

Some Islands

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Some Islands - A journal of linguistics and art • Number 1

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Editor

Joshua Nash

Designer

Jason Sweeney

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Front cover: *Paimio Chair* (designed by Alvar Aalto, 1932) by Jonathon Larsen, 2021

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Joshua and his collaborators acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which their work takes place. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.



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EDITORIAL

JOSHUA NASH

“That’s just not realisable phonotactically.”

“What does that mean?”

“That’s not an acceptable thing to say in that language according to the rules governing its possible sound sequences.”

“Wow. I wish people, scientists like you—linguists—could translate their knowledge into a more digestible form so that we could better understand the complexity of the stuff you talk and write about. And it would be great if you could do it in a way that were enticing, experimental, and somehow took me back to an earlier time where I could dream more and be sentimental and nostalgic about things that I really like, especially colourful visual art and music.”

This is *Some Islands*, an experimental academic medium which takes as its point of departure and basis the hardcore linguistic, a realm of prospects melding the analysis of language and the tools linguistics offers. Here we—the editor, the band, and other contributors—pose linguistics as the scientific study of language as a system. The wonky assumption that language is indeed an analysable scheme is more than merely a simple stretch. It is sketchy yet supple enough ground upon which to place many possibilities. Enter *Some Islands* as an investigational thinking plot for opening up what linguistics is and might be and letting such ideas graze in the open airs of art and somethingness. The actual geographical and metaphorical foci: islands. Other types of islanding: how we may view buildings, chairs, photography, and ways of thinking as being island-like.

Some Islands celebrates the blatant nothingnesses and extreme importance of all that islands offer: the languages, the cultures, natural and spoken landscapes, ways of being. This journal is about being lost at sea and trying to find a mooring in a safe berth where things are ok. Remoteness and insularity as stages for so many things. Pitcairn Island, that mystical and remote island in the South Pacific, is one significant basis. Linguistics as tool and device. Art as a thorough thought thoroughfare. Not giving a fuck as a modus operandi. Sentimentality and yearning as means to open up the can of worms of thingyness and ways to catch yourself doing and feeling the unknown. Islands, linguistics, architecture. Music (as written). Ghost stories. Ghost signs. Sexy syntax. Phenomenal phonology. Phonetic phenomenology. Nonsense narratives.

WHAT IS LINGUISTICS ANYWAY?

Linguistics is concerned broadly with three fundamental questions: How do languages develop? How do languages change? And how do languages die? A key additional question, which has driven much of the editor’s approach to linguistics over the last two decades, is: Can artistic, aesthetic, and creative endeavours help us as much as linguistic science does in our appreciation and understanding of what language is and how it works? We believe it can. Art is congruous with science as an effective heuristic in appraisals of language. *Some Islands* provides a rehearsal room for some of this jamming and experimenting to take place.

Science represents. Art signifies. We watch. What we endeavour to capture in these pages using a critical approach to understanding linguistics as a science—syntax (the study of sentence structure and ordering), morphology (the study of word structure), semantics (the study of meaning), and the rest (blah blah blah)—is a method through which we can slightly take the piss out of ourselves and you, Dear Reader, at the same time as being drop-dead (read: fargen) cool (we think so anyway). We incorporate the band’s academic prowess and creative acumen, meld it with a love of nostalgic 1980s and beyond, musically-inspired aesthetic, and blend it all together to create a mix which we all hope you love and return to repeatedly. Gone are the days when academia couldn’t be turned into your favourite band badge or slogan: “Duran Duran are so good they named them twice.” The Top 10 tracks for the week have now become ‘The Top 10 Pitcairn language hits’. *Some Islands* amalgamates fun into the tunes previously strummed and played by books, journal articles, and the stodgy peer-review process.

Some Islands is a partial throwback to a form and aesthetic grounded in a time of life and experience of the arts and culture that the *Some Islands* crew knew before social media and a rampant corporatisation of the arts was upon us. The journal is a tip of the hat to the South Australian journal of new writing and new art, *Otis Rush*, published between 1987-1996 at the then Experimental Art Foundation. We want to remember these good times.

You will notice that Joshua Nash appears strongly in the authorship in this first number. Number 1 is manifesto-like, the thinking of which has largely arisen out of Joshua’s island-driven and linguistic thinking over the last two decades. Future renditions of *Some Islands* will be less Nash-focused and more other-focused, we promise.

We are not sure about how many iterations of *Some Islands* there will be. You know, funding bodies can be hard to convince about stuff we believe is important to get out. Still, we plan that each rendition will have several recurring columns, themes, and artistic contributions presented by the founding members of the band—Joshua Nash (linguist, writer, curator, and editor), Fiona Sprott (writer and photographer) and Jonathon Larsen (visual artist) with the silent Jason Sweeney (renegade music maker, designer, and introvert extraordinaire) keeping time in the background.

In this first *Some Islands* we see Tobias Nash (I know—he’s my bro, right?) go hard on an area of research interest of his brought about through a life of wandering and wondering about history, buildings, signs, graffiti, loss, ruin porn, and erasure: ghost signing. While Toby strikes his pose in and around Melbourne, much of what he advances holds for anywhere there is the built, the crumbled, and the crumbling. Let’s see how he steps up by writing his own song for the band. God knows how ghost signs are gonna be made relevant to islands. Over to you, bruz!

Next up to the plate is Brett Cranswick Esquire (N. Amer. a title appended to the surname of a lawyer). While he *is* a lawyer and an avid cyclist, he, too, is a junkie-cum-lover of words and the female form. A shameless connoisseur of the yeah, nah and exponent of the adjectival or hedging usage of the quintessentially Australian lexeme, *fargen*, Brett treats us to one of his penchants (that’s |’pɔ̃ʃɪ| not |’pɛŋʃ(ə)nt|, k?): poetry. The sonnet, a poem of fourteen lines, is taken to new heights by Cranswick Esq., a timely re-revealing of this almost lost poetic form in these unprecedented times (really, dude, that one, again?). The Poet’s 2013 ruminations, melding of love for a tiny, female child, the editor’s actually, and several lines of otherworldly inspiration are brought to bear on a backdrop of metaphorised nature, *fargen*.

To those who don’t need an introduction, Dr Fiona Sprott needs no introduction. Writer, performance artist, and photographer, Jason and I couldn’t help but invite her into the band (Jason has been jamming with her for decades. They’re the old ones, get it?). She queried immediately the ‘island’ bit of *Some Islands*, and rightly so, but I reckon she’s pretty much on board now. Fiona will be contributing continually to the mix throughout the *Some Islands* season. She has a hand in the piece ‘Beyond Words’, which is all about how the spoken and written are sometimes lost for the writer; (abstract senses of) islands, re-cycling, landscape photography-cum-memory banks, and the pain of lost dreams. We are damn stoked Fiona is with us now.

Jason Sweeney. What needs to be said about the human glue holding it/us altogether? There is hardly much point labelling J, Jase, or JBS. He remains there, sequentially silent, anarchically apparent, and musically munificent, tearing his own and our dreams apart and stitching them back together. Nash/Sweeney and Sprott/Sweeney — the slashes — have taken many guises these last decades. Finally we have come together in *Some Islands* and the music is sweet (as). We like the genericness of our designations: writer, visual artist, linguist. Despite Jason being the graphic designer, he is really the musician. The chunes and beats are on every page and his love for 1980s alt-pop abounds. He is concomitantly learning heaps about linguistics along the way which we think is just plain bitchin’. Jason is also the lymphatic system of *Some Islands*: without him, we would all be a floppy mess on the floor swimming in a sea of great (we think so) ideas. Consider him Da Produca.

We were over the moon when Dr Helen Bromhead put her hand up to contribute her writing about islands and peninsulas. With formal education in linguistics and semantics, Hezza is from the (young) old school. She is from the days when PhD students used to sit back, relax, and enjoy the(ir) candidature. Her approach to the study of meaning when ruminating about islands in parallel with an image of her mother’s tapestry fits in perfectly with the remit of *Some Islands*.

Dario Vacirca, Dazza to his mates, is one of those good eggs. He has been happily hovering around the Australian art scene for ages, bouncing between installation, performance, writing, and embodied practice. Here he melds art with water, sun with time, sticks with stones, and his work with Indigenous artist, Megan Cope, to create something hopeful for the future.

Jonathon Larsen, J-Lo to his bros, is Australia’s Andy Warhol. We firmly believe his stuff should be in the National Gallery in Canberra (instead it is mainly hanging on Josh’s walls in West Croydon, South Australia and his own joint in Daylesford, Victoria). A jack of all trades, here J-Lo’s riff is as the visual artist. Although he is a whacky Banana Bender, we still couldn’t help but want his art (check out that Mambo-esque print on [the cover](#)). Sketches of represented language, crumbling tension, Australiana gone rife and viral, and architecture and design rendered real in blazé small island landscapes will rip shit up in these pages. Like some of the others, he is new to crossovers involving linguistics, language, and art. But we reckon he is more than teachable-reachable. He has told us several times that he has no idea what *Some Islands* is even about. Join the club.

Adrian Young, aka Ade, is the non-Aussie in this bunch (that’s ok). He’s the only one other than Nash who has been to Pitcairn Island (and Norfolk Island, for that matter). He knows the vibe, the deal, and lots about the history of research into the two islands. Dr Young is a historian of science, a smart cat, and a lover of deep diving into dusty archives. Moreover, he loves talking shit. We had to have him as a part of the team.

We dedicate the first *Some Islands* to Laurel Rae Thomas who died at 76 on 14 March 2022. An artist and the mother of Joshua and Tobias, she instilled a sense of the aesthetic in the brothers from an early age. Laurel’s photographs are depicted on [page 59](#).

Joshua Nash
West Croydon, South Australia
September 2022

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IS THE JOURNAL ARTICLE DEAD?, OR WHAT THE HELL IS ACADEMIC WRITING FOR ANYWAY?

JOSHUA NASH

I was asked in mid-2021 by one of my closest colleagues in the academic game, my creolist (contact language scholar) mate in Denmark, whether I myself was a creolist. The more existentially driven elements of the querying were addended with an empirical appendage: “What do you think about the tense-modality-aspect system in Berbice Creole Dutch spoken in Guyana?”

Part of me pounced at this question. I consumed the bait. I took to listing all my contributions to the field of creolistics: I have published an article in *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* about a concept I coined: creole toponymy (placenames); I am the only scholar to have written about spatial and prepositional grammar and frames of spatial reference in the Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island languages; an 11-authored, big international splash journal article of which I am the lead author has the search term, ‘creol-’, appear 75 times. In closing I wrote, “I don’t care much about tense-modality-aspect in contact languages. Or Berbice Creole Dutch for that matter [I did actually look it up this morning—12 February 2021]. There are many ways to be a creolist and a linguist.” My mate didn’t respond to my email nor was a response required.



Long journal articles take ages to write. Some can take decades or more even to see the light of day, if ever. Who reads them anyway? Has the template of the journal article been lost in the scramble for academic brownie points and journal rankings? I query our modern-day attention span and the amount of energy-cum-bandwidth we have to read large codices, intricate academic journal entries, and intellectual treatises.

Some have asked me, “What do you do?” My response: “I write really complex pieces like books, chapters, and articles, which nobody reads.” While I love the writing process and the feeling of having published output recognised and made accessible to those who are able to understand and share a particular point of view, somewhere I feel I am done.

Perhaps *Some Islands* as a product, its presence within the academic industry, and the associated participants as band members are enough and a decent way to end in academia. Still, I need to pay the rent.

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WORD, IMAGE, MUSIC, BREAKDOWN: SOME ISLANDS AS METHOD

JOSHUA

NASH

FIONA

SPROTT

JASON

SWEENEY

Some Islands is realised as method, theory, and renegade actuality. The core triad of the team is revealed on the canvas of island studies, linguistics, and that by-now well-worn cliché: art-science crossover. Silence, self, the spoken, absence, the lens.

Some Islands: Islanding and methoding

The breakdown of language actually testifies to one's capacity to search out an expression for everything. ... In actuality, speaking has not come to an end but to a beginning. (Gadamer, 1975, 93)

We are three generalists. We are engaged in a long-term project studying islands, both literal(ly) and figurative(ly), called *Some Islands*. *Some Islands*—the method—and *Some Islands*—the journal—are experimental academic media which take as their points of departure and basis the hardcore linguistic, a realm of prospects melding the analysis of language and the tools linguistics offers. Here linguistics is posed as the scientific study of language as a system. The wonky assumption that language is indeed an analysable scheme is more than merely and just a simple stretch. It is sketchy ground yet supple enough upon which to place many possibilities. Enter *Some Islands* as an investigational thinking plot for opening up what linguistics is and might be and letting such ideas graze in the open airs and potential of art and science.

