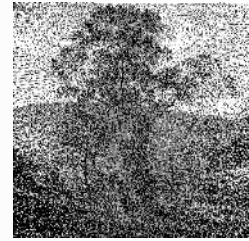


Fire-Stick Picturesque: Landscape Art and Early Colonial Tasmania

Article by **Julia Lum**

WORD COUNT:4,536



Abstract

Drawing from scholarship in fire ecology and ethnohistory, this paper suggests new approaches to art historical analysis of colonial landscape art. British artists in the colony of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) relied not only on picturesque landscape conventions to codify their new environments, but were also influenced by local vegetation patterns and Indigenous landscape management practices. Describing the meeting ground of two cultural systems in the representation of Tasmania's geography, this paper highlights how British-born artists such as John Glover (1767–1849) and John Skinner Prout (1805–1876) responded to the Tasmanian environment. In drawing attention to artistic developments in the aftermath of frontier violence of the 1830s, and the dispossession of Tasmania's first peoples from their homelands, the paper suggests that colonial landscape imagery was problematically invested in a paradoxical task: of both ordering and of "rewilding" Tasmania's landscape. Woodland, trees, and natural resources—in both material manifestation and iconography—would play a fundamental role in the formation of colonial identity in the wake of the island's violent appropriation.

Introduction

In 1835, paintings sent from Van Diemen's Land to London by the artist John Glover (1767–1849) were exhibited on New Bond Street. Glover, the one-time President of the Royal Society of British Artists and formerly styled the "Litchfield Claude", had in 1831, at the age of sixty-four, emigrated to the British colony of Van Diemen's Land (called today Tasmania, an island to the south-east of mainland Australia).¹ The 1835 exhibition catalogue provides an excess of detail about the artist's new home and its arboreal features: "There is a remarkable *peculiarity* in the Trees in this Country; however, numerous, they rarely prevent your tracing, through them, the whole distant Country." For a work depicting Glover's property at Mill's Plains in Tasmania, the catalogue explains: "This gives a good idea of the thickly wooded part of the Country: it is possible, almost every-where, to drive a carriage as easily as in a park in England" (fig. 1).²



Figure 1

John Glover, *View of Mill's Plains, Van Diemen's Land*, 1833, oil on canvas, 76.2 × 114.6 cm. Collection of Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (0.1465), Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1951. Digital image courtesy of Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

But England, it was not. A reviewer for *The Times* noted that the Glover's landscapes bore "in many respects a resemblance to the views on the lakes of Cumberland," but that Tasmania's landscape was marked by difference:

*the hills are more lofty, possess more of a primeval aspect and abound more in forest scenery. The trees are large and branching far and wide but they are neither so delicate nor so umbrageous as the trees of Europe.*³

Scholars have described the ways that the Australian landscape's appearance, particularly its tall twisting eucalyptus trees, created an early colonial dialectic: on the one hand, settlers forged a culture emulative of Britain, and on the other hand, they contended with the distinct and inassimilable features of their new home.⁴ Attempts to resolve this paradox took the form of comparison: areas of open grassland punctuated by trees were immediately likened to English gardens and the carefully constructed grounds of country estates. As Michael Rosenthal has poignantly remarked: "in England Arcadia has to be made; in Australia it is found."⁵

The sparsely wooded, park-like terrain visible in Glover's *View of Mills Plains, Van Diemen's Land* was no less the product of human intervention, long managed by Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples, who cultivated and controlled vegetation with regular, small-scale burning regimes (fig. 2).⁶ In 1823, one observer attributed "the general openness of the forest land in the island, and its usefulness for pasture" to the "practice among the natives of burning the bush in order to circumvent and enclose their prey."⁷

