

PANEL FOUR: LINES OF SIGHT: IMAGINING LOCAL LANDSCAPES DIFFERENTLY THROUGH MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLING

Galup is an immersive work about the history of Lake Monger in Perth created by Noongar theatre-maker Ian Wilkes and artist Poppy van Oorde-Grainger. It includes an oral history from Elder Doolann Leisha Eatts about a massacre at the lake and was originally commissioned by International Art Space as part of the Know Thy Neighbour #2 program.

That Was My Home explores the hidden histories of the Noongar camps around Fremantle, Swanbourne and Shenton Park in the suburbs of Perth along the Swan River.

Always Wadjemup is a multimedia digital exhibition by Indigenous curators Samara King and Vanessa Smart and a reflection of their experiences working on Wadjemup (Rottneest Island).

We convened a conversation around how local creatives are using the arts in innovative ways to reveal and bring back to life hidden and erased landscapes in Perth.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr Denise Cook is an historian, oral historian and museum curator with over 30 years' experience. She is the author of *That Was My Home*, which explores the hidden histories of the Noongar camps along the Swan River. Denise has documented the voices of Noongar people, juxtaposed with information from the archives, photographs and stories from others in the community. She specialises in WA history, particularly local and Noongar history, as well as protocols for non-Aboriginal people working in the Noongar community. Denise's work includes the Kaartdijin Noongar website for the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, exhibition team leader (Indian Ocean Gallery) for the WA Maritime Museum, and oral histories for organisations such as Freshwater Bay Museum, Rail Heritage WA and the former Roelands Mission. She co-wrote the *Gwalia Unearthed* guidebook and is currently Associate Research Fellow at Deakin University. Denise is particularly interested in researching, recording and telling stories that might not otherwise be heard.

Lynnette Coomer lived in the Shenton Park camps in the 1950s with her parents, grandmother Melba Bodney, and siblings. She went to Jolimont Primary School when she was seven. Later she, and the next youngest children, were taken to Roelands Mission. Lynnette worked for many years as an Aboriginal Education Assistant. In 2015 she won the Reg Henry Snr. Aboriginal Person of the Year Award. Lynnette was also the Kwinana Citizen of the Year for 2020 for her support of the Ngala Yorga Group, Celebrate Culture Kwinana and the Medina Residents Group.

Ian Wilkes is a Noongar theatre-maker, dancer and performer. He has directed several plays including Yirra Yaakin's *Boodjar Kaatijin* and *Songbird* and performed numerous lead roles including in Yirra Yaakin's *Hecate* and *Ochre's Kwongan* for Perth Festival, CO3's *The Line* at State Theatre WA and *Honey Spot* at the Sydney Opera House. Ian is also a founding facilitator of Culture 2.0, Yirra Yaakin's regional youth engagement program. He was a facilitating artist on Community Arts Network's *Burdiya Mob* project and a performer and cultural consultant on *Beyond Empathy's Excursions* project. Ian is currently a writer and performer of on-country performance *Galup* and writer and director of the VR work *Galup*.

Poppy van Oorde-Grainger is a filmmaker, artist and producer. Her work has been broadcast on ABC, SBS and Nickelodeon and presented at international festivals and galleries including London International Festival of Theatre, Japan Media Arts Festival and Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. Poppy first gained national recognition as the winner of the Fremantle Print Award and then

later the Australia Council Kirk Robson Award for leadership in Community Arts and Cultural Development. Poppy was a director and producer on Community Arts Network's Burdiya Mob and Ngaluk Waangkiny projects and Beyond Empathy's Excursions project. Poppy is currently a director, writer and producer of the on-country performance and VR work Galup and is director of not-for-profit production company Same Drum.

Samara King is a Karajarri woman from Broome, Western Australia. She was part of the 2020 Emerging Curator program between Rottnest Island Authority and Western Australian Museum and is the co-curator of Always Wadjemup; a multimedia digital exhibition that reflects the experience of working on Wadjemup (Rottnest Island).

