ago, this debate around cultural and commercial tension remains relevant (see Altman and Taylor 2000; Altman et al. 2002; Langton 2003). While arts marketing scholars have predominantly focused on the tensions between art and commerce (Bradshaw 2010; Fillis 2014), researchers who study the exchanges of Indigenous art in the market acknowledge an additional layer of complexity—the tension between *culture* and commercial. I am not suggesting that art and culture are distinct and separate from one another. Rather, through the study of Indigenous art markets, the value of art for its aesthetic quality and the value of culture for the Indigenous communities is elaborated. At the heart of the art-versus-commerce is the concern of whether the artists can continue to create artworks using self-expression and creativity in the face of market-oriented demands of making a profit (Fillis 2014; Major 2014). In comparison, at the heart of the debate between cultural and commercial tension of Indigenous art exchange, is the concern over the role of art intermediaries in preserving the cultural integrity and authenticity of Indigenous art being circulated in commercial markets (Acker 2006; Booth 2014). It is also a concern about how artists can retain their connections to their cultures, communities, and lands through their artworks.

In the 1990s, Belk and Groves (1999) discovered that some art intermediaries were more profit-driven when they told cultural stories for commercial purposes. Fast forward almost two decades later, I have found that the art intermediaries in this study employ different and more sophisticated practices to foreground cultural stories. Overall, they work more to preserve and share the different meanings of art by privileging Indigenous voices, contributing to the wellbeing of the communities, creating scholarly knowledge about

Indigenous art to wider non-Indigenous communities, and advocating for the rights of artists. To be fair, art intermediaries in the recent past may have played a more nuanced role than was reported by Belk and Groves (1999). I found that it took weeks and even months to permeate the Indigenous art circles and meet some of the most powerful art intermediaries. This extended engagement in the field enabled interaction and observation of the art intermediaries across multiple occasions, both in person and through online activities, over the span of two years. Through extended immersion in the field, I was able to capture the nuances in the roles played by art intermediaries and how they work with artists, communities, and the consumers through cultural stories, as they navigate the tensions within the art markets.

Supporting these findings, a body of research on narrative theory suggests that effective storytelling can help organisations communicate their impact, engage with audiences, and motivate them to take actions (i.e., Bublitz et al. 2016; Goodman 2015). Specifically, Bublitz et al. (2016) proposed a framework to guide organisations in crafting compelling stories that are transformative. In their framework, they emphasised that authentic portrayals are a key feature of powerful stories, especially when combating scepticism among consumers. Consistent with the existing literature, the findings from this study support the transformative power of storytelling to educate, engage, and change people's behaviour (i.e., get people to buy artworks). This transformative story framework was offered by Bublitz et al. (2016) as part of a marketplace solution inspiring consumers with stories to get them to volunteer time and money to help solve complex social problems, such as poverty and health disparities. Similarly, I found that artists' sharing Indigenous cultural stories using art helped spanned differences with consumers from settlers' cultures offering a pathway of rapprochement between the two cultures through a marketplace exchange.

Reconciliation of Local Indigenous Cultures and Settlers' Cultures in the Marketplace

In this study, the artists are from the Indigenous cultures while the consumers are from settlers' cultures. Arts originate from the local Indigenous cultures that are then produced and consumed within the settlers' cultural context. Against the sociocultural complexities of these exchange relationships, I observed interesting power dynamics as art intermediaries play different roles in foregrounding the cultural stories to advance reconciliation between Indigenous and settlers' cultures. With art and cultural stories at the centre of the focal relationships of art intermediaries, artists and consumers, I conceptualise three different ways art intermediaries navigate between Indigenous cultures and settlers' cultures and balance the culture/commercial tensions.

Recall that in the previous chapters, Indigenous art has different meanings for the three groups of art intermediaries. For cultural conduits, art is a medium of cultural education. Art connoisseurs view art as part of a global art market that is culturally legitimised and socially constructed by experts through scholarly works. Change agents view art as a political instrument for societal transformation. Based on these different meanings of art, the art intermediaries use different power dynamics when working with artists and consumers. Based on the emergent findings, I have identified the three different approaches that cultural conduits, art connoisseurs, and change agents take, respectively, through cultural expansion, aesthetics expansion, and political resurgence. In Figure 9.1, these are the three different coloured circles with dotted lines as their boundaries. Based on the concept of "third space" by postcolonial scholar, Homi Bhabha, I further theorise these circles as liminal spaces where the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation" of cultural meanings between the Indigenous and settlers' cultures occur (Bhabha 1994, 38). As DeBerry-Spence (2008, 372, emphasis in the original) further explained, the "*third space* is a 'politicised, creative, in-

between, fluid space' (Khan, 2000, 126) where interrogation, negotiation, reflexivity, resistance, hybridity and identity reconstruction are enacted (emphasis in the original)."

