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War and Peace: 200 Years of Australian-German Artistic Relations

The guns were barely silent on the Western Front when on 23 November 1918 Belgian-born Henri Verbrugghen took to the stage of the recently established NSW Conservatorium and softly tapped his baton, bringing the audience to silence. Then into this silence Verbrugghen called down the immortal opening chords of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the 'Choral', with its celebrated fourth movement 'Ode to Joy', based on Schiller's words. A difficult piece to stage because of the considerable orchestral forces required, the performance was nevertheless a triumph, and all the more so for the occasion it marked, the Allied victory over Germany. Due to the long lead time and the necessity for extensive rehearsal, its being played at the signing of peace was a coincidence, but nevertheless a very serendipitous one. And the point was not lost on the critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, who in their review wrote:

> The armistice and the blessings of peace were not in sight when the program of the Conservatorium Orchestra on Saturday afternoon was projected, but by an extraordinary coincidence the inclusion of Beethoven's 'Choral Symphony' with the Ode to 'Joy, thou spark from Heaven descending', brought the whole body of players and singers into line for the celebration of the glorious Allied victory.[1]

The real coincidence here was perhaps not the fortuitous programming of Beethoven at the moment of the signing of the Treaty at Versailles, but that of Germany and Australia itself. The fact that the very music chosen to express an Allied victory in Australia was German certainly attests to those values of universality expressed in Schiller's poem, but it also attests to the reception of those ideals in Australia and the fact that, at least in part, Australia could express its nationhood only in a German language. And it is true that in this paper the relations between Germany and Australia are mostly one-way and there was, indeed, a German influence on Australia before there was even an Australia. We could thus never entirely separate ourselves from Germany, even in our moment of victory over them. We could never truly fight them because in some ways we would also be fighting ourselves. And if, in our shared history, there have at times been anti-German moments — and we will show some of

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[1] Anonymous, 'Conservatorium Matinee', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 November 1918, p. 4. The authors would like to thank Samantha Owens of the School of Music at the University of Queensland for her assistance in the writing of this essay.

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them here — it is undoubtedly true that there has been a much longer-running German or pro-German aesthetic, which is for us the real history of where we are today.[2] All of this, of course, is true not just of music — although music is privileged in its seeming abstraction, spirituality and breaking of boundaries — but also of the visual arts.

After all, the first Head of our first art school and the first Director of our first state gallery was Eugene von Guérard, the Viennese-born, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf-trained painter who came to Australia aged 42 in 1852. He panned and painted on the goldfields (Ballarat) and then travelled and painted throughout Victoria for some eighteen years (working beside his good friend, the Swiss Nicholas Chevalier, on Professor George Balthasar von Neumayer's meteorological expedition to Cape Otway in 1862; he also accompanied Neumayer's magnetic survey expedition to north-east Victoria and Mt Kosciusko that same year), before being appointed Curator of the National Gallery of Victoria and Principal of its Art School in 1870. (Louis Buvelot was the other, unsuccessful, candidate.) In that year, he became both a charter member of the Victorian Academy of the Arts and was awarded the Cross of the Order of Franz Josef by the Emperor of Austria. Von Guérard was always able to send work to exhibitions in Europe: he sent work to the Royal Academy in 1865, to the Exposition Universelle de Paris in 1867 and 1878, to Dusseldorf, Vienna and the London International Exhibition in 1872, and to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. In that year, too, von Guérard travelled to New Zealand, where he completed his preparatory sketches for that country's first "national" painting: his *Milford Sound* of 1877. (There is a New Zealand-German — or better Australasian-German — art as well.) In 1881 von Guérard resigned from both of his positions in Melbourne, and in 1882 he returned to Düsseldorf, from where he sent work to Melbourne in 1884 and 1885. In 1891, ten years before his death, he moved to London, from where he travelled and painted St Ives and the Lake District. Are there, therefore, unknown works by von Guérard that can extend our understanding of the engagement by Australian artists in each of these schools, who might have seen them and identified with them insofar as they were by a fellow Australian? (We might think here also of Margaret Preston, who worked for a summer at St Ives during WWI and was primed by her own German experience.) After losing all of his Australian investments in the crash of 1893, von Guérard spent his final years in poverty, and was buried next to his wife, who had predeceased him by ten years, in Brompton Cemetery in Chelsea, where his grave can still be visited today.

Dating the return of von Guérard to Australian art history to the 1960s, the curator Daniel Thomas begins, 'Australia's neglect of von Guérard's art during the past hundred years [he is writing in 1980] requires some explanation', and he points to

[2] By "German" here, we mean to refer not only to Germany's allies during the war (Austria), but to all European countries whose principal language is German (Switzerland). And in our definition of German artists in Australia we include all those who were either born or trained there or who through one or both of their parents' language identify with there.

'chauvinism', which we would call racism, and suggests furthermore that, unlike Chevalier, von Guérard's English was poor and that he was unpopular amongst his students for insisting on a 'tight and detailed' rendering and not the more 'broad and loose' handling of the then-popular French-inclined Buvelot. 'The most significant reason', however, Thomas explains, 'was the lasting canonisation of a later generation of artists, McCubbin, Roberts and Streeton, who emerged in the later 1880s', and for him their reification (or is it deification?) excludes other Australians. As he goes on to write, 'In fact, earlier artists, including von Guérard, were at times equally "Australian" in their accurate observation of or feeling for Australian life, while the nationalist generation was often "UnAustralian", for example, in its Japanese or Rococo aestheticism'.[3] That is, we might say, it is the UnAustralian artist who is the more Australian and the apparently Australian artists who are the more UnAustralian. But after his death von Guérard was in no exhibition of Australian art, nor was his work even illustrated, until 1962, and his work was first reproduced in colour only in 1969.