EDITED TRANSCRIPT

Shaheen: In Visible Ink is our flagship event and as the name suggests, it is all about coming into large cultural institutions and really interrogating this idea of visibility, the stories that we see, the stories that we don't see, and asking ourselves some questions around what are the histories we don't see and why and how, as people who visit museums, people who visit galleries, we get information from the display cases around us, but how we can think more critically about our local landscapes, our local place names, our local buildings, our local lakes, our local places of recreation and see them differently. And the catch cry of In Visible Ink is, see differently. When you do see differently, you can be transformed, and you can make change.

Shaun Nannup talks about art and song, and dance and language and story. Because art is the way we have this really multi-sensory appreciation for the world around us. So it's not just see differently, it's feel differently and touch differently and hear differently and listen differently. Just through sight, we go about our everyday lives, seeing about 10 per cent of what we could possibly see. But through engaging all our other senses and connecting with others, we have this ability to kind of extend our sight. And through engaging with the senses, we also have these moments of empathy based that shiver you get up your spine when you see or hear or feel something differently, which can catalyse you to make change.

This panel is about imagining local landscapes differently through multimedia storytelling. All of our guests have a unique point of connection. They've dedicated themselves in their practice, be it through film, through research, theatre and digital mediums to telling and making visible unheard, unloved, unknown stories, and we want to explore this idea of how the story connects to the medium and how the medium makes people feel.

Welcome Samara King, thank you so much for joining us, you are a Co-curator of the digital exhibition, Always Wadjemup and you worked at the WA museum last year in order to do that, and with the Rottnest Island Authority. We are very keen to hear your story of how you found this digital medium to tell this painful story of Rottnest Island and Wadjemup and these dual narratives - and how your work has kind of spoken to both Aboriginal voices and white voices in that process.

Welcome Poppy van Oorde-Grainger and Ian Wilkes, the incredible creators of Galup showing at Perth festival, the story of Lake Monger, the story that happened there during colonisation, but also, the long history of all of our, a very long history of stories.

Welcome Lynnette Coomer and Denise Cook, it is a pleasure to hear you talk about your experiences at these lakes and you know that many of us don't know the real stories of.

I'd like to think about this idea of change and as an artist, why do you do this work and how it has changed you and then ask the audience how it has changed them?

We have a project called 10 things to see differently – where we'd really like to put the question to you – you all live in suburbs and on roads and near lakes that you go jogging around - so how can we take this information home with us, how can we start to see our own local landscapes differently if you are interested in knowing the history of your house or area or street or lake what can we do and how can we start to see our own local landscapes differently?

Ian: so Galup began a few years ago when Poppy called me and said, what do you know about Lake Monger? And the first thing that came to my mind was my Dad's voice saying something bad happened there. As a kid, we would drive past the Freeway, and Dad would always point out to Lake Monger and go: Noongars were killed at that lake when the Wadjelas, when the white man first came here, that's the story, that's what happened. Don't forget it. Always remember that, it's important. And Dad would constantly be doing these things around the area of Perth. And just teaching us little things at a time. And then it was many, many years after Poppy calls me and says, what do you know about Lake Monger?

And that's the first I said, well, my Dad told me there was a massacre that happened there. And not many people know about it. And it's been hidden, and it's been covered up through all the old journals and all the old records, and so that sparked Poppy's desire for this show.

Poppy: Yeah, the Know thy Neighbour project that International Art Space was getting artists to find out more about where they lived. And I've been living near Lake Monger for a long, long time and I'd worked a lot in regional and remote communities. And when you go to those places, communities will often tell you about special places and stories. And I thought, how weird is it that I've lived next to this place? I know nothing about it. It's just a wildlife sanctuary. People go there to run and jog and ride bikes and have picnics.

I'd worked with Ian before on a project with Community Arts Network in Narrogin and that was about teaching students about language and dance and culture. And I loved working with Ian, I thought he was amazing at teaching people and bringing passion out of people for their culture. And so, I had this idea of working with him to make a show. And I thought it would be like a school-based children's thing, but then when he told me what his Dad said, suddenly I was like, maybe it's not a kid's show. Maybe this is something else.