Some Islands celebrates the blatant nothingnesses and extreme importance of all that islands offer: the languages, the cultures, natural and spoken landscapes, ways of being. It is about being lost at sea and trying to find a mooring in a safe berth where things are ok. Remoteness and insularity are stages for so many things. Pitcairn Island, that mystical and remote island in the South Pacific, is one basis. Linguistics as tool and device. Art as a thorough thought thoroughfare. Sentimentality and nostalgia as means to open up the can of worms of thingyness and ways to catch yourself doing and feeling the unknown.

We inhabit an island-like nexus of collaboration of hermeneutical (concerned with interpretation) inquiry through our own practices of specific artforms. Scientific inquiry and open, freeform philosophical musings using online communication platforms accommodate the necessities of doing modern research and living. Using lots of words, we have not given up on them. Rather, we respond here to the challenge posed by Risser (2019: 9), that words do not fail us at all, but rather, he suggests, the answer to the question of “where are we to find the words for what we cannot at first say, I would now answer, accordingly, in the evocative power of our words in living language—what I think can best be described quite simply as the future of our words”.

Risser (2019: 6) stresses in reference to the hermeneutical approach of Gadamer that the “interplay between conversational partners in dialogue is itself caught up in the interplay that language itself is undergoing. [...] Language is not a stockpile of words but a virtuality of words, which is simply that of an open potentiality with respect to the performance of meaning in language”. For us, finding those possible words of the future involves leaving words behind and engaging in creative acts, sharing images and sound, immersing ourselves in a being-there-ness in a world rendered strange, after having once been so familiar. *Some Islands* has operationalised several of these prospects.

Sprott is a writer. Nash is a linguist and island studies scholar. Sweeney is a musician. We distinguish between linguistics—the scientific study of ways of speaking (language, if you will) as a system—language (things people speak), languages (English, Swahili, Bengali), and Language, the philosophical, historical, and scientific concern of understanding the how, why, and when of human speaking and using language. While we bow down to these disciplines, especially Nash, because he has been banged into shape as a student on the anvil of linguistic science for more than two decades, we are not irreverent to what these strands may offer us lexically and epistemologically. After all, the words they have provided us have failed us.

Sprott ditched words for a camera [Figure 1]. Nash got rid of lots of heavy linguistic baggage and opted for documenting silence and creative non-fiction as a way to represent processes of islands, language, sounds, place, and ways people speak [Figure 2]. And Sweeney has always been the silent one with a penchant for being a little more than hushed [Figure 3] and islanded (read: isolated). Our current work with *Some Islands* is nestled and betwixt methodologically and theoretically two obvious and large disciplines: art and science.

We adopt a positive attitude and embrace this unorthodox means of 'discussion' and 'talking' to each other, which Susan Cain (2013: 88-89) argues is actually more beneficial, "...group brainstorming doesn't actually work [...]. Studies have shown that performance gets worse as group size increases...the one exception is online brainstorming...a worthy goal, so long as we understand that social glue, as opposed to creativity, is the principal benefit [of group brainstorming]". To our specific method.

Sprott on Photographing the Landscape: The Island of Self and Subject through the lens

Sprott uses a camera to dialogue, to facilitate her being-there-ness and capturing moments, which line up, frame by frame, each moment revealing something different to the moment before as the sun moves on its axis, casting subtle shifts in light, and the ecology of the location teems with life being lived (by non-humans). Time is a factor. During 2020 and 2021, there were moments when only an hour per day was allocated to leaving residential locations for exercise or being outdoors. This distillation of time allowed to be outdoors as a landscape photographer became intensely valued, and deeply meaningful for this hour creates a figurative island born of the intensity of focus upon the literal being-there-ness. This focus sharpened and literally framed or guided the camera lens.



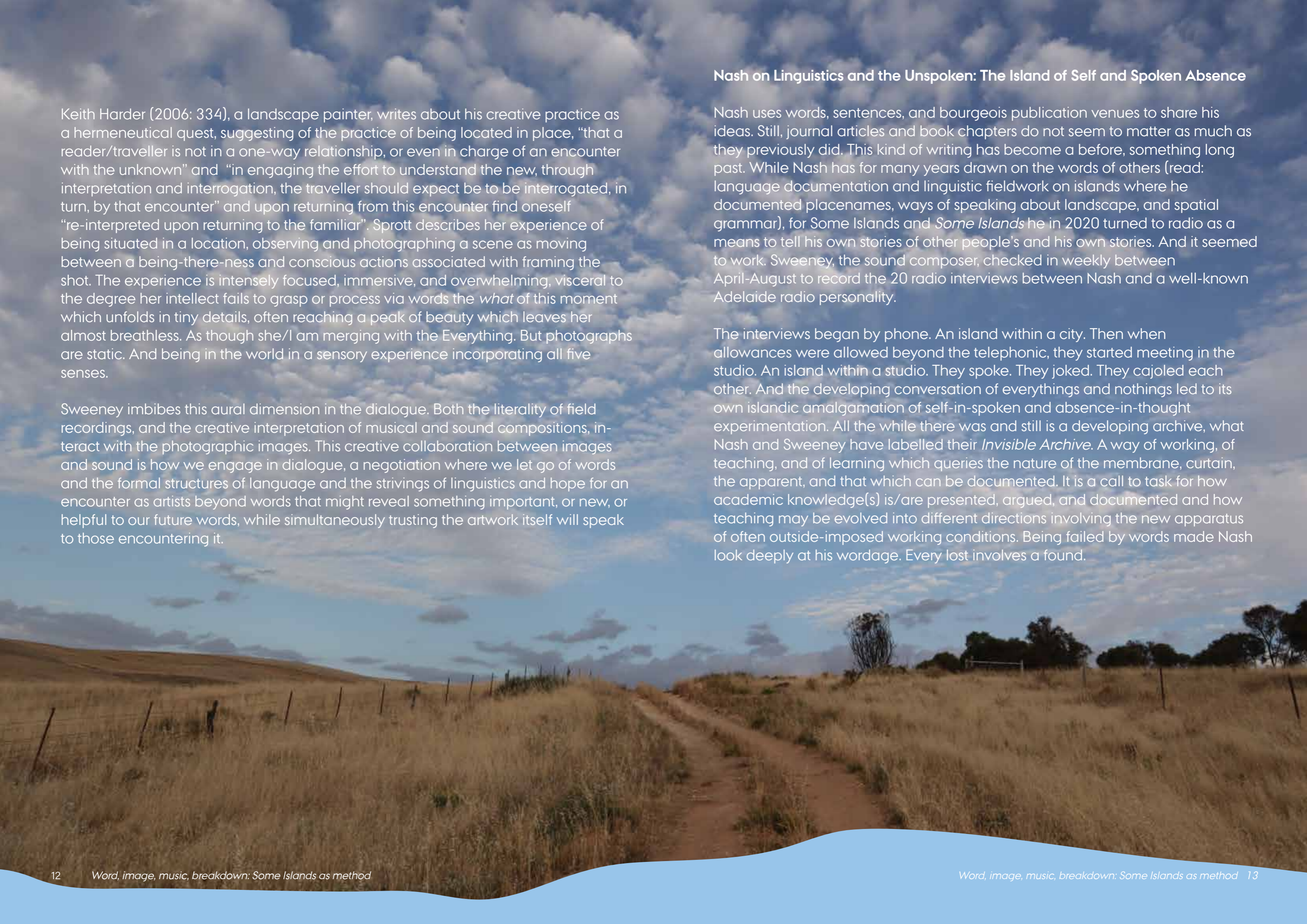
Figure 1. Burra landscape (Sprott 2020).

islands, continents, language, environment, essence, symbols, sound, **silence.**

Figure 2. Screenshot of Norfolk Island film edit (Nash and Sweeney 2018).



Figure 3. TED Talk, New York (Sweeney 2013).



Keith Harder (2006: 334), a landscape painter, writes about his creative practice as a hermeneutical quest, suggesting of the practice of being located in place, “that a reader/traveller is not in a one-way relationship, or even in charge of an encounter with the unknown” and “in engaging the effort to understand the new, through interpretation and interrogation, the traveller should expect to be interrogated, in turn, by that encounter” and upon returning from this encounter find oneself “re-interpreted upon returning to the familiar”. Spratt describes her experience of being situated in a location, observing and photographing a scene as moving between a being-there-ness and conscious actions associated with framing the shot. The experience is intensely focused, immersive, and overwhelming, visceral to the degree her intellect fails to grasp or process via words the *what* of this moment which unfolds in tiny details, often reaching a peak of beauty which leaves her almost breathless. As though she/I am merging with the Everything. But photographs are static. And being in the world in a sensory experience incorporating all five senses.

Sweeney imbibes this aural dimension in the dialogue. Both the literality of field recordings, and the creative interpretation of musical and sound compositions, interact with the photographic images. This creative collaboration between images and sound is how we engage in dialogue, a negotiation where we let go of words and the formal structures of language and the strivings of linguistics and hope for an encounter as artists beyond words that might reveal something important, or new, or helpful to our future words, while simultaneously trusting the artwork itself will speak to those encountering it.

Nash on Linguistics and the Unspoken: The Island of Self and Spoken Absence

Nash uses words, sentences, and bourgeois publication venues to share his ideas. Still, journal articles and book chapters do not seem to matter as much as they previously did. This kind of writing has become a before, something long past. While Nash has for many years drawn on the words of others (read: language documentation and linguistic fieldwork on islands where he documented placenames, ways of speaking about landscape, and spatial grammar), for *Some Islands* and *Some Islands* he in 2020 turned to radio as a means to tell his own stories of other people’s and his own stories. And it seemed to work. Sweeney, the sound composer, checked in weekly between April-August to record the 20 radio interviews between Nash and a well-known Adelaide radio personality.

The interviews began by phone. An island within a city. Then when allowances were allowed beyond the telephonic, they started meeting in the studio. An island within a studio. They spoke. They joked. They cajoled each other. And the developing conversation of everythings and nothings led to its own islandic amalgamation of self-in-spoken and absence-in-thought experimentation. All the while there was and still is a developing archive, what Nash and Sweeney have labelled their *Invisible Archive*. A way of working, of teaching, and of learning which queries the nature of the membrane, curtain, the apparent, and that which can be documented. It is a call to task for how academic knowledge(s) is/are presented, argued, and documented and how teaching may be evolved into different directions involving the new apparatus of often outside-imposed working conditions. Being failed by words made Nash look deeply at his wordage. Every lost involves a found.

Sweeney on Musical Composition and the Tech: The Island of Self and Sound and Wires

For Sweeney music has always aligned with his desire for solitude and creativity as a preferred act-of-one. The music studio is an acoustically sealed island. It is the closed door, the do-not-disturb, the signalling of a possibility of creativity: that something might emerge, as song or score, and then be swiftly cast out into the digital ocean of sound, of abundant music content, a saturated social space existing in the vast streaming network of platforms like Spotify and Apple Music. And sometimes, the signal may get caught in a net, on the net, and a listener listens.

A musical instrument, perhaps, is an island. A space to land and inhabit for a short space in time, in order to compose, in order to arrange one's thoughts in musical form. For Sweeney there is no written score, no claiming of ownership to the sounds made. The music is in commune with the player of the piano, the organ, the sampler, the laptop. A solitary practice, indeed, but one that is made public in the stream of internet media, ear witnesses to a work made on an island of sound.

Sweeney's collaborative practices with Nash and Spratt have often been undertaken in separate spaces, through long-distance file-sharing, from personal spaces of solitary work. Prior to March 2020, *Some Islands* (Nash/Sweeney) had already been a series of films and documents made while Sweeney was in Adelaide and Nash was in Aarhus (Denmark) and Armidale (New South Wales). Sweeney and Spratt have been adept at remote working practices since the advent of electronic media sharing in the late 1990s. *Some Islands* was ready, the spores awaiting. As individuals, we were already 'tooled up' to work across wires, using the sharing technology at our disposal. Spratt eventually and organically joined *Some Islands*.

The internet itself, beyond its burgeoning wireless and satellite delivery, is a network of wires travelling under the ocean, delivering unimaginable data speeds between continents, between islands, deep sea data that we rely on to keep our dry lands and digital lives functioning. As thinkers, writers, artists, musicians, and developing island studies scholars, this invisible behemoth creature maintained by a shipping network, is integral to our work, to our practice as collaborators and communicators. The sheer magnitude of this network is beyond words to most of us and yet, here we are, tapping away at ideas that rely on its functionality, its stable network capacity. We stay dry on our islands while the wires soaking beneath us keep us afloat. We express disdain when the signal goes offline as if it is somehow sabotaging us on purpose.