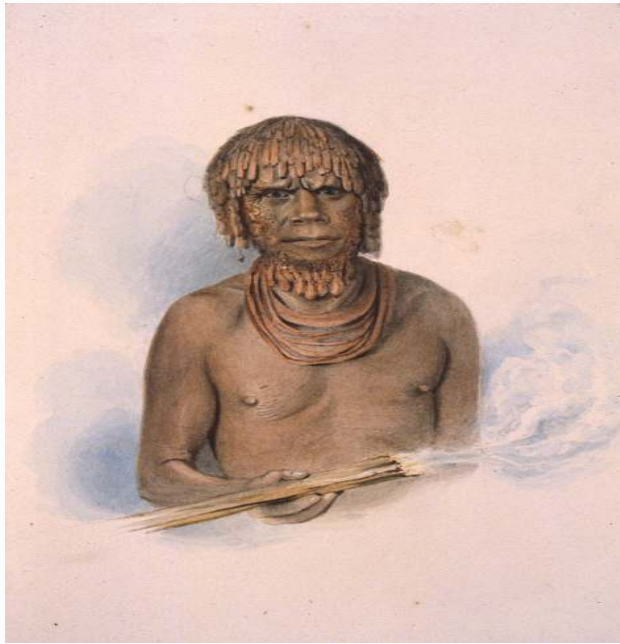


Figure 2

Thomas Bock, *Manalargena, a leader of the north-eastern nations*, 1831–35, watercolour, 26.5 × 22.3 cm. Collection of The British Museum (Oc2006,Drg.61). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).



Figure 3

Martyman, *Map of Tasmanian Tribes at the time of first European contact*, based on data from *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* by Lyndall Ryan (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996) and overlaid on a photograph from NASA, 2006. Digital image courtesy of Martyman (CC BY-SA 3.0).

Cultural landscapes, in particular the fertile fire-managed belts of open forest-turned-pasturelands, and the European paintings that depicted them, were critical to Tasmania's early colonial identity.⁸ That a colonial landscape "school" flourished in the 1830s and 1840s can be attributed to two important considerations. First, Glover's arrival in the colony coincides, crucially, with the close of the "Black War", or Tasmanian Aboriginal people's resistance to British colonization, and with the atrocity of their "conciliation" and their exile to Flinders Island in Bass Strait.⁹ A battle for territory and resources between Tasmania's Aboriginal population and the island's invaders, culminating in unspeakable violence and the displacement of Indigenous nations from their homelands, brought about the decimation of the island's original population within a single generation.¹⁰ In the aftermath of these events, the long-held assumption that Tasmania's first peoples went extinct—a belief, it should be stressed, that has been challenged by present-day Tasmanians of Indigenous heritage—had both immediate and long-lasting effects on the colonial mindset and artistic output (fig. 3).¹¹

Scholars such as Tim Bonyhady, David Hansen, and Ian McLean have persuasively argued that this history forms a dark backdrop to Glover's romanticized depictions of Aboriginal peoples in a pre-European landscape.¹² Yet, rather than revisit aspects of Glover's oeuvre which infamously elegize "the manner [the Tasmanian Aboriginal people] enjoyed themselves before being disturbed by the White People," as the artist described of his painting *Natives at a Corrobory, under the wild woods of the Country*, this paper instead analyses British landscape art's iconographic transformations in colonial Australia.¹³ I will examine in particular the ways in which paintings and watercolours held in tension the aesthetic aspirations of the land's new

occupants and the imprint of Indigenous *countersigns*, a term coined by the Pacific historian Bronwen Douglas. In several scholarly projects, Douglas has investigated European texts and images for the impact of Indigenous action on the developments of racial theories and classification. Indigenous presence, she argues, leaves an “imprint of certain referents on the signifiers used to represent them ... Filtered through distorting screens of presupposition, precedent, perception, and emotion—both ecstasy and phobia—Indigenous presence impinged on outsiders’ representations.”¹⁴ Extending Douglas’ argument, I suggest that Aboriginal custodianship of the land and its resources made an indelible mark upon early colonial landscape art, and that referents of Indigenous agency were redirected by artists, consciously and unconsciously, into representations that encoded features of the expropriated territories. This paper attends to the moments in which European ways of seeing came face to face with existing Indigenous modifications to land.