Ian's Dad, Ted Wilkes, who is one of the elders that's guiding us, he and many others suggested we speak with Doolann Leisha Eatts, because of her family connection to that place, and then she told us this story. And now we've got Uncle Darrell Kickett and Auntie Liz Hayden also guiding us on the project.

Ian: And more on the show itself, we don't just focus on the massacre itself. There's a lot of history that surrounds Galup, interesting stories that are quite positive, connective, and have got a good energy around them, old stories from the 1830s when farmers and settlers were around the area, and there were still cultural things happening around. It was an interesting time. And there's stories of Yagan and spear throwing contests and Noongar's dancing around the piano. We really wanted to inject a positivity first, before we speak too heavily about this massacre. The show that we've created is quite fun, energetic, interactive, and it's a site-specific work, a theatre work, we guide the audience around the lake and nature speaks for itself; the lake is a character. We mould both worlds together, the world of the 1830s and the world of now, because it's hard to avoid the public when you're doing a site-specific work. So, there's joggers, riders, kids, dogs, and yeah, these things are

unavoidable. We set up a show that allows the audience to accept that those things are happening, but also accept that we're in a weird kind of void - a world with within the era of the 1830s. And that's what I think is quite powerful, seeing the two worlds run parallel. You get to see what happened way back then and how things are still just happening in the modern world. People jog and pass without that knowledge or knowing you're in that story as well.

(Clip plays)

*"We're gonna go to for a walk.
And I'm gonna show you some stories of this place, Galup, and we're gonna use our imagination.
And we're gonna we're gonna walk into two separate worlds."*

Poppy: four elders have been guiding this project and making sure that we're safe in it and they've just been amazing in holding this project, we've got social impact goals that we're working towards that the elders have said, we really want a memorial at the lake to talk about the massacre. We really want this story taught in schools. And we also want to promote the way that we've done this project really collaboratively over a long time.

Shaheen: I'm interested in talking further about how truly collaborative this experience of theatre making has been in traditional art forms, in more Western art forms that isn't always the case. The work that you are all doing is incredibly collaborative. The lines are not there, things behind glass cases, you've blurred lines in several ways between yourselves as collaborators and the history and also the audience. I'm interested to know how the audience has reacted so far to the performances?

Ian: It's been fantastic. The audience feedback we've been getting is really great, because it's how we want to end the show - to make sure there's this feeling of togetherness.

That last scene that is around the fire, right there just after we hear Nanna Doolann speak about her grandmother talking of the massacre, we end the show with that, and it's quite heavy. And people don't know how to absorb some of that real heavy stuff. We give them time; we give them space to soak it all in and then we yarn. Something that I've learned, over my years performing is whenever we're dealing with heavy topics, we've got to yarn about it afterwards. You can't just go okay, massacre story, bye, bow, goodnight, walk away.

It's vital that we sit down and you as an audience get the chance to respond and ask questions and share thoughts and feelings. That is a vital part of the show. It's technically after the ending of the performance, but it's a vital part of the show.

Hearing some of the audience mention their thoughts and feelings and their feedback, what they can do to help or how, and the questions about what we're doing, to increase awareness... It's been spot on. It's been great.

Poppy: I think even before the end, that whole 90 minutes of the play, and looking at different stories around that time, it's all about getting people's heart ready to hear that story so that they are feeling united, and their hearts are open. And they're ready to hear that.

After the show, there's the talk around the fire. And then there's a 20-minute walk back with everyone. A lot of thought and care has been put into thinking about the audience and making sure they've got additional support if they need it, and that the team have also got that additional support amongst each other. If they want to see a counsellor because this is heavy stuff to be dealing with all the time, then that's there. And having those elders, and we did a community

consultation, six months before starting this project so that people could tell us what they thought. That's really important.

Shaheen: Samara, there's not many stories more heavy than the Wadjemup story. How did you get involved with Always Wadjemup?