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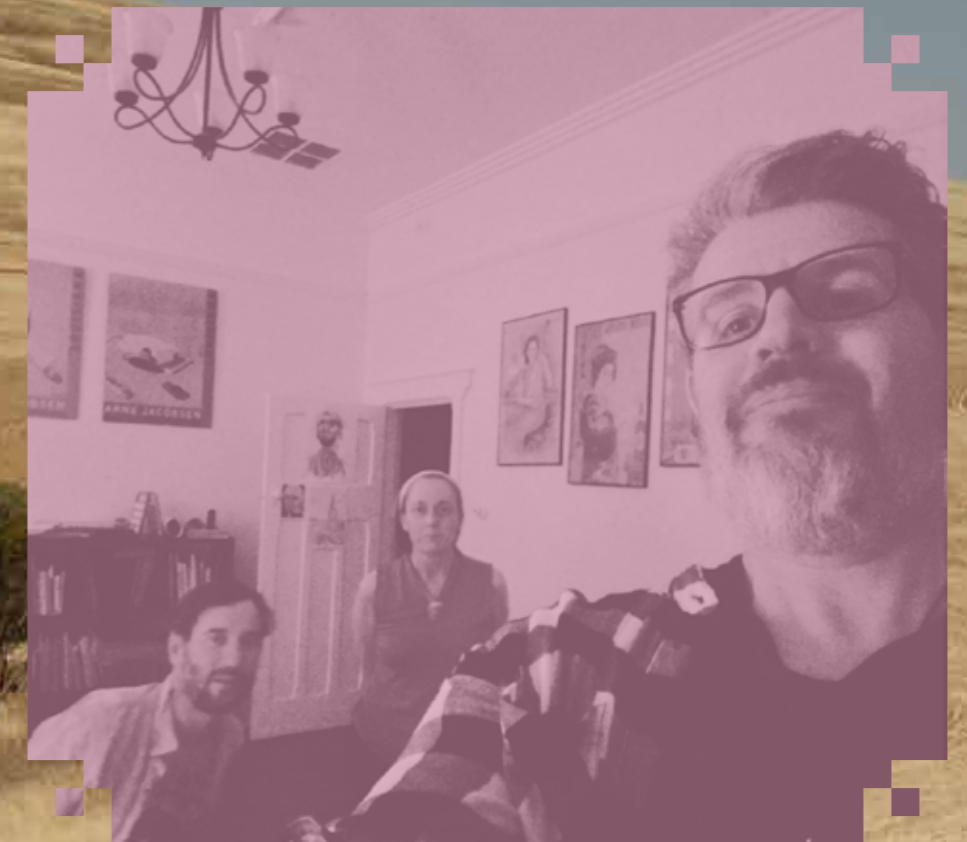
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All photographs by Fiona Sprott, near Burra, Ngadjuri Country, South Australia.

Progress/Process

The dialogue outcomes, some of which are *Some Islands*, presented at (<https://www.joshuanash.net>), demonstrate the ways in which Nash has drawn together a small group of thinkers, both academic and creative, and encouraged an art(s)-science collaboration unbounded by strict rules or methodology, as a response to wanting to write. It is a collection of clear and unclear thoughts expressed variously through the media of image, film, audio, and text.

With island studies and linguistics as ballast in the choppy seas of the present, we are pleased that we have shared some of the art and science *Some Islands* offers the world. During the last while, Australia as an island nation has been cut off from the rest of the world. As we write, we witness the ravages of climate change (at least the discourse), Russia invading Ukraine, and lots of stuff about some virus which seems to be getting around. Journalists and writers talk about the space of before before war breaks out in our region; China, Indonesia, somewhere else, someone else. One can almost hear the splintering wood of this threshold we stand upon balancing the various calamities which now inform our existence. The concept of an after feels much like the futility of scanning the horizons of seas spread far and wide around an island (Australia) we are castaways on, in the hope that rescue vessels will/might magically appear. Here at *Some Islands* we are filled with nothing but a buoyant optimism, which will hopefully come to fruition in a multitude of worthwhile ways.



The authors in conversation, West Croydon SA 2021
L-R Joshua Nash, Fiona Sprott, Jason Sweeney

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SOME



CHAIRS

CONCEIVED, COMMISSIONED, AND WRITTEN BY JOSHUA NASH

PAINTINGS BY JONATHON LARSEN, 2021

Began in late 2020 when linguist, Joshua Nash, invited visual artist, Jonathon Larsen, to join *Some Islands*. The overarching scientific focus of *Some Islands* is a striving to understand relationships involving islands, isolation, place, linguistics and language. The parallel, creative stream, which developed early on in the work, implicates creative takes on design and language analysis with musical and aesthetic explorations into linguistics, architecture, and design. Here chairs are as utilitarian as they are sculptural, functional as utterly useless bar their aesthetic value.

The idea began when Nash decided that he wanted to have period photographs of his favourite modernist chairs designed largely by architects hanging in his lounge room. Obtaining similar enough images of a decent number of chairs from the 1930s onwards proved to be more than difficult. The solution was to devise amalgams of chairs and representations of linguistic analysis and superimpose these blends within the natural island landscapes Nash worked within as a field linguist, especially on Pitcairn Island. This sense, in the annals of time and lost memory, became something else, the something of *Some Chairs*, the Mambo-fied, reified, and concretised manifestation of chairs in space-time, the Nash-Larsen outputs now presented.



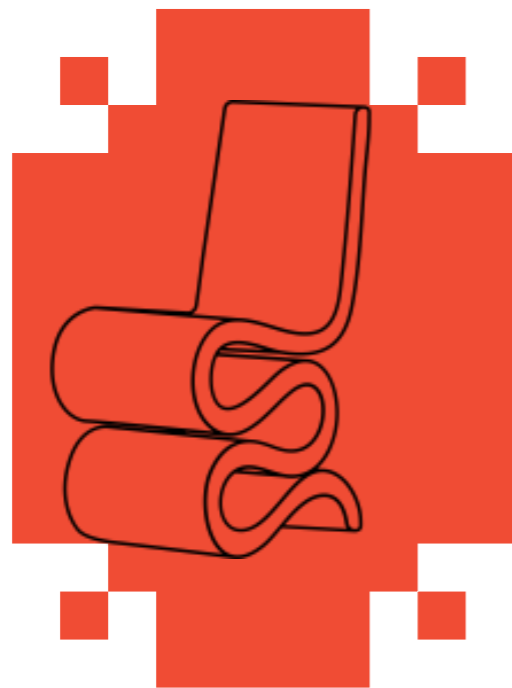
Visual musings about the Barcelona Chair, Pitcairn Island, nature, and positive-negative, presence-absence.

Opposite page: Eames Lounge (designed by Charles and Ray Eames, 1956)

The linguistics and design of Some Chairs

'Chair as event', 'chair as device', 'chair as island', and 'chair as metaphor' are several of the heuristics used in these five paintings. The *some* of *Some Chairs* and its involvement in *Some Islands* is tantalisingly and invitingly ambiguous. As a determiner, *some* can mean 'an unspecified amount or number of' and 'someone or something that is known or unspecified' and 'approximately'. These are all relevant (enough) to *Some Chairs*, with the final definition being less tenable. This abstruseness in definitions is applicable in the sense that the number and distinctiveness of the chairs are up for grabs. And the indistinctness here is an offering. Linguistic *some-ness* creates an opening, an advantage not a hindrance. *Some Chairs*—some places to sit and think—and *Some Islands*—some islands, some island-like places, and some remote locales where *some-things* happen, are bedbuddies. We made them so at least.

These ephemeral and worded *some*s are both linguistic-cum-language interpreted and design and architecture-driven takes on sitting and representation. These perspectives, reared in and nestled within aesthetically abstract and present environments, are ironically iconic and languishly languaged.



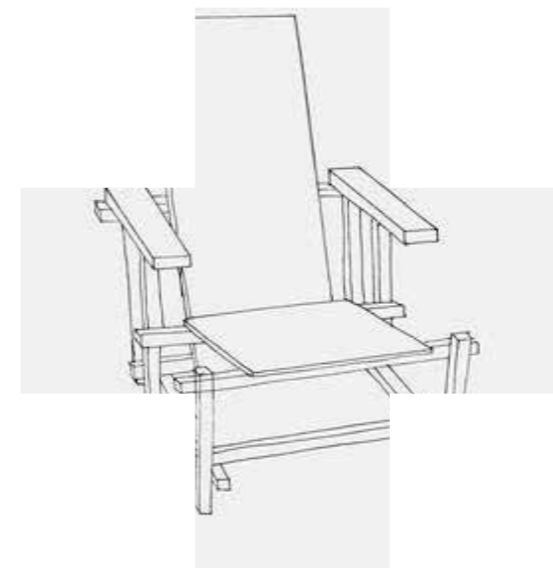
Wiggle Side Chair (designed by Frank Gehry, 1972)

Epistemology and method

Linguistics, the study of language as a system, reifies language, the actual things human speak. The study of Language, capital 'L' Language, the philosophical idea that language is key to the human condition, objectifies and interprets Language and language(s) as things 'out there' in the physical world and 'in here' in our human minds. What and how we speak are available pinpricks of analysis into the nature of how worded domains construct and are constructed by who we are. The same can be said of the built and designed. Here, specifically 'the chair', with definite article, and 'chair', without definite article.

In the same way that when asked, 'what is language for or about?', many would say, 'well, it's about communication and getting your point across,' most would say, 'designing a chair is about creating functional objects to sit in. Any chair-focused design outcome should fulfil the primary purpose of designing a functional object with its beauty being largely linked to its utility.'

We agree to an extent but largely disagree. Where architecture and design objectify art into objects such as buildings and chairs, as a linguist and visual artist team we believe chair design has less to do with utility as it has to do with non-partisan representation of and about what it means and may mean to sit. Further, some chairs might have nothing at all to do with sitting and could be considered exclusively outcomes of sculpture and artisanal or industrial production. Designing chairs that are comfortable and in which people can sit has a place within consumable and high-art chair design. This consideration is not necessarily a part of this project's brief.



Rietveld Red Blue Chair (designed by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, 1918)

Brno Chair (designed by Mies van der Rohe, 1930)



Wassily Chair (designed by Marcel Breuer, 1925-1926)



Egg Chair (designed by Arne Jacobsen, 1952)



Barcelona Chair (designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, 1929)



What this project does is to re-present well-known design icons—chairs—which we claim portray more than chairness—things for sitting in. These pieces of well-recognised, iconic, and expensive high art are grounded in more profound literal-sculptural and conceptual-artistic surrounds. This is done through several means.

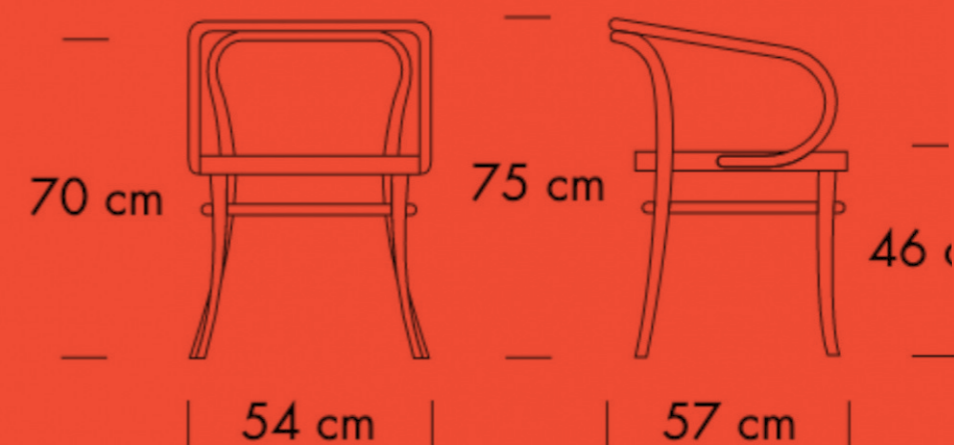
First, the choice of colours. The brief given to Larsen was to use the boldest, fluorescent colours available. The reasons were to create a sense of the unusual, of the atypical, and of irony, because these chairs would not normally be represented as such. This purposefully humorous, almost-Mamboesque colour-driven sense of soft shock is exacerbated by the floor, a wonky yet perspectival horizon line, which emplaces the forms and colours within the world. The colours, scenes, and feelings evoked are not unintentional, arbitrary, or non-pointed. And the feeling of animation *Some Chairs* exude is far from chance.