Third Space for Cultural Expansion

Art intermediaries who are cultural conduits focus on increasing cross-cultural understanding between the Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people to create a third space for cultural expansion and growth (see Figure 9.1 and the space with the grey dotted line labelled cultural expansion). Within this space, the art intermediaries' focus is to share power with Indigenous artists and the communities. They collaborate with Indigenous communities to indigenise gallery and museum spaces that were traditionally spaces dominated by settlers' cultures in which Indigenous cultures were socially constructed as primitive, inferior, and on the brink of extinction (Giblin, Ramos, and Grout 2019). Art intermediaries who are cultural conduits are reflexive of their power within this marketplace. As result, they work to build trusted relationships with Indigenous artists, their communities, and consumers. Their priorities are to work toward ensuring that Indigenous artists and communities maintain their power to decide how art is created, presented, communicated, and sold to the consumers. More importantly, in this space, some of the resources generated from the market (such as financial profits) are channelled to improve the wellbeing of the communities so that they can continue to express their cultures and create arts.

In the grey circle in Figure 9.1, the two grey arrows that extend upwards and downwards from the art and cultural stories circle signify this cultural expansion. Cultural conduits seek a *détente* in which the art of all cultures can flourish and be valued on an equal plane. They move toward cultural equality. Cultural conduits embody the essence of decolonisation focusing on Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together to explore their different cultural perspectives, in the spirit of advancing cultural equality

(Denzin et al. 2008). Therefore, for cultural conduits, it is important to educate people from settlers' cultures about the importance of respecting the cultural dimensions of Indigenous art and contributing to the wellbeing of Indigenous communities. In this space, cultural conduits balance the cultural-commercial tension by honouring cultural stories of Indigenous communities on the basis of educating consumers from settler's cultures to make purchases that benefit the communities.

Third Space for Aesthetics Expansion

Art intermediaries who are art connoisseurs are cognizant of the broader global art market and are striving for aesthetic expansion by developing an appreciation for the diversity of Indigenous art (see Figure 9.1 and the blue circle). Art connoisseurs are the perceived *experts* or cultural elites within this global art market who create scholarly knowledge about Indigenous art. Through their scholarly works and extensive networks with a community of cultural experts, art connoisseurs strive to introduce and advance different Indigenous art into the global art market. They are selective in the artists that they represent and always form aesthetic evaluations as to what can be promoted in the global art market. Art connoisseurs associate themselves with the most innovative and avant-garde artists who are commercially successful. Similar to Rodner and Thomson's (2013, 7) observation whereby the artists' reputation further enhances the art intermediaries' image and status in a "co-branding effect." As they develop a reputation of representing award-winning and acclaimed artists, art connoisseurs become powerful influencers who are trusted by consumers, art enthusiasts, and art collectors. Art connoisseurs also shape the market by working to expand the tastes of the consumers by exposing them to different styles and types of Indigenous artworks. This is a powerful and prudent investment because consumers with omnivorous tastes will purchase a wider range of styles and contribute to aesthetic expansion.

In the figure, the blue dotted arrow symbolises the aesthetics expansion orchestrated by art connoisseurs. With this expansion, art connoisseurs help create more opportunities for Indigenous artists to enter into the global art scene to share their cultural stories. As a result of aesthetic expansion, Indigenous art transcends local Indigenous and settlers' cultures to move into global art culture. Therefore, using their aesthetic expertise and influence with individual artist, art connoisseurs balance the cultural-commercial tension by elevating Indigenous artistic work into the *high art* status where it is competitive with other kinds of arts (i.e., contemporary Western arts). This move justifies greater financial investments from wider range of art collectors to promote Indigenous arts.

Third Space for Political Resurgence

Art intermediaries who are change agents use this space for political resurgence (see Figure 9.1 and the orange circle). Focusing on the Venezuelan art movement, Rodner and Kerrigan (2018) demonstrate that political discourses can seep into production, dissemination, and consumption of arts that then play a role in constructing, shaping, and propagating an image for a nation. Visual arts that reflect broader political changes possess the power to influence a country's national identity (Rodner and Kerrigan 2018). According to Rodner and Kerrigan (2018, 9), through arts and cultural production, the former president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez projected a new national image that broke "away from Neoliberal, postcolonial, Western hegemony to revitalise local narratives..." Similarly, within the context of Indigenous art market in Australia, these art intermediaries also harness the power of the art to assert and revitalise indigeneity.

