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Shadows of exile: an installation of puppet, masks and musical instruments

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Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

SHADOWS OF EXILE

An Installation of Puppets, Masks and Musical Instruments

Kraig Grady

**This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of
Masters of Creative Arts – Research (MCA-R)
of the
University of Wollongong**

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ABSTRACT

My creative research project includes an installation and an exegesis. The project investigates whether installation art can materialise an imagined space that might externalise the experience of exile. I explore the potential for installation art to incorporate elements that are traditionally found in performance and to recontextualise them in an immersive and playful environment. This project draws on three decades of my creative practice including shadow theatre, silent films, fictional narratives, musical performance and composition with handcrafted instruments which have been situated in a mythopoetic space called *Anaphoria Island*. The current work attempts to make tangible this space in an installation that draws on a variety of media, my own experience of exile and my multi-faceted cultural background of nine different ethnicities.

The installation is realised through the method of bricolage as a creative approach in order to illuminate multiple perspectives of exiles, consolidated into a single space. The project also investigates how contemporary art practices such as Ilya Kabakov's concept of 'total installation' can be used to create an immersive environment in which the viewer becomes an active participant in the work. The installation comprises a variety of constructed artefacts arranged in front of LED lighting displays that draw attention to the contrast between materiality and shadow. These artefacts were created through experimentation during the studio work with found objects and materials, such as bamboo, fabric, shoemaking material, plaques and discarded furniture. Using strategies such as bricolage and 'total installation', the final work aims to investigate the capacity of installation art to project the multiple experiences and personifications of exile.

Keywords

exile, installation art, bricolage, shadow puppets, 'total installation'

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1. INTRODUCTION

My creative research project is composed of an installation and an exegesis. The aim and objective of the project has been to explore how installation art can materialise a mythopoetic space known as *Anaphoria Island* in order to externalise the experience of exile. The project also investigates the potential of installation art to incorporate elements such as puppets, masks and musical instruments that are traditionally found in performance. It explores how these elements can be recontextualised into an immersive environment in order to both engage and problematize the experience of exile.

Aims and Objectives

The project has been informed by research into installation art, ‘total installation’, bricolage, shadow and shadow puppet theatre. Artists whose work has informed my studio practice include Ilya Kabakov, William Kentridge, Christian Boltanski, Kara Walker and Lotte Reiniger. The theoretical concept of ‘total installation’ as formulated in the 1980s by the Russian artist Ilya Kabakov served as the primary model and point of reflection in putting the *Shadows of Exile* installation together. The other artists provided different approaches of working with silhouettes and/or bricolage. The key feature of ‘total installation’ is that it provides an immersive environment using the technique of bricolage to bring together many diverse elements. Bricolage, which historically has an association with mythopoetic thought (Levi-Strauss 1966 p.17), is indispensable for consolidating my reflections on exiles, the displaced individuals who collect and collate scattered memories and relics of their lost original cultures.

Experimentation with shadow puppets was central to my project. Scholarly research into puppetry in terms of performance is limited, with few studies in comparative puppetry outside of the occasional survey of different national or cultural traditions. An example is ‘Shadow Theaters of the World’ (Chen 2003), an article that appeared in the journal *Asian Folklore Studies*. This paper serves as a useful introduction but a more in-depth study would be welcome. In light of this, my research has focused on the use of silhouettes and shadows by contemporary artists such as William Kentridge, Christian Boltanski, Kara Walker and the German pioneer of silhouette animation Lotte Reiniger.

Background

Installation art is a new endeavour in my practice. The theoretical underpinning of ‘total installation’ conceived by Kabakov offers an immersive space in which the viewer is allowed to complete the work. This form involves a decentralized experience in the space where each experience is considered equal and possible.

Anaphoria Island is central to my project for it serves as the space in which the experience of exile is externalized through ‘total installation’. *Anaphoria Island* is an on-going artistic venture that started with a series of musical concerts in 1993 and was eventually located at an online space in 1996 (Figure 1). It acts as a home for my varied work in shadow theatre, music, instrument building, visual art and speculative cultural fiction. The website is structured as an embassy that reveals a narrative about the island and its cultural pursuits. *Anaphoria Island* condenses many different themes into a single symbol that is continuously developing. Carl Jung describes a symbol as that which “signifies something more and other than itself which eludes our present knowledge” (1977 p.475), and this characterisation reflects my own experiences with *Anaphoria Island* as something enigmatic and constantly growing. The name *Anaphoria* has various meanings. For example, it relates to Henri Corbin’s use of the word *anaphora* as “the act of raising up” (1986 p.57) as well as the medical term *anaphoria* which denotes “a tendency of resting eyes to turn upward” (*The American Heritage Stedman's Medical Dictionary* 2007). The latter reference conjures Jung’s comment that the “gods have become diseases” (1967 p.37) with regard to forces that are bigger than the individual.

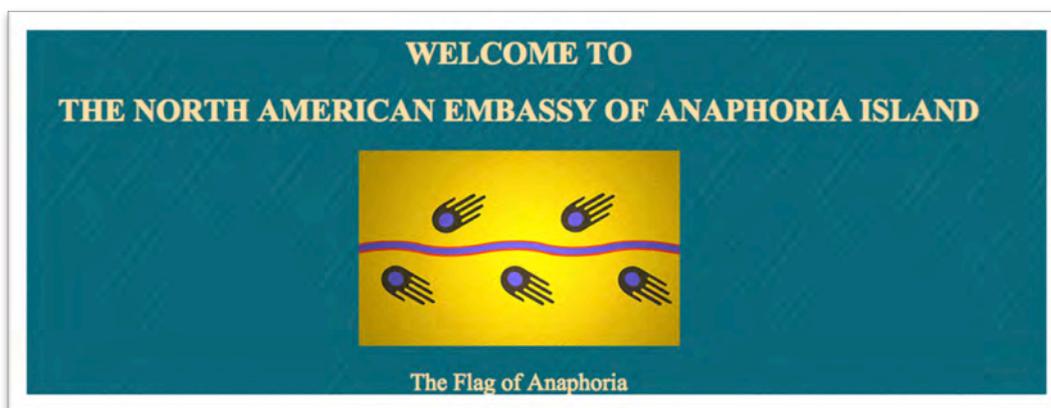


Figure 1: Kraig Grady (1996 - ongoing) *North American Embassy of Anaphoria Island*, website <http://anaphoria.com/index.html>

Anaphoria Island is described on its website as an “Isle of Exiles” which is a crucial aspect of this project. An important influence on my thinking about *Anaphoria Island* is theatre director Eugenio Barba who as an artist in exile talked about “the desire to remain foreigners” (1986 p.10) as a necessary condition for his activity. He likened his theatre group to a “floating island... which can detach itself from the solid ground of terra firma yet remain cultivatable, becoming strong by exploiting its weaknesses, rediscovering its own identity, its own being, through difference with others” (1986 p.19). A unique feature of my own work in shadow theatre is that the puppets I make are informed by puppet designs from a range of cultural traditions that reflect Barba’s idea of a theatre of exile. My approach to puppetry has been discussed in an article by Matthew Cohen published in the *Asian Theatre Journal* (2007). In his article, Cohen pointed out that my previous shadow theatre work, as archived in *Anaphoria Island*, involved cross-cultural uses of puppetry that represented exiled characters and captured the perspective of the exile in the contemporary transnational context. In this current project, my focus has shifted from a concern with traditional shadow puppet influences primarily from Asia, to the development of new puppets that are informed by Western iconography and cultural artefacts.

Anaphoria Island is a site to unify my unsettled sense of place. As an online space it is anything but fixed with the potential for constant development and expansion. This fluidity allows continuous adjustments to be made according to the influx of new ideas that may find a home in *Anaphoria*, having been exiled perhaps from elsewhere. Many of the artistic forms in which I have worked – whether music in experimental tuning systems, silent film or shadow puppetry – tend to exist outside the mainstream and might be considered forms that are exiled from more standard practices. My personal interest in the experience of exile and cross-cultural perspectives stems from my own background: I am a descendant of nine different ethnicities, including Native American (*Ojibwe*), and have relocated most recently to Australia. I grew up aware of a tension regarding my Native American ethnicity passed down from my mother’s side, as we were not recognized by present day tribal authorities because my ancestors did not register themselves with the government as members of a specific tribe at the time when many Native Americans were encouraged to assimilate into a single larger nation. This registration would later determine the ownership of property and assets within each

tribe. While I have no interest in such assets, the decision of my ancestors to assimilate forever blocked me from being recognised as a member of the *Ojibwe* tribe. Unfortunately this makes the Native American part of me an exile in my own native land.

The closest to ‘home’ I have felt was in Los Angeles, where I lived for over a half century and felt a relationship with the land. This city does not, however, inspire a stable sense of identity: although it is a site of enormous cultural significance for the Western world, as expressed through cinema and popular culture, the everyday reality for its inhabitants is one of decentralisation and significant social, racial and economic diversity.

In order to support myself in Los Angeles, I worked as a scenic artist in film and television. I developed my own projects that involved silent films and live music (1983-1989), and later created an opera called *War and Pieces* (1990) that involved live performers. Soon afterwards in the mid-1990s I found in shadow puppet theatre an ideal medium between working with live performers and a screen to represent and characterize *Anaphoria Island* and its inhabitants. After working in this medium for nearly twenty years, I became aware of the potential for various elements of shadow theatre to be used in a static art installation that is independent of a performance. I also became interested in the possibility of suggesting multiple narratives through the visual design of puppets and their settings, without relying on words or actions.

The current project also draws on some of my early artistic practice from the 1970s, when I built musical instruments with different tuning systems following the example of American ‘hobo’ artist Harry Partch. In his book *Genesis of a Music* (1974), Partch outlined a theory of ‘corporeal music’ that led to the development of instruments that not only sounded different because of their unusual tuning to capture the subtlety of human speech intonation, but also looked different and coerced the performer into dance-like gestures to play them (Figure 2). Partch sought to relocate music as an element of theatre, much as it was in ancient Greece. The visual and expressive character of Partch’s instruments distinguished his work from the Western idea of abstract music where the visual elements are not considered. To further his project, Partch sought models from a range of non-Western musical traditions that did not separate music from other cultural practices such as ritual or theatre. Partch’s approach

of embracing various cultural influences has influenced my own work, as archived in *Anaphoria Island* and in my current installation project.