Samara: My name is Samara King, a Karajarri woman originally from Broome. I came upon this project as one of the emerging curators, there was two of including Vanessa Smart, she's a Noongar woman. It was a WA Museum program, and we partnered with the Rottnest Island Authority. It was definitely one of the more difficult things that I've ever had to do. I definitely try to find that balance between such a heavy history and making it consumable and for people to actually want to read and share, I think that was one of the more difficult aspects. I think creating that balance between talking about the Whadjuk Boodja, the countryside and the prison side, allowed a bit of a balance of the history there.

Shaheen: Having these stories amplified globally, because you've also worked on translating Always Wadjemup into a Google Arts and Culture exhibition – and one of the reasons is because outside Australia, outside Western Australia, these stories are not known - people's concept of Aboriginal storytelling and culture is so different, how important is it to elevate these stories to a global stage through more digital mediums?

Samara: It's so important. And especially with the Wadjemup story, I mean, we take for granted the history and the tragedy that happened there, but so many tourists going there just don't know anything. And I think it was really vital work to get that story told and share it with as many people as we could. We have the website and there's also a couple of documentaries, some short films that are on You Tube as well. Making it as accessible as possible was really important.

Shaheen: Lynette and Denise, you tirelessly tell your stories. And that can also be quite hard work - how has the book kind of relieved you of some of that personal responsibility to be there telling the story because people can read it, it is amplified, it is in the public discourse, what is your process been in taking this story to the world?

Denise: It all started as my PhD and one of the things the elders said they wanted from it was a book. And so, I actually wrote my PhD as one half of it was the book kind of ready to go and the other half was the theoretical side of how I went about it and how it compared to what other people had done. And that worked really well for me because I knew I would just never sit down for months and months and turn an academic PhD into a book.

I was really happy to get it out there and really happy and have had lots of positive feedback from the book. I think people are really interested in the stories, I guess we probably get quite a lot of requests to come and talk, and we do most of them.

Shaheen: I guess I'm keen to know perhaps from Lynette, that this experience of talking your story, is it something that is exhausting? We talk about the labour of telling these stories, which is sometimes alleviated by having it online or having it in a book or having it in a performance. There is so much labour required of the voices of these marginalised histories, to get up every day even though it's hard, and tell this story. I'm interested in your perspective of how difficult it is versus how you know healing and cathartic it is to be doing this work.

Lynette: It is a healing. It is a healing. It has to be a healing. I feel the healing here. I've spoken to a few people and said how it is a healing, especially when you take your childhood stories to children in schools, which I have, and those little children listen to your story. Not being read from a book but

told from out of your mouth by you, because you lived and breathed it, and at the end of it, they are crying. And that's what it's all about. You know, the saying goes, we have to start with our young ones. And that's how I like to start my stories and do my healing with the young ones. I've had the chance, working with the education department for 25 years plus. But yeah, and I still go around to schools since the book's been written and tell my story.

It's very much a healing. Like I said, you have the papers, you have your social media and all this and that and as soon as something happens, it's an Aboriginal, right. We become visible then with the bad things. It's about time that we had things come out about the positive things. Don't make us invisible, make us visible, have us as visible people.

We have a voice, and we are a voice. And it's time, it's time for changes. I'm sure a lot of you white fellas out there, really and truly want to know the true facts, and have the true stories to tell your children. Because all I get out there is: get over it. Get over what? You know. They say that because they don't know from the people, or they haven't heard from the right people.

It's time for changes. Definitely. Everyone's a storyteller, everyone has their own stories to tell. Well, it's time for us Aboriginal people, First Nations people to tell our stories, and to share our stories, and to be connected with each and every one of us.