Specifically, these art intermediaries are direct representatives of the various Indigenous communities. They focused on advocating for the rights of the Indigenous artists and ensuring that cultural stories are protected from any potential appropriation or

misrepresentation. Their interests include the consumers but also expand to include society at large. For example, they circulate art within corporate spaces and popular cultures. They seek to create change using as many outlets as possible to break away and challenge colonial biases on stereotypes of Indigenous art, cultures, and people. They also engage in different opportunities and platforms to assert Indigenous perspectives and fuel the resurgence of Indigenous cultures in contemporary society.

Political resurgence is symbolised by the orange arrow that extends from art and cultural stories. This arrow extends in the direction that expands the power of local Indigenous cultures and asserts its primacy and even superiority. Change agents are Indigenous individuals who use their role as art intermediaries to advance Indigenous perspectives and tell stories about Indigenous cultures. Unlike the art connoisseurs who expand into the global culture beyond local Indigenous and settlers' cultures, the change agents work within the Australian society to challenge and transform stereotypical settlers' cultural view towards Indigenous people. They remain close to their communities and connected to their lands in Australia, and these connections further fuel their advocacy in the market. As Indigenous artist and activist, Brenda Croft (2008, 8) states, by "our very existence we challenge... We are not meant to be here, we are meant to vanish, to give truth to the lie of terra nullius (i.e., uninhabited land)." Therefore, as powerful intermediaries in the market, change agents are persistent in creating new and alternative opportunities to express Indigenous perspectives and cultures within the Australian settlers' society.

For them, they balance the cultural-commercial tensions by prioritising cultural integrity over commercial profit. They mobilise art and cultural stories as valuable resources that are authentic and superior to than settlers' cultural view of Indigenous art. For them, art and cultural stories are more than commodities traded within the market. Instead, art and

cultural stories offer people from non-Indigenous cultures the opportunity to experience the cultural significance of Indigenous cultures.

Chapter 10: Contributions and Future Research

This study focuses on the relationships and dynamics of power among art intermediaries, artists, and consumers within the Indigenous art market in Australia. Drawing on postcolonial and decolonial perspectives, I conceptualise three ways that different groups of art intermediaries navigate Indigenous-settler relations while balancing commercial and cultural tensions: cultural expansion, aesthetics expansion, and political resurgence. In this chapter, I discuss the implications of my findings by proposing the key contributions that this study makes to the existing work on arts marketing and prior scholar work on consumer research literature. Last, I outline the practical implications of this study for the different of stakeholder groups involved within the Indigenous art market. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and directions for future research.

Contributions to Arts Marketing Research

This study contributes to arts marketing research by expanding our understanding of the roles of art intermediaries in Indigenous art markets, and how they interact with Indigenous artists and their communities. In contrast to an “art machine” (Rodner and Thomson 2013)—in which different groups of stakeholders take on various roles at different stages in the process of legitimising the meanings and values of art—I found that art intermediaries in Indigenous art markets have a more nuanced approach when working with artists, communities, and consumers. Many of these art intermediaries make long-term investments in building relationships, not only with artists and collectors, but also with Indigenous communities. The findings contribute to the arts marketing literature by developing a more in-depth understanding of marketing which is not only sympathetic to artistic imperatives (O’Reilly and Kerrigan 2010), but also to the well-being and development of the communities with which the artists are closely associated.

This study extends the existing knowledge on arts marketing by painting a far more detailed and fine-grained picture of how art intermediaries are attuned to their positionality, power, and influence in the market. For example, the cultural conduits work to be equal collaborators with the artists and the communities with whom they work and represent. They develop trusting relationships with the communities to ensure that power is shared and dispersed among the artists and their communities. The art connoisseurs, however, are powerful gatekeepers because of their long-term investment and reputation in the community of art experts. Yet, to maintain their position of influence and power, art connoisseurs cleverly put the artists and their artworks in the spotlight. Finally, the change agents are members of Indigenous communities who advocate for the significance and value of Indigenous art and culture. They work to transform the marketplace into a more expansive and inclusive space in which artists' rights and cultures are protected, and the welfare of Indigenous communities are prioritised over financial gains. They strive to challenge stereotypes of Indigenous people and culture by educating the general public to assert their Indigenous worldviews through the artworks.

Although my study focuses on the visual arts (such as paintings or sculptures), my findings are similar to marketing practices found in theatre arts in which art intermediaries take on additional roles (Ryna et al. 2010). In the case of Indigenous art markets, the art intermediaries are also involved in educating the consumers about Indigenous cultures and communities, the aesthetics of Indigenous arts, and the value of Indigenous arts. The art intermediaries wear multiple hats as they work to gain the trust of the artists, their communities, and consumers. Thus, my findings support arts marketing scholars' call for the development of more sophisticated ways of marketing art products management (Fillis 2010, 2011; O'Reilly and Kerrigan 2010). In this case, my findings demonstrate the need for developing arts marketing theories and practices that are more sensitive to how power is

exercised in the art market that could either harm or support the Indigenous artists, their cultures, and communities. Especially in settler societies, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, it is important for arts marketing theories and practices to account for the legacies of colonisation upon which the art market exchange was founded.