Tulip Chair (designed by Eero Saarinen, 1955, for the Knoll Company)

Second, the chairs and the abstract environments themselves. While Nash suggested the chairs, which are intended to be more than functionally design items, Larsen made these items real in graphic terms. Placing (read: plonking) abstract, vector-inspired paintings of chairs in loud and almost imposing fluorescent colour paint is an invitation to think deeply about the nature of design in place, language in place, and how places and things can be brought closer to us and made relatable through the bizarre and, to use a tired word, the surreal. Because of this, the outcomes are as much paintings as they are sketches of represented language and crumbling artistic and linguistic tension, architecture and design gone rife and viral, and architecture and design rendered real in blasé, 1.2m x 1.2m interfaces that will rip shit up on any wall.

The process of reification, making things concrete, and the design of these chairs are made more abstract through the less concrete representation of the chairs. These are not chairs but paintings of chairs. Although the outcome is intended to be a tip of the hat to pop art, the philosophy behind the work is almost anti-Warholian in the sense that the chairs are not Campbell's Soup Cans (ordinary) but are high-end, modern design chairs (extraordinary). Few can ever buy these pieces of design, nor could many ever inherit Larsen's renditions. These versions and representations are intended to ground high art in the humorous, the extraordinary-made-mundane, and the reality of the timelessness and spacelessness of (em)placing art within alternate surrounds.



Thonet '209' (designed by Gebrüder Thonet, 1900)

TOP 10 PITCAIRN

L A N G U A G E

H I T S

Pitcairn is a language filled with many nooks and crannies. Leaving contact language linguists baffled for ages, this list should help these folk and others perk up their attention.

1. There is an upside-downside axis used on Pitcairn Island when speaking about location. For example, 'you downside me' means 'you're to the north coast side of me' and 'you upside me' means 'you're to the south coast side of me.' Pitcairn uses absolute spatial descriptors which position speakers in absolute space where speakers of English on Pitcairn Island depend more on relative expressions like 'in front of' and 'beside' to describe spatial relationships.
2. The equative, that is, those sentences or phrases where one term is identified with another, is different in Pitcairn than English. Often the form of the verb 'be' is absent. In English you say 'I am good'. In Pitcairn, it's 'I good'.
3. 'Bout you gwen?' literally means 'where are you going?' but can pragmatically mean 'how are you?'. Pitcairn pragmatics, or the branch of linguistics concerned with language in use and context, can be indirect and opaque.
4. 'Dar [common noun] fer [proper noun]' is a productive grammatical form in Pitcairn which makes a lot of sense for a small society where everyone knows each other. This construction marks possession, ownership, and connection to the proper noun, usually humans, being referred. A woman called Darrlyn brought back an excellent variety of passion fruit from Brisbane in the 1990s. It was a cracker of a fruit and had a great taste. It became known as 'Dar passion fruit for Darralyn's/Darralyn' or simply, 'Dar fer Darrlyn('s)', where the common noun can be dropped because those discussing the topic know what the focus of conversation is. In such micro populations, meaning can be generated quickly and news can travel fast. People are remembered in place.
5. Similar to 'Dar fer', the 'you semes' form attributes one person's characteristics or behaviour to another person. 'You slow semes Barker' means 'you're slow just like [same as] Barker.' Mr Barker was a man who lived on Pitcairn Island as was known for walking slowly. A woman called Millie asked a lot of questions. 'You semes Mille' means 'you're asking a lot of (likely personal) questions, you're being inquisitive.' While this grammatical form is productive, the associated personage and reason for saying 'you semes Fred' or 'you gut Fred feet' (Fred Christian had huge feet) would be largely unknown to younger islanders. Small island memories are volatile and can disappear within a generation.
6. There are more than 500 placenames contained within and just offshore the five-kilometre square island. The islanders have named hydronyms, names for water bodies, surrounding their island primarily as utilitarian linguistic and historical tools used for locating fishing grounds. These sea names are not only stark examples of maritime and aquatic cultural heritage; they illustrate how perceptions and processes of naming the marine environment relate to terrestrial naming. Pitcairn Islanders never write down the location and names of these places, though some have been

documented by researchers. Timiti's Crack, a fishing ground close in to the north coast, remembers a Polynesian woman, Timiti. Some fishing places have two names—Out Rope and Out McCoy on Em Black [Out at McCoy's Ground above the black seaweed]. This place must have been found or named by a Mr McCoy. These documented names and locations could never really be used to catch fish. The islanders have little to worry about: linguists go to such places to catch names not fish.

7. Pitcairn is overflowing with funny words and expressions, some which sound more than a little strange to English speakers. You don't use a gun on Pitcairn Island; you use a musket. If someone asks, 'you se rip et?', that means, 'did you fall over?', an expression which is similar to 'you se rip yous trousers?' or 'you se bust yous trousers?' On Pitcairn Island, everything can be a brute. 'Ha weather se wild as a brute', 'you ugly as a brute', 'I busy as a brute', 'Got one brute thing'. Peter Goers ([see p. 50-51](#)), who visited the island three months after Nash in 2016, has said 'it's Speak like a Pirate Day every day on Pitcairn Island'.
8. What is fascinating when comparing Pitcairn and the historically related language of Norfolk Island, Norfolk, is how these languages differ. The Pitcairn word for 'pregnant' is 'heavy' [hɛwe]. The equivalent Norfolk word is 'haboo' or 'habuu' [hɒbu:] from Tahitian 'hapu' 'pregnant'. The population of Pitcairn Island split with that of Norfolk Island on two separate occasions in the late 1850s and 1860s. These changes demonstrate how time, input from diverse sources, and different social and natural ecologies result in distinct language change and shift. Other words which are not used or not as common on Norfolk Island are 'to jug', e.g. to pull, to snare, synonym of 'heave', e.g. 'you gwen jug yous line' (you should pull up your fishing line) and 'you jug ha fowl on ha leg' (you pull/yank the chicken on its leg) and 'megetch', literally 'maggoted', as in 'I se megetch' (I'm maggoted, I'm stuffed).
9. People say Pitcairn sounds like a clipped language or like broken English. This may seem so to the ear, but from a more technical perspective, Pitcairn is a highly efficient way of speaking which utilises available word (lexical) and structural (grammatical) assets resourcefully. The word 'gwen' (going) can be used in an unexpected way such as 'you gwen 45 des year?' (literally, are you going 45 this year?, and translated as, are you turning 45 this year?).
10. Pitcairn speakers employ different ways of speaking about distance to and from their remote island. People talk about travel times to other parts of the world mostly in terms of days on a ship. Chile is 11 days by ship (you gwen *up* Chile); New Zealand (you gwen *down* New Zealand) is anything from 7-10 days on a small ship and up to 14 days on Pitcairn Island's former supply vessel, *Claymore II*. Days on a ship and days on the island itself, with similar activities and similar discussions, pass quickly in the Pitcairn Island way of thinking. Because of the small size of the island, Pitcairn Island, although stationary, appears to be its own vessel sailing through its own state of time, space, memory, nostalgia, and naming, with the rudder of its language being the coagulant which precipitates relevance and relevants as required. And the role of outsiders—non-islanders—in the on-the-ground affairs on the island is not as pertinent as those who are a part of the island's social tapestry. Why? Because *they will be gone by the weekend*. Who is in and who is out is more to do with perceived danger and threats to becoming aware of the inner workings of the Pitcairn Island social system regardless of how long one stays. Whether that *weekend* is a few days, weeks, months, or even years, those who don't belong to the island will eventually be gone. The islanders and endangered language remain.

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Writer, linguist, Pitcairn Island

JOSHUA NASH

I have conceived of the position as a writer as one of confluence, of confluence. There are many people involved in my thoughts and journeying to Pitcairn Island so far, the things they have written, thought, and presented. There is much baggage and many fellow passengers with whom I travel. There are the linguistic and other scholars who have been and are still associated with research into Pitcairn Island: Anders Källgård, Swedish medical doctor who visited in 1980, 1996, and 2008; Adrian Young, PhD candidate from Princeton University in the US, who researched the history of research into Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island; A.W. Moverley and H.E. Maude who did make it here in the 1940s; the linguists who have worked on the language but have never been there: Peter Mühlhäusler, A.S.C. Ross, and several other language contact scholars, who seem to believe either the world knows everything about the language or that they hold some answers and questions to what should be considered when writing and thinking about the Pitcairn language. Here I am. Pen, voice recorder, and camera in hand.

Seas

Islands

Recording

Introspection

Thought worlds

Doorways to unknowns

Thoroughfares of the mind

Possibilities of interaction

Self over syntax

Mind over morphology

Photos over phonology

Amelioration over argumentation

Islophilic illusions

Augmented allusions

Oceanic observances

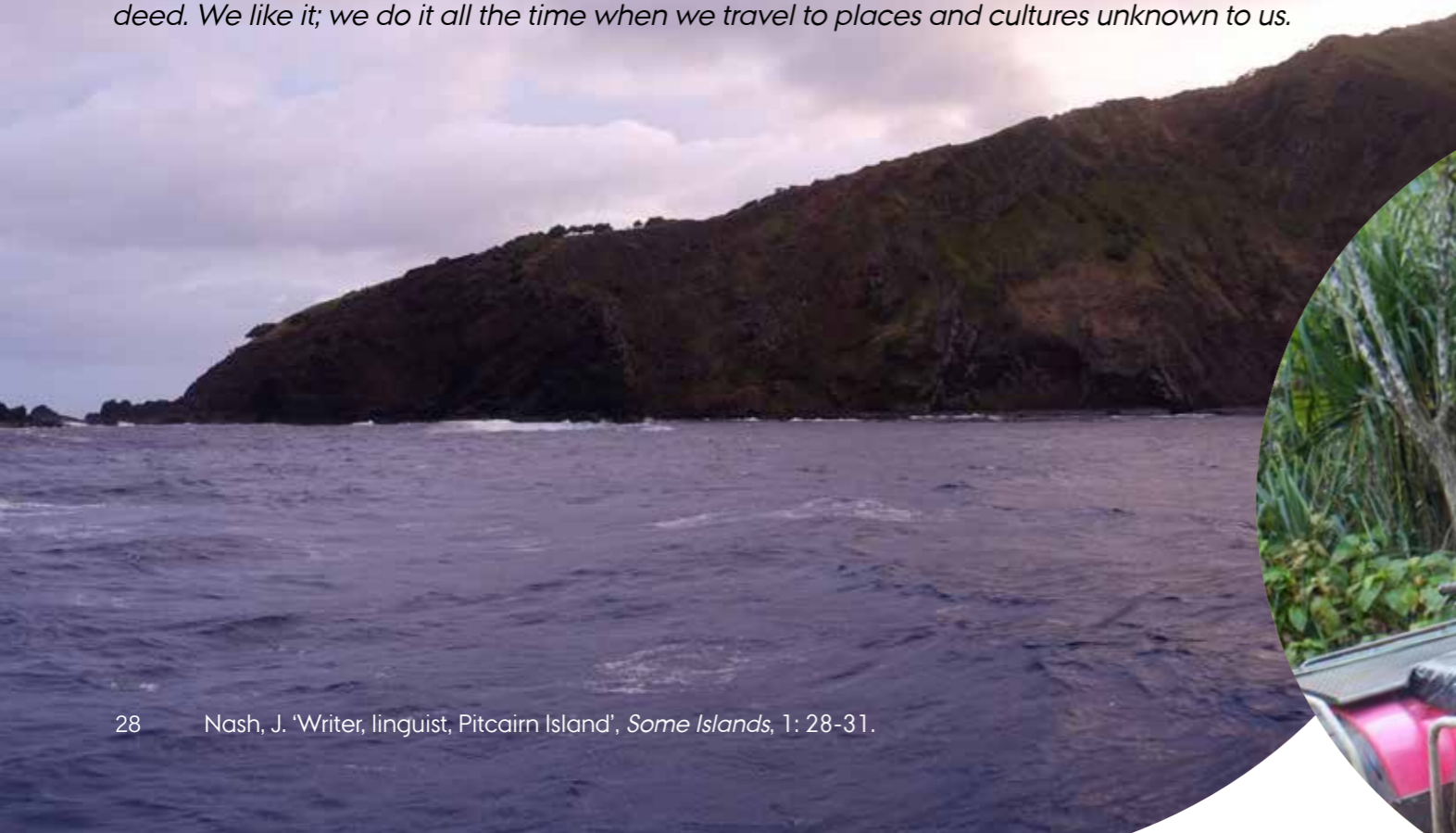
Pacific pilgrimages

Sound and silence

WORDS	I know the word and use it myself, sometimes or often	I know the word, but seldom or never use it	I recognise the word, but do not know its meaning	I do not recognise the word	COMMENT
1 AITERMAITAI					
2 BEMBY					
3 BERNIE - FLOWER					
4 BITY-BITY					
5 BREMAN COW					
6 CORREY SULLEN					
7 DAFFY					
8 DUNNEKIN					
9 FUTO					
10 GO UP DURRON					
11 GWENNER					
12 HEMMY					
13 HOOEY - HOOEY					
14 HOOLOO - HOOLOO					
15 *HOPWEY					
16 I SHALL BRU TACK					
17 KOO'SHOO					
18 KOOTCOO					
19 *LEHOO					
20 LOGAN BIN KICK PLENTY					
21 MAA - DA					
22 MAAMCO					
23 MA - OO - LOO					
24 MAHAAMEE					
25 MOND - MOND					
26 MORGIA					
27 NAN - WE					
28 NAR - WE					
29 NIPPER					
30 NUNCO					
31 OH - LE					
32 OHWBY - HOG					
33 OLD OAT					
34 *OMITE					
35 OO - EE - NEE					
36 PILLAI					
37 PLUN					
38 *POOPCOE					
39 POC - OO					
40 PRIDE -					
41 R...					
42					

A Pitcairn word list used by Swedish scholar, Anders Källgård, on Pitcairn Island in 1980.