Figure 2: Betty Freeman (1970) *Harry Partch and His Instruments*, photograph.

The installation itself makes tangible my pre-existing mythopoetic space of *Anaphoria Island* by drawing on a variety of media, my own experience of exile and my multifaceted cultural background. Over the years, I have produced numerous works in a variety of art forms under the umbrella of *Anaphoria Island*. These include: eleven shadow plays performed in such places as the Pacific Asia Museum and Norton Simon Museum in Los Angeles (1996-2009), original music on custom-made instruments released on eleven CDs and LPs on four different labels (1989-2014), a world music radio program called *The Wandering Medicine Show* on KXLU-FM Los Angeles (2002-2007), as well as an art installation at Verge Gallery, University of Sydney (2012) and a sound installation in Udine, Italy (2013). These activities demonstrate the breadth and longevity of *Anaphoria Island* as more than just an imagined space but as a fruitful and on-going enterprise as a virtual producer.

Summary of the Current Research Project

The current project, the installation *Shadows of Exile*, is a move away from my previous work that relied on performance or myself as a physical presence in order to shift the focus toward externalizing *Anaphoria Island*. This website does more than simply archive my previous work; instead it complements and expands my work with details that do not fit in the context of my performance practices, such as the history and narratives of *Anaphoria Island*. Its existence on the web for nearly two decades gives it an omnipresence that is accessible to audiences without my conscious participation. The structure of the website allows the different disciplines of my practice, such as music, instrument design, fictional narrative, visual design and poetry, to be interlinked. *Anaphoria Island* has remained a stable mythopoetic space in order to place my varied selves in the different activities in which I am engaged. In my current project I attempt to relate my own experience of being in *Anaphoria Island* by using ‘total installation’ as a way to immerse the audience in this space that acts as my home for exiles.

The strategy of bricolage was used in my installation for its ability to investigate the capacity of installation art to collect together and project a sense of multiple and fragmented experiences and personifications of exile. The installation *Shadows of Exile* consisted of a large room circled by fabric, plaques and masks that contained five bamboo frames holding cloth screens, lights, shadow puppets, symbols and artefacts, as well as musical instruments that the viewer was welcome to play. The frames were arranged in contrasting angles throughout the installation. Each frame displayed a different shadow scene using various artefacts such as figures, masks and symbols that were placed both in front and behind the screen. These were backlit by LED lighting displays that drew attention to the contrast between materiality and shadow, between the real and the immaterial. The artefacts were created through experimentation during the studio work with found objects and materials, such as bamboo, fabric, shoemaking material, plaques and discarded furniture. The method of bricolage allowed for the incorporation of multiple perspectives of exile consolidated into a single space, in a ‘total installation’. It is in this ‘total installation’ that viewers could visit and be immersed in *Anaphoria Island*, which has finally become a tangible, static and immersive space.

2. SITUATING CONCEPTS FOR *SHADOWS OF EXILE* INSTALLATION

The key concepts that inform my creative research project are ‘total installation’, bricolage, exile, shadow and shadow puppets. Installation art provides the framework from which to look at exiles and it is primarily through the use of shadow puppets and shadow objects that these exiles are represented. Examples taken from contemporary art theories that explore the interrelationships between these concepts are referred to in putting together my final exegesis.

Installation Art

The project culminated in an installation using the strategy of bricolage as a result of my research into the concept and practice of installation art. Installation art is recognized by Edward Colless as a hybrid art (2001 p.11) and postmodern practice (2001 p.12) that draws upon a wide range of different approaches. This results in a variety of definitions by different artists and theorists, which are outlined below.

Installation art is commonly seen as a form that immerses the viewer into an activated space where everything presented is considered a component of the work. Julie Reiss was one of the first to recognise that the “spectator is in some way regarded as integral to the completion of the work” (1999 p.xiii). Reiss influenced another important theorist Claire Bishop in differentiating installation from sculpture: whereas sculpture is viewed from the outside as the spectator looks at or walks around the work, an installation implies a viewer actively engaging with the work (2005 p.6). Artists such as Mike Parr have created installation spaces “that required the active role (as mind and mobile body) of audience for its completion” (2001 p.19). Furthermore, the theorist Boris Groys has claimed that the self-awareness of the viewer’s body is what separates installation art from the forward facing, non-self-reflective mediums such as film or a rock concert (2009). The art historian Helen Hughes has recently commented on how both Groys and Bishop evaluate the success or failure of the installation by how self-aware the viewer becomes as a presence in the work (2013 p.23). Installation is thus recognized as being inseparable from the space where it is placed (Geczy & Genocchio 2001 p.2).

The overall medium of installation art might also be considered in relation to memory. Since the installation is often temporary, Russian born, American-based conceptual and installation artist Ilya Kabakov believes it exists best in the memory of the audience (cited in Groys 2006 p.21). He expects the viewer to experience the work in an act of reflection and memory (Haden-Guest 1998 pp.108-9). The installation is thus a remnant of a memory in its final stage like a shadow of its presentation.

Total Installation

While there is a range of approaches to installation art, such as those based on minimalism (Bishop 2005 p.50) or sensory experience (p.82), it is the ‘total installation’ formulated by Kabakov that is most relevant to my own installation project. ‘Total installation’ considers the walls, ceiling, floor, entrance and even the preliminary entrance space to be part of the work (Podoroga 2003 p.348). ‘Total installation’ is also dependent on the perspective and experience of the audience. Kabakov insists that it is the audience who completes the piece, arguing for a decentralized viewpoint where each viewer’s role is equally significant and complete, in contrast to the experience of other types of installation or creative works like sculpture where each viewer perceives or captures only one part of the work. Kabakov goes so far as to state that ideally the installation can have no single author (Groys and Kabakov 2006 p.19). I have found that this is a productive approach to installation art, particularly for this project to encompass a mythopoetical space where it was used in an attempt to engage or immerse viewers in the decentralized experiences of exiles beyond my own experience.

There is also an element of theatricality to ‘total installation’. For instance, Kabakov’s installations are staged so that the viewer can have the impression that they have just interrupted a scene or arrived after its occurrence and every element offers some clues to the overall narrative. Theatricality in Kabakov’s work is the result of his early background as a stage designer where the set is the focus in which to express these elements and provide the context of the narrative. Kabakov insists, however, that installation does what theatre cannot do: it brings together all the elements of the setting as equal, and places the spectators within the work without restricting the main focus upon actors (cited in Groys 2006 p.17). For instance, in his most famous work *The Man*

Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment (1984) (Figure 3), viewers are able to peer into an apartment through a boarded up door. There they can see a room in shambles, with walls covered with detailed plans and preparations of Russian cosmonauts. There is a spring contraption in the middle of the room and a hole in the ceiling. These clues suggest that the man shot himself through the ceiling, and act as remnants of a theatrical action that hint, rather than show, a fragmented narrative.

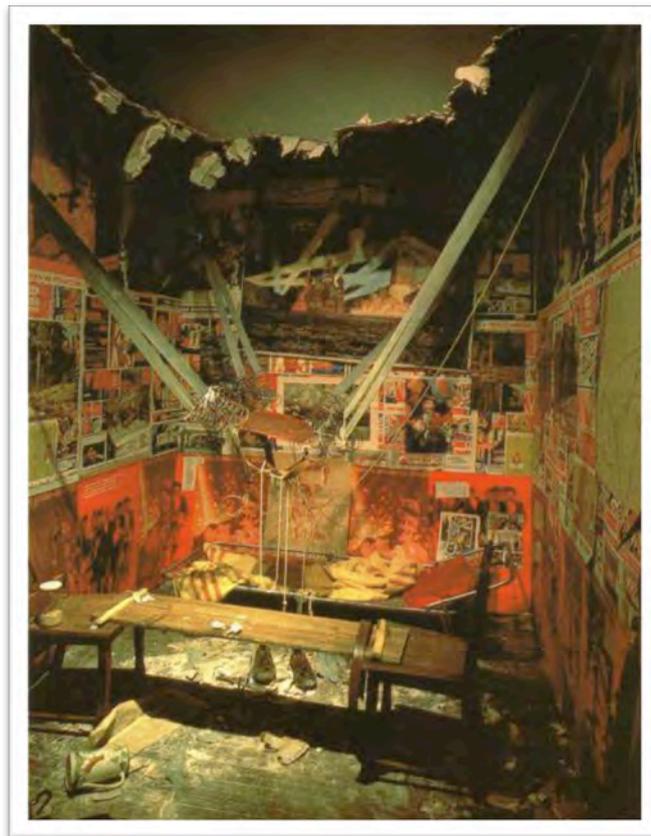


Figure 3: Ilya Kabakov (1984) *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment*, mixed media installation, New York, USA.

This theatrical background is not unique to Kabakov among artists whose work is relevant to my own installation. For example, William Kentridge also began his training in the theatre in Johannesburg (Kaplan 2005 p.28). Similarly, the Iranian-Australian artist Hossein Valamanesh, whose predominantly sculptural work deals with his state of exile, was active in Iranian theatre before his immigration to Australia (Knights and North 2011 p.9). One of the earliest installation artists in the US, Michael McMillen grew up around and later worked in the film industry (Karlstrom 1997). Besides being the installation artist whose work I have had the most access to in my life, McMillen

also shares my own background as a scenic artist in Hollywood. This training, developed through 30 years of working in the film and television industry, has allowed me to apply my skills in scenic art and set design in a different direction within the context of a 'total installation'. In the past my website functioned as the stage to establish a context, but in the installation the viewer steps into the territory of *Anaphoria Island* as opposed to viewing it via a computer screen.

Bricolage

'Total installation' draws on bricolage as a way of creating an immersive space. Colless finds installation to be a kind of bricolage that is made possible in the atmosphere of the practices that preceded it (2001 p.13). In the introduction to the book *What is Installation?*, Geczy and Genocchio find in installation art a bricolage form that has been influenced by various artistic precedents:

it is a logical result, on the one hand, of the art of gathering and assembling a mixture of found and made objects, of bricolage, and on the other, of conceptual practices such as situationism, art & language and performance (2001 p.9).