Less like a machine, my conceptual model conceptualises roles of the art intermediaries that resemble Thornton's (2009) "conflicted cluster of subcultures – each of which embrace different definitions of art (Thornton 2009, xix)." I have found that the different groups of art intermediaries also derive different meanings of Indigenous art forms and construct different power dynamics within these social relationships. They construct different market spaces that I have termed "third spaces" in my conceptual framework where they work towards cultural expansion, aesthetics expansion, and political resurgence. Through grounding the Indigenous art market exchange on cultural stories, art intermediaries move beyond merely navigating the tensions of arts and markets, as they also strive to balance the cultural/commercial tensions. Extending beyond the duality of producing art for art's sake versus art for business' sake as documented in the existing arts marketing literature (i.e. Fillis 2006), these art intermediaries recognise that for Indigenous art and the Indigenous artists, *art is for culture's sake*.

Contributions to Postcolonial Consumer Research

This study expands the post-colonial theoretical perspectives employed in prior consumer research by drawing on literature and concepts in the area of decolonisation and settler colonialisation. Although focusing on different consumption contexts, extant postcolonial consumer studies share the similar goals of understanding consumer cultures, consumer resistance tactics, and identity outcomes in post-colonial societies (as outlined in table 4.1 on the key postcolonial consumer studies). For example, Patterson and Brown

(2007) theorise Irish pubs as sites of cultural resistance where Irish people reconnect with their traditional cultural identities. Askegaard and Eckhardt (2012) applied Bhabha's concept of ambivalence to frame the re-appropriation of modern, westernised yoga practices in India as a form of consumer empowerment. Similarly, Varman and Belk (2012) identified the consumption of shopping malls in India as a form consumer resistance through mockery. However, these existing consumer studies have focused on post-colonial contexts in which the colonisers have returned independence to the people and generally withdrawn physically or in political power from the country; thus, the colonised are left to rediscover and reconstruct a new identity.

Instead, this study introduces to the field of consumer research the concept of settler colonialisation and explores a different form of post-colonial arrangement in which the settlers migrate and settle permanently alongside the traditional owners of the land. Moreover, in this context of settler colonisation, the settlers wrest and retain significant economic, political, and cultural power. As a result, settlers maintain forms of control over resources (i.e., ownership of lands) that continue to affect the livelihood and wellbeing of Indigenous people and their cultures. Against this settler colonial context, Indigenous people engage in different practices to assert sovereignty, claim rights, and revive cultural identities (Land 2015). Settler colonisation is an ongoing process of negotiating and reckoning between Indigenous peoples and settlers on their traditional lands (Short 2010; Wolfe 1999). Specifically, I explore the local Indigenous and settlers' cultural tensions and demonstrate how these tensions are negotiated by the art intermediaries within the Indigenous art market. These art intermediaries also are actively involved in the exchange of art between artists and consumers, balancing the cultural-commercial tension inherent in their roles.

In the Indigenous art market, art intermediaries engage in practices to support the flourishing of Indigenous people and their cultures (Veracini 2007b, 2010). My conceptual

framework specifically explores the different power dynamics that art intermediaries negotiate between the settlers' and the Indigenous cultures when selling art. When navigating these cultural differences between Indigenous and settlers' cultures, art intermediaries engage in practices to foreground the cultural stories of the local Indigenous peoples and amplify Indigenous perspectives. For example, the cultural conduits indirectly share cultural stories after developing close relationships with Indigenous communities that produce art. They also share power with Indigenous communities through cultural expansion. The art connoisseurs orchestrate events in which artists share their cultural stories, and they exercise their knowledge of Indigenous art to introduce a wide range of Indigenous arts and styles to consumers toward expanding aesthetic appreciation. The change agents are powerful Indigenous people who directly educate consumers on important Indigenous cultural and political values while they advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples through political resurgence. Within their domains of influence and power, all art intermediaries value Indigenous cultural stories and use different methods to privilege these stories when selling art.