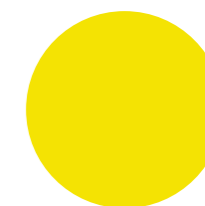
Whether through walking to edgy places or sketching triangulation lines on paper or across open seas, pilgrimage represents travel as mobile faith, movement as worship. Language perceived and reified in the landscapbecomes a temple of the tongue, locations of reverence. Words, names, and constructions can be travelled to; they can be viewed, even drawn. They can be venerated. Pilgrimage as a linguistic gesture is a healthy deed. We like it; we do it all the time when we travel to places and cultures unknown to us.



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PRISTINE LINGUISTICS AND PITCAIRN ISLAND

JOSHUA NASH AND ADRIAN YOUNG



A more technical treatise for those wishing to learn more about linguistics and Pitcairn Island. Contact language studies and its relationship to the Pitcairn language is presented. Pristineness is defined. Pacific history meets the blurriness of the linguistics of some island.

For linguists, Pitcairn Island has served as a persistent site of interest, one that perhaps reveals as much about their discipline's assumptions and obsessions as it does about the nature of language itself. The island exists as a living laboratory for the study of contact languages and linguistic hybridity, a place to work out the definitions and boundaries of language itself. Linguistics has long construed the island's language as unique, born from contact between English and Polynesian cultures and languages. Its development began with the initial 1789 Anglo-Polynesian encounter in Tahiti and gelled further when the nine *Bounty* mutineers and 21 Polynesians arrived on Pitcairn Island in 1790. However, how to characterise the language that their descendants speak, and in particular how to parse out the relative influence of English and Polynesian varieties, has been the subject of some debate.

One of the fundamental ideas tussled with in Ross and Moverley's seminal 1964 work is the notion that Pitcairn Island is pristine, a place where we can know the history and origin of words and language better than other places. That is due in no small part to the island's intense focalisation in other forms of scholarship and travel writing, which purportedly produced a legible archive of the language's origins and development. This position relies intensely on the idea that the Pitcairn language is an extreme isolate, uncontaminated by ways of speaking in other places. The result is a kind of linguistic laboratory; in Ross's words, "One can witness the actual birth of a language and follow it through to the present day". Pristineness is a significant and loaded term to choose when describing an island that was often understood as hybrid and perhaps racially impure, especially in eugenic discourse — but here, for Ross, it ultimately implies a profound, even noble transparency and knowability.

Pristineness is a term that exposes well the ways that contact language studies and creolistics, a nascent research discipline at the time Ross was working on Pitcairn in the 1950s and 1960s, produced and leveraged the marginalisation of places like Pitcairn Island. Indeed, Ross's depiction of the island and its language as laboratory-like, model-esque, or exceptional reveals considerably more about the assumptions and aspirations of linguistics as an emerging academic discipline than it does about the island itself or what doing research there might entail. Ascribing the notion of the pristine to Pitcairn Island is a marginalising act, one that implicates the island by dragging it to (or even beyond) the extreme periphery, while at the same time centering it squarely under an intense scholarly gaze. Inverting Ross's core concept of the "pristine" instead helps us arrive at the notion of a pristine linguistics. Ross wrote that a placename is pristine "if, and only if, we are cognisant of the actual act of its creation" (1958: 333). But in the case of Ross, we are cognisant of the actual act of the creation of linguistic studies of the Pitcairn language, a significant metahistorical and meta-theoretical fact. From that history, we can determine a great deal about how scholars might document and theorise about new languages and transform Pacific islands into distanced or focalised locations of truth creation.

While a professor of linguistics at Birmingham in the 1950s, Alan Strode Campbell Ross first stumbled upon the Pitcairn language in a decidedly opportunistic way, reading a decontextualised and to him un-understandable snippet sentence of Pitcairn in a newspaper account. His interest was immediately piqued and he invited Albert W. Moverley, the first non-Pitcairn Islander teacher to have taught on Pitcairn Island in the late 1940s, to collaborate with him as a graduate student and produce a study of the language. On the basis of that work, Ross introduced the concept of 'pristine placenames' and then, more famously, collaborated with a number of other scholars and amateur enthusiasts to publish *The Pitcairnese Language* (1964). It contained much of Ross's thinking about the island as a kind of laboratory for studying contact languages, as well as a number of other chapters by additional authors. It ultimately amounted to a kind of wide-ranging and almost-motley edited collection of research about both Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island, taking in not only language but history and sociology. Moverley himself had died untimely and unexpectedly before the book was finished, but Ross decided to ascribe editorship of the 1964 volume to his former pupil.

It is striking that Ross himself never went to Pitcairn Island. Some of the other contributors to his volume had: in the early 1940s, Moverley had been stationed on island as a primary school teacher, but at that point had no professional training in linguistics. Foundational Pacific historian, H. E. Maude, who offered an historical essay, had visited in an administrative rather than scholarly capacity. Elwyn Flint, an Australian linguist, did conduct some real fieldwork on Norfolk Island, where the Pitcairn-descended population speaks a same-same-but-different variety of Pitcairn, but he never travelled to Pitcairn Island himself. Thus, Ross's work relied entirely on collaborators or material gleaned elsewhere to supply the raw material for his work, revealing, perhaps, the British academic's own insular and marginal position. Indeed, linguistic knowledge from Pitcairn Island was decidedly peripheral, dragged from its local context to a university half a world away in the form of tape recordings or published snippets of transcribed dialogue in travel accounts. As a text, *The Pitcairnese Language* is thus perhaps most revelatory of contact language linguistics at the moment of the field's formation, the mid-1960s, an archive of the globe-spanning relationships that made the study of places like Pitcairn possible, and at the same time a testament to the utter difficulty of studying a place that was ostensibly pristinely accessible.



I dreamed a dream of Pitcairn; the island was centre on the stage.

Still from film about Pitcairn Island (Nash/Sweeney 2018)

In the ensuing decades, other linguists did conduct further work. But it, too, is revelatory of Pitcairn Island's utter limits as a truth spot. Much of the subsequent linguistic work on both Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island came away not only with word lists, but with destabilising questions like "how do we even define what a language is?" Those following in Ross and Flint's footsteps repeatedly disagreed about how to classify the Pitcairn language — was it a creole and a language in its own right, or a merely a cant, a type of esoteric insider language designed to obscure knowledge from outsiders? As attempts began to systematise and salvage it as an endangered language, orthography and indeed even the language's name itself ("Pitkern" vs. "Pitcairn") abounded. Ultimately, Pitcairn muddies the waters a lot for a place where knowledge is supposed to be easier to create. The concept of the pristine à la Ross seems to befog and make fuzzy rather than make lucid or unambiguous.

And yet, Ross and those who followed him hardly came away with nothing. Ross reveals to us real threads hidden deep in the languaged stuff of Pitcairn. Eight decades of investigation into its grammar, lexicon, social and natural history, placenames, phonology, and some textual analysis all hark back to a single yet volatile conclusion: Pitcairn is useful for linguists. We know something about the language and its history; we know how, when, by whom, and for whom certain words and constructions were brought into this way of speaking; and where we do not know, we suspect there are entrance points. But at the same time, Ross opened several cans of worms relevant to but possibly loathed by linguists. Both his work and subsequent linguistic investigation into the Pitcairn language revealed, as in the case of so many foundational studies in creolistics, the limitations of our own definitions and categorisation of language. Accordingly, a critical history of his work reveals the ways that the professional study of language has long relied on the marginalisation and focalisation of the spaces and people it studies — and at the same time the ways that linguistics has cast the messy, social, and disciplinary work that made spaces "pristine" into the depths of previous forgettings.



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The semantics of islands and peninsulas

Helen Bromhead

The semantics of 'islands' and 'peninsulas' bring together that famous couple from the world's creation stories, 'land' and 'sea'; their meet-cute started this mess. Senses of *island* and *peninsula* form vignettes from their relationship. Water *surrounds* 'an island'; a country can be *separated* from the 'islands' by turbulent sea. A 'peninsula' can *jut out* into the sea like a sore thumb or be *bounded by* water on three sides. Even the English word, *island*, has a dual etymology: the Proto-Indo-European **akua*, water or swamp, and land.

Languages of island-rich countries such as English and Swedish have many words for different kinds of islands. Blame the Vikings and their longships stopping at small islands for rest and refuge. English has the terms *isle*, *islet*, *rock*, *atoll*, *key*, and the uncommon, *holm* and *ait*, among others. Swedish, in addition to the general *ö* 'island', has elaborate island vocabulary. In contrast, languages of countries with few islands appear to have fewer words for islands. Polish uses one word, *wyspa*, but also has the diminutive *wyseпка*. Yet, just in case an avowed anti-Whorfian is reading this piece, such languages still do not have as many distinctions as languages with a lot of island words.

Islands come in different sizes but must be thought of as bound. The vast land of Australia is not normally considered an 'island'. Rather, it is thought of as a continent, or an island continent. At various times there have been attempts to legally define an island based on whether it is habitable. The fact that islands are separate and not part of places of other kinds is important to the island concept. Bermuda's principal islands are now joined by bridges. With such fixed links the island-ness has been eroded and Bermuda is often thought of as a single island.

That pesky part of speech, the preposition, plays part in shedding light on the concepts of 'island' and 'peninsula'. People can live *on* 'an island' or 'a peninsula', but not *in* one. In some languages, the locative preposition used with island words, particularly those for small islands, differs from the preposition used with the name of the mainland. The English preposition *on* is used with places such as small islands which can be viewed as surfaces. In English, one is generally *on* a small island, but *in* a larger place (e.g. *in* Australia). Danes have traditionally used the 'on' preposition, *på*, when talking about Greenland, a large landmass under colonial rule by the far smaller Denmark. Here, as in other cases, the classification of somewhere as 'island' depends on the presence of other places across the water from the 'island', either a mainland or other islands. By contrast, Greenlanders, and some Danes now pushing back against colonial assumptions, prefer to use the 'in' preposition, *i*, to signal Greenland as a country among others.

The sense of the English word *island* can be put in simple words as:

a place of one kind

on all sides of places of this kind, there are places where there is a lot of water

because of this, places of this kind are not parts of places of other kinds

places of this kind can be big places, places of this kind can be small places

people can live in some places of this kind

someone can be in a place of this kind

If the island is the dominant peacock to whom a discipline of Blue Humanists bows down, peninsulas are his flock of dowdy peahens. Islands spark interest because they are bounded and foster distinctive environments, cultures, and histories. Peninsulas lack the uniqueness of 'islands'; they can just be considered to be parts of other places. Peninsulas are bordered by water on some but not all sides, and are attached to larger land masses. In basic terms, the meaning of the English word *peninsula* is:

a place of one kind

on many sides of places of this kind, there are places where there is a lot of water

on one side of places of this kind, there are places of other kinds where people can live

these places are parts of big places where people can live

places of this kind can be big places, places of this kind can be small places

people can live in these places

But my attention is drawn back to the flashy subject of this journal, islands. Take two of Swedish's plethora of island words, *holme* and *skärgård*.

A *holme* is a small, flat island with some trees and other vegetation, a nice place to park a longship. Bilingual dictionaries give the English word, *islet*.

The ending *-holm* appears in names for small islands, such as Långholm, Tallholm, and Lillholm.

Most 'holmar' are uninhabited but, in some cases, people can live on them because of their pleasant conditions. Simple phrases which could depict *holmar* are "places of this kind are very small places", "many things grow in places of this kind" and "there is water in places of this kind", along with some wording similar to that used above for the English, *island*.