Bricolage was a key method in my own installation, reminiscent of the techniques used by early 20th century installation artists Marcel Duchamp with his 'readymades', and Kurt Schwitters with his 'Merzbau' constructions. The former allowed the incorporation of the found object, while the latter enveloped his own surroundings in large constructions within his workspace. Various performance practices of early 20th century art, such as those of the Futurists, Dadaists and John Cage, also helped to liberate materials and means of production and undermined the expectation of a central controlled focus (Zurbrugg 2001 p.28). Later in the 1960s, 'happenings' and performance art presented more performance practices that were bricolage in nature (Rosenthal 2003 p.36).

Subsequently, the installation artists discussed in this exegesis each used bricolage in different ways: Boltanski threw together cut-out fragments of figures and objects to cast shadows on the wall, Kentridge created a procession of hybrid surrealistic silhouettes that refer to earlier illustrators, and Walker juxtaposed different scenarios of slavery to heighten the reality of American racism in her black and white silhouettes. The latter two artists worked with highly charged and politically directed subjects to expose

abuses, which although not referring directly to exiles nevertheless involved similar conditions of exploitation. In my installation, bricolage was essential for capturing the exile's reliance on working with what is on hand to reconstruct their lives.

Exile

Exile, according to noted postcolonial theorist Edward Said, is “strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift that is forced between a person and a native land” (2000 p.173). Said differentiates the exile from the refugee and the expatriate: the exile is associated with the historical punishment of banishment, the refugee with the 20th century political experience of fleeing groups of people seeking international assistance, and expatriates with a voluntary relocation to foreign locales (p.181). All three of these terms could be used to describe my situation through the experiences of my ancestors' local, national and international displacement and relocation. According to Said, “We have become accustomed to thinking of the modern period itself as spiritually orphaned and alienated”, yet out of this, exile has been transformed into “a potent, even enriching motif of modern culture” (p.173).

The experience of exile for the artist can take many forms. For example, for the Roman poet Ovid the notion of exile meant crossing the boundary of the known world into the unknown world, a fate considered worse than death (Grebe 2010 p.491). For the 15th century Japanese Noh playwright and poet Zeami, the tragedy of exile is the subject of his last work *Kintosho* in which the main character manages to transcend his fate by transforming from an exile into a pilgrim (Matisoff 1972 p.449). For those Surrealists who found themselves displaced from their homelands as a result of World War II, exile was sometimes considered a disruptive form of initiation or even liberation (Chénieux-Gendron & Eastman 1996 p.437). In this way Said's ‘unhealable rift’ that is the experience of exile can be something that moves between different perspectives. For example, my own experience of not having a single origin causes me to seesaw between feeling like I have no place of origin at all, to considering all places as a potential home. Given such divergent understandings of exile across history, literature and artistic practice, the aim of my own installation was to draw on this diversity rather than reduce it to a single perspective.

It is interesting to note the number of installation artists and sculptors who identify themselves as exiles. For example, Ilya Kabakov identifies himself as ‘an orphan’ of Russian society (cited in Boym 2001 p.209), and Kurt Schwitters’ exile might have been predicted by his ‘Merzbau’ construction that served as a temporary refuge in a hostile world that he eventually had to escape (Orchard 2007). Art theorist Paul Carter has borrowed terms used to describe the Bardo in Tibetan Buddhism to provide a context for the exile of Iranian artist Hossein Valamanesh in Australia (1996 p.7). Carter claims “the impulse to identify *poieses*, or ‘making’, with *place*-making is no doubt a widespread migrant tendency” (p.2). Furthermore, Groys refers to the audience of an installation as “displaced, put into exile, forced onto foreign ground” (2009).

Often the exile will be twice removed, as in the case of Christian Boltanski, whose work deals with postmemory as an exile of time as much as space. Boltanski deliberately avoids pictures of specific holocaust victims in his work but, by reproducing and altering photographs of the period, he reconstructs new narratives to carry a collective memory of the holocaust as opposed to a specific memory tied to individual experiences (Hirsh 1996 p.678). Notably Boltanski at times works with shadows, using them to suggest remnants of otherwise inaccessible memories as in his installation *Theatre D’ombres* (1984) (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Christian Boltanski (1984) *Theatre D’ombres*, mixed media, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris / New York.

Shadow and Shadow Puppets

One of the most important founders of psychology, Carl Jung claims that the shadow represents parts of the personal subconscious whose character one finds uncomfortable (1959 p.8). Exiles often invoke in others a similar discomfort. Shadows are often associated with exiles, as seen for example in the political expression “shadow government in exile” (Plaschinsky 2012). Puppeteer Franziska Ewart claims that in the West, shadows often represent something sinister or inferior; in contrast, Eastern cultures provide examples where shadows are connected with the souls of the dead and a connection to the past (1998 p.1). For example, Ewart retells the legend of the Chinese Emperor Wu-Ti who lost his beloved, and members of his court created her likeness and projected it upon a curtain (p.2). Also within the Hindu religion, shadow puppets are worshipped as a link to the past and are considered alive (p.4) when used in performance.

Strong performance cultures of shadow puppetry can be traced in the history of Indonesia, China, India, Turkey and Greece (Ewart 1998 p.1). Shadow puppets appeared in France in the late 19th century when they were imported from China but there has been little development of the field in Europe since then (Cate and Shaw 1996 p.54). The development and sophistication in design of puppets in India, Java and Bali correspond with the religious contexts of shadow theatre in these cultures (Ewart 1998 p.6). In *Phenomenology of a Puppet Theatre*, Jan Mrazek describes the construction method of Javanese Wayang puppets as a form of montage, where certain features such as facial characteristics and clothing are heavily codified to symbolize specific traits (2005 pp.17-24). This montage technique is a type of bricolage. The puppet maker has to create a flexible design that allows for the multiple poses and expressions required of a puppet in different situations within the course of a drama (p.54). This is not unlike the flexibility required of exiles who must adapt to many different situations in which they find themselves.

In contrast, both Turkey and Greece have their own secular comic tradition based on a character called Karagoz/Karaghiozis, meaning ‘Black Eye’, who goes from one disaster to another. This tradition inspired Paolo Colombo to curate *In Praise of Shadows* (2008), one of the few exhibitions that make direct reference to shadow puppets. The name of the exhibition was drawn from a lecture by William Kentridge

with the same name, where he discussed the importance of the silhouette and the shadow. Kentridge himself borrowed the title from a book by Junichiro Tanizaki that explored the differences between Eastern and Western aesthetics. This exhibition was shown at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, and later at both the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art and the Benaki Museum, Athens. It included the works of three key artists working in silhouettes: William Kentridge, Lotte Reiniger and Kara Walker. This lecture drew Colombo's attention to the parallels between the Turkish/Greek Karagoz/Karaghiozis traditions of shadow puppetry and contemporary art strategies that share a "dialectic between the *haves* and *have nots*", and "voices of the disenfranchised" (Colombo 2008 p.14).

In his lecture, which was later published in the exhibition booklet, Kentridge suggests that the silhouette avoids "the seduction of surface, or texture and relies on essence", and "without the face, it is the body that conveys emotion" (cited in Colombo 2008 p.18). He sees in the shadow a pure image where "internal acting strategies are less expressive than what one witnesses in the image of a person" (p.18). Making a figure out of a bricolage of torn paper, Kentridge finds something emerges from the play of materials. His displays of silhouettes are the result of a bricolage of earlier artists such as Goya and Daumier with surrealistic objects taking the place of heads.

Another artist represented in Colombo's exhibition is contemporary American artist Kara Walker. Walker uses silhouettes in her installations to explore the postmemory of slavery and its abuses (Figure 5), and in doing so she forges a connection between shadows and exile. The word 'silhouette' emerged in France to describe the black scissor-cut portraits that became popular in the 1750s (Reiniger 1970 pp.11-12). Walker adopts this format, originally used by Europeans to portray themselves, in order to provide a different picture of slave owners in her work, often by placing them in bricolage tableaux. Both Kentridge and Walker have used shadows and silhouettes as a political vehicle to represent the oppressed or situations that are hidden from view. Due to the lack of detail and differentiation of parts, shadows represent what is not understood or comprehended - a condition in which exiles often find themselves.



Figure 5: Kara Walker (1995) *The Means to an End — A Shadow Drama in Five Acts*, etching on paper, University of Michigan Museum of Art, USA.

Amongst the ten artists represented in the exhibition *In Praise of Shadows*, the earliest examples belong to Lotte Reiniger, a pioneer in silhouette animation from the early 20th century. Her inclusion testifies to the level of development and refinement of her silhouettes that are yet to be surpassed. What is unique about her silhouette figures, which were created for animated films, is they are designed with many movable parts (Figure 6). This provides great flexibility, which is also a desirable quality in the creation of shadow puppets. For my own installation, a puppet I created of Nefertiti with movable shoulders was influenced by Reiniger's innovations (see Figure 19).



Figure 6: Lotte Reiniger (1926) *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, film still, Germany.

My understanding of the concepts of ‘total installation’, exile, bricolage, shadow and shadow puppets discussed in this section has been informed by the works of key artists such as Boltanski, Kabakov, Kentridge, Reiniger and Walker. My own work explores and extends the interrelationships between these key concepts through the process of bricolage which brings together found and created objects that resonate with the experiences of the exile. The processes by which these concepts shape the development of a range of shadow objects that are assembled into a final ‘total installation’ are discussed in the section that follows.

3. MY CREATIVE PRACTICE

My project is practice-based where the resulting artefacts are considered “the basis of the contribution to knowledge” instead of practice-led which is “concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice” (Creativity and Cognition Studios 2014). Like the artist Susan Kneebone, I use bricolage as a method, a mode of making and also a methodology. In her case it is used to create photomontages and in my own an installation as a way to unify different elements that both materialize and symbolize the mythopoetic nature of *Anaphoria Island*. The lack of other examples with similar goals to my installation made it challenging to find an appropriate methodology for my project.