Aligned with prior postcolonial consumer studies, this study reveals that art markets hold potential to reclaim Indigenous cultural heritage and reassert Indigenous cultures. Yet, this study contributes a more nuanced understanding of how, through the art market, different art intermediaries navigate the cultural-commercial tensions to reframe the art market as a potential site for decolonisation. While decolonisation of settler colonial states seems improbable (Veracini 2010) and no complete end exists to this ongoing navigation of contradictions (Stewart-Harawira 2005), decolonising scholars focus on identifying spaces and practices in which Indigenous agency perseveres within the gridlocks of colonial power (Laidlaw and Lester 2015). In outlining the key ideas in building decolonising solidarity between settlers and Indigenous people, Land (2015) emphasised the necessity for settlers to

confront their complicity with forces of colonialism (Brown and Nicholas 2012; Trask 1999). Through this study on the Indigenous art market, I brought into centre stage, how art intermediaries construct market spaces (as I have termed “third spaces” in my conceptual framework) where they challenge settler colonial tendency to eliminate (Haebich 2016) and assimilate Indigenous people into dominant settlers’ cultures.

Contributions to Consumer Acculturation Research

The study’s findings and analysis contribute to consumer acculturation research by discovering different types of relationships between cultural groups that are based on cultural expansion and political resurgence. Consumer researchers studying acculturation processes and identity outcomes focus on outsiders from a different culture (such as migrants) engaging in consumption practices to *fit in* within the dominant host culture (as discussed in chapter 3). Arnould and Thompson (2005, 874) positioned these studies as “postassimilationist consumer research” in which migrant consumers are “outsiders” consuming to find one’s “place in society” (Penaloza 1994, 47). These studies also assume that failure to assimilate or fit in with the dominant cultures perpetuates the defamation, stigmatisation, and discrimination of people from the dominant host culture (Penaloza 1994; Sandıkçı and Ger 2010; Üstüner and Holt 2007). Thus, Luedicke (2015) conceptualises this acculturation process as a relational and mutually adaptive process between the immigrant and indigene consumer groups. Focusing on the Turkish-Austrian relationship, Luedicke (2015) demonstrates that these immigrant-indigene relationships are full of conflicts and tensions.

Building upon Luedicke’s (2015) conceptualisation and findings, I also focus on the relationships between local Indigenous cultures and settlers’ cultures. Unlike the immigrant-indigene relationships described by Luedicke (2015) that are filled with underlying hostility and fears; however, I have found relationships between cultural groups that show significant

potential for reconciliation. As I have proposed in the conceptual framework, these involve art intermediaries playing different roles in centring of cultural stories from the Indigenous cultures and a change in power dynamics in the settler-Indigenous relations. In the context of Indigenous art market, art intermediaries such as cultural conduits share power with people from Indigenous cultures as the Indigenous artists and the communities retain control over how Indigenous cultures are expressed. Art intermediaries such as art connoisseurs share their network of followers and clients with Indigenous artists to increase the exposure of Indigenous cultures in local settlers' cultures as well as in global cultures. The change agents strive to maintain cultural integrity and preserve Indigenous perspectives by challenging outsiders' biases towards Indigenous people and cultures, which then fosters mutual understanding. Overall, my findings reveal a different set of relationships between cultural groups that are grounded in comradeship, collaboration, and equality.

To apply the conceptual framework to the contexts that concern the relationships between immigrants and the dominant cultures, researchers would focus on understanding how the immigrant consumers express their cultural identities through their pro-sumption activities within the markets and how the dominant cultural group support these cultural expressions. After all, immigrants are not only consumers of consumer culture but producers as well. For example, in looking at Mexican consumers in the U.S., how do Mexican consumers practice various arts and crafts (i.e., "artesanía"), such as the art of cooking or weaving with palm fibres, to maintain their native Mexican cultures? Instead of blending in, integrating, or assimilating, what do they do to stand out and express their Mexican cultures through the market? Moreover, how do consumers from dominant cultural groups contribute to the thriving and expression of Mexican cultures?

Therefore, this study contributes an alternative lens through which to view consumer acculturation beyond postassimilationist assumptions. Specifically, the study introduces the

postcolonial and decolonisation theoretical perspectives (Martineau and Ritskes 2014; Tuck and Young 2012) that shift the attention on how reconciliation is possible. Might it be through marginalised groups asserting their voices against dominant cultural groups or dominant cultural groups creating spaces that support different cultural expressions? I am not suggesting that no conflicts or tensions exist between two cultural groups. Instead, in line with the tradition of postcolonial scholars, I suggest future studies to further investigate how power imbalance between two cultural groups can be restored and reversed that could result in positive outcomes such as cultural expansion, aesthetic expansion, and political resurgence. In other words, it would require subsequent studies asking a different set of questions aimed at capturing how consumers from a particular cultural group exercise their power and agency to overcome stigmatisations and discriminations against other cultural groups. As for the consumer of the dominant cultures, how are they involved in advocating for the cultures of the minority or marginalised groups?