This brings us to a second explanation for landscape art’s significance in Tasmania. Picturing a land that bore the marks of Indigenous stewardship, the first professional settler artists were of a generation who had witnessed radical changes to the British landscape and who had also participated in the landscape genre’s ascent in their native country. Artists such as Glover carried with them ways of seeing that married Claudean landscape ideals of harmonious proportion and balance with features of the “rugged” natural world, thus producing “picturesque” or picture-like, compositions.¹⁵ Though these ideals had been distilled to a set of conventions by popular guidebooks penned by proponents such as the Rev. William Gilpin, the picturesque and its accompanying politics derived—in Britain, as in its colonies—at the nexus of painting and the physical environment.¹⁶

What has been called an “ecological history of landscape art” requires consideration of the meeting ground of the representational and the environmental.¹⁷ In an article addressing this subject, Andrea Gaynor and Ian McLean suggest that both art historians and ecologists must reach beyond their disciplinary boundaries to embrace artworks as possible “indices of ecological knowledge”.¹⁸ In the 1830s and 1840s, the collision of two cultural attitudes towards land required a peculiar and insidious transposition of the picturesque in Tasmania, as the settler colony searched to sublimate the genocidal means of the island’s possession. In the immediate aftermath of frontier violence, artists and their contemporaries attempted to find order in the particularities of a newly seized landscape. In the 1840s, the watercolourist John Skinner Prout (1805–1876) became deeply invested in its “rewilding”, his unpeopled forests constituting a haunting double to depictions of Indigenous subsistence in their landscape of exile.

Country Estates

The artistic appropriation of Tasmania’s landscape followed on from its physical appropriation. It is now well established that the English landscape tradition came to prominence during the urgent years of enclosure, unrest, and agricultural industrialization in Britain.¹⁹ Along with a convict labour base and meagre capital investment, those ideological foundations would be transported to Australia, where the ideal of the English estate was mapped onto the estates “discovered” in the landscape. Bill Gammage’s *The Biggest Estate on Earth* suggests that before the arrival of Europeans, Indigenous peoples “collectively ... managed Australia as a single estate” by routine patch fires.²⁰

At present, there is scientific debate about the degree to which the landscape was burnt, and such practices are not without their own histories of dynamic change, but fire ecologists generally agree that distinct zones of vegetation were sharpened by the first Tasmanians, who maintained

the savannah grasslands that upon their conversion to pasture became known by British settlers as the “Midlands”.²¹ By measuring the surviving native vegetation of the Midlands, ecologists have proposed that three artists in particular—John Glover, John Skinner Prout, and the latter’s sketching companion Francis Simpkinson de Wesselow—most faithfully represent Tasmania’s changing vegetation during the decades of rapid settlement.²²

Tasmania’s Aboriginal people used “fire-stick farming” to signal, create pathways, hunt game, regenerate plants, and extend their area of habitable land.²³ The art historian and geographer Greg Lehman (Trawulwuy)²⁴ describes the way in which landscape management was also bound within customary law, and the very identity and origins of his ancestors:

*The Palawa [Tasmanian Aboriginal people] considered themselves descended from Tarnier, the kangaroo ... The kangaroo provided meat, skin, sinews, and bone. In turn, the Old People used fire to maintain the expanses of grasslands and to generate fresh, new growth for the kangaroo.*²⁵

Aboriginal ancestral landscapes are *Country*, implying a process of *caring* and being *cared for* in a mutually beneficial relationship. The term *Country* encompasses a way of moving through and representing land through social action—both tangible and intangible.²⁶ Moreover, the beguiling eucalypts in early colonial paintings were a valued resource in Tasmanian Aboriginal communities: not only was the bark of trees used for building huts and canoes, but according to some textual accounts, peoples in the Coastal Plains, Central Plateau, and Huon forest practised a mortuary rite that placed the deceased body upright in the hollows of living trees.²⁷