Ian: Aunty mentioned healing. I just want to speak about how we end our show at Galup with Nanna's story. And, yeah, just making sure everyone's safe and protected, stories constantly being told, and the weight that is held by me, Poppy, and Nan, having to constantly tell that tragic story has got a lot of weight. It would be traumatic. We've actually recorded an audio and Nanna sits at the bench, and it's played through the speakers. That way, she doesn't have to verbally tell the story, at every performance, even though she has the resilience to be able to do that. We feel it's another option that is not only creative, but it's also a way of protecting Nan, to be able to sit and hear her own voice and sometimes her daughter has to sit in her place and hear her mother's story. And myself and Poppy, we're constantly hearing the. It does hold weight, and it is heavy, but we find the best ways to protect ourselves and keep safe, checking up on each other, making sure we're all okay after hearing that story. And like I said, we have that yarn with the audience. That's not just for the audience, that's for us mob as well, as well as performance to sit and reflecting.

Okay, that's the hundredth time I've heard that story, but it's still hitting me in the heart. And just back on the healing thing. Lake Monger, Galup, is a place of healing for all of us. We always end each performance knowing and telling the audience, this is not a bad place. Just because something bad happened here doesn't make it bad. We need to come together to heal it now and make sure that everyone has an awareness, and we're working towards memorials.

I think Rottnest has the potential to be the same. But right now, the world that we're living in is just halfway there. You've got your schoolies and your tourists constantly there; they're putting a huge shadow over that possibility that is togetherness Rottnest. And certain other sites around Perth. And that's what we're pushing for over at Lake Monger and Galup and anywhere else around Perth that requires the same treatment.

Samara: I think healing is definitely the goal on the island. But my experience there last year, and I don't know if you found the exhibition on your own, but it was buried, and the story was not promoted through WAM or Rottnest Island Authority. It wasn't told, as this piece of information that we needed to know, it's still very hush hush. It's quite backwards. I think that healing is still quite far for Wadjemup unfortunately.

Shaheen: How do wadjelas, white people, deal with these very dark and polarising stories with care? Because many of us want to know, but are worried about this idea of retraumatising, and people don't know how to get to healing.

We've had a chat about the Rottnest Island situation, marketing departments that want to focus on quokka selfies and beautiful islands and pictures – how, if you had to give a piece of advice in terms of this really deep storytelling work that you do compared to how local governments from a tourism point of view, and how Western Australia can start to adjust the narrative that it tells itself and the rest of the world about having a fairly white colonial history and beautiful beaches and quokkas, which are all fantastic but also walking in two worlds simultaneously, what piece of advice would you give large institutions, marketing departments, the Rottnest Island Authority? In terms of going to the next step?

Samara: I think call it out whenever you can. I think the marketing team at Rottnest Island Authority actually gets a lot of emails from people being like, I was just on the island, where's your history? I want to learn more. Even when I was working there, we wore a uniform so people could identify us and a couple of people actually came up to me, white people and would be like, where can I go to learn about the prison? There's nothing. There's no information there. Unfortunately, you have to actually seek it out for yourself. I think doing whatever you can to learn more is unfortunately the step you have to do. It's not given to people.

Poppy: I think that knowing the truth feels so much better than not knowing, even if that truth is really heavy and dark and hard, it feels better. Doolann Leisha Eatts after we did those first performances a few years ago was so happy, she said this is one of the proudest days of my life, I feel so blessed. She was so happy because she promised her grandmother when she passed the story on to her that she would get this out there and it really is a good feeling. I feel so connected to Lake Monger now knowing its story than before, when I just knew it as this lake with swans on it.

Ian: We talk about truth telling as a thing, but the opposite side of that is truth listening – hearing, being able to listen to the truth and absorb it. There's a saying I'll paraphrase but it goes something like 'the truth to an open-minded person is like water for them if they were dying of thirst in the desert, the truth to a close-minded person is poison'. You've got to be able to open your mind and your heart - I'll add to that saying your heart – you've got to be able to open your mind and your heart first before you're able to hear the truth properly. My dad always says, 'what truth telling', we've been telling the truth for 200 years you just haven't been listening. Truth telling is this thing, but you know the next thing down the track is truth listening and hearing the truth, and actually letting it affect you, and I think that's why we're leaving the show Galup the way we do. We want that truth to be heard and felt, and I know that each and every audience member after that chat around the fire is switched on and openhearted.