Bricolage as Methodology

Methodology is described by Karl Popper as “not the way in which something is discovered, but a procedure by means of which something is justified” (2009 p.5). To understand how bricolage is used as a methodology, it is helpful to look at the origin and meaning of the word. The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss describes the bricoleur as “someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to a craftsman” (1966 pp.16-17). He recognizes bricolage as a science or at least a pre-science like alchemy was to chemistry: “There still exists among ourselves an activity which on the technical plane gives us quite a good understanding of what a science we prefer to call ‘prior’ rather than ‘primitive’, could have been on the plane of speculation. This is what is commonly called ‘bricolage’” (p.16). Lévi-Strauss also claims “art lies half-way between scientific knowledge and mythical or magical thought. It is common knowledge that the artist is both something of a scientist and of a ‘bricoleur’. By his craftsmanship he constructs a material object which is also an object of knowledge” (p.22). This seems to fit the aforementioned definition of practice-led research as one that “includes a creative artefact as the basis of the contribution to knowledge” (Creativity and Cognition Studios 2014).

The Oxford Dictionary (2014) defines mythopoetic as “relating to the making of a myth or myths”. Lévi-Strauss furthermore characterizes the type of “mythopoetical” thought that is relevant to my work with *Anaphoria Island* as “a kind of intellectual ‘bricolage’” (1966 p.17). It was Lévi-Strauss’ notion of bricolage that was also useful for Susan Kneebone who claims in her PhD thesis that it “enabled a mythopoetic approach by creating new connections between the materials” as well as a “process of bringing together disparate objects and archives in order to navigate and thread together other narrative connections between memory and history” (Kneebone 2010 p.21). A major difference in the use of bricolage between Kneebone’s approach and my own stems from the differences in working in photomontage and installation art: in her project Kneebone was concerned with using “art as a cultural agent for self-knowledge, understanding, reconciliation and social change” as part of “a personal journey exploring a specific place and time in [her] family history” (2010 p.10), whereas in my own project the very nature of ‘total installation’ directed me away from a personal expression of exile and instead led me towards more shared and varied experiences of exile.

Another example in which the concept of bricolage is relevant to installation art is found in its interaction and play with memory. The psychologist James Hillman claims that bricolage allows the process of psychological reflection to remain open, like “suggestions hanging in the air, an open phrase...” (1975 p.164). He states that on the other hand, “knowledge makes us able to leave it [the subject] behind” (p.164). In other words, once something resolves to some form of knowledge, it becomes all too easy to turn our attention elsewhere. If one of the goals of installation art is for the experience to be ongoing in the memory (Groys & Kabakov 2006 p.21; Haden-Guest 1998 p.108), then bricolage provides a technique to suspend conclusive knowledge while still maintaining itself as an object of knowledge. This promotes the work to be recalled in the memory in an attempt to resolve it and thus requires the viewer to complete the work.

Bricolage is also useful in my installation work in enabling three other important features: it preserves, decentralizes, and provides for synchronicity. Bricolage preserves by recycling what already exists and extracting meaning out of novel combinations. Examples in my installation include the use of discarded objects that could no longer

fulfil their original function, but were given new meaning through recontextualisation, such as curtain backing material used as screens, and old fabric to make masks. Bricolage decentralizes by undermining hierarchies and presenting all elements as necessary for the whole. For example, the bamboo frames compared to the lights and electrical transformers had different values in terms of cost in the real world, but in the installation they had, if not equal status, an inseparable existence. Bricolage also breaks down the barriers between life and art by celebrating acausal connections of objects or images that appear synchronized in time. One may, for instance, accidentally stumble on an image or material that seems to fit in an uncanny way. For example, the incident of a woman throwing a shoe at Hillary Clinton occurred while I was working on the idea of a puppet design representing a female protestor. Like the bricoleur, as presented by Lévi-Strauss, I became the installation artist who:

‘speaks’ not only *with* things... but also through the medium of things: giving an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between limited possibilities. The ‘bricoleur’ may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself into it” (1966 p.21).

This is the nature of working with what is on hand, which is what the exile must do in a new place. For Lévi-Strauss’ bricoleur, there is no separation between studio time and living time, because the moments in which things come together are indeterminate and usually unpredictable. Bricolage thus allows more of life to take part in the creative process.

The Installation

This section discusses creative outcomes from my studio research including various materials and proportions used in the installation by drawing on the concepts of ‘total installation’ and bricolage. The *Shadows of Exile* installation was exhibited in The Arts, English and Media (TAEM) Gallery at the University of Wollongong from the 26th September to 16th October 2014 (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Kraig Grady (2014) Installation view from rear of the gallery behind musical instrument, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Drawing on the practice of using preliminary space outside of the installation proper (Podoroga 2003 p.348), viewers were introduced to *Shadows of Exile* by a map of *Anaphoria Island* derived from the online *Anaphorian* map on the exterior wall of the exhibition space, in the foyer of the building. This exhibition space was a single 14 x 7 meter room. Within the shadowy space were five large screens suspended on self-supporting bamboo frames which acted as a way to organize the flow of content in the installation. Five was chosen as an appropriate number to represent motion and the unsettledness of the exile because it is an unsymmetrical prime number that cannot be resolved into equal subdivisions. This unsettledness was reinforced in the position of the frames in the floor space as shown in Figure 8. Each frame held an array of shadow puppets and masks that were lit by two LED lights housed within terracotta pots, and each structure was topped with a weathervane. The content of each frame was assembled under loosely descriptive titles or themes:

1. The Frame of Welcoming and Hope,
2. The Frame of Evil Forces,
3. The Frame of History
4. The Frame of Animal Sanctuaries, and

5. The Frame of Transcendence.

These titles were not included in the actual exhibit because they were only intended as a way for me to organise various objects into groups rather than defining a specific meaning about each frame for the viewer. Unlike Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment*, there was no central narrative. Instead each frame served as a clue to the non-linear nature of the installation whose goal was to present contrasting investigations of exile. Since the frames were of similar size to one another within the space, each held an equal point of focus. It was left to viewers to each find their own interpretations that unified the features of each frame, thus completing the installation through their active engagement with the work.

The five frames were spaced in the centre of the room, and masks and fabric were used to capture the spilt light from the frames. Runners of fabric circled the base of three walls of the exhibition space. These fabric runners were marked off at intervals with carved plaques and masks. The exit wall featured a second map above an altar of five masks with changing lights, while a display acknowledging the 'sponsors' and some *Anaphorian* 'merchandise' of CDs, LPs and business cards was placed next to the entrance/exit in a position designed to catch the attention of the viewers as they left.

Alternating with the frames were five groups of original musical instruments which, unlike the puppets, were available for the audience to play. These handcrafted musical instruments included nine large aluminium bars suspended over large tubes and a double-branched tree instrument in the back. Mallets were supplied for the audience to hit the tubes to make sounds. These original instrument designs suggested objects belonging to the exiles and the sound world from which they came.

In my installation I deliberately chose to have the puppets non-interactive. They were frozen into position as if in the middle of a shadow puppet performance rather than available for viewers to engage in their own play or performance. In this way, their presence as distinct images and their shadows held greater weight. Another rationale for this choice not to allow for interactivity was to draw attention to the assumption that puppets are usually thought of as toys or entertainment for children in the West, rather than creative objects unto themselves. Allowing for audience play would not only interrupt the carefully framed shadow display of my installation, but would diminish the

impact of the distancing experience of 'exile', the central concept explored in my creative work.

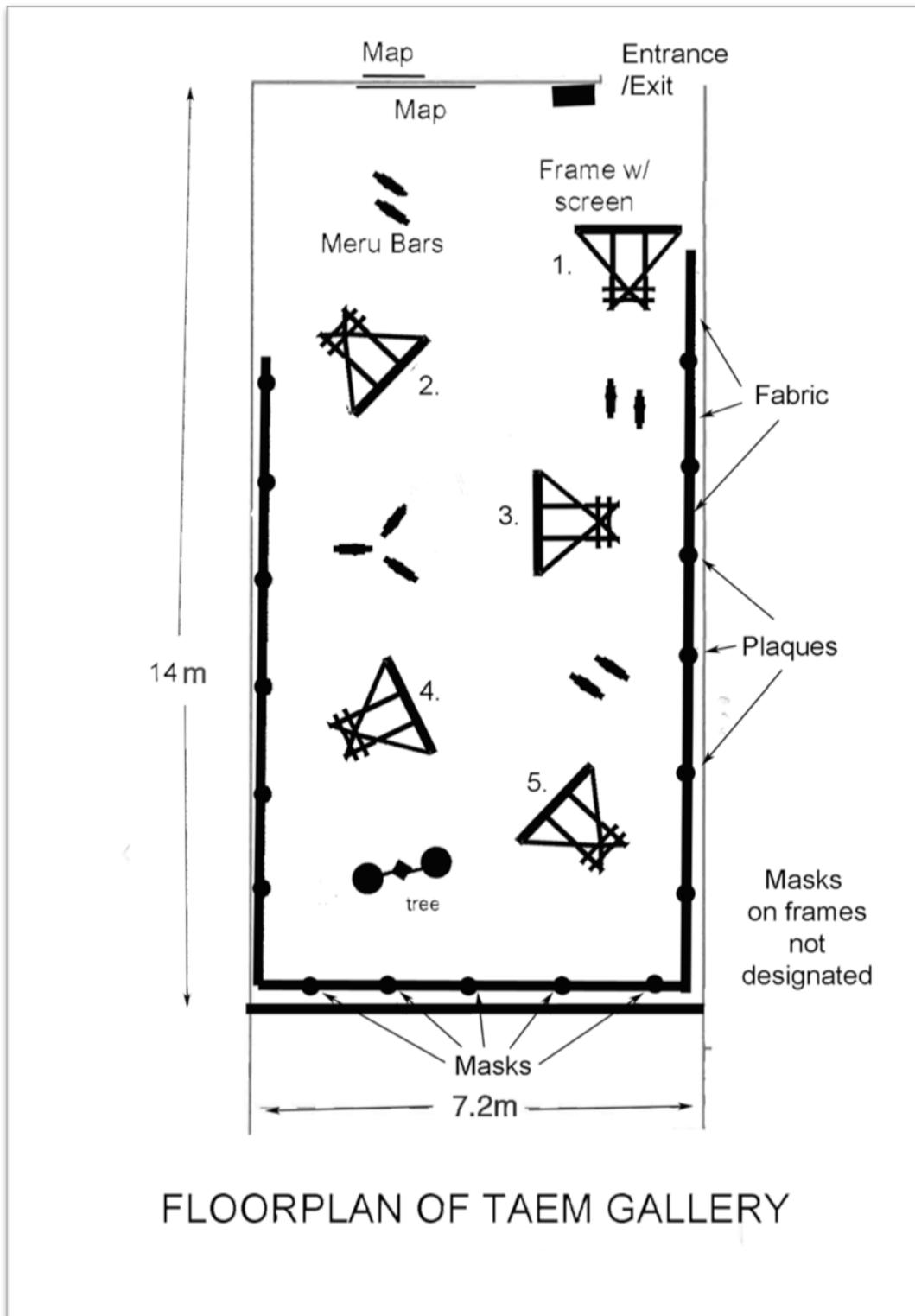


Figure 8: Kraig Grady (2014) Floor plan of *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Materials

The materials used in the installation were a bricolage of found and purchased objects, as well as natural and manufactured objects. The purpose was to represent the way that no culture is completely isolated from technological or material advancements any more, and increasingly contemporary urban materials are incorporated into traditional elements or cultural artefacts. These materials were used to make the frames, screens, puppets and shadow objects, masks, musical instruments and light setups for the installation. Details about the two maps and merchandise display at the entrance/exit of the installation and exhibition space are described in more detail later in this chapter.