Skärgård can be translated into English with the word *archipelago*, but they are not exactly the same. The word *skärgård* would not tend to be applied to an archipelago in the Pacific, rather it is a Swedish national cultural concept. Part of the word is *skär*, now obsolete, which used to denote a small, rocky islet, a landform found in Northern Europe. These small, rocky islets combine with larger inhabited islands to form a 'skärgård'. Simple phrasing of *skärgård* would contain the material 'rock', and the concepts of 'country' and 'Sweden'.

Islands contain worlds. Words contain worlds. Words for islands contain worlds of worlds.



Tapestry of Leveque Island by Tina Bromhead

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managed intimacy

MANAGED INTIMACIES

Still from the 2019 film, *The Linguist's Lens* https://youtu.be/frfzigv4_Q

We all require closeness, touch, and a feeling of togetherness. These desires can translate to one word: intimacy. But there are many kinds of intimacy, hence the plural, intimacies. How do we mediate these requirements, our needs versus the wants, closeness and nearness, dark thoughts and revealed feelings? This is what *Managed Intimacies* seeks to uncover.

Sound. Image. Words. Film. These are the media through which these intimacies are propelled and shared. While they deal mainly with the languages and cultures of small islands, this is only a beginning point of reference. The spoken might invite us into a more abstract realm while the heard dredges up the past. These media are all managed, a force we are wont to deal with continually.

Here this managing dwells across the need to empiricise and make sense through counting and categorisation as opposed to leaving things be in their place and just looking. Whether shallow or deep, these intimacies are required, enabled through making things and thinking about their whereabouts. These makings are as human-cultural as natural-environmental. Never solved, always in flux, ever bounded, managing intimacies is integral to this project of insularity, postulating about spatial referencing, and the role of art and science in a deeper appreciation of fuzziness.

Joshua Nash

Listen to a series of music pieces by Jason Sweeney integrating conversations from radio interviews Joshua Nash has undertaken with Ewart Shaw, Peter Goers, and various other producers during the time of research.

<https://www.joshuanash.net/managed-intimacies>

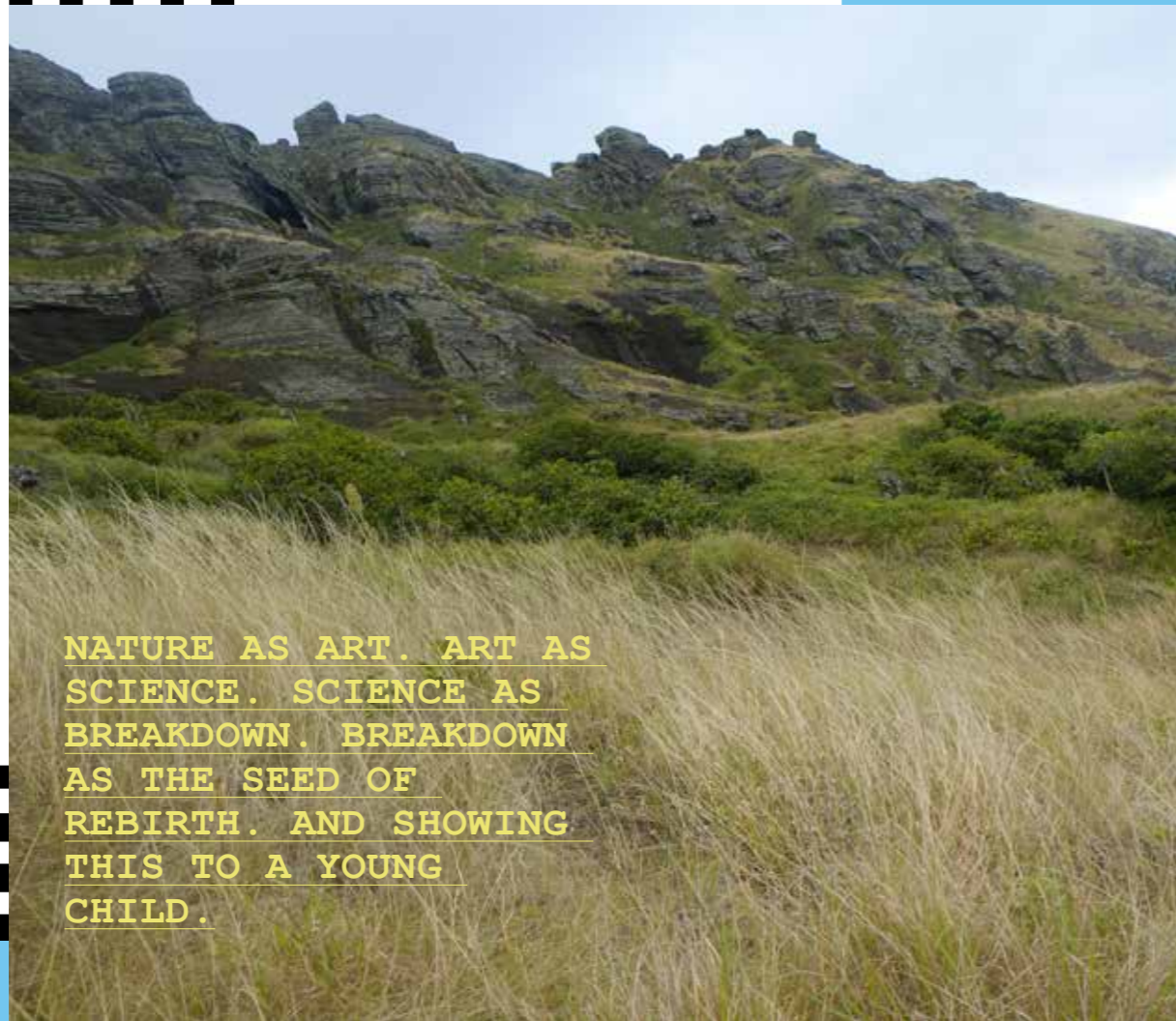
Contact language linguistics is steeped in the three major questions with which general linguistics is also concerned: How do languages develop? How do languages change? And how do languages die?

What is different about considering new languages and those, too, which often have small speaker numbers, is how people using these ways of speaking differ in managing new social and natural environments. Where a top-down approach often exists in coloniser-imposed language situations, bottom-up or flatter hierarchies can arise. These anarchic tongues, the linguistically (power) decentralised, are results worthy of scientific and artistic attention.

In the case of Pitcairn, the Pitcairn Island vernacular-cum-argot let anarchically loose to carry out its own grammatical and lexical travails on a piece of South Pacific rock. Like other resultant patois, Pitcairn adapts, ebbs and flows, finds its own way, and continues to bemuse those who look at and to it for answers. Categories disappoint. Boundaries are fuzzy. Science bows down to art. Yet here we are.

JOSHUA NASH

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NATURE AS ART. ART AS
SCIENCE. SCIENCE AS
BREAKDOWN. BREAKDOWN
AS THE SEED OF
REBIRTH. AND SHOWING
THIS TO A YOUNG
CHILD.

Olive Autumn

She settles in her swaddling cloth, like rain
In its allotted time of night. What dreams
May come to that contented crib, where seems
And is are one, give us pause without pain.
Never did an infant sigh but the main
Voice of the heavens groaned. And when she screams,
It matters not a whit whether sky teems
Or earth heaves - readiness is all in vain.
The fall of leaves behind the now distempered
Season dispels her name in playful winds
Along the coast between the sea and strand.
If usage is derived from need, demand
Must spring from some neglected fault that binds.
Dreams change, depending on when they're remembered.

Brett Cranswick

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Despite the pain of the present

JOSHUA NASH

*Despite the pain of the present, the traumas of the past,
and the fragmented dreams of the future, we will dare to
reclaim the aspects, parts, and pieces of
the soul that have been turned from,
now longing to return home.*

Matt Licata

Everyone seems to be traumatised, to have triggers, and to be in a draining relationship. As I scratch this draft out (1 May 2022), Johnny Depp vs Amber Heard is plastered across our news media. People have personal issues and mental health issues (these are different). And mental health days are scheduled with some frequency. Most are stressed. Many are in therapy or have a counsellor or a therapist. People previously used God or religion or society or social clubs or the pub to make it through the folly and bumbling of being human. I don't doubt other people's or my own traumas. The title of Mark Epstein's book, *The Trauma of Everyday Life*, offers a significant platitude: everybody's got something. But what are these somethings, how do they come about, and how to alleviate, resolve, or at least manage them? Do we fail if we have a personal breakdown?

There are hints throughout *Some Islands* of the pain and suffering and the hopes and fortunes of doing art-science in a neoliberal academy and coin-focused world. We come to this planet, we share a little time — together alone and alone together — as a little blip of consciousness and hopefully with good helpings of love and fun times, then we disappear. We invent theories and religions and delve into the mysteries of existence in the hope that there will be some kind of answer, some salve which can help us get up in the morning, be ourselves, whoever that is, and a way to make sense and meaning in the who, what, where, when, and how of our existence. All the while, time is ticking and we're getting older. All the while I ask myself: Does any of this really matter?

We always have a choice. I have sometimes found it difficult not to play the victim in a world which seems so unjust. Self-help books and therapy can take us some of the way; time in nature and gardening and any other number of healthy and less healthy activities can help us embrace what is there or keep us away from our pain and inevitable, eventual death. While I have no idea and am not overly concerned about the origin and destiny of life, I am definitely doing my best to derive meaning from being alive. Today. And as a friend and co-astronaut of the depths intimated to me on the phone today, 'affect leads to meaning.' And whether that affect is so-called 'good' or 'bad', I prefer to feel all the breadths of emotions rather than be (comfortably) numb and distant from the latitudes of feeling. As the same friend said to me, 'going into therapy is as much about getting better emotionally and mentally as enabling and giving ourselves the almost bizarre parallel of being able to feel worse. And often, much worse.' Obliteration of truths and falsehoods of who we think we are and our senses of self lead to required private, intimate, and (inter)personal composting.

All things (must) pass. Every feeling and emotion comes and goes. There are really no mistakes in life, only meandering paths of learning. Still, my regrets are mounting. I might hazard a guess that yours are, too. I have brought up a child speaking a language which is not mine, not hers. It doesn't even belong to the country in which we were both born. Where I have claimed I am a language vessel and have brought up a child bilingually, I am also aware that I might well have traumatised and battered a child with my projections of what I deem to be important: the ability to speak more languages and to have more access to different ways of seeing the world. And I have no doubt that my insistence on speaking this language led in part to my now ex-partner being pissed off with me. Oh, well, relationships come and go. Children are forever. Linguistic trauma? We will eventually return to the upsets of the past, the aches of the present, and the patchy imaginings of the now. And we will do our best.

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The terms 'impact' and 'outreach' are bandied about much in modern-day academia. Gone are the days where publishing an article once every few years was enough to keep one employed or up to intellectual speed within the athletics and track records of bloated bibliographies and multi-authored research collaborations. Even more, scholars need to generate idea after idea every few years to convince funding bodies to give them money to do art: that which doesn't need to be done. Or does it?

How does scholarship continue in times where not only endless publishing is merely an assumption but the search to pay your own salary is implied? So how can one impact and outreach when there is simply so much stuff about the place? In the days of the neverendingness of the internet, the radio interview, or what is nowadays dubbed 'podcast', is as good a place as any to engage in conversations. And here a conversation can be much more than the generalised or focused punchiness of click baited links to topical topicalities. Ramblings of rambliness, intellectual engagements for their own sake, and scholarship on the loose. Bring them all back.

Two well-known radio personalities, Peter Goers and Ewart Shaw, are such conversationalists. Engaging with thinkers and producers of this humble calibre enables a figment of the past to be brought into the present, that talking for art's and talking's sake is just fine. As it is. Interaction with these types through the South Australian airwaves makes one realise that it is ok to be an academic, that the public intellectual is not a dead person, but an institution and symbol worth upholding, something even to be lauded.

Talking and thinking are worthwhile ventures. They let the feelings that underlie these human events spill out into the worded domains of radio frequencies. The impact of word conglomerates and outreach of thought domains are like seeds planted in the minds of those incident on these hearings.

Listen to the catalogue of radio interviews here:
<https://www.joshuanash.net>



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Cameleers, language, dust, outback

Joshua Nash

In my childhood I saw *The Ghan* leave Adelaide north toward Alice Springs and beyond countless times. This passenger train commemorates the route, role, and personage of the Muslim **cameleers** in exploring the inland of Australia.

In 2014 I was invited to participate in a project documenting the architectural, settlement, and cultural history of the cameleers in the Australian outback. I transferred my background in linguistics and environmental studies to architecture and cultural history and in so doing sketched a self-mandated experimental and speculative course. The exploration of the built environment and its relationship to natural, cultural, and linguistic landscapes is a logical extension of my educational training and personal interests.

I felt there was a large gap in how the story of the cameleers, especially in South Australia where I was born, could be represented in a creative and hyper-personal manner. This is summed up in a single line:

I simply look around, take in the view.

