

## ***Insider / Outsider***

As a returning migrant after ten years residing in Australia, my position as a “liminal personae” is further considered through this body of work titled *Insider/Outsider*. (Turner, 1969, p.359). The work subjectively ‘maps’ the shifting identities which move between being an *insider* and *outsider* resulting in continuously reconstructing notions of home, homeland and belonging (Ní Laoire 2009, p. 35). The work also points outwards towards the wider issues of the relatively rapid transformation of cultural identities in our geo-political world. As a mode of thinking and doing, drawing offers myself as artist researcher the possibilities of gaining new experiential and tacit knowledge through the materialising of the mark. From an intuitive process of drawing, a subjective dialogue of enquiry articulates the interstices inherent in personal, cultural and diaspora identities. Within the drawing process, the notion of insider/outsider is both subject matter and method as the drawing emerges “as a coming to know” (Cain, 2006, P2.).

Traditional and contemporary Aboriginal artists such as Paddy Bedford, Dorothy Napangardi, and George Tjungurrayi whose practice centers on painting maps their inner knowledge of significant and sacred Aboriginal sites. These maps of concentric circles, dots and lines are not literal maps, diagrams or notations but are encoded stories of place and identity. People readily map meanings to space on a page to communicate abstract or concrete ideas, distance, place, relationships etc. (B. Tversky, 2011, p.515). The Aboriginal works of art are evidence, albeit coded, of a deep connection and certainty of place. (Judith Ryan, 2007, p584). The concept of mapping is used in this proposed work as a process of enquiry within the drawing process.

In the proposed drawings systems of mapping classification are omitted and narratives and transcribing of space are ignored in favour of map-like grids as sites for speculation. The ‘maps’ do not contain sites of importance or certainty of place rather the chaotic lines are pathways that lead to nowhere and the dots are markers of nowhere in particular. The vibrant and robust painterly hues found in Aboriginal artwork are absent resulting in open intersecting lines that offer no explicit meaning. The notion of insider/outsider is also explored through painting as it undergoes a washing process transforming it into drawing. In other words the work is could be read as both a painting and a drawing. The resulting drawings are the visible embodiment of a ‘liminal personae’ of lived experiences of migration and returned migration.

## **References**

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