British arrivals also attached certain cultural values to woodland—oak trees especially—as metaphors of ancient family lines and the literal substance of naval might. Trees had been central to the debates over the nature of picturesque landscape convention, which relied on the harmonious distinction of foreground, middle, and background; pathways wending through a sagacious distribution of trees could alternately screen and open up a variety of pleasurable vantage points at each turn.²⁸ Lancelot “Capability” Brown and his successor Humphry Repton had cultivated the aesthetic of vast sweeping lawns for the nobility, Repton in particular advancing practices of “improvement” in landscape architecture, which involved the selective cultivation and removal of trees to reveal variations in ground level (fig. 4).

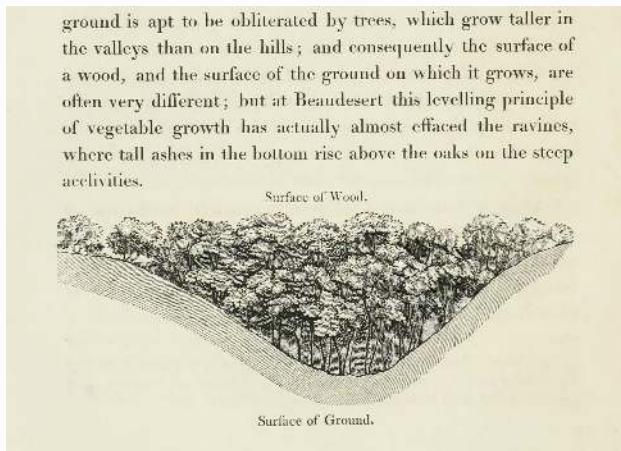


Figure 4

Humphrey Repton and John Adey Repton, detail from, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, (London: Bensley & Son, 1816), 42., 1816, aquatint. Collection of Getty Research Institute (2912-228). Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program (CC BY-NC-SA).

There are a number of European eyewitness accounts describing Aboriginal landscape management in distinctly aesthetic terms. “Travers[ing] a vast extent of clear country interspersed with clumps or copses intended as a cover for kangaroo,” wrote George Augustus Robinson, “the whole range for miles forming a beautiful picturesque scenery. This has been done by the natives: when burning the under wood they have beat out the fire in order to form these clumps.”²⁹ In gaining possession of the land, invaders were quick to convert evidence of Indigenous land management into emblems of an invented English lineage in the antipodes. One of Tasmania’s most powerful early landowning families, the Archers, found such characteristics already a feature of the Norfolk Plains, south-west of Launceston. Effected by the *Panninher* clan’s care for their Country, the open land was ideal for the raising of 25,000 head of merino sheep.³⁰ The Archers named their properties after estates in their native Hertfordshire. A comparison of engravings depicting two Panshangers—one English and one Tasmanian—produced around the same time, reveal the Archers aspirations to landed status (fig. 5 and fig. 6).³¹ Like its English counterpart, the Tasmanian Panshanger Estate is pictured by William Lyttleton, overlooking the verdant open plain, yet this lithograph also makes visible the distinctive and dramatic rise of the Great Western Tiers mountains.³² Whereas Repton’s garden design at Panshanger (England) was based in part on enhancing the viewing conditions from the estate, some of these aspects were ready for appropriation on the sloping ridge overlooking the Tasmanian landscape, visible today at Woolmers Estate (named after Woolmers Park, Hertfordshire) (fig. 7, fig. 8). This landscape offered up the indivisible values of aesthetic and economic capital.



Figure 5

William Radclyffe after John Preston Neale, *Panshanger, Hertfordshire* in *Views of the Seats, Mansions, Castles, etcirca of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England*, Vol. 1 (London: Jones & Co. 1829), 151., 1829, engraving. Collection of Getty Research Institute (6575). Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program (CC BY-NC-SA).