Cameleers publications

1. Nash, J. 2019. 'The Afghan Cameleers in the Australian Outback: a case of toponymic absence?' *Placenames Australia* (December 2019): 13.
2. Nash, J. 2018, 'Linguistic spatial violence: The Muslim cameleers in the Australian Outback', *Refract*, 1(1): 103-118.
3. Nash, J., McShane Lodwick, L., and Wander, M. 2018, 'Am I a generalist or a linguist?, or how relevant are emotions and refracting methodologies to the academy? An interview with Joshua Nash', *Refract*, 1(1): 119-124.
4. Nash, J. 2019, 'Linguistics and architecture: A re-review'. *KÅRK* [Magazine of Aarhus School of Architecture and Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Copenhagen], 36: 42-49.
5. Nash, J. 2017. '(The) Unbuilt of the Weak, or the linguistics of concrete and dust', *Australian Folklore*, 32: 267-269.
6. Nash, J. 20 April 2020 – Arts on Air with Ewart Shaw, 5 EBI, Adelaide, discussion about Afghan cameleers and linguistics
7. Nash, J. 28 January 2019 – Evenings with Peter Goers, ABC Radio, Adelaide, discussion about Afghan cameleers and Pitcairn Island
8. Nash, J. 2015, Review of Barnett (2013), *Emergence in Landscape Architecture, Landscape Research*, 40(4): 517-518.

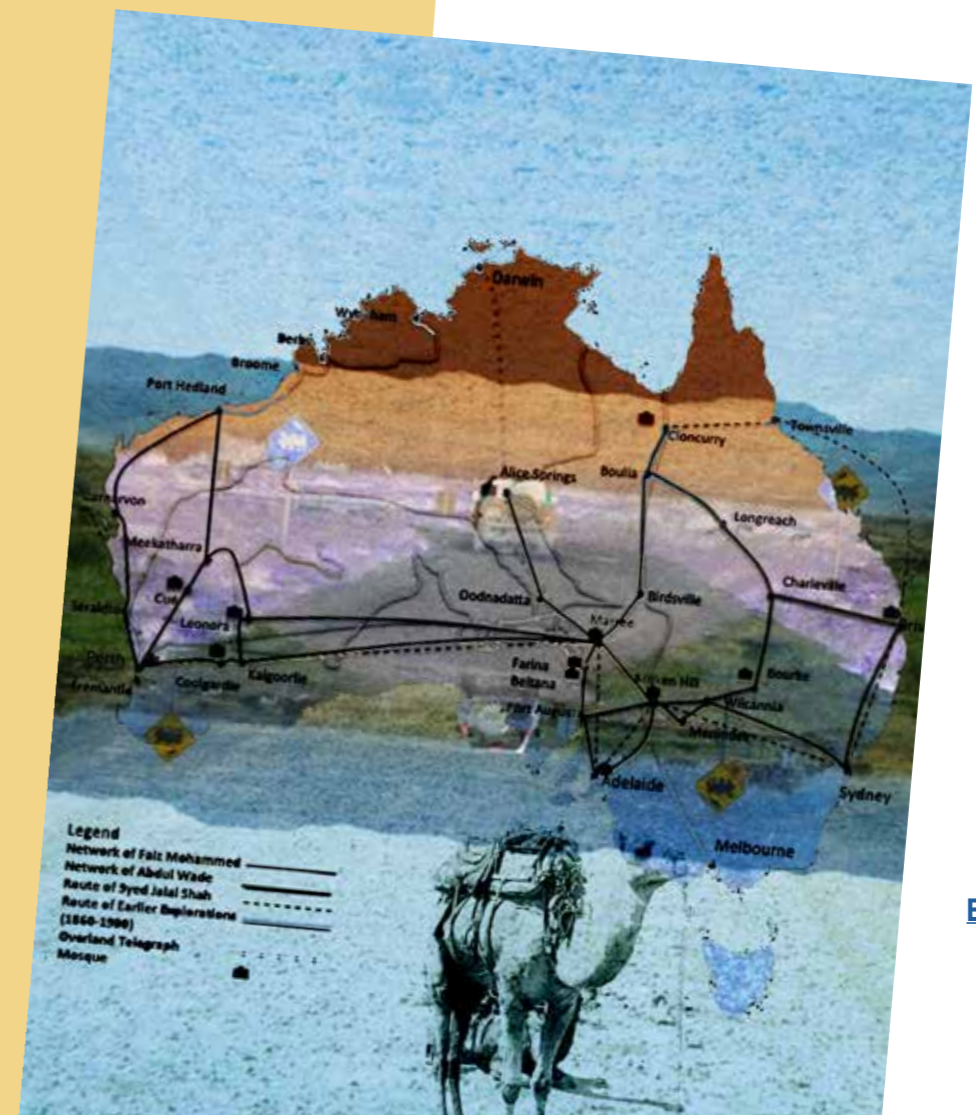
The strong, built architectural remains fashioned in the late 1800s by the Muslim cameleers—the Indian, Pakistani and Afghani camel drovers—in the inland of Australia are as much in my view as the weak, absent residua of the unbuilt they never fabricated or erected.



The cameleers constructed and were scaffolded by their new homeland, stationed among the exotic-esoteric placenames adorning Outback pastoral, rural towns—Marree, Beltana, Tarcoola, Oodnadatta. To me on my Australian desert jaunt, the toponyms and places I traverse are as linguistic as architectural, as disassembled as entrancing. The landscape is strong and robust, the persuasion about what I see punchy, terse, and laconic.

The personal names of the Afghan cameleers—Abdullah, Khan, Shah, Alumgoo—endure amid the contradiction separating the grounded dust fated relics (the now unbuilt, the thought, the linguistic) and architectural realia (it's there, I know it because I can see it) in amalgamated linguistic terrain and architectural reach. I feel acquiesced in thinking of these micro colonies the cameleers occupied in this non-urban land.

The rustic places of worship and peripheral encampments in country South Australia are obvious, apparent, lucid. I collect images, experience contact and proximity, feel the grit of dust beneath my fingernails.



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Fagoteering the future

Dario Vacirca reflects on his experience working on an Indigenous oyster reef regeneration artwork on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island/Moreton Bay), Queensland with Megan Cope. Photography by Cian Sanders.

...from one future island (the always potential country of countries, 'Oz') which the global future (our cosmopolitan present) seems to forget, to another island (Minjerribah/North Stradbroke) still bearing its custom and burgeoning another potential future through slow and creative reckoning of practices past but not forgotten...

Fagoteering is a portmanteau bringing together the verb, *fagoting*, meaning to bind in or make into fagots, with that bizarre western pastime of *orienteering*. Orienteering started as land training for the Swedish military and has since grown into a sport-like mode of keeping our urbanised bodies gamified in the wild world of the wilderness. Weird. Obviously, the term's audial residue connotes a *queering* and so turns the attention from the 'gaming' of land to a *wandering* (or *wandeeering*) with it - a certain kind of *dérive*. *Fagoteering* (foraging, queering, orienteering, wandering, fagoting) was a slow obsession I developed during the strangeness of these last years: walking or driving from my home in the direction of green spaces, picking up sticks, bundling them into piles, bringing these piles together to make bigger piles, and then either leaving them in a public place or at home in some sort of nesting de/arrangement. This new practice precipitated a joy, an extimatic force of mind and nature, opening the space to listen to poetry or talk and record myself on the side of the road while coming to know Bunjalung Country. But this writing is not about the process of collecting sticks; it is about what opens through such nomadic practice.

One night my partner and I were hosting a guest for dinner, the studio manager for Quandamooka artist, Megan Cope. Jessie talked in rolling waves about the beautiful toil the studio team were currently undertaking in the pursuit a new work, *Kinyingarra Guwinyanba*, for the Brisbane Institute of Modern Art's *This language that is every stone*, part of a series of exhibitions surveying the life and ideas of poet and philosopher, Edouard Glissant. When Jessie said something like, *so, we are looking to collect like, up to 1000-3000 sticks*, all eyes, including my own, turned to me. What followed seemed like a peculiar dream.



After showing Jessie some of my fagoti, and having my collection skills approved by Megan, I drove my old van between my home in Tweed Heads and Megan's studio in Lismore, stopping along the side of the road to chainsaw fallen tree limbs, follow my stick-sense into semi-open properties, and to try to be as precise as I could to the size requirements - 1800mm long by 70-120mm in diameter.

On my second visit to her studio, Megan explained the process of oyster farming and how the practice we were engaged in differed to commercial oyster farming. The rock oysters we were using are immune to the herpes virus which can affect the Pacific oyster. Pacific oysters are the choice of most commercial farms because they grow to full maturity in a year, whereas rock oysters take up to four years. Of course, the rock oyster is native, and the Pacific oyster is not. Alongside collecting and staking sticks (poles) was a process of collecting and cleaning oyster shells. Shells were drilled into and then laced through the top third of each pole, around 40 shells per pole. When placed side by side, the poles reminded me of 'rainmaker' instruments from primary school; but these beautiful and fragile instruments were for a different kind of music, an ecological transposition stitching ancient and contemporary practices into the regeneration of an oyster reef on traditional country. I was enamoured to hear Megan speak of this aesthetic practice being an ecology/economy-system regenerator and food bank placed within the land of her ancestors; a transdisciplinary and collaborative long-term project bridging the personal and political, using the platform and modalities of art to effect transformational change. Another example of my PhD research in practice!

When we made it to the island, I spent days staking poles and drilling holes into them, melting many a drill bit and learning about the materials with which I was working. When I was not working, I rode my bike through the sandy four-wheel drive tracks and stumbled into wild beaches which at low tide did not gobble me up. At night the oyster art crew gathered for meals and yarns around the fire, getting to know each other through the lens of art, labour, oysters, and the magnetic pull of the island. One morning we woke early and ventured to Uncle Ricky's house where we accessed the tidal oyster reef through mud, mangroves, and other ecosystems I don't have names for. The one-hour walk delivered us to a pristine and ancient seascape, where Uncle Ricky shucked oysters straight off a pole and told us how *those rich yacht folk* treat his oyster banks as their own private supply.

I spent a night in Minjerribah with Megan unpacking her vision, process, and desires for art and political practice. I projected my own experiences in leading large groups of people into impossible artworks around the world and reflected upon the role of the artist-facilitator in such difficult undertakings. Later when discussing the opportunity to write this text, I expressed that I wanted it to focus on the importance of the platform of art and the role of the artist/provocateur to transform economies and ecologies - within and beyond the sphere of art. Megan responded that she wants (the project) *"to be collaborative, but also to understand that it's for Country, so it's important to be active in the de-centering of ourselves as human in its outcomes. I guess we are simply agents in the process to assist kinyingarra in growing freely in the space of art and collaborators with Yarabindja (sea country)."* She is right.



Upon returning from Minjerribah I went for a long walk, collected some beautiful, gnarly sticks, and built a big fire. That night my partner and I cooked unshucked oysters and bunya nuts given to us by Uncle Ricky directly onto the fire. We looked at the moon and each other and talked about how cool it was that the oyster pole project will continue for generations to come, and that at the next planting we will take our daughter and that she, too, will engage in her own mode of de-centering while life and language flourish on ancient country.



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Backyard radical permacultural hope

JOSHUA NASH

How can I live in hope?
And what does it mean to be radical?

How do I want to live my life and spend my remaining days? I'd say doing permaculture. At least parts of my days. And with doing permanent agriculture in suburban West Croydon, with every seed that is sown comes an aspiration for something beyond. Even if I plant a tree on a property I don't own of whose fruit I might never see even less eat, I do it anyway. Just because. That's how I roll. It's humbling, it's fun, and if nothing else, I can watch it grow. Spring comes and the grass grows by itself. The child is nurtured as the seasons roll on.

During a garden tour in 2015 associated with a conference about ecological economics at my family's rental property in Armidale, New South Wales, on which we had planted many fruit trees and established productive garden beds, I was quizzed by one of the attendees: "How is what you're doing here helping to abate climate change?" My rejoinder was simple yet filled with radical hope: "I have no idea. All I know is what I put in these garden beds."

Manure, cardboard, mulch.
Manure, paper, mulch.
Water. Wait. Plant. Watch.

Watch the film here: <https://youtu.be/B1ykD1oH5ZM>

Renegade radicality implies change. It might also mean pushing boundaries. Being avant garde, even. Being a rebel without a clue, dude. Doing things differently. Turning a tabula rasa of grass frontyard and almost desert-like backyard into a setting of potential plenty with child looking on.