The major structures in the installation were the five frames with their surrounding areas of shadows and objects. Each frame stood at 2.24 meters high and 1.78 meters wide and was made from bamboo poles donated to me from the garden of local artist Jelle van den Berg. Bamboo was chosen as the building material because it was lightweight and readily available, and it also had the potential to suggest a non-Western structure of the kind that might be found in *Anaphoria Island*, thus making this mythopoetic place more tangible. The dimensions of the design of each frame are illustrated and discussed in detail below.

To construct the frames, the bamboo poles were tied together with synthetic black bungee cord using a knot known as a Japanese square lashing illustrated in Figure 9. This knot provided superior strength compared to Western knots and could also be readjusted without having to undo it. The same black cord was also used in the musical instruments as illustrated in Figure 11. Thinner black elastic was used to attach the screens to the bamboo frames. These materials were chosen for their colour as they related to shadows, and elasticity which enabled enough tension to be exerted on the bamboo and screen to hold the structure in place, as well as allowing for adjustments that would not have been possible otherwise using natural fibres such as rope or twine.



Figure 9: Kraig Grady (2014) Japanese square lashing, studio photograph of work in progress.

The bamboo frames were used to support the screens made from curtain lining fabric that was chosen after numerous shadow tests with flashlights. The screen material had to allow shadows to be cast with a sharp edge, and at the same time disguise the hotspot of the light source to avoid a halo effect appearing on the screen. The frames and screens were arranged throughout the installation space so that viewers would approach each one from different directions by walking between, behind or past them. This encouraged visitors to view not only the front of the screen but also behind, which further helped to promote the idea of multiple viewpoints of exile in a mythical yet tangible place.

Another type of fabric used throughout the installation was a weblike scarf material that was draped on the sides of the frames to catch the light spilling from LEDs in order to cast shadows on the walls. An awareness of the currents of air coming from the air conditioning in the room also determined where to hang the cloth so that it would create movement in the space and on the walls. This fabric was also used as a stand to support the puppets as well as to make the masks, which are discussed in detail below. In addition, Javanese fabrics that were given to me as a gift from fellow postgraduate student Aprina Murwanti were wrapped around two bicycle wheels that form the musical instrument called the Tree, as well as used around the perimeter of the

installation. Placed upon this fabric was a series of plaster plaques that were salvaged from trash found near the university, and carved and painted to look old to give a sense of history. These mixed sources and origins of materials used in the installation reinforced the idea of bricolage as a creative method in my work.

The puppets and other shadow objects that were placed on the frames were made from a resinated cotton material called Celastic which was once used for making shoes. These were coloured using acrylic paint. Traditionally animal hides are commonly used for making shadow puppets due to their durability, translucence and malleability for creating detailed designs by cutting holes with chisels. While I have experimented with deer hide in the past, I found the material often warped over time, so I prefer to use Celastic for its superior quality and feel.

The puppets and shadow objects were placed in one of three basic positions: leaning against the front of the screen, or behind the screen, or near the source of light. Placing the puppets on either side of the screen allowed for the possibility of accentuating them in different ways or hiding them from view when seen from behind. The image in Figure 10 below illustrates the different possibilities: objects placed in front of the screen, such as the woman holding a baby, could be seen in full colour, whereas those placed behind, such as the mushroom on the far right, tended to be seen in shadow. With some puppets that were placed directly against the back of the screen, the light would cause the colours to seep through from behind the fabric, creating a muted effect as with the woman with the basket on her head.

Shadow objects that were placed near the light source resulted in larger and often more fragmented shadows that would sometimes overlap with others. Some puppets also had one or more movable arms that could be adapted to express actions in the various tableaux depicted on the screens. Although shadow puppets were displayed as static objects in this installation, their mobility, like that of an exile, is what separated puppets from silhouettes. For example, changing the distance and angle of the puppet in relation to the light source created different variations on the screen and these were used to accentuate particular characteristics or moods. The placement of each puppet and shadow object was chosen to represent just one of many possibilities Puppets have the potential to express more than one emotion or action and they also have the ability to

change and adapt according to their surroundings. These characteristics make puppets a suitable medium for representing the different experiences of exile.



Figure 10: Kraig Grady (2014) Close up of 'The Frame of Welcoming and Hope', *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The nine large gong-like instruments found in the installation are called Meru Bars and were made from tuned aluminium bars suspended over ABS plastic tubes that are commonly used as drainage pipes (Figure 11). These tubes were painted to look like they were made from marble instead of plastic using techniques I learned from my experience as a scenic artist for television and film in Hollywood. These instruments were placed in alternating positions with the frames. At the back of the room was another instrument called the Tree, which consisted of small metal bars that were hung from two branches (Figure 7). This instrument was mainly made from discarded objects such as branches, bicycle wheels and old wooden boxes; even the hanging bars were salvaged from a pre-existing instrument. As these examples illustrate, the exhibit was filled with many different materials that might be considered to have been 'exiled' to the trash but then rescued and reassembled into these novel instruments using the technique of bricolage.

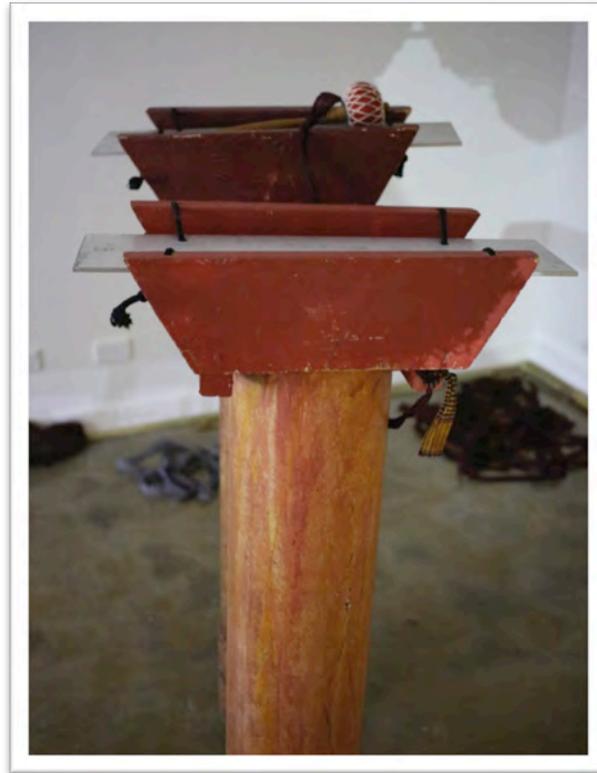


Figure 11: Kraig Grady (2014) First set of Meru Bars, musical instruments, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Finally, the sources of light for the entire installation came from a set of 15 three-watt LED lights that I soldered and placed inside terracotta flowerpots to contain their heat (Figure 12). These represent the pervasiveness and use of modern technology by people across the world. Ten of these lights were placed in pairs in the back of the frames to illuminate the screens. The light emitted also spilled over the edges of the screen to cast various shadows of hanging masks, fabric, as well as viewers on the walls as they interacted with elements of the installation. The five remaining lights were used to animate the altar of masks sitting under the interior map. The entire lighting configuration resulted in a very frugal setup that ran on only 45 watts of power.



Figure 12: Kraig Grady (2014) Terracotta pots holding 3W LED lights, studio photograph of work in progress.

Proportions

While bricolage is the principle creative and conceptual strategy for the installation, an awareness of proportions also guided the way in which elements within the exhibit were organized. For example, the instruments were specially tuned to a non-standard scale based on a complex recurrent sequence of numbers. These numbers were used in combination with the 2:1 length-to-width proportion of the room itself to determine the position of objects in the space. Furthermore, the design of the frames was also based on these proportions: the height of the standing frame was in 2:1 proportion to the width of the screen, with further subdivisions from the musical number sequence used to determine the position of supporting pieces in the frame as seen in Figure 13. The construction of the bamboo frames involved several attempts, beginning with a small-scale model made with skewers, followed by an iterative process of trial-and-error in

order to achieve a stable structure that could not only stand on its own, but could also support the puppets and terracotta pots that housed the lighting system for each screen.