Figure 6

William Lyttleton, *Panshanger, Tasmania, the seat of Joseph Archer, Esquire*, 1835, hand-coloured lithograph, 57.5 × 73.3 cm. Collection of National Library of Australia (NK260). Digital image courtesy of National Library of Australia (CC BY).



Figure 7

Panshanger Park, Hertfordshire, View from former house site overlooking River Mimram, 2017, photograph. Digital image courtesy of Julia Lum.



Figure 8

View from the Woolmers Estate Towards the Macquarie River and the Distant Great Western Tiers, Tasmania, 2016, photograph. Digital image courtesy of Julia Lum.

John Glover's painting, "*Montacute*," *Bothwell*, reveals another estate's boundaries carved into a Midlands hillside (fig. 9).³³ Beyond it, small clumps of copse-like trees are woven through with paths of clearings. Just a few years earlier, these would have been the hunting grounds for the clans of the Big River Nation. By the time Glover arrived in Van Diemen's Land, martial law had been in effect for two years.³⁴ Settlers had expropriated the best Aboriginal hunting grounds for agrarian use but left alone the forests and mountains.³⁵ In Glover's painting, forested foothills such as these would be where the Aboriginal men and women staged their attacks on stock huts and outbuildings as acts of resistance.³⁶ Tracing the line where forest met pastoral appropriation, Glover attends to the edges of martial control.



Figure 9

John Glover, *Montacute Bothwell*, 1838, oil on canvas, 76 × 114.5 cm. This is an interpretation of Aboriginal visual systems of communication illustrated in a 1870 publication by James Bonwick. Private Collection, Australia.

“Drawings on the Bark of Trees”

In February 1829, Tasmania’s Surveyor General, George Frankland, reported that he saw Aboriginal drawings on trees and inside huts (fig. 10). Frankland was not the first European to observe that art existed among Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples,³⁷ however, his realization inspired a proposition to Tasmania’s Governor, George Arthur, for a visual solution to European–Aboriginal hostilities:

*Sir, I have lately had an opportunity of ascertaining that the aboriginal Natives of Van Diemen’s Land are in the habit of representing events by drawings on the bark of Trees ... The proposal which I venture to make is that, if your Excellency approves the drawings, they should be multiplied, and being made on more durable materials, should be fastened to Trees in those remote sites where Natives are most likely to see them.*³⁸

One hundred “proclamation boards” were produced and mounted to trees in the hope of broaching Indigenous semiotics to communicate the notion that transgressions—either Aboriginal or Settler—of a (non-existent) peace would result in equal punishment (a very different picture from reality, as martial law had declared that Aboriginal people be driven out of settled districts “by whatever means ... may dictate”)(fig. 11).³⁹ John Skinner Prout, who arrived in the island’s major settlement of Hobart in 1844, called a board in his possession an example of “the universally understood language of painting”.⁴⁰

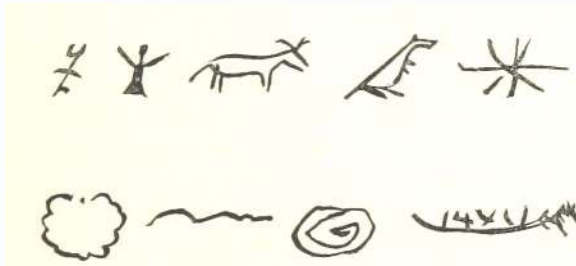


Figure 10

James Bonwick, detail from, *Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians*, (London: Sampson, Low & Son, & Marston, 1870), 47., 1870, illustration. Collection of British Library (General Reference Collection DRT Digital Store 10492.f.11). Digital image courtesy of British Library Board.



