

Log Extract

Back in 2011, I went on a trip with my grandpa, who goes by 'Doc', to the Northern Territory. Doc is an Aboriginal art distributor and art history lecturer, and he prides himself on connecting with Aboriginal artists in ways that ensure they not only earn a fair profit for their works, but have their stories and experiences heard and shared. On the trip in 2011, we visited numerous remote art centres in the Western Desert. I distinctly remember a shed where I met 3 Aboriginal artists, silently painting their people's stories, smiling at me and talking between themselves in their language. Back at home in my high school, however, Aboriginal art is a thing of textbook pages and dot-paintings of iconic Australian scenes adorning the Art block halls... composed by non-Indigenous juniors, of course. Through my trip to the Territory and my interactions with Doc, I have been lucky enough to learn about the true power of Aboriginal art as a platform for cultural expression and inclusion, and it was this learning that acted as the genesis for my PIP.

At first, I conducted a terrible failure of a focus group, only obtaining 'yes and no' answers, but I learned from this experience and tried again with students of an older age and a higher moral development. In a questionnaire that I then conducted to gain an insight into attitudes toward Aboriginal art, the same problem arose whereby persons with little knowledge of Indigenous art became outliers in my research. The limited knowledge that continued to emerge in my data highlighted how I needed to conduct research with participants who have a stake in Aboriginal art. This led to a focus group with a senior art class providing more useful data that I would later apply in my Central Material when considering the role of Aboriginal art as a topic and practice in education settings.

Dimitrov's book, "The Other in South Asian Religion, Literature and Film: Perspectives on Otherism and Otherness", became an important first step in framing my thinking and allowing me to consider Aboriginal culture and identity through the lens of 'otherness'. This theory provided me with an interesting platform for analysing the data from a focus group I then conducted with Aboriginal students in my school. This focus group provided an all-important Aboriginal perspective on art that was also cross-cultural given my non-Indigenous identity, although it was obviously limited to the views of young Aboriginal persons with varying personal experiences in the art world.

In order to provide my research with an expert opinion that I could rely on in terms of validity, I conducted a face-to-face interview with my grandfather, or Doc. This allowed me to investigate his experiences with artists and to synthesise his 'insider knowledge' of the field with the data I

had gathered from my meso world. During this process, I learned about the importance of considering my own bias, especially given that I was analysing data from a family member. Doc's interview led to an interview with a non-Indigenous collector of Aboriginal art, which provided me with a perspective that I had not considered before. Combined with face-to-face informal interviews that I was able to conduct with an Aboriginal artist and art gallery director respectively, this qualitative data provided a genuine insight into the world of Aboriginal art creation and consumption in Australia, including its culture and gender politics...