Shaheen: Denise, you have written and spoken and talked and collaborated around very visible landmarks around Western Australia, what legacy, what clues can people pick up when we go to these places - because it really is invisible. We can visit any of the lakes that you write about and talk about and not know this unless someone has managed to pick up a book or been lucky enough to hear you speak in an is forever transformed. We've had interesting conversations during this symposium about memorialization and its benefits and whether it's destructive or constructive to memorialise, because over the last 100 years, 200 years of colonization we've inadvertently memorialised the wrong histories; we've also memorialised histories of people that we shouldn't have, the wrong people are shown next to objects that shouldn't be in these cases; memorialization has pluses and minuses.

Poppy and Ian, part of your social impact campaign is memorialization in a very physical way, could you talk a little bit about you know what you want to leave behind?

Poppy: I think we don't know yet. I think it was when we heard Doolann tell that story and said we need to have a memorial and the elders all supported that idea, but we've got no idea what that memorial would look like and it'll be a big conversation with a lot of people to figure that out. But it's been great that we've had several people from Town of Cambridge come to the show and they're all really supportive which is awesome.

Ian: Those council people that have come from Cambridge I can tell it really hit them in the heart and I know there were tears in their eyes, so the effect that one show can have on one person can make big change. We are excited by the fact that we've got local town and burdiya mob when it comes to making key decisions and being able to see it and just change your mind like that, the ball gets rolling and then eventually it gets bigger and bigger. I'm hoping that for Rottnest the possibilities for that kind of thing to happen will increase and like sister said, we're not there yet, we got a lot more things in a lot more minds to change. We speak about arts and performance being a key ingredient to making those changes, and I believe that strongly as a performer, as a cultural man, I believe that the performing arts makes huge difference in making big change around the world and for my people here.

Denise: In relation to your question about what would you say to the marketing department about telling these stories, I think people have a much deeper and more meaningful connection with the place when they know more of its story, I certainly do and I think that can only be a good thing if you're trying to encourage people to connect with your place, you want to give them as many stories as you can, as many different shades of what's happened, and I just think it just creates a much richer meaning and that's really important.

Shaheen: what memorialisation would you like to see around the sites in your book: it's so full of stories I'm not sure where one would even start.

Denise: The traditional way is to put up a sign with some information and maybe someone's story... there's so many different styles out there. I think the stories are the strongest thing and so I would want to somehow get the stories out whether it's a sign or whether it's a website or whether it's an app or an artistic interpretation or performance.

Shaheen: Ian and Poppy I'm interested in your next iteration of Galup and the virtual reality potential. At the last In Visible Ink we had a wonderful film maker called Lynette Wallworth join us and talk about the potential of virtual reality to create new worlds and alternate universes where multiple possibilities exist and she likened VR to much more traditional indigenous forms of storytelling because it hovers and looks down and is much more in the round.

Poppy: The Galup performance is for 15 people and we know it works but we don't have the resources so that everyone in Perth can go through it, there has been so much demand from the Education Department, from the Fremantle Dockers, from all these people who really want to come... the VR and the reason we're drawn to it is that you feel like you're at the lake and you have that connection to it, and the lake is a huge storyteller.

Ian: I'm excited by it, it is the future and new generations are starting to grab hold of this technology that is just developing and so I'm excited by the possibilities it holds for a lot of stories.

Shaheen: 10 things to See Differently is a prompt to the community to look at our local landscapes in different ways. What can you See Differently?

Q&A and comments

Q: I have learned quite a lot about Bibra Lake because of environmental activism; people came down told stories of the Noongar birthing area and there was so much to learn (and) I felt really connected to that place, and that it was something really to fight for, because those stories were so present in our minds. I think environmental activism can really get people to know what's around their backyards and just beyond.

Q: I'm a high school teacher and the healing that you obviously do and go through, I'm wondering about my classroom, where they may not be ready to listen, they may not have warmed up those listening skills, how do you put the stories out there so that a wide variety of kids can understand and access the different resources in different ways?