Implications in Indigenous Art Marketing

In addition to the aforementioned theoretical contributions to consumer research, this study also has practical implication for different stakeholder groups who are part of the growing Indigenous art markets. Currently, limited scholarship explores the important role of art intermediaries within the market. I contribute to this area of knowledge by highlighting the nuanced role played by art intermediaries and the multiple tensions that they face in their interactions with artists, communities, and consumers. Importantly, the study identifies common practices of these art intermediaries who are experienced, well-respected, and have demonstrated success within the Indigenous art markets. Irrespective of their positionality and roles within the market, they insist that Indigenous people, their cultures, and their stories at the centre of all market interactions. Future research might explore the different modalities

of storytelling (i.e., written stories, zoom interviews, videos) for their various efficacy in forging strong connections with potential consumers.

In contrast to the negative portrayals of art dealers engaging in unethical practices that are often highlighted by news reports, the art intermediaries involved in this study challenge these negative stereotypes. They are adamant about forming trusted relationships with either the artists, the communities, or both. They are reflective of their position of influence as they use their power to create opportunities to share cultural stories of Indigenous people with wider societies. Collectively, they work towards educating consumers about the cultural meanings of the art, garnering their respect and acknowledgment towards enhancing the significance of Indigenous cultures and peoples. Therefore, it is suggested that, for art intermediaries to maintain their position and influence within the market, it is a best practice to always honour, respect, and acknowledge that Indigenous cultures and arts belong to the Indigenous people.

By extension, such practices need to contribute towards ensuring that Indigenous peoples maintain their rights to protect their cultures and control how the art is circulated and shared within the markets. For instance, one of the cultural conduits formed a steering committee with Indigenous representatives who ensure that art and cultures are not distorted through the market. They also collaborated with Indigenous communities to indigenise marketing sites, such as galleries and museums. Additionally, one of the Indigenous art intermediaries in this study who is a change agent, only leases art instead of selling art as a way to retain Indigenous ownership of art and culture. Future research could explore different practices and guiding principles that protect Indigenous cultures, creating a space in which Indigenous people can continue to express their cultures and arts through the market. In addition, the call for decolonisation of market spaces, specifically museums, has been a key debate for over two decades (Aldrich 2009; Bodenstein and Pagan 2014). Future research that

focuses on ways to indigenise market spaces that challenge the legacies of colonising ideologies could be beneficial and value-creating for all stakeholders involved.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, I have focused on the Indigenous art markets in Australia as the context and this might not be representative of other art markets and other settler contexts (i.e., Maori art markets in New Zealand or Tarahumara mask makers in Chihuahua Mexico art markets). For example, in some settlers' colonies, Indigenous people have greater power restored through treaties, such as the Treaty of Waitangi that protected Maori people's land rights. Nevertheless, I argue that an approach that focuses on a relational study of the power dynamics of minority/majority populations would still be useful. This further suggests that future research could investigate other Indigenous art markets being attuned to these power dynamics. As I have highlighted, with the introduction of settler colonisation, further research could investigate different markets in other settler colonial societies.

One interesting site of research is the Native American art market in the United States. According to art historian and director of Museum of the American Indian in New York City, Frederick Dockstader (2020), Native American art tend to occupy a peripheral role in the contemporary art market. But this position is shifting. In the last few decades, due to concerted efforts of a few museums specialising in exhibiting Native American art, greater interest is emerging. For example, Kinsella (2020) reported in *Artnews* that, after being marginalised and stereotyped into narrowly defined categories for a long period of time, art works by Native American, First Nation, and other indigenous artists are being acquired by institutions that resulted in rising of prices. As quoted by Kinsella (2020), a curator of Native American art at the Seattle Art Museum, Barbara Brotherton states, "We're just in this

modern moment where it's gaining cachet from venues like art fairs, contemporary galleries, and biennials...What is contemporary Native American art, and where does it belong? In some ways we're still having those discussions." Tracking the similar trajectories between the emergence of a contemporary market for Indigenous art in Australia and the Native American art in the U.S., it is worth exploring how my conceptual framework can be applied to understand the power dynamics among these art intermediaries, the artists, and consumers.

Subsequently, as highlighted in chapter 2 of this thesis, the Indigenous art market is incredibly complex consisting of multiple groups of stakeholders. One key limitation of this study is that I only strategically focused on art intermediaries to help develop our understanding of the dynamics within the Indigenous art markets. However, Indigenous artists are increasingly gaining more skills and knowledge within the art markets and many artists independently represent their artwork through various digital marketing platforms including Instagram. Thus, for future research, it would be valuable to capture the voices and perspectives of the Indigenous artists in their interactions and engagements with the market stakeholders. For example, only sampling art curators who self-identify as people of Indigenous descent (Native Americans in the United States and First Nations in Canada), Vamanu (2020) identified the two main goals of Indigenous curatorship, which include activism and engagement of the public. These findings overlap with my findings that change agents are similarly engaged. In addition, recognising that I have sampled both Indigenous and non-Indigenous art intermediaries in my study, future research can focus more on capturing Indigenous voices to understand Indigenous peoples' activism and engagement through the market. This could be through the art markets or other markets such as Native or Indigenous food businesses.