Von Guérard, however, was not the first German artist in Melbourne. A fuller account would begin perhaps in the mid-nineteenth century with the explorer figures Ludwig Leichardt and the Städelschule Frankfurt-trained artist Ludwig Becker, who worked on Burke and Wills' ill-fated 1860 expedition into the interior, the first German we know of to die in the desert. It would include John Lindt, the Frankfurt-born painter and photographer, who arrived in Brisbane in 1862, aged 17, and who eighteen years later published his world-renowned *Album of Australian Aborigines* (1880), as well as the Vienna-born Carl Pinschof, who came to Melbourne in 1880 with the Austrian entry to the 'International Exhibition' of that year and became a much-loved patron of the Heidelberg School painters, and who in 1898 bought the expatriate sculptor Bertram Mackennal's *Circe* (1902), now in the National Gallery of Victoria, paying for its casting. The Pinschof house, Studley Hall in Kew, was a well-known turn-of-the-century Salon, its influence ending only (of course) with the outbreak of World War I. (A larger account of the time would have to include the Swiss-born Buvelot, the Russian-born Swiss Nicholas Chevalier and the Austrian-born Carl Kahler, who painted the panoramic *Flemington Lawn on Cup Day* (c. 1889), as well as all the German work presented in the various International Exhibitions held in Australia during the latter half of the nineteenth century.)

These fin-de-siècle German-Australian relations in late nineteenth-century Melbourne remind us of that prodigy, composer, pianist, educator and eventual follower of Masoch — we might even call him a pianist — Percy Grainger, who after being born in Melbourne moved to Frankfurt in 1895 at age 13, where he studied for five years, before beginning his celebrated concert career. His German musical links remind us that the great Australian soprano Nellie Melba was in fact introduced to Mathilda Marchesi (who as her vocal teacher was crucial to Melba's success) by Elise

[3] See Daniel Thomas's 'Appendix: Von Guerard's Reputation', in Bruce, 1980, p. 131. It is important to realise that amongst von Guérard's pupils were, in fact, McCubbin and Roberts.

Wiedermann, the wife of Pinschof, and herself a former opera singer. (Later, Dame Joan Sutherland, Australia's other great soprano, would be trained by a pupil of Marchesi.) Indeed, Melbourne was a kind of little Germany at the turn of the last century. We might think here, for instance, of von Guérard's successor at the Gallery School in Melbourne, the Irish-born George Frederick Folingsby, who lived in Munich for some twenty-five years before he came out to Australia, where he had studied under Karl von Piloty. From the Kunstakademie there he had learnt the Munich "method" or "system"; the technique of working from a bituminous base. And it is from Folingsby and his successor at the Gallery School, the English-born Bernard Hall who likewise studied in Munich, that we get the so-called "browning" of Melbourne art at the turn of the last century.[4]

During this time Australia came to be as the amalgamation of its various states, all of which had significantly different histories and ethnic populations. South Australia, the only free colony, was also the most German, as it still is today. It was the first state to give women the vote, and would be the home state of both Hans Heysen and Albert Namatjira. Heysen's house, 'The Cedars', and, Namatjira's *Hermannsburg Gorge* (1945), we might say, are equally indigenous and a product of the German presence in Australia. The bibles in Namatjira's Hermannsburg, there because of the Lutheran missionaries, were of course in German, so that for many Central Desert Aborigines German, and not English, was the first non-Indigenous language they learnt.[5] The Adelaide-born artists Bessie Davidson and Margaret Preston both studied in Munich, Davidson at the Kunstlerinnen-Verein München in 1904 and Preston at the School for Illustrators the same year. This pedagogical line runs all the way through to Stanislaus Ostoja-Kotkowski, the Polish-born and Kunstakademie Düsseldorf-trained painter and avant-garde film maker, who arrived in Australia in 1949 and whose science-fiction themes and engagement with technology can perhaps be understood as a combination of Central European folklore and German industrial modernism. There is undoubtedly something of Ostoja-Kotkowski in the Czech-born but Kunstakademie Stuttgart-trained Otto Hajek, whose outdoor concrete *gesamtkunstwerk*, *City Sign*, made for the Adelaide Festival Centre Plaza in 1975, is under threat today. Indeed, Adelaide's festival has consistently been an outlet for not only German art but also German theatre, music and literature. Is it too much to suggest that the internationalism of the Festival, which has been running since 1962 and the first in Australia, is at least in some part an outcome of German cultural cosmopolitanism?

Speaking of Ostoja-Kotkowski's cosmologies, it is little understood just how influential the work of Russian-born, but Bavarian-resident, Vassily Kandinsky's spiritualism was in early twentieth-century Australia, even before he went to work at the Bauhaus. Just a year after its publication in German, reviews of the English translation of his *Über das Geistige in den Kunst* (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*)

[4] Zubans, 1972, np and Galbally, 1983, np.
[5] For a detailed history of Lutheranism in Hermannsburg, see Austin-Broos, 2009.

were published in the Australian press.[6] In fact, we might say that the inventor A.B. Hector's Colour Light organs, which were demonstrated at Palings in Sydney in 1912, look back more to Goethe's experiential, eye-including light than to Newton's mathematical, eye-excluding light, and at the same time across to Kandinsky's contemporaneous *Der Gelbe Klang* (*The Yellow Sound*) (1909-12).[7] This activity precedes and inspires the landmark 'Colour in Art' show of Roland Wakelin and Roy de Maistre in Sydney in 1919, which by coincidence Verbrugghen opened just a year after his performance of Beethoven. All of this, of course, is followed by the Frankfurt-educated Eleanore Lange's *Seraph of Light* (1932). Lange in her role as art lecturer introduced colour theories to an interested audience at the Teacher's Federation in Sydney in the 1940s. Others influenced by Kandinsky include the painters Frank Hinder (who also trained with the founders of the Transcendental Painting Group in Taos, New Mexico (see his *Tribute to Kandinsky*, 1938)) and the English-born house painter-turned-artist Ralph Balson.