Q: I was thinking about Wadjemup and the experience at Galup, because I was lucky enough to get a ticket and share that gentle approach that you both spoke about, they really did take us through this kind of fun - in fact if I use that word when we're talking about a massacre it doesn't sound good but it was fun, because we got to dance and sing and it was lovely, and then we hit this really important story that you knew it was coming and all the layers in between, and when you really shared about Wadjemup, really honestly and thank you, because it's hard to do that sometimes, but the opportunity for us to learn about Wadjemup in a similar way - we're working in Fremantle with Len Collard and the City of Fremantle on Aboriginal place names and I wonder how can we connect what you've already done with other bits of research that have been done and bring that to life using the arts? I think the arts are such a fabulous way to share that story, we can't go on existing with Wadjemup silence in the way that we do, I don't want to go back there anymore and that's not the answer either, I think the right answer is in finding ways to platform the stories by the voices of the people who have the right to tell them.

Samara: we have the website alwayswadjemup.com, so there's a couple of videos, they are on YouTube as well, so now very easily shareable, and we also did the partnership with Google arts and culture which is a little snapshot - not the whole website history which can be a lot of information for a high school student say, but I think that Google arts exhibition is a really good one because it shows the men that were in prison, photos with some quotes by them, and a bit of story as well, I think anything you can do to find a human story and listen to the Aboriginal voices of the place: that's what lasts and what stays with you the most, rather than a list of dates in history or a sign. The stories are the most important.

Poppy: when I was a kid my favourite museum was called the museum of moving image because they had actors who would like dress up as a cowboy and teach you how to act on a western set, or you got to be a newsreader, and I really think that's such a great way to learn - not just reading words and looking at pictures or even videos but just having another human there.

Ian: I think it's about creating experience and a connection and emotion attached to what is being taught, so if we are talking about history and museums, they definitely have the potential to step up and create more immediate emotional experiences rather than the intellectual kind. Some of the museum visits I've had, you go there but it's very intellectual as a kid and 10 years later you don't remember the feeling, so that's where I think there's a link missing. It needs to be emotional; it needs to have a feeling and we speak about performing arts doing that and creating that.

We also spoke about dual names and what another name holds, we can have dual names but the meaning behind that name needs to come with it and the history and the power that it holds it's not just a Noongar word.

You'll notice these names around Perth and some people have that knowledge behind what that name is and who it is and like sister said, it's those who really understand that there is digging to do - who was that guy - who was that man, you know we got Yagan square now and people are asking the bigger question who was Yagan? So it comes with the change, when we make the name change we bring that history with it.

Denise: and it's also important to bring women's names and women's histories into those stories too.

Q: I think the complexity of the processes in which we're engaging here can't be underestimated, and so there's this sign making or bilingual sign making process and how they contextualise in the larger histories is also being done elsewhere in the world, and having opportunities for exchange is really important, not to compare histories or to simplify cultures, but to learn from one another and about your mistakes. I'm doing a project in South Africa and I've been working a lot there in the past five years and there are so many connections and opportunities for sharing - we're talking about Robben Island obviously the similarities there, and one of the biggest problems is how tourism has picked up Indigenous histories and then fetishized them. There's obviously an opportunity on Rottneest, it's like we can earn money from Indigenous histories so it's like you can sell them that idea in order to memorialise it and create museums; but it's not necessarily getting what you want - so there's so many overlaps and opportunities for learning through multiple indigenous histories throughout the world as well.

Q: following on I think there is an assumption that telling the stories is good in itself and I think the opening could also be used and utilised and abused so we can feel good about. There is a moment of healing that happens in that space of intimacy that is very special but how from that point could it be utilised in a way that's the reverse, and continues to perpetuate this narrative in which really structural whiteness is the only knowledge that is the valuable one and the others are content to be peripheral knowledges?

Ian: The risk I guess that those stories could be used and misused, appropriated or the notion that, oh we told that story, we don't need to revisit or go any further - now we know about the massacre on the Lake and that's all there is to know...