Conclusion

The Indigenous art markets in Australia is dynamic and evolving, which encompasses multiple groups of market stakeholders navigating layers of tensions and challenging status quo. In this study, I have outlined the historical and sociocultural factors that have influenced the emergence of this art market. Focusing on the art intermediaries, I have captured the complexities and nuances in their role that shape the exchanges and power dynamics within the art markets. Emerging from the findings were three groups of art intermediaries who construct different meanings of art, engage in different practices and form different power relationships with the Indigenous artists, communities and the consumers. I have then proposed a conceptual framework that honour the centrality of Indigenous cultural stories in all the art exchanges through the market. Reimagining the art market as a site of decolonisation and reassertion of Indigenous cultures, I have identified the three different ways where settler-indigenous tensions are navigated which create spaces where Indigenous agency prevails, and Indigenous cultures are revived.

As discussed in this chapter on contributions and future research, it is envisioned that this study opens new areas of research and inquiry. Particularly, I call for researchers to study art markets and the role of art intermediaries with more sensitivity towards the legacies of colonisation. As I have demonstrated in this study, some art markets are entangled within the gridlock of settler colonising structures. Through the lens of decolonisation, power relationships among market stakeholders can surface for analysis to better understand the effects on the cultures and well-being of Indigenous communities. With a decolonising agenda that involves re-centring of Indigenous people's relationship to culture, future arts marketing research can further explore how can art marketers engage in practices that can continue to honour the cultures and histories of the Indigenous people. As I have only focused on the art intermediaries of the Indigenous art markets, there are potential areas to

further explore other stakeholder groups such as the art consumers and art collectors. Similarly, future research of consumer cultures and consumption practices should also focus on challenging the legacies of settler colonisation and investigate how traditionally marginalised and stigmatised consumers might engage in activism to create a more inclusive space in the market. Furthermore, what would be the potential dark side of this decolonial movement for freedom and equality? Instead of relationships of conflicts and hostility, how can relationships of cross-cultural collaboration and expansion be fostered through the markets?

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Appendix 1: Interview Protocol

RESEARCH AIMS:

- **To understand the operations of commercial galleries / art businesses and its engagement with key stakeholders**
- **To understand the opportunities and tensions arising through the engagement with various key Indigenous art market stakeholders**
- **To understand the marketing of Indigenous art and its main customers**

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

- 1. Outline of Interview Purpose (Plain Language Statement)**
- 2. Consent Explanation Script (Consent form)**
 - a. Recording explanations.
 - b. Project explanations.
 - c. Confidentiality and withdrawal explanation.
 - d. Request for verbal consent: participation and audio recording.
- 3. Rapport Building and Background Questions**

Keeping in mind that your responses are confidential, and your identity is anonymous.

1. Could you please tell me about your training and experiences that prepared you for your current position?
2. Tell me about your current job and responsibilities.

4. Interview Questions

Key Domains	GRAND-TOUR Questions and Possible Probes
Supply of art (relationship with artists and art centres)	• I'm really interested in how you go about sourcing your artwork. Can you please tell me about the processes that you go through to search for and source your artwork? ○ Can you talk me through your approach to representing your artists and their artwork? • Now I'd like to move to discussing the relationships with artists and art centres. Can you please contrast for me a successful relationship that you have had with an artist or an art centre with an unsuccessful relationship? What was the history of these relationships, and what were the positives/problems? ○ Can you share some other stories about the opportunities and challenges of working with artists? • In addition to the artists, who are the main stakeholders with whom you have built relationships in sourcing the art pieces? ○ Can you elaborate more on your experience in working with them?
The larger art market for indigenous art and galleries as intermediaries	I'm really interested in your experiences of the Indigenous art market broadly. • Starting with how the Indigenous art market has evolved over the time that you have been involved, can you describe to me how the work being produced by artists has changed? • On the flip-side of the indigenous art market, can you tell me about how demands by customers have changed? ○ (Can you explore if and how you educate the artists about customer tastes or educate customers about artists' styles?) • Can you share a story about an artist whose work you have successfully promoted? (Tell me more about how you worked to promote this artists' work. Can you tell me about art work that is easier to promote?) • In contrast, can you share a story about an artist whose work has so far not been successful? (Tell me more about the challenges. Can you tell me about specific art work that is more difficult to promote?) It would be great to explore how you work as an intermediary between indigenous artists and the art buyers. • Can you describe some of the unique challenges and opportunities in your position as an intermediary between artists and buyers?