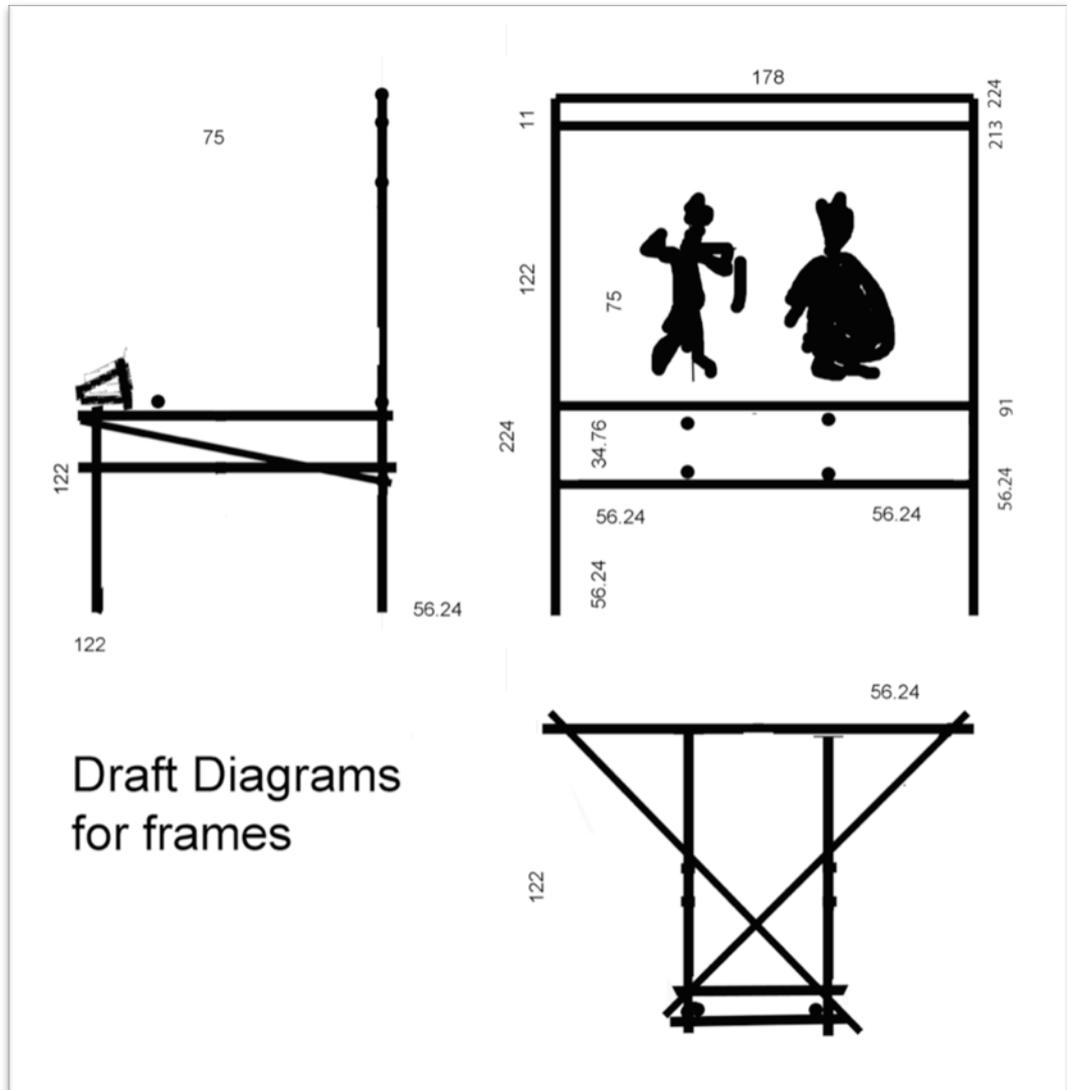


Figure 13: Kraig Grady (2014) Diagram of dimensions for frames, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Two Maps

The two maps of *Anaphoria Island* acted like signposts for the installation: one smaller black-on-white map appeared outside the entrance to the exhibition space in the foyer for Building 25 at the University of Wollongong (Figure 14), and a larger white-on-black one inside (Figure 15). These maps were created digitally in 2014 to show contour lines with much greater detail than the versions that originally appeared in the 1990s on

the *Anaphoria Island* website, then printed on a large format printer for the installation. The maps enhanced the experience of entering “a world apart from the external world” (Rosenthal 2003 p.41) and at the same time a place to which the viewer is exiled (Groys 2009). The outside map introduced the viewers to the different world they were entering, similar to an exile entering a new place. The interior map was like a shadow of the outer: its colours were reversed and the two maps appeared on opposite sides of the same wall. This interplay between reverse sides was also important in the display of puppets where the viewer was encouraged to view the front of the frame as well as behind. Like the contours of puppets whose shapes are defined by the edges they create between light and shadow, the lines of the maps also suggested the many boundaries and struggles faced by exiles in their plight.



Figure 14: Kraig Grady (2014) Exterior contour map of *Anaphoria Island*, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.



Figure 15: Kraig Grady (2014) Interior contour map of *Anaphoria Island, Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Puppets and Shadow Objects

An assortment of two-dimensional cut-outs was used in the installation to cast shadows on the screens. These consisted of various puppet characters as well as shadow objects that included natural objects like trees and clouds, as well as manmade objects like buildings and cameras.

The technique of bricolage was applied to shadow puppets on two levels. The first was in the creation of individual puppets resulting from a combination of different parts, and the second was in the way in which different puppets were brought together and arranged with other shadow elements in the installation. Bricolage also represented the way in which exiles draw upon both their past and present worlds in order to survive. Previously, my interest in shadow work focused on puppet designs from various shadow theatre traditions of Asia, including Indonesian, Thai and Chinese puppets. I found the level of refinement in the designs of these traditions offered greater possibilities for the development of my own puppets than their Western counterparts that seemed crude in

comparison, and were often made for children's entertainment. I attempted to recreate several designs from these existing traditions to gain insights into puppet making in order to achieve my long-term goal of eventually developing my own unique designs. This process of practical engagement with puppets led to various discoveries that could not have been gained through reading or theorising alone. For example, making and using these puppets over a period of more than a decade helped me understand the ergonomics of puppet design, the proportions of various body parts of puppet figures, the importance of creating shapes and characters that could be adapted to different situations, and so on. By not restricting my work to puppets from just one tradition I was able to combine various influences from different cultures as a way to synthesize my own designs. This process of bricolage also seemed appropriate for the idea of *Anaphoria Island* as a space 'in between' cultures.

In my current project, these various non-Western shadow theatre traditions were cast aside in order to explore specifically Western resources for the purpose of working within a contemporary installation art context. This led to an examination of various artists whose works were discussed in the previous chapter of this exegesis. Silhouettes found in contemporary art often reveal a connection with historical practices, for example William Kentridge's references to Daumier and Goya, or Kara Walker's use of 18th and 19th century silhouette styles to represent colonial rule. Kentridge and Walker both explored the political conditions of the oppressed in their work, often through the use of shadows and silhouettes. Similarly, sources from various forms of Western representation, including illustrations, paintings and photography, were incorporated into my designs through the process of bricolage.

My goal in creating new puppets for the installation was to capture a variety of different forms of exile, and to represent their different viewpoints. The character of each puppet emerged by asking who was left out or exiled from the puppets already made. Once a character was decided upon, images that reflected their ways of being and seeing were imagined and researched. This would lead to a process of bricolage in which different elements that reflected the many layers of a character's viewpoint would be combined and manipulated until a satisfactory form emerged to capture the character that was sought.

A specific example that illustrates this process of bricolage in the construction of shadow objects was the puppet of a policeman and his dog (Figure 16). In preparation for constructing this puppet, I researched multiple images of police officers and police dogs as well as surveillance cameras. From these sources, different elements were selected and pastiched together into a single image to represent the basic iconic shape of a policeman and his dog. To this were added various cameras for the heads and tail to represent the idea of surveillance. The puppet seemed to need another layer to its design so I experimented with adding extra arms to show the confusion of utility paraphernalia worn by police, and positioned the arms into the shape of a hidden swastika.



Figure 16: Kraig Grady (2014) Close up of the puppet of the policeman and his dog, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Since 'total installation' theorizes the idea of a theatricality without an actor (Groys 2006 p.17), this could lead to a possible objection to the use of puppets in my installation if they were to be likened to actors. Kabakov's use of characters in installation art, however, differs from how actors are used in theatre, and such a comparison also helps to illustrate the way in which puppets might relate to both. Kabakov does not completely do away with characters but instead suggests their presence in his installation art through his titles or text accompanying his work. For

example, in *The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment*, the existence of the man in the title is suggested through the impression left by his actions on the room even though he is not seen in the actual installation itself. In the same way each frame area in my installation might be seen as a scene that precedes, follows or is stopped midway in performance. Another important aspect of *The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment*, and one that is not true of the actor except in rare cases, is that the character is frozen into an eternal state from which no further development is seen. It is like a statue. This is the same with the puppets in my installation. While in shadow theatre puppets can undergo the same transitions as an actor, in my installation they represent eternally frozen characters whose positions have been fixed in order to suspend the resolution of their narratives.

The Five Frame Areas

The displays in and around each of the five frame areas also illustrate the use of bricolage in arranging various elements in the installation. Each frame is discussed separately under the unofficial titles that helped shape the contents of the screens, starting with the first one at the entrance of the installation.

The first Frame of Welcoming and Hope, was a bricolage of diverse women who might be seen at an airport or some other place where people embark on a journey (Figure 17). All the puppets faced towards the direction in which viewers were guided into the installation space. There is a personal significance in the Native American woman carrying a sleeping child that relates to my own matriarchal lineage with the *Ojibwe* tribe, from which I have been excluded or exiled. The procession of female puppets followed a candle of light held by an arm inside a cloud (Figure 18). This light represented the feeling of hope for the exile that enters a new place. It also reflected the sense of anticipation that viewers may bring with them when entering an installation and captured the spirit in which they were welcomed into the space.



Figure 17: Kraig Grady (2014) The Frame of Welcoming and Hope, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.



Figure 18: Kraig Grady (2014) Candle on The Frame of Welcoming and Hope, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The second Frame of Evil Forces was presented with the rear side of the screen seen before the front as one entered the space (Figure 19). This particular frame showed the fear the exile remembers or might be confronted with in a new place. Various hybrid puppets, like the policeman and his dog with surveillance cameras as heads, or a figure whose head had been replaced with a guillotine, were pieced together in a bricolage that represented dark forces beyond the control of the exile. Puppets were set on both sides of the screen but those in front were not visible from the back. The shoe thrower, who expresses the strongest resistance to injustice, was placed in front of the shadow of Ned Kelly, the famous Australian exile from the law. The presentation of this screen was informed by some of Kara Walker's work in that many disparate events were presented simultaneously on a single picture plane. A further sense of discomfort was created by the masks and their shadows on the walls: here the light extended over the boundaries of the frame to project images on the walls as though reaching out to some world beyond the arbitrary borders of the screen.