I think it is that's currently where some of these stories are at - a lot of the language and a lot of the words that we're using just ends with the knowledge, but the change needs to come, so there is the risk that that people would just accept it and go, well that's it done, but I feel like within projects that we're doing and connections that we're making with the museum and other mob, that further change comes and that's for us to decide. And for those who are really passionate about that, we can inform people that that's what we're doing, but they choose whether they want to help us or not, they can go home and back to their lives, that's OK and I'm not sure really what more I can do. I'm clear on my passion and what I want to do, and I know you mob are sitting listening, but what are you going to do once you walk away? You know it's up to you, you've got lives to lives and other passions that you hold dear that you want you want to focus on, and that's OK, same as the mob sitting next to me, we got these different things that we're passionate about but they all hold a similar feeling.

Denise: one person who reviewed my book said he thought it focused on positive stories more than negative stories and that was a bit of a deliberate choice on my part, because there's so much negative history out there and I wanted to show the strength and the joy. There is some of the hard stuff in there too, but it's not the main focus and I guess as a historian but probably as anybody telling a story you make choices about which stories to tell, and how you approach the stories you tell, and I guess it's a person of my time telling it, and then another person in a different time, or another person might tell a different story in a different way. Maybe there just has to be so many of us telling the stories that people listen and hear what they want to hear or take something from the range of different stories.

Ian: something that really kind of stuck with me from one of the audience members feedback was she was amazed at how Noongar people are so generous. After everything that's happened we are constantly trying and trying and opening our hearts and being generous, where you look at the rest of the world and how radical some of these other cultures are against colonisation. I feel and I still really believe we are in a crucial point within Australia and Perth especially, we are truly living in a lucky part of the world, not just because of coronavirus but because we have the opportunity to be able to share that generosity that our First Nation mob have. I know there are some Noongars and some other mob that are quite radical in their thoughts and feelings, and we need them people, we need them uncles and aunties shouting, because otherwise we don't get that little bit of friction, that little bit of fear that is required when it comes to go, OK, we actually need to listen to some of these mob when the door opens for that generosity to happen.

Q: I'm one of the directors of the Museum of Freedom and Tolerance and everything we do in this space is risky, so if you want to know what the losses are, what's the negative, there's lots, but we have to be active and we have to make change.

If you want to make change in this area there's three tools: education - if you don't know there's a problem people don't know there's a problem, they don't know the story and we've got to tell it. The second is law, and we've got to be active in law, and third is in advocacy - when you talk about people got to shout, they've got to shout, but we are predominately focused on education, so the first part of that is to tell the story in a way that people really feel it, just as you guys are all doing with personal stories, and when you go into to schools and tell your story and you can see them and look in their eyes, they really feel it, and when you're giving them their personal experiences in your shows and performances they really feel it. So, we have to tell our stories in meaningful ways that people feel it.

The challenge is that's actually not enough, we have to start there we have to do that really well, but then we have to move people to make change. It's the really hard part and it's something that we will be working on beyond my time in the museum, forever trying to help people to change. But it starts with the stories, the risky personal stories, the risky art stories, but in every format. I think we have to explore every single format of education, so I commend you all for everything you do.

My mother-in-law was a survivor of the Holocaust and she had about eight years of torture and persecution and lost all her family, and when she came to Australia, she couldn't tell the story. I married into her family and I didn't know the story for many years. And then someone encouraged her to start telling it in schools, and it tore her apart, she was depressed, really, really distressed for a long time but over the years it was healing for her. She's passed away now but she passed away really proud that she had the guts to tell it and to impact young people, so I wanted to say I watched the pain and the difficulty of it, and I commend you for your bravery.

I think that's a wonderful place to leave it and I can feel the energy in the room: everyone needs to sit for a while and part of this journey is that it's important to recognise it's long and there are no easy solutions but to have the honour of you all speaking about your work and to have you listening with such dedication, I think that this active listening and active speaking is what we need to emulate as we go forward in our own lives.

In Visible ink is just part of that journey of how we use art to make change, and how we use truth telling to effect real change in the community.