Figure 11

Proclamation Board commissioned by Major-General Sir George Arthur, Tasmania, Australia, Collected by J. Skinner Prout. Purchased by Dr Joseph Barnard Davis, 1829-1830. Collection of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Z 15346). Digital image courtesy of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

In this experiment, proclamation boards extended exhibitionary space into the outdoors, adopting the forest as gallery walls. The uniform designs on huon pine board were “pounced” using a stencil and then painted freehand by anonymous convict artists. Rather than serving as picturesque framing devices, the board’s trees declared a European pictographic justice—the two pictured on the board’s fourth and sixth registers bear the hangman’s noose. The straight trunks drive a vertical line towards the inert bodies of the slain, who lie at their bases. As columns, they secede the privileged social space of British justice (in the form of the men in red coats) from the “lawless” disorder of the bush. While the effectiveness of these picture boards as linguistic tools remains unknown, they are the material remnants of frontier violence. Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll richly suggests that the “failure to communicate, linguistically and otherwise, resulted in the proclamations’ hybrid forms—part dendroglyph, part legal document, part hieroglyph, part semaphore.”⁴¹ While Tasmania’s trees may have been the iconographic fodder for the introduction of English landscape conventions, they are here doubled as the visual tropes of the darker side of that landscape’s possession.

Proving once again their double-edged utility as a means for both communication and punitive action, tree branches were again deployed by Governor Arthur in his campaign known as the “Black Line”. In October 1830, the majority of the ticket-of-leave convict and male free settler population formed a large-scale human cordon to sweep the remaining clans into the Forestier Peninsula.⁴² A memorandum issued by Governor Arthur to each leader of the Division parties included the following instructions:

*Where by trunks of trees are lying in a direction parallel to the line of positions they can be taken advantage of by being made the support of a palisade composed of sticks of about two or three inches in diameter ... driven firmly into the ground in rear of the trunks—inclining forwards, so that the ends which will be sharpened to a point ...*⁴³

The rudimentary sketch in a copy of this dispatch shows a tree branch fashioned into both *abbattis* (line of defence) and palisade designed to entangle Tasmanian Aboriginal people “in the artificial obstacles” (fig. 12).⁴⁴ This desperate measure was to compensate for the settlers’ inability to combat Indigenous guerrilla tactics and their lack of knowledge about local terrain.

However, the proclamation boards did little to affect the violence, nor did the human cordon subjugate Tasmanian Aboriginal guerrilla tactics and knowledge of country. The government-appointed “Friendly Mission” campaigns of George Augustus Robinson (1829–1834), expeditions that used Indigenous guides to deceive fellow clanspeople into surrendering their country, were the only ways the colonists achieved their “mission”.

The archival traces of trees gesture towards the embeddedness of the very tangible physical landscape, and the violence of its expropriation, in representation. Trees, as the mute witnesses to colonial dispossession, left an indelible impression on Tasmania’s landscape artists. Take, for instance, Glover’s sketchbook pages—filled to every corner with patchworked portraits of trees as the material for what might populate his paintings (fig. 13). Glover’s Midlands scenes often insert the motif of the fallen tree branch into his foregrounds and middle grounds, breaking up the recession into the distance with a series of visual impediments.⁴⁵ The viewer’s eye is forced to wind its way through a landscape littered with the living, felled, and decayed timber of the changing environment, an effect which would have been received on at least three levels: as a naturalistic recording of the eucalypt’s life cycle; as an element of “roughness” and irregularity dictated by the picturesque; and as an uncanny reminder of the palisades and *abbattis* of the former Black Line.⁴⁶