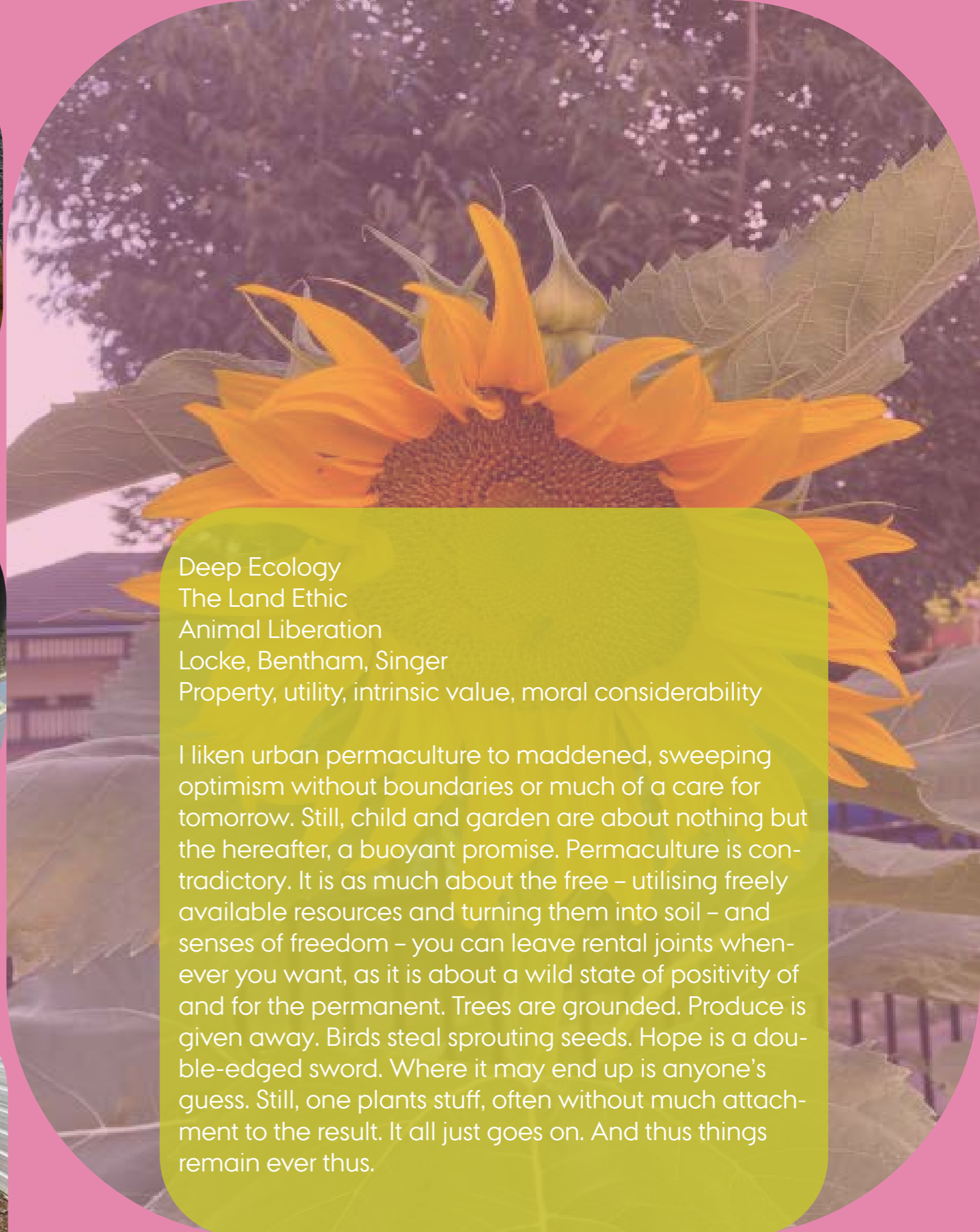
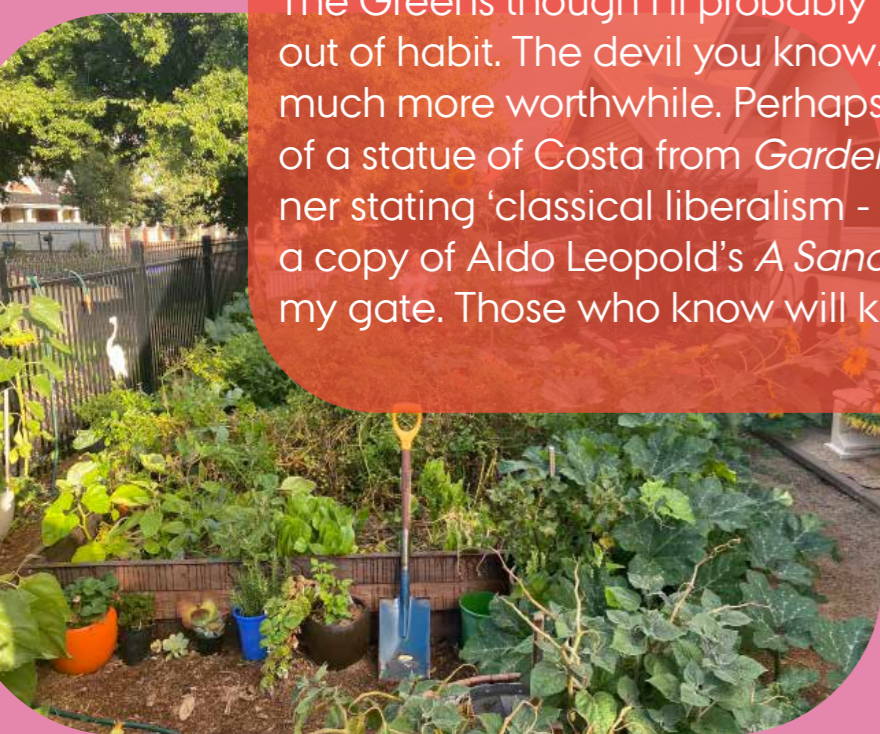
Sanctified sanctuaries
Human humus
Wozzy worms
Composed compost

The future. That which is and has potential. The unborn and inchoative. No-thing — that is, life, Centre, the Greater — needs thing — namely, the biological, the active, the physical — to be made world. The art of creating blends with the objective and expectancy of the scientific in the outlaid. In gardens things move in whichever direction. Weird shit happens, wildness occurs. Child and father sometimes sit and watch, sometimes not. Neighbours and locals pass, stop, take in the view. Some produce is handed over. 'How is this reducing waste? Do I go to the shop fewer times than I would have without planting these bunching onions, kale, and radical radishes? How is this changing the world? Do people notice the garden when they walk past? Am I ok?' It doesn't really matter if someone is watching. The nape of nature is a place of optimism and promise, worthwhile ground into which to initiate more somethings.



Perpetual permaculture
 Ephemeral eatables
 Neighbourly negotiations
 Actualised espaliers
 Anarchic acrostics
 That expression again – radical hope

I've heard it said one becomes more conservative with age. Voting is one thing, being aligned with a party, a person, or ideology is another. 'Wokeness' to me seems moderate and predictable. Get woke, go broke. Growing food keeps me away from the supermarket. That's hopeful. The child seems to enjoy picking snow-peas. That's promising. And the stances of the Malcolms Fraser and Turnbull appear so much more aligned with what I am striving for than the vibe I get from present-day social justice warriors and their political correctness. I don't care much about what number I will append to specific names for the Australian Federal Election on 21 May 2022, nor do I care much about The Greens though I'll probably vote for them simply out of habit. The devil you know. Planting stuff seems much more worthwhile. Perhaps I can hang a statue of Costa from *Gardening Australia*, a banner stating 'classical liberalism - welcome here', and a copy of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* on my gate. Those who know will know.



Deep Ecology
 The Land Ethic
 Animal Liberation
 Locke, Bentham, Singer
 Property, utility, intrinsic value, moral considerability

I liken urban permaculture to maddened, sweeping optimism without boundaries or much of a care for tomorrow. Still, child and garden are about nothing but the hereafter, a buoyant promise. Permaculture is contradictory. It is as much about the free – utilising freely available resources and turning them into soil – and senses of freedom – you can leave rental joints whenever you want, as it is about a wild state of positivity of and for the permanent. Trees are grounded. Produce is given away. Birds steal sprouting seeds. Hope is a double-edged sword. Where it may end up is anyone's guess. Still, one plants stuff, often without much attachment to the result. It all just goes on. And thus things remain ever thus.

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Islands in the Stream

Words and images by Tobias Nash

We sometimes manage to get glimpses, islands of memories, of an old world which previously existed among the sea of glass and steel buildings in the cities we now inhabit. Historic in their own right, colonial and Victorian buildings have survived and harp back to a time before radio, television, and information waves were used to promote business and industry.

The earliest forms of advertising were painted and printed, the former on building surfaces, most prominently on walls, and the latter on paper. While newspapers and magazines are now preserved digitally, remnants of signs were painted widely across our cityscapes. These are still to be found on surviving commercial and mercantile buildings of old. Some of these archives exist in partial erasure with fading paint, typography, and designs struggling to remain relevant.

These are signs, forgotten or unnoticed in our digital age unlike when their lead-based paint was first applied to sandstone or brick walls decades ago. They are reference points nonetheless, pinpricks into illusive moments of advertising, manufacturing, and cultural history. Ghost signs reveal where corner shops, which have all but disappeared, existed and products that were sold. Some of these were colonial such as classic Bushell's Tea, which largely for its twentieth century advertising remains an Australian icon. Others were pop culture references like Fanta.

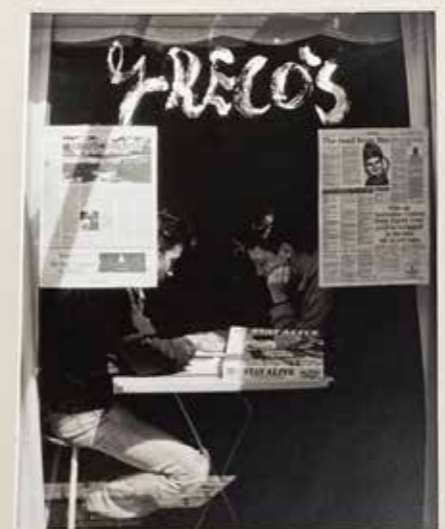
Often the names painted on these wall spaces are for businesses that they have outlived or products for which there is no longer a viable market and for which are still inadvertently being advertised. In plain sight in many cases for more than a century, ghost signs will also outlive the illuminated and animated billboards that cover much of the contemporary landscape. These signs provide a palpable and mappable history of our cities and suburbs. Ghost signs as islanded publicity, moored in solidified time against the often-crumbling walls of the very surfaces upon which they are adhered.

The urban landscape in particular is a rich ground to explore the psychogeographic advertising glories. The signs, which one inevitably begins noticing everywhere, tend to be concentrated in commercial areas, in clusters which would appear as industrial archipelagos, disconnected from what was once a mass of visible signage, on veritable treasure maps spread throughout largely inner suburban areas. Ghost signs are archipelagic leanings narrating silent stories of the islanded space of industry meeting and merging.



Over decades and exposed to the elements, ghost signs are submerged, obscured by newer buildings or covered over by layers of created palimpsests. These may be re(dis)covered as they re-emerge over time in a quirky irony of development which sees older buildings being razed to make way for newer ones. The ghostie pilgrim can be privy to these photographic and esoteric graffiti-like collectables while wandering through the zones wherein these non-intended artistic manifestations-cum-presentations exist.

Heritage protections mean that some of these old signs are maintained and many instances can be found in our cities of signs being incorporated into modern developments, quietly acknowledging the history of industries of by-gone eras. Thankfully, the significance of these histories is not lost to the astute who chose to maintain and in some cases revamp old signage rather than literally whitewashing it. Even then, as seen through the tides of history, the past has the power to rise again from beneath and many ghosts of businesses past will resurface.



The Identity Crisis by Laurel Rae Thomas, 1993 (a photographic series of Tobias Nash and Joshua Nash.).

Submissions to *Some Islands*

Please contact the editor, Joshua Nash, at jahewangi@hotmail.com if you wish to submit to future issues of the journal.

As an interdisciplinary journal, we are open to receiving articles and ideas which exist under the remit of islands, linguistics, and art. Such articles could take the form of written texts, academic journal articles, video pieces, sound work, music, and visual art, with all multi-artforms, creative outputs, and endless possibilities in between.

Experimental and edgy takes are most welcome. We will try to offer you a small financial contribution for your time.

Some Islands is an experimental and investigational academic and artistic thinking group dedicated to querying what linguistics is and might be and letting such ideas graze in the open airs and potential of art and science.

Some Islands deals with literal islands, like those found, for example, in the South Pacific, as much as metaphorical islands, like how we may view landed property, chairs, and ways of thinking as being island-like.

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