Figure 19: Kraig Grady (2014) *The Frame of Evil Forces*, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The identity of some of the shadows in the installation was deliberately obscured so that what was revealed on the reverse side of the screen encouraged viewers to take in

multiple views of the display, and to discover what kinds of hidden figures were creating the shadows they saw. For example, the two rectangular shadows at the top of the second Frame of Evil Forces were produced by the contour of the Twin Towers, suggesting the fear that overhangs the memory of the world following the events of 9/11, and which also hangs over much of what the exile might experience as an aftermath, even if not directly connected with these events.

The third and central frame was The Frame of History (Figure 20). It included puppets and other objects that were rooted in historical figures and places that re-emerged in various hybrid forms. For example, the ‘hobo’ musician Harry Partch was combined with a Rembrandt-like beggar and appeared to be begging from an even older period in time symbolized by the aloof figure of Nefertiti. Other hybrid puppets included a Victorian-style underwater device that harked back to historical technologies in a Steampunk fashion, while above it flew a medieval angel of five rings with wings and the head of a bird. Various backgrounds were also used to cast shadows, including Stonehenge and the mythical Tower of Babel. These and the Mayan-looking puppet implied extinct civilisations that are no longer accessible.



Figure 20: Kraig Grady (2014) The Frame of History, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The fourth Frame of Animal Sanctuaries provided a safe haven of a type that should be offered to exiles, but sadly seems only to exist for animals, not fellow human beings (Figure 21). Among the animals was a hybrid between one of Jean Cocteau's Minotaurs from his film *Testament of Orpheus* (1960) and Vaslav Nijinsky as the faun from the ballet *L'après-midi d'un faune* (1912). This frame also included a kind of Babylonian bull that paid homage to similar images that were destroyed in recent times in Iraq in an attempt to give this mythical beast an externalized presence, as well as a bowerbird – known as an avid collector of objects – combined with a cornucopia that became a kind of mascot for the bricoleur (Figure 22).



Figure 21: Kraig Grady (2014) *The Frame of Animal Sanctuaries*, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The exception in this display was the figure of Julian Assange who at the time of this writing was trapped in an embassy, a sanctuary of sorts but also his prison (Figure 21). Assange represented a modern-day messenger who is sent into exile for trying to expose the truth. The screen played with the idea that only the animals were listening to what he had to say. The puppet of Assange was placed in front of the screen whereas all the animals were placed behind to show the separation that needs to be bridged between their two worlds.



Figure 22: Kraig Grady (2014) Close-ups of The Frame of Animal Sanctuaries, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The fifth and final frame was The Frame of Transcendence (Figure 23) which contained various symbols that hint at the spiritual realm (Figure 24). The image of a homeless woman hitchhiking with a frypan suggested a precarious condition that is filled with danger. Paul Carter uses the idea of the ‘gap’ to discuss the work of Hossein Valamanesh (1996 p.7), which bears a resemblance to Buddhist monk Chögyam Trungpa’s description of the after-death experience in his commentary to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Freemantle and Trungpa 1975 p.1). The belief in the cycle of reincarnation casts an individual as a temporary exile to the ‘bardo’, a gap or intermediate state between death and rebirth that deals with the experience of being ungrounded. Trungpa explains the concept of the ‘bardo’ as a combination of “‘bar’ [which] means in between, and ‘do’ [which] means island or mark; a sort of landmark which stands between two things” (p.10). This description resembles the idea of *Anaphoria Island* as a space that exists in between places from which exiles have been banished.



Figure 23: Kraig Grady (2014) *The Frame of Transcendence, Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

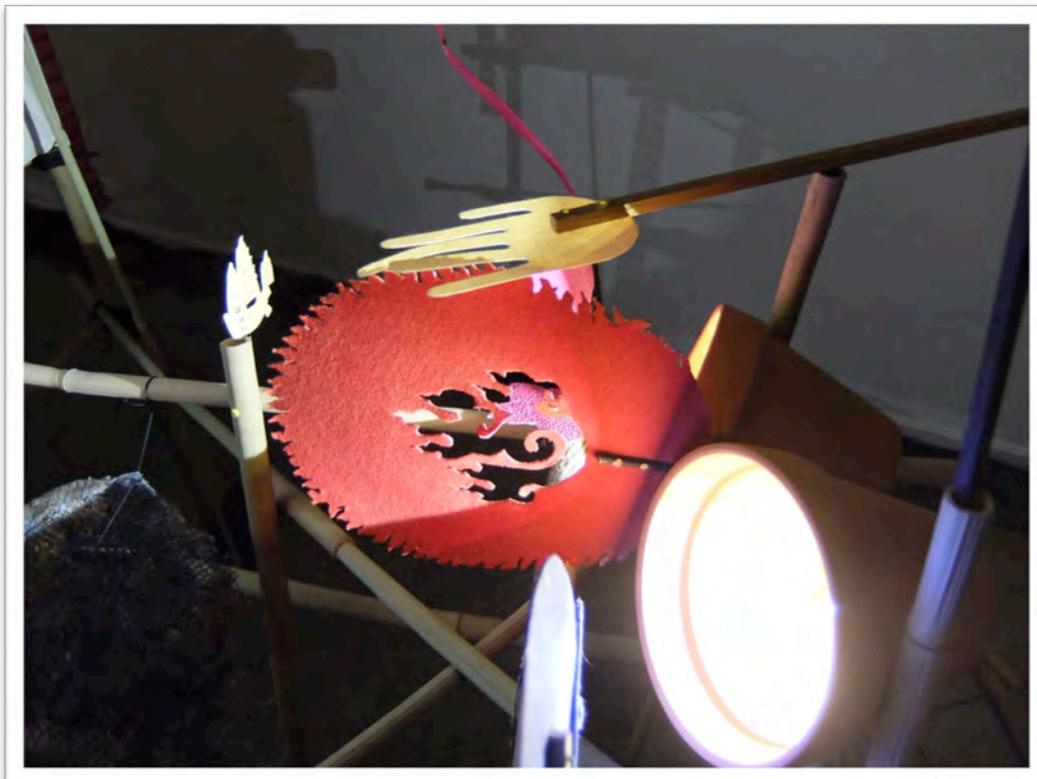


Figure 24: Kraig Grady (2014) Setup at rear of *The Frame of Transcendence, Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The image of ladders found in Valamanesh's works seemed to suggest a place beyond a mere earthly domain and this led me to think about exile as not only a geographical movement but perhaps a spiritual transcendence also. Thus, on top of the frame I placed a weathervane with an image of myself leaving my body as if it were exiled from this world into the imaginary realm of the Bardo. Similar weathervanes were also placed on each of the other frames in the installation (Figure 25). One of these was the image of the petrified dog of Pompeii who could not escape its fate. The other four weathervanes were silhouettes of myself representing various dilemmas of the exile who is blown here and there by the wind, or by forces beyond one's control. The inclusion of my own image in the installation was partly due to practical reasons: I was seeking to create certain poses that were most easily achieved by taking pictures of myself and turning them into silhouettes. More importantly, it also connected my own sense of identity as an exile with those of the puppets and shadow objects in the installation, which perhaps in many ways reflect aspects of my own personality and experiences.



Figure 25: Craig Grady (2014) *Weathervanes, Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Masks

Masks were presented in my installation as elements that are similar to shadow puppets in that they are used as tools for performance. They were featured as both physical objects as well as intangible shadows. Masks have appeared in my previous shadow plays to represent supernatural forces, such as the spirits that haunt the hunter (Figure 26) as a moral reflection on his actions in my previous shadow play *The Quiet Erow* (2009). In my current installation, the puppets which appeared as complete figures were contrasted with the masks that showed only faces. These masks and the shadows they cast were intended to represent disembodied personas that formed barriers to confront the exile, such as border guards or other bureaucratic forces that dwarf the individual and are hostile to their situation. The masks also suggested the fears and memories in the minds of the exiles themselves which can also have a crippling effect on the individual.



Figure 26: Kraig Grady (2009) The haunted hunter, from *The Quiet Erow*, shadow play, still photograph from rehearsal.

The masks involved many stages of development and experimentation with different materials. The first set of masks was made with discarded fabric shaped over moulds of clay. I was interested in experimenting with other materials that would allow light to pass through the masks so I tried using silicone instead of fabric, and also made moulds from play dough instead of clay. In the course of this project, the most useful material I found for casting shadows was a weblike scarf material, and I used this to create a new

set of masks to replace the original set. Treating the first set of masks as moulds, I built the new set of masks to retain elements of the original designs but with less defined and more abstract features. In this way, the final masks in the installation were the products of several layers of development, and as a result they seemed to carry the memories of earlier generations of masks. Like the puppets in the installation, the masks were used to cast shadows but on the walls and floors instead of the screens (Figure 27). This had the effect of activating the spaces on the walls with images of the masks that were bigger than the actual sources of the shadows. Masks were also placed at the rear of the installation on the waves of fabric, as well as near the exit wall where they formed an altar-like display with changing lights underneath (Figure 28). This altar of five masks represented the spirits behind the five frames.