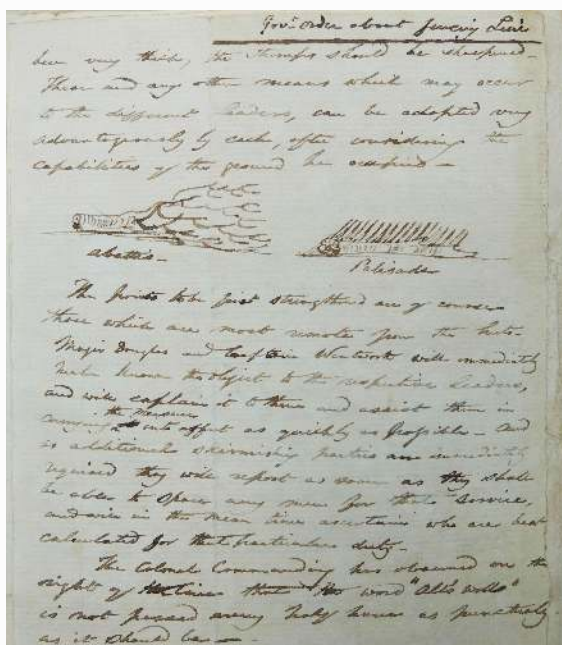


Figure 12

Manuscript detail showing note on 'government order about fencing Line' in, *Native War: Connected with the Campaign after the Natives*, by Thomas Scott, 1830, album manuscript. Collection of State Library of New South Wales (A1055 / 3). Digital image courtesy of State Library of New South Wales (CC BY 4.0).

Searching for Nature

As European settlement encroached on Indigenous hunting territories in the Midlands, a sharper distinction between the “settled territories” and the bush arose. Glover’s *The River Derwent and Hobart Town* (circa 1831), captures the boundary zone at “Salvator Glen” (fig. 14).⁴⁷⁴⁸ It is an area that remains on the borderlands of Hobart, cut into the foothills of the towering Mount Wellington (*Kunanyi*).⁴⁹ In Glover’s 1831 canvas, fresh, vine-like “epicormic buds” scale the fire-tolerant trunks of taller eucalypts—a process of regeneration after burning had ceased.⁵⁰ The glen’s small affinity to the landscapes of Salvator Rosa was pinned on the hope that its purported wildness could resist the strain of colonial incursion. “And therein lies the great anxiety and neurosis of what Glover was painting,” remarked fire ecologist David Bowman, during a walk through the present-day landscape. “In part an incredibly biodiverse landscape and in part also an artifact.”⁵¹ By the time John Skinner Prout had completed a watercolour of the Salvator Glen, the dusty brown earth suggests deforestation and sandstone mining (fig. 15).



Figure 13

John Glover, *Six landscapes in Sketchbook No. 43*, (four are numbered 91-94 and titled as 92. The Start [?] of Motts [?] Plains, Tudema Tura 93. At Campbell 94. At Campbell Town), 1805, 1831-1832, pencil, pen, ink, and wash on wove paper, 18.5 × 23.5 cm. Collection of State Library of New South Wales (DGA 47) Digital image courtesy of State Library of New South Wales (CC BY 4.0).



Figure 14

John Glover, *The River Derwent and Hobart Town*, circa 1831, oil on canvas, 51.5 × 71 cm. Collection of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (AG5458). Digital image courtesy of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.



Figure 15

John Skinner Prout, *Salvator Rosa Glen*, 1844, watercolour, 22.1 × 32.4 cm. Collection of Art Gallery of New South Wales (8311), purchased 1949. Digital image courtesy of Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Figure 16

Edward Villiers Rippingille, *Sketching Party in Leigh Woods* (detail), circa 1828, graphite and brown wash, 17.5 × 27.5 cm. Collection of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (K3078/30). Digital image courtesy of Bristol Culture.

In the mid-1840s, the English-born Skinner Prout (nephew of the better known Samuel Prout) led a series of convivial social excursions in search of a more unspoiled nature. He encouraged direct observation and the spontaneous watercolour sketch, techniques modelled after his fellow artists of the “Bristol School” (fig. 16).⁵² He also welcomed amateur participants—a group of acolytes who attended his lectures at the Hobart Mechanics Institute—to join him on expeditions to what the group called “Fern Tree Valley”.⁵³ A shift in stylistic approach towards the landscape brought a spontaneity that captured trees in new poetic terms—as supposedly pristine, elemental woodland. Yet as Simon