Kandinsky was not the only *Bauhausler* to influence Australian artists. The Swiss-born Bauhaus master Paul Klee, who taught there in 1924, had a considerable impact on Australian art. The Sydney-born and interwar School of Paris painter J.W. Power translated Leopold Zahn's book *Paul Klee* (1920) for his own use in 1924, and Klee's work certainly helped shape the work of the first generation of Sydney's pioneering abstractionists (Grace Crowley, Ralph Balson, and, Frank and Margel Hinder) between the wars. And, of course, the Bauhaus in general had an enormous effect on Australian art. No Australian studied there, but a new Australia emerged from there. When the infamous refugee ship the *HMT Dunera* eventually landed in Melbourne after its nightmare journey from London, it included the *Bauhausler* Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack. Hirschfeld-Mack, who had won an Iron Cross for his heroics during World War I while being a life-long Quaker, had been a radical and inventive artist following study at the Bauhaus (1922-26) and went on to teach there, but was entirely unknown upon his arrival. And although he exhibited at the Contemporary Art Society in 1947 and held his own small one-person show at the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne the following year, his most significant legacy is in the field of art education, where as both an art teacher and a teacher of art teachers he transformed art education in Victoria. Less directly, but no less consequentially, the influence of the Bauhaus can be seen in Adelaidean Dorrit Black's founding of the Modern Art Centre in 1931, an institution that sought to combine the manufacturing and selling of commercial art and its applications with the teaching and exhibiting of contemporary art. Later our domestic architecture, which could be said to come into its own only after the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, was kick-started by Vienna-born Harry Seidler, who had trained under Walter Gropius and Marcel Brauer in North America during the late 1940s. It is interesting, however, that when Gropius did visit Australia in 1952, the one person he went out of his way to

[6] The Argus, 1914, p. 4 and The Argus, 1915, p.4.
[7] On Hector's 1912 performance, see Sydney Mail, 1912, p. 21.

meet was Hirschfeld-Mack, who was then teaching at a private boy's school in Geelong.

The first Bauhaus student to visit Australia, so far as we are aware, was Tilli Frankel. When Franckel was interviewed on board a ship in Sydney while en route to Wellington in 1936, she promoted Bauhaus principles. Speaking of Gropius, she said 'His idea is that in this highly advanced machine age artists should not be employed creating a few beautiful things by hand, but that their time should be spent evolving good ideas which could be carried into factories by machine'.[8] Frankel's husband, the geneticist Otto, was subsequently secretary of a committee that under the chairmanship of the philosopher of science Karl Popper brought Austrian refugees to New Zealand. The two in fact had known each other back in Vienna before emigrating. Thus New Zealand acquired, for example, the Vienna-born Ernst Plischke, its first modernist architect. An architectural exchange that happened in reverse in London when the Hungarian-born Bauhaus master Lazlo Maholy-Nagy employed Australians Dahl and Geoff Collings and Alistair Morison to help him in his redesign of Simpsons of Piccadilly.

This German-Australasian connection did not just happen in Australasia. It also happened in New Guinea, where Australia shared an actual border with Germany. The German-Danish Expressionist Emil Nolde was the official artist on the Külz-Leber medical expedition, sent in 1913 to German New Guinea (as it was then called) to study signs of a precipitous decline in population. It was in response to the region's "primitivism" that Nolde is said to have changed his style completely, no longer making watercolours with a 'decorative modernity', but instead employing a 'remarkable sobriety'.[9] An example of the work he produced during his time in New Guinea is *Head of a South Sea Islander* (1913-4) (Fig. 1), now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales. This is probably one of the works that was impounded by the British when the German ship on which Nolde was returning home at the end of his trip attempted to pass through the Suez Canal after war had been declared. After the war, Nolde managed to track down his confiscated watercolours to a loft in Plymouth, England, from where he retrieved them. Nolde was a contradictory figure: a Nazi sympathiser and an avowed anti-Semite, he was nonetheless forbidden to paint by the Nazis and his works were removed from museums and included in the infamous 'Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art)' exhibition of 1937.

[8] Tilli Frankel quoted in Sydney Morning Herald, 1936, p. 4.
[9] Jumeau-Lafond, 2008, np.

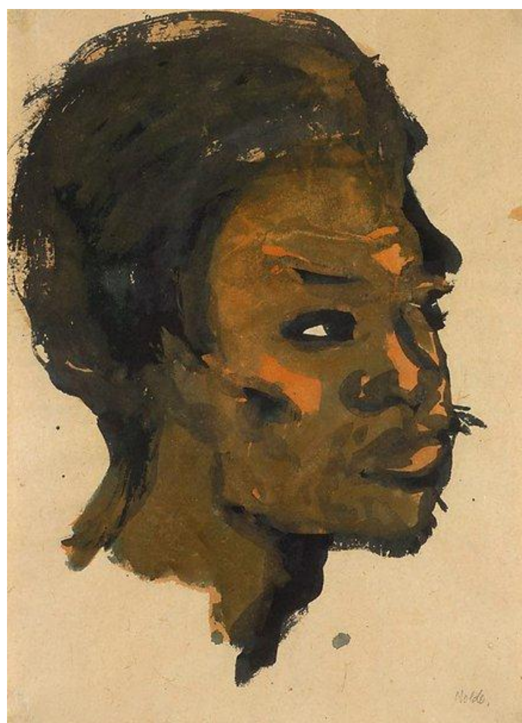

Fig. 1. Emil Nolde, *Head of a South Sea Islander*, 1913-4. Watercolour, 48.0 x 35.0 cm image/sheet; 77.0 x 62.0 x 3.5 cm frame, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, inv. no. 358.1989 (Nolde Stiftung Seebüll).

If the universal cosmopolitanism of the Bauhaus, whether understood as spiritual or industrial, is one side of our connection to Germany, it is important to acknowledge the other side. At times undoubtedly the two countries' relationship has been characterised by conflict and antagonism, and their cultures by mutually excluding nationalisms and chauvinisms. These contradictory impulses can indeed be seen not just in each country, but also in one family, the Lindsays.

On the one hand, this family included the man who was perhaps Australia's most celebrated and productive émigré art historian (with apologies to Robert Hughes), Jack Lindsay. From 1926 until his death in 1990, he lived in England. His Communism was shared by many intellectuals of the time, but he was nevertheless deeply influenced by Nietzsche, about whom he wrote a little-known and under-rated book, *Dionysius: Nietzsche contra Nietzsche*, in 1928. He also wrote books on Turner, Cézanne and William Blake, and in 1978 a book of poems called *War or Peace* (the title of which we play on in this paper), which was illustrated by Noel Counihan.

His father and uncle, however, were somewhat different. There is his father Norman, who during World War I became an über-nationalist, and created many menacing anti-German works, none more "Australian" than his recruiting poster, *The Arm of the Kaiser reaches around the World*, of 1918. And then there is Norman's brother Lionel, the one-time Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, who was a vicious

anti-Semite and author of the notorious *Addled Art* (1942), in which he railed against the so-called Jewish conspiracy and its threat to Australian art in the form of modernism: 'I have often watched these [Jewish] modernist dealers snaring a gull, and listened to their blandishments. An air of profound conviction surrounds their utterances; never for a moment do they relax an eyelid, as they flatter the taste of snobs and give them to imagine they are the happy few capable of rising to the heights of modern art'.[10] The irony here, of course, is that, as with the performance of Beethoven where the Allied victory could be expressed only by German music, so too Lindsay could defend the integrity of Australian culture only by imitating Nazi racism.

Unfortunately, he was not the only one to do so. Perhaps the most surprising is the painter Hilda Rix Nicholas, who like Lindsay decried the conspiracy between Jewish art dealers, collectors and artists with regard to modernist painting on her return to Australia from Europe. She claimed that it was 'immoral, reflecting a state of decadence which began just before the war', and went on to suggest that its success was to be explained because 'the pictures were brought up in most cases by Jewish dealers, who then offered them for sale at greatly enhanced prices and created a small boom'.[11] This was the same "conspiracy" that the society painter Ernest Buckmaster saw upon his return from Europe and that the director of the then National Gallery of NSW J.S. McDonald also discerned and condemned.

However, there was no more committed Nazi-Australian artist than the attractive subject of Violet Teague's well-known *Boy with a Palette* (1911) (Fig. 2). This portrait depicts the artistically precocious son of Edward Scharf, the German-born musician, and Olive de Hugard, the Bendigo-born pianist. (This couple mixed in the same circles as the Pinschofs.) E. Phillips Fox hailed the young Theo Scharf as a prodigy when he held an exhibition at the Athenaeum Gallery in Melbourne as a fifteen-year old in 1914. On the eve of the War, he and his mother, with not a word of German between them, decided to go to Munich. Following the War, he trained in that city, where Nellie Melba acquired a number of his prints. In the 1920s, he made his reputation in Munich with his Expressionist etchings of its street life, and in particular with his well-known series *Night in the City* (1923). He taught drawing at the State School of Applied Art (later the Academy of Applied Art) from 1935, and rose to the position of Professor and it was he who welcomed those School of Paris artists who had accepted the invitation to participate in the notorious exhibition of French Art held in Munich in 1942. During World War II, he accepted a position as an official war artist, establishing what he called his 'career as *Kriegsmaler*' in the unit *Staffel der Bildenden Künstler*, part of the *Propagandakompanie* (PK) that was run from Berlin. In Scharf's own account of his war service he ended by pointing out that, following his time as a POW, although he had been discharged from the

[10] Lindsay, 1946, p. 12.
[11] The Argus, 1926, p. 21.

Wehrmacht, 'I have never been discharged from the Staffel der Bildenden Künstler'.[12] In 1950 Scharf returned to Melbourne, where he was unknowingly received as a prominent "Professor" by the Australian press, who were little aware of his Nazi past. In 1956, he returned once more to Munich, where he lived undisturbed until he died in 1987.

Fig. 2. Violet Teague, *Boy with Palette*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 175.5 x 108.5 cm, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, inv. no. NGA 76.103 (Violet Teague Archive, courtesy Felicity Druce).

[12] Scharf, 1983, p. 148.

But Scharf is again only one side of the Australian relationship to Germany under Nazism. We should equally not forget J.W. Power, who served as a doctor on the Front during World War II, after which he painted his memorial *Ypres* (1918), and who participated in the signal 1936 anti-Fascist exhibition 'D.O.O.D. (De Olympiade onder Dictatuur)' in Amsterdam, alongside Max Ernst, Georges Vantongerloo and his friend Otto Freundlich, whose work was to feature on the cover of the catalogue for the 'Entartete Kunst' exhibition the following year. Also in 1942 the Contemporary Art Society held its well-known 'Anti-Fascist Exhibition' at the Athenaeum in Melbourne, which featured Albert Tucker, Noel Counihan and Vic O'Connor, with a catalogue that quoted from the German social realist artist Käthe Kollwitz.

The Second World War came to Australia in other ways as well. We have already briefly mentioned *HMT Dunera*, which left England in July 1940, overcrowded with mostly Jewish-German and Jewish-Austrian enemy aliens. Its battened-down transportees were robbed and beaten during their two-month trip to Melbourne and Sydney by brutal (and more than likely anti-Semitic) English guards. Sigmund Freud's grandson Walter Freud, who was himself on the *Dunera*, once calculated that 'each man would have had an average of seven minutes per day to empty his bowels and bladder and to peer through the only portholes not covered by iron plates', before being locked below deck in the dark again.[13]

To summarise the story once more, those who disembarked in Melbourne were sent to Tatura in Northern Victoria, and those who went on to Sydney were accompanied by armed guards on a nineteen-hour train ride to Hay, where they were interned in two camps, before also being transported down to Tatura. Thus imprisoned, this mostly male community, the so-called Dunera Boys, created a society that replicated Weimar Germany, characterised by the cosmopolitanism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and sustained by an ad-hoc and improvised practice of mutual exchange. (A kind of university was set up in the camps, and the many accomplished musicians interned there set up orchestras, which frequently played German music as an implicit protest against its appropriation by the Nazis.) Indeed, from late 1941, it became possible to request a return to England or to migrate elsewhere, but many of those detained decided to stay on in Australia.

We have already mentioned the *Bauhausler* Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, but there were several others younger than him who learnt or extended their artistic skills in the camp. There is Klaus Friederberger taught by Hirschfeld-Mack, who was born in Berlin in 1922 and exhibited for the first time at the CAS in 1944. There is Erwin Fabian, who was born in Berlin in 1915 and was also taught by Hirschfeld-Mack. By extraordinary coincidence a painting by his father Max had been included in the German section of Penleigh Boyd's 1923 'Exhibition of European Art', held in Sydney and Melbourne. Finally, out of many others, we might mention Peter Kaiser, who was born in 1918 in Berlin, trained at the Berlin Academy from 1936 to 1938,

[13] Walter Freud cited in Inglis, 2010, p. 50.

and who, when he left the camp, lived and exhibited with the Merioola Group in Sydney until 1950, when he left for Paris and became part of that city's post-war École de Paris. He continued to exhibit in Australia, with the critic James Gleeson writing of his show at the Macquarie Galleries in 1963 that his Tachist-inspired works were 'more Spanish than the Spanish themselves'.[14] And we cannot refrain here from also mentioning Hein Heckroth who, after being freed from Hay following pressure from Herbert Read and returning to London, won an Oscar for the sets he designed for Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *Red Shoes* in 1948. This in turn reminds reminds us of that other South Australian Robert Helpmann (whose second 'n' was an German affectation), who actually starred in the movie. Heckroth's *Australia* (1941) (Fig. 3) is now in the National Gallery of Australia, and his *Pandora* (1942) was recently sold in Germany, where he has an archive, the Hein-Heckroth Gesellschaft e.V.

Fig. 3. Hein Heckroth, *Australia*, 1941. Oil on board, 47 x 59 cm, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, inv. no. NGA 2007.1065 (National Gallery of Australia).

We would also like to draw attention to two other Germans who would become our first professional art historians, Franz Philipp and Ursula Hoff. The Viennese Philipp had studied art history in Vienna until 1938, from which degree he was expelled in the middle of his study on Mannerist portraiture in Northern Italy. He was arrested days

[14] Gleeson, 1963.

after *Kristallnacht* and sent to Dachau, until his mother finagled his release, and then to London, where at the last moment he was squeezed on to the *Dunera*. In 1947 he was appointed tutor in Italian Renaissance studies at the University of Melbourne and in 1950 became a lecturer. Ursula Hoff was born to German parents in London in 1909 and moved to Hamburg as a baby. Her university studies were spread between Munich, Cologne and Hamburg, where she studied with Erwin Panofsky, Aby Warburg and Fritz Saxl, before arriving in Australia on the eve of war in 1939. In 1943, she was appointed to the National Gallery of Victoria, the first woman to work there and the first qualified art historian to work in a state gallery.[15] Just as we might say that with von Guérard Australian art began with a German, so we might also say that art history in Australia, at least as it is practised in universities and museums, begins with two Germans.[16]

The real influx of German immigrants to Australia came after World War I. It largely happened outside of the institutions, and there was no greater categorical challenge to art presented during this period than photography. In fact, from the 1930s the pioneering modernist photographers Wolfgang Sievers, Margaret Michaelis and Mark Strizic had generated a new post-World War I photography, which was characterised by high contrast, the use of the studio and an emphasis on the graphic qualities of architectural space. Helmut Newton (who had arrived from war-ravaged Berlin in 1940 and soon started working in advertising) inherited all of these qualities, but with an emphasis on human rather than architectural form. He married his early assistant, the Melbourne-born photographer Alice Springs (who reminds us of our female musicians' tendency to adopt a pseudonym relating to their Australian origins to present themselves overseas, for example, Nellie Melba who came from Melbourne, June Bronhill who came from Broken Hill and of course Florence Austral). Newton's work mined his personal history, especially, we might conjecture, his years in Berlin under Nazism as a young boy, expressing itself, for example, in the fascist-themed, goose-stepping, perfect Aryan bodies of his female *Nudes* (c. 1970).

[15] For a more detailed account, see Palmer, 2008.
[16] Also on the *Dunera* were the primitivist Leonhard Adam, the historian George Nadel and the philosophers Kurt Baier and Peter Herbst, amongst many others.

Fig. 4. Photograph of Alan Moore drawing SS guards in Belsen, 1945. Canberra, Australian War Memorial, inv no. P00927.001.

But the potential obscenity with which Newton flirts here is laid bare by another kind of body: that of the Jewish victims of the Final Solution's insane logic. In this regard the remarkable photos of the official war artist Alan Moore, here shown drawing at the scene of the immediate aftermath of the liberation of the concentration camp at Belsen (Fig. 4), are testament to what in some ways cannot be spoken of. The Australian experience of the Holocaust, if it began with the forced expatriation of the Jews of the *Dunera*, ended with these appalling images. Another Australian artist present at the defeat of Nazism was the Meldrumite Colin Colahan, whose paintings depict both the mass movements of populations and the justice wreaked upon selected individuals that accompanied Germany's defeat. We also cannot help but compare Moore's images of the Jews interned at Belsen with Hirschfeld-Mack's images of the aliens interned in Australia (*Desolation, Internment Camp, Orange, NSW*, 1941). Both are extraordinary premonitions of that new class of human in the twentieth century, the *homer sacer*. And Colahan's images of collaborators imprisoned in a lion's cage in Antwerp (Fig. 5) and of traitors at an Allied court martial turn the black and white of war into shades of grey.

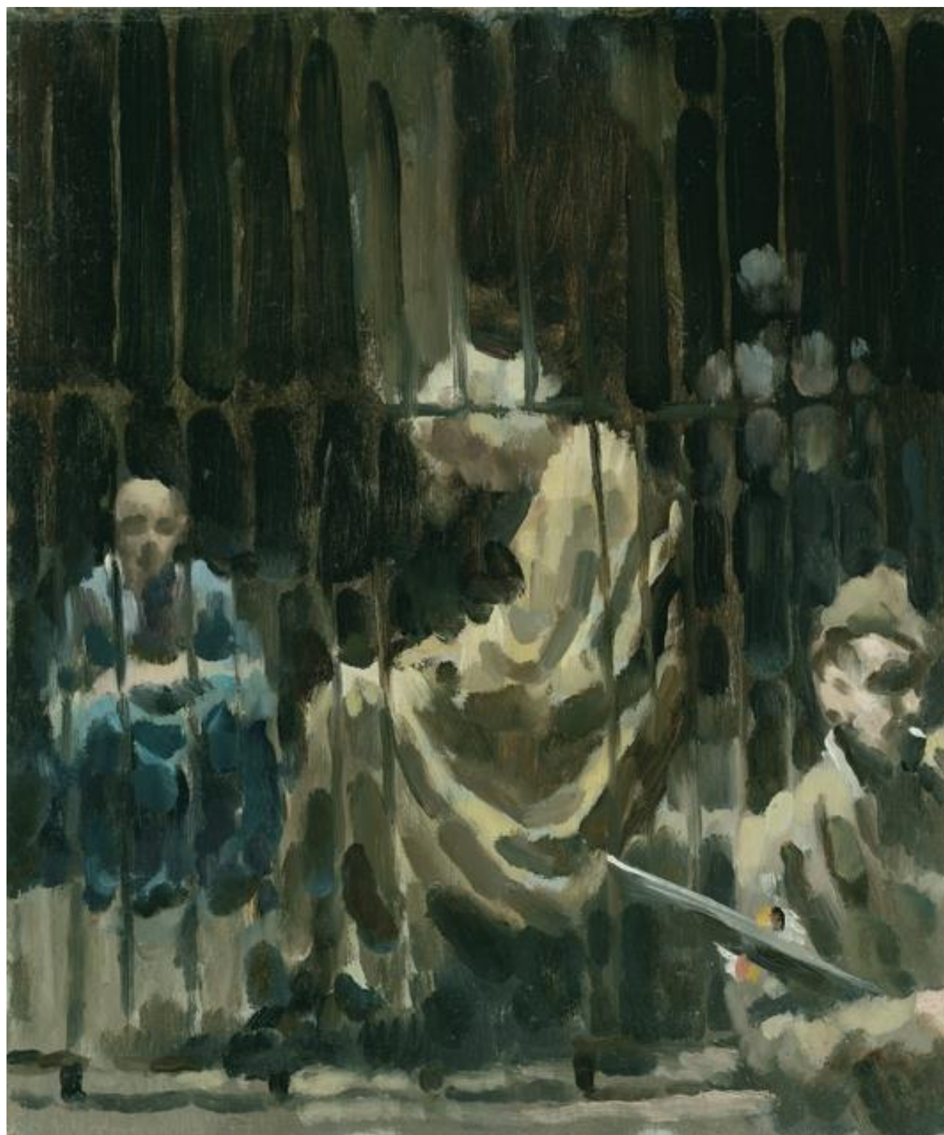

Fig. 5. Colin Colahan, *Collaborators in the Lion's Cage in Antwerp*, 1944. Oil on wood, 45.8 x 38 cm (overall); 62 x 54.5 x 4.5 (framed), Canberra, Australian War Memorial, inv. no. ART25707.

The artists who came from Germany in the 1950s differed from those who came before and during the War in that they were for the most part already artists before they came to Australia. We offer only a small selection here. There is, as we have already mentioned, the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf-trained Ostoja-Kotkowski. There is the also Maximilian Feuerring, who went on to represent Australia at the 1961 São Paolo Biennale and who likewise studied at the academy in Düsseldorf. There is the Berlin-born Inge King who was mentored by Kollwitz, who once advised her about becoming an artist, 'Don't do it if you can help it, it is so difficult'.[17] But, nonetheless, she went on to live and work at the Abbey in England, where she met her husband, the Melbourne printmaker Graham King, before establishing her career in Australia. In 2014 at the age of 98 she was the subject of a retrospective at the National Gallery

[17] Gleeson and King, 1979, p. 22.

of Victoria. There is also the Kölner Werkschulen-trained Udo Sellbach, who began as a teacher of printmaking at RMIT in 1965 and in 1977 jointly founded the Print Council of Australia and became the founding Director of the Canberra School of Art. There is Marcella Hempel, who studied at the Berlin College of Textiles and Fashions and lectured at the Academy of Applied and Fine Art in Dresden from 1946 until 1950, before leaving East Berlin in 1952 because 'I did not want my child to grow up under a totalitarian regime which took the life of my husband, who had been a political prisoner under Hitler'.[18] After arriving in Australia in 1954, she began teaching textile design at the East Sydney Technical College and later established a famous course in woven textiles with a number of other women émigrés at Wagga Wagga. There is Jutta Feddersen, who after studying weaving in Bremen arrived in 1957 and taught at the Sturt workshops at Mittagong, where she was employed by the founder of the weaving workshop, Erika Gretschel, who was herself a refugee from Germany after the war. Finally, we have Berlin-born painter Gunter Christmann, who arrived in 1959. In 1968 he was included in *The Field* and was an important member of the Central Street group of artists in the 1970s. He also represented Australia at the São Paolo Biennale and participated in two Biennales of Sydney. And all of this leaves out pre-war arrivals such as Gustav Pillig and Elise Blumann, wartime arrivals like Karl Duldig, post-war arrivals such as John Krzywokulski and Ernest Fries and even Cold War arrivals like Karl Wiebke and Alex Spremberg.

The generation of German artists coming immediately before and after the war were largely untrained or only recently established in art, but this changed after the Wall between the two Germanys went up. From this point Australia became a destination for West German artists who had already acquired a world-wide reputation. They worked but did not remain here. The great Joseph Beuys completed his major work *Oceania* after visiting Australia in 1972. He was followed by Klaus Rinke, also a Professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, who first came to Australia for the Mildura Sculpture Festival in 1976 and then returned in 1980 and would live here periodically until 1983. Rinke, incidentally, is one of the best-known collectors of Australian Indigenous art in Germany. Australia was in the imaginations of German filmmakers too. In 1984 Werner Herzog made *Where the Green Ants Dream* in the Northern Territory. Northern and Central Australia were also important reference point for Sigmar Polke, whose short films made in the Northern Territory in 1988 were recently featured in his 2014 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, alongside the films he also shot in Papua New Guinea. Sydney's Biennale, only the fourth in the world, has continued to be an outlet for German artists in Australia, including, for instance, Jörg Immendorf and Martin Kippenberger, amongst many others. The Goethe-Institut too has been an important conduit for artists' residencies from the 1990s on, bringing out, for instance, Leni Hoffman, Manuel Franke and Andreas Exner. And German-speaking Austria and Switzerland have, of course, been

[18] Marcella Hempell, letter to John McPhee, 11 October 1990, cited in McPhee, 1997, p. 83.

concerned to support their artists, and thus we have seen exhibitions here of the work of such artists as Heimo Zobernig, Andreas Reiter Raabe and Beat Zoderer.

Equally, Australian artists during this time studied and worked in Germany. The Sydney artists Tim Maguire, Maria Cruz and A.D.S. Donaldson all trained at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, continuing the connection with this institution begun some 140 years before by von Guérard, and later extended by John Hennings, Pillig, Feuerring and Ostoja-Kotkowski. The Melbourne artist Stephen Bram has studied at the Kunstakademie München, as did George Folingsby, Bernard Hall, Frank Weitzel and the under-recognised Erica McGilchrist.

Finally, the impact of Germany continues even without the presence either of their artists over here or our artists over there. This is seen in the widespread influence German Neo-Expressionism exerted on Australian art in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as evidenced in the work of such artists or artist collectives as Imants Tillers, Dale Frank, Peter Booth, Sydney Ball and Roar Studios (the last through the intermediary of the European CoBrA artists).

In 1985 the influential German art curator René Block curated a show called '5/5 Fünf vom fünften' at Berlin's DAAD Gallery, which featured five contemporary Australian artists. The title was deliberately intended to evoke the early twentieth-century German photographer E.O. Hoppé, who in 1929 came to Australia, initially intending to spend only six months, but eventually staying here an entire year, and in 1931 published *The Fifth Continent*, the first photographic record of Australia by a photographer of any nationality. In the words of the photography curator Gael Newton, 'While many hundreds of photographers had made hundreds of thousands of images of different places and had photographed notable journeys, including the rugged transcontinental trips by pioneer motorist Francis Birtles before WWI, no local photographer had published an equivalent, all-encompassing work'.[19] It was an epic transcontinental undertaking by camel, car and train, with Hoppé's young son Frank employed as an assistant. It was largely funded by Hoppé himself, who had, in fact, started life as a banker for Deutsche Bank in London in 1900 and developed his interest in photography shooting with amateur photographic societies in his spare time.

In 1907 Hoppé opened his own photographic studio, and by 1930 he had attained world-wide fame as an ocean-hopping documentary photo-essayist working in a style of tonal impressionism. *The Fifth Continent*, we might say, owes something to August Sander's great Weimar period taxonomies of the German social system, except that with Hoppé the logic is cross-sectional not vertical, panoramic and not classificatory. His project might even be seen as a complement to that of the Austrian botanical illustrator Ferdinand Bauer, 'widely acclaimed as one of the greatest botanical artists

[19] Newton, 2007, p. 14.

of all time',[20] who accompanied Matthew Flinders on his circumnavigation of Australia in 1801 and 1802, thus becoming the first artist to see at least all of the *outside* of Australia. While here, Hoppé showed his work at the David Jones Art Gallery, where it had a considerable influence on the first Australian modernist photographers, the ultimately more Bauhaus-inclined or even Surrealistic Max Dupain and Olive Cotton.

Fig. 6. E.O. Hoppé with Aboriginal Woman (1930). Courtesy E.O. Hoppé archive.

This image of Hoppé at work at an Aboriginal mission (Fig. 6) reminds us uncannily of Tracey Moffatt's *Self-Portrait* (1999) (Fig. 7) and we wonder about coincidence and cause and effect. Is not Moffatt here reversing the roles from ethnographic subject to ethnographer of her own subjectivity in the light of Hoppé? Does she not keep Hoppé's camera and train it on herself?

[20] Norst, 1989, p. 9. Norst goes on to say: 'His paintings and drawings of [Flinders'] and other journeys are treasured in museums and libraries around the world: Lichtenstein, Oxford, Gottingen, Vienna and London; and his own contemporaries as well as botanists today compete in extolling the excellence of his work' (p. 9).

Fig. 7. Tracey Moffatt, *Self-Portrait*, 1999. Hand coloured photograph, 33.5 x 22 cm. Courtesy the artist.

During the writing of this paper, we have sometimes tinkered with the seemingly outrageous slogan, in homage of course to Richard Bell, “Aboriginal Art is a German Thing”. And perhaps it applies, if it applies at all, to no one more than Albert Namatjira (whose very name — for, of course, the forename Albert is ultimately German — indicates his dual identity). During his own lifetime, there were two predominant attitudes towards Namatjira’s work. He was either disdained by the likes of his “teacher” Rex Battarbee (who ended up preferring the more “primitive” Edwin Pareroultja) and the eminent French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss for losing his Aboriginality, or he was positively lauded for being the first Aborigine to show that the “black man” could paint like the white (this being more or less Margaret Preston’s attitude).[21] But, as has been more recently revealed — take, for instance, his pokerwork boomerangs done in the early 1930s, well before he “learnt” to paint — Namatjira was constantly surrounded by Western artefacts, in a situation neither of primitivism nor of sudden modernism but of what we might call *contemporaneity*.[22]

[21] For a reading that opens up the possibility of a “deterritorialised” Namatjira along the lines we are suggesting, see Rowe, 2013.
[22] On this see McLean, 2009, pp. 72-95. Indeed, we might recall in this context that it was from the German missionary and ethnologist Carl Strehlow, working at Hermannsburg, that Tristan Tzara got the ceremonial songs that he turned into his Dadaist ‘Song of the Serpent’ and ‘Song of the Cockatoo’ (1917). Thank you to the reviewer of this essay for reminding us of this.

This contemporaneity, as we say, was largely German. The Hermannsburg mission where Namatjira lived was as much as anything a small German town, from the late 1880s on to an equal degree as in touch with Berlin and Munich as it was with Sydney and Melbourne. More particularly, in terms of an actual artistic lineage, we can say, taking into account whatever internal revisions, Namatjira is also part of a German desert landscape school that starts with Heysen and runs through Rex Battarbee. Indeed, it was the newly appointed Pastor Friedrich Albrecht who in 1934 invited Battarbee and John Gardner to hold a show of their watercolours at the Lutheran Mission at Hermannsburg. Albrecht then encouraged Battarbee to send Namatjira some painting materials, and in 1935 Namatjira produced his first watercolour, the oddly prophetic *Fleeing Kangaroo*. (Coincidentally, this is the same year as the Dresden artist Hans Grundig produced his etching *Warten* [*Waiting*], his own image of the kangaroo, as part of his cycle of prints *Tiere und Menschen* [*Animals and People*].) Later in 1935 Albrecht took ten of Namatjira's works to the Lutheran synodical conference at Nuriootpa, where six were sold, and the following year Battarbee included a number of Namatjira's paintings in his own exhibition in Adelaide, where Heysen saw them for the first time and remarked upon their "freshness".[23]

On the one hand, then, the Cologne Art Fair famously rejected work by John Mawurndjul from Australia's Gabrielle Pizzi Gallery in 1994 for being "folk art".[24] On the other hand, it is German art historiography from Alois Riegl on that has largely made it possible not to treat Aboriginal art as primitive ethnography. Indeed, there is an entire thesis by Friederike Krishnabhakdi-Vasilakis called 'On the Reception of Aboriginal Art in German Art Spaces' that investigates this duality, describing an intellectual war between those high-art spaces at the top of the hierarchy that reinforce what it describes as a 'self-reflexive notion of culture' and ethnographic museums that increasingly have 'provided the context against which European, specifically German, identity and culture are pitched'.[25]

Krishnabhakdi-Vasilakis discusses a number of these apparently ethnographic shows that have done so much to make clear that Aboriginal art is in fact contemporary, particularly two held at the Iwalewa-Haus at the University of Bayreuth: 'Papunya: Moderne Malerei von Australischen Ureinwohnern' in 1982 and 'Traumzeit-Maschinenzeit: Neue Kunst der Australischen Ureinwohnern' in 1987. She then looks at two more recent exhibitions held in more conventional art galleries, after the battle for the status of Aboriginal art had largely been won, one of which was 'Aratjara – Art of the First Australians' at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf in 1993. This show was jointly curated by Aboriginal activist Gary Foley and the German Bernard Lüthi, who had been the curator of the Aboriginal art for the ground-

[23] On this "freshness", see 'Albert Namatjira', www.wilmap.com.au/people/namatjira.html [accessed 7 March 2015].
[24] Mundine, 1997, p. 70.
[25] Krishnabhakdi-Vasilakis, 2011.

breaking ‘Magiciens de la terre’ at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1989. It included Rover Thomas, Clifford Possum and Pansy Napangati and subsequently toured to London and Copenhagen. Since 1995 there have been at least four major surveys of Aboriginal art in Germany, of which we will speak of only one: ‘Rarrk – John Mawurndjul: A Journey through Time in Northern Australia’, a 2005 retrospective of the Arnhem Land *rarrk* painter John Mawurndjul at the Sprengel Museum in Hanover, which is incidentally the home of Kurt Schwitters’s *Merzbau*.[26] (It also went to the Jean Tinguely Museum in Basel.) Again, Lüthi was one of the curators, and the exhibition was the first retrospective of an Aboriginal artist in Germany. There was a symposium in Basel, involving scholars from Australia and Germany on the topic of world contemporary art and particularly on the place of Aboriginal art in the new global context (and all of this, in a way, takes us back to von Guérard, who collected Aboriginal shields from Western Victoria and sent them back to German ethnographic museums while working for the National Gallery).[27] Remember, this was the artist rejected from the Cologne art fair just ten years earlier for being “too folkloric”.

What would it mean to say, if we can imagine such a conference taking place in German — which in all probability it did not, insofar as all the Germans would have spoken English — that it would have been *in German* that Australia could once again have thought its place in the world, a language that not only speaks of the breaking down of our national boundaries but actually *is* the breaking down of these boundaries. It is a language that, throughout our history, would have reminded us, even if it was not understood, even in not being properly understood, that there were others outside of us. And this against all of our periods of xenophobic and self-isolating nationalism, a nationalism that runs parallel to, even if it is not quite as virulent as, theirs throughout the twentieth century. In this we might compare German to something like the sound of music, which is equally hard to translate, to turn into something concrete, but is nevertheless not just the message but also the very medium of a kind of universalism.

We finish here by jumping forward some twenty-six years from our first mention of Beethoven’s Ninth to the legendary performance of the same piece given by Eugene Ormandy and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Sydney in 1944 at the height of World War Two.[28] Again, it is not exactly clear what Ormandy wanted to say by staging the piece — he refused to spell it out when asked — but the musical language of Beethoven speaks to us in a way that makes us actually enact the words of Schiller across the divide of conflict:

> Your magic brings together
> What custom has sternly divided.

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[26] Another exhibition that certainly deserves mention is the Emily Evans and Claus Volkenandt curated ‘Remembering Forward: Australian Aboriginal Painting since 1960’, held at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne in 2010.
[27] These papers have been published in Volkenandt and Kaufmann, 2009.
[28] Sydney Morning Herald, 1944, p. 7.

All men shall become brothers
Wherever your gentle wings hover.

We are reminded that during World War One a persistent rumour crossed both sides stalled facing each other in deadly trench warfare: Beneath the ground between them there was a secret cavern where troops of opposite sides mixed and fraternised. It was obviously a kind of fantasy erected against the horrors of war, intended to make them bearable: utopian, unrealisable, subterranean. But, in some way, art *is* this fantasy. It runs below or against all conflict, all opposition, all partisanship, all exclusionist and nationalist histories, whether Australian or German. And this is not simply utopian or unrealisable, but, as we have hoped to show here, is actually to be seen in our two respective art histories.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. Emil Nolde, *Head of a South Sea Islander*, 1913-4. Watercolour, 48.0 x 35.0 cm image/sheet; 77.0 x 62.0 x 3.5 cm frame, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, inv. no. 358.1989 (Nolde Stiftung Seebüll).

Fig. 2. Violet Teague, *Boy with Palette*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 175.5 x 108.5 cm, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, inv. no. NGA 76.103 (Violet Teague Archive, courtesy Felicity Druce).

Fig. 3. Hein Heckroth, *Australia*, 1941. Oil on board, 47 x 59 cm, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, inv. no. NGA 2007.1065 (National Gallery of Australia).

Fig. 4. Photograph of Alan Moore drawing SS guards in Belsen, 1945. Canberra, Australian War Memorial, inv no. P00927.001.

Fig. 5. Colin Colahan, *Collaborators in the Lion's Cage in Antwerp*, 1944. Oil on wood, 45.8 x 38 cm (overall); 62 x 54.5 x 4.5 (framed), Canberra, Australian War Memorial, inv. no. ART25707.

Fig. 6. E.O. Hoppé with Aboriginal Woman (1930). Courtesy E.O. Hoppé archive.

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