Figure 27: Kraig Grady (2014) Shadows of masks behind Meru bars, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

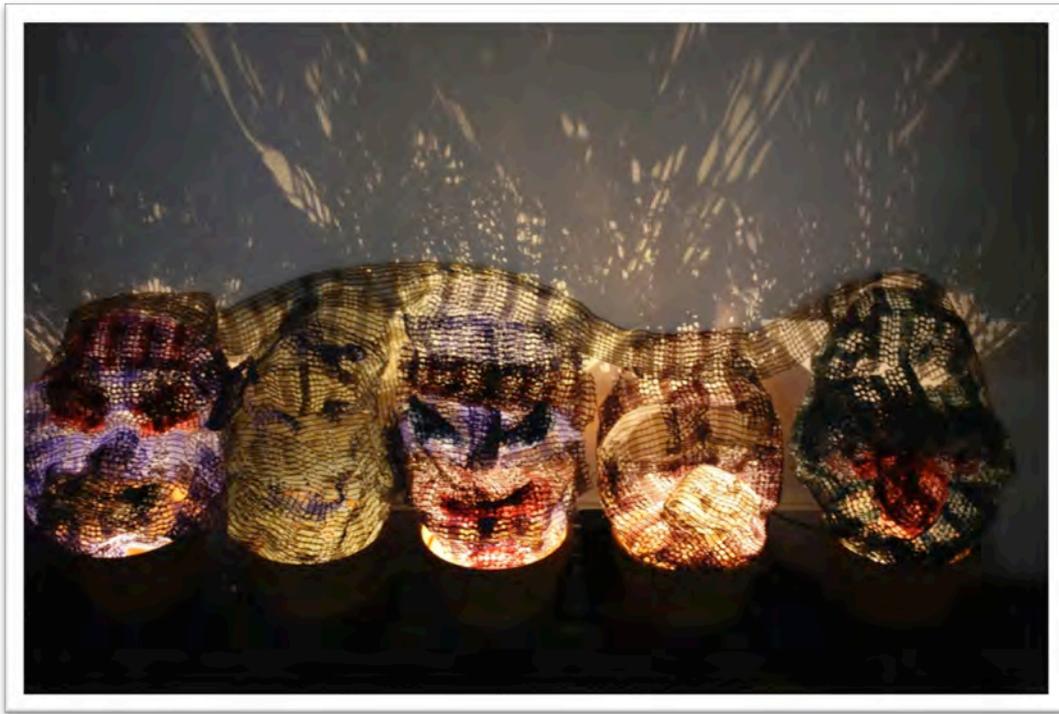


Figure 28: Kraig Grady (2014) Altar of masks, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Musical Instruments

The nine Meru Bars and the Tree instrument were designed both for their visual power to represent another culture, and as objects that produced sounds that permeated the entire space. These instruments allowed visitors to interact directly with the exhibit, and thus enabled the work to be completed through the active involvement of viewers, for without their participation the sounds of the instrument would not be heard in the installation space.

The instruments were positioned to catch as much light as possible so that the viewer casted a shadow on the walls as they played (Figure 29). The sounds were arranged from the lowest Meru Bars near the entrance of the installation and moved towards the highest Tree instrument at the farthest point (Figure 7) to complement the journey through the space towards The Frame of Transcendence. Even if the instruments were played softly, the beating tones produced by their closely tuned pitches allowed the sounds to resonate in the space. The instruments also created a type of aural experience

that is not commonly found in Western music, and perhaps they suggested a kind of sonic offering to the exiles.



Figure 29: Kraig Grady (2014) Shadow made by a viewer playing Meru Bars, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

The Perimeter of Flowing Fabric

During the installation of the frames, puppets and other elements in the space, I became dissatisfied with the industrial feeling of the room and decided to counteract this by lining the perimeter of the floor with fabric to soften its harsh edges (Figure 30). The fabric was stretched and scrunched to mimic the contour lines of the maps or to suggest waves that engulf the territory of *Anaphoria Island*. The fabric was held in place with plaster plaques that were painted to look like old stones with carved designs that were derived from particular shadow puppets as shown in Figure 31 and Figure 32. This representation of images as having a history furthered the strategy of giving tangibility and materiality to *Anaphoria Island*. Some of the silicone masks were also used for the same purpose along the back wall of the installation.



Figure 30: Kraig Grady (2014) Plaques along walls, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.



Figure 31: Kraig Grady (2014) Plaque and puppet of the goat in the tree, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.



Figure 32: Kraig Grady (2014) Puppet and plaque of the beggar, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Display at the Door

Another aspect that required experimentation in the final days of setting up the installation was the area near the exit. It seemed bare compared with the rest of the exhibit so the challenge was to activate this section of the space. I adapted a lighting system with five LEDs on an automated dimmer to backlight some masks arranged in flowerpots (Figure 28). Placed under the map of *Anaphoria Island*, this arrangement became an altar or offering of five spirits that provided some movement for the eyes as viewers headed towards the exit of the installation. Finally, the last gap in the space was filled with a display acknowledging the ‘sponsors’ of the exhibit along with some *Anaphorian* ‘merchandise’ (Figure 33).



Figure 33: Kraig Grady (2014) Display of *Anaphorian* ‘sponsors’ and ‘merchandise’, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, reconstructed in studio.

Just as installation art provides a means by which the artist can regain the control often given to the curator or museum manager (Colless 2001 p.13-14), the small display at the exit door attempted to take back some of that control. The ‘merchandise’ display mimicked a museum shop: the CDs and LPs are real commercial recordings that were released in 2013 and 2014 (Figure 34), but there were no prices marked, nor was there any place to leave money. Through these manifestations of *Anaphorian* ‘merchandise’, the display made tangible the world of *Anaphoria Island* as something more than just a mythopoetic place. It also had the effect of disorienting viewers who may have expected to see some explanatory information about the exhibit but were instead drawn further into the world of *Anaphoria Island* through the display that was part of the installation

narrative itself. In this way, the audience became active viewers in completing the immersive experience of the ‘total installation’.



Figure 34: Kraig Grady (2014 and 2013) Record cover ‘Anaphoria: Escarpments’ and CD cover ‘In a Pentagonal Room’, *Shadows of Exile*, installation, TAEM Gallery, University of Wollongong.

4. CONCLUSION

In my creative research project *Shadows of Exile* I set out to materialise a mythopoetic space that externalised the experience of exile and explored the potential for installation art to incorporate elements that are traditionally found in performance and to recontextualise them in an immersive and playful environment. The performance elements chosen were shadow puppets and shadow objects, masks and musical instruments. Drawing on my past practices in different media, I explored the possibilities of how they could be placed in an installation. Merely transplanting the performance elements into an installation was insufficient for materialising the varied experiences of exiles because they had to be recontextualised into the new medium. For example, the contour of the overall figures of puppets was more significant in the context of an installation than the design of the face and mouth which is more important for puppets used in live shadow plays. The main method chosen for my project was bricolage for its ability to combine disparate elements. The final outcome was seen as a bricolage of the ideas of ‘total installation’ meeting the ‘remnants’ of a shadow theatre.

Bricolage was an effective strategy in creating the installation as well as individual puppets in order to reflect the multifaceted world of exiles. It allowed for a mythopoetical approach in presenting multiple perspectives of exile which were intended to be reflected upon by suspending explicit knowledge. The installation comprised a variety of constructed artefacts arranged in front of LED lighting displays that drew attention to the contrast between materiality and shadow. These artefacts were created with found objects and materials, such as bamboo, fabric, shoemaking material, plaster plaques and discarded furniture. The shadow puppets also were designed as a bricolage of images and ideas spanning a range of influences, from contemporary Western art to historical figures and extinct civilizations. Bricolage allowed these disparate ideas to be brought together and represented as hybrid shadow images.

The research led to a focus on ‘total installation’ as it appeared as the form of installation art best suited to my desire to make a space in which the experience of exile might be explored. Its affiliation to bricolage is one of the reasons this direction was a fruitful one. The method of bricolage also allowed for multiple perspectives of exile to

be consolidated into a single space in the form of a 'total installation'. Through this 'total installation' viewers could visit and be immersed in *Anaphoria Island*, a mythopoetic space which has finally become a tangible, static and immersive space. The outcome encompassed an overlap of narratives that allowed a freedom for viewers to find their own links with the exiles of *Anaphoria Island*. Although Kabakov's idea of 'total installation' encompasses everything within a particular space, in my own work an installation like *Shadows of Exile* existed within the larger narrative landscape of *Anaphoria Island*. While the installation was temporary, the website of *Anaphoria Island* serves to maintain the ongoing presence of the island. On the other hand, the immersive nature of an installation made possible a tangibility that could not have been achieved by the website alone.

I limited my research for the installation to performance elements with which I was familiar, such as shadow puppets, masks and musical instruments. Whereas Kabakov sought to remove actors from 'total installation', I feel my project suggested a way in which characters in the form of puppets could be included in an installation with theatrical elements. Also, in contrast to my previous work in shadow theatre, the puppets developed for the installation explored influences from Western culture and theory. Since most of the earlier 'exiles' to *Anaphoria* came from non-Western locales, the characters created for this exhibition were in a sense the first wave of Western migrants, a foreseeable situation in the future as the dominance of Western culture diminishes and becomes more fragmentary. The task of finding Western uses of shadow and puppets was difficult as most examples tended to be underdeveloped compared to the level of detail and accomplishment found in other cultures with longstanding shadow theatre traditions. At the same time this limitation forced me to develop puppets in a new way by concentrating on the edges of the designs in order to create distinctive shapes and contours as a way to express the character of the puppet rather than relying on internal details and decorations.

With my primary artistic background being in the performing arts, for this installation I decided to take the opportunity to concentrate especially on the visual aspects of my work. As a future development of this project it seems live performance could be reintroduced into the installation to explore the many facets of my practice. Perhaps

further investigations into the works of other installation artists such as Ed and Nancy Kienholtz and Anne Hamilton would be useful in the future.

In the course of my research I was surprised to find a lack of studies in comparative shadow puppet design and this seems a worthy area to be pursued further. On a strictly technical level, the use of holes to differentiate parts of a shadow puppet would also be an interesting practical study on its own. The focus on non-traditional sources has broadened my approach to developing new puppet designs and I look forward to experimenting further. For instance, most puppets mainly consist of people or animals, while other elements, such as plants, buildings and landscapes, function as backgrounds, but by taking a cue from Kabakov to bring this background to the forefront might open up new possibilities for exploration. I am also interested in the possibility of recontextualising the puppets that I created specifically for the installation back into a performance environment. For example, I foresee scenes in a shadow play where the visual element might take the place of dialogue and gesture with the theme of exile playing an important role.

The *Shadows of Exile* presented multiple perspectives of the experience of exile, rather than defining a clear and unified story of exile, through the various shadow displays. The installation also provided a home for numerous items that had been displaced, such as items that had been salvaged from the trash, or existed on the margins, such as the musical instruments in non-standard tunings. The method of bricolage allowed me to work with a range of materials in order to create a large variety of new objects including shadow puppets, masks, bamboo frames and musical instruments. Placing these objects that are traditionally used as performance tools into the new context of a 'total installation' forced me to think of these items as more than just a means for achieving a performance but as objects with visual presence and worthy of attention in their own right. I am pleased that through research and practice, for my final installation I created something I could not have predicted in the beginning. Regardless of what medium I find myself working in next, it is likely to be shaped by the insights provided by the experience of working with a 'total installation'.

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