Consumption of art (consumers and buyers)	We have been talking about the various key stakeholders such as the community art centres and the artists, now I would really like to understand more about your clientele. • Can you tell me more about the different clientele that your gallery serves? ○ What are these customers usually looking for when they are buying Indigenous art? I'd like to now explore the balance that you strike between meeting the tastes of your clients, while at the same time educating your clients. • Can you tell me about a time when you have experienced tensions between meeting the cultural tastes of your clients, while also attempting to educate and shape their tastes?
External influences (government and policies)	Let's now move to talking about the role of outside influences – such as government policy – on the indigenous art market. • Can you talk me through the outside factors or influences that are currently hindering greater growth and expansion in the indigenous art market? ○ Can you tell me more about the various government interventions that influence the gallery? ○ What government policies have helped and hindered the indigenous art market? ○ Can you give me a specific example of how you have had to change your practices in response to governmental policies?

5. Concluding Questions

- It is an aim of this project to improve and expand the market for indigenous art.
With this in mind, what would be the best way to distribute the research findings?
- Are there any additional insights that would help me understand the indigenous art market?
- Might you recommend another gallery owner or manager that I should include in my study?
- Thank you so much for your time and insights.

Appendix 2: Plain Language Statement



Faculty of Business and Economics Department of Management & Marketing

Project Title: Caught in the Middle: Understanding the Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art Market

HREC Project Number: 1851203.1

Dear Sir/Madam,

We invite you to participate in a research project being conducted by the Department of Management and Marketing at the University of Melbourne. This is a Doctorate research project that studies the contemporary Indigenous art market in Australia.

Purpose: The aims of this research are to understand: (1) the operations of commercial galleries / Indigenous art businesses and its engagement with key stakeholders and (2) the marketing of Indigenous art and its main customers.

Research Process: In this interview, you will be asked questions about your experience being involved in the art gallery and in engaging with the various stakeholders such as the artists and the buyers. You could expect this interview to take about one to two hours and it will be conducted at a venue that is convenient and comfortable for you. There is no right or wrong answer. All interviews will be audio-recorded for the purpose of the research project. Please be advised that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

Confidentiality and data use: If you consent to participate, your responses will be kept confidential. All interviews will be transcribed and can only be accessed by Ai Ming Chow and her supervisors Dr. Michal Carrington and Prof. Julie L. Ozanne. Once the interview recordings have been transcribed, any personally identifiable information will be removed from the transcript documents. This data will be retained for a minimum of five years after publication. In resulting research publications, you will be referred to by a pseudonym only.

All information will be stored in compliance with University of Melbourne guidelines in safe storage and/or in softcopy password protected files in the principal researcher's computer. A copy of the results of the study is available to you, if you wish to be sent a copy.

The information that we collect may be used for research, teaching purposes and publication in academic and industry outlets (e.g. conferences, journals, magazines). The data collected for this research may also be used in future projects that are closely related to this project.

Participation incentive: If you would like to be compensated for your time commitment, participants in this interview will be financially compensated at a rate of \$30/hour.

Possible effects: Minimal risks, effects, discomforts or inconveniences are foreseen. There is a small chance of identifiability due to the small sample size and all participants working in the same sector.

Any questions?: For any questions or concerns regarding the conduct of this research, please contact Ai Ming Chow (ai.chow@unimelb.edu.au) or Dr. Michal Carrington (michal.carrington@unimelb.edu.au) or Prof. Julie Ozanne (julie.ozanne@unimelb.edu.au).

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research

Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

Thank you for your assistance,
Ai Ming, Chow

Appendix 3: Consent Form



Management and Marketing, Faculty of Business and Economics

Consent form for person participating in a student research project:

Name of participant: _____

Name of investigator(s): Ai Ming Chow, under supervision of Dr. Michal Carrington and Prof. Julie L. Ozanne _____

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.
2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form, it will be retained by the researcher.
3. I understand that my participation will involve an interview and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.
4. I acknowledge that:
 - (a) the possible effects of participating in the interview have been explained to my satisfaction;
 - (b) I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
 - (c) the project is for the purpose of research and data used in this research project may also be used in future projects that are closely related to this project;
 - (d) the information that I provide will be kept confidential and will only be accessible to the researchers involved in this project;
 - (e) with my consent, the interview will be audio-recorded and I understand that data will be retained for a minimum of five years after publication;
 - (f) I will be referred by pseudonym in any publication arising from research;
 - (g) there is a small chance of identifiability to the small sample size and all participants working in the same sector.

I consent to this interview being audio-recorded

☐ **yes** ☐ **no**
(please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings

☐ **yes** ☐ **no**
(please tick)

Participant signature: _____

Date: _____

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.