

Lotus Trace III:

Hybrid Cultural Identity ~ A Place to Call Home

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made.

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Ruth (Ru-Hwa) Liou

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Note on Transliteration of Chinese Characters

The customary order for Chinese name of persons, place and terms in this research is followed in both Wade-Giles (a Romanisation of Pinyin was used in the first half of the 20th century in the English-speaking world) and Hanyu Pinyin systems (invented in 1950s and adopted as a standard in mainland China in 1958). This research paper uses different spelling systems when a specific spelling was used by the original author or the original reference is quoted, or the reference honours the preferred spelling of China or Taiwan, as appropriate, or it is the preferred spelling of the person who is referenced.

The traditional way of recording Chinese names is surname first, such as Deng Xiaoping, Mao Zedong, Jiang Jie-shi and Ma Ying-jeou. This approach also applies to those who are less westernised and/or if it is their personal preference to hold to their origin convention, for example the name for: Guan Wei and Lin Hwai-min etc., otherwise, they would be written in western style as for: Greg Leong, Do Ho Suh, Yi Fu Yuan and Ien Ang etc. in the paper. The difference between Taiwan and China in spelling names is that the common practice in Taiwan is to place hyphenation between the two characters of the first name. Some historical well-known persons in western countries were specified in both Wade-Giles spellings system after the first use of the Hanyu Pinyin, such as Jiang Jie-shi (Chiang Kai-shek). The popular name of places like Beijing etc. have long been used internationally therefore Romanised Pinyin system (Peking) is not given.

In this exegesis the Traditional Chinese characters were used.

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Preface

To comply with the Rules Governing Research Higher Degrees of University of Newcastle, Policy number 00826 (last amended 28 Aug 2009) – *Examination of Theses in the Creative Arts Guideline*; this practice-based research thesis in Fine Art consists of a substantial creative presentation, presented as an exhibition and accompanied by a scholarly written work of critical analysis titled: *Lotus Trace III: Hybrid Cultural Identity ~ A Place to Call Home*.

The rationale of this exegesis is to provide supporting textual research for the original creative components. This exegesis is framed by the relevant theoretical discourses in Cultural Studies, Social Sciences, Anthropology, Post-Structuralism and Post-Colonialism articulated within contemporary cultural and social contexts.

Abstract

Concepts of Identity, Culture and Home have become fluid in a contemporary globalised world. No longer can one hold a static assumption that these concepts are coherent and unitary. As a migrant, and later in life an artist, who has been living in Australia for thirty-five years, the question '*Where are you from?*' always highlighted my 'double-consciousness' and provoked me to consider '*who am I?*' My own acceptance of 'otherness' intensified my desire to explore through my creative arts research the concepts of self and belonging.

My research perspective is drawn from a personal migration experience. It is a testimony to the psychological complexities experienced by people displaced to live in an unfamiliar culture and the affects this displacement has on ones sense of self. It considers theories that examine whether displaced people can ever be fully assimilated into a new and different culture and enquires whether '*liminal space*' is a transitory or permanent location for the displaced person's identity configuration?

The research project reconnoitres and conceptualises a personal justification of hybrid/cultural identity configuration and metaphysical belongingness in a liminal space - a psychological space of '*neither here nor there*' realised through sculptural installation. It explores and identifies an understanding of accumulating differences that mark the split, incomplete, hybrid positions in the fissure of liminality of those transnationals who are placed between two or more divided geographies, socio-graphics and cultural identities in the 'in-between-ness' and beyond. Through a critical analysis of six contemporary transnational artists whose experiences of displacement have shaped their sense of identity, belonging and their creative arts practice I find a common ground to convey my own insight and feelings of 'being in the third space'. My research shows how the search for a concept of home, identity and belongingness informs the work of the artist and a longing to express these effects and understandings manifesting itself through a visual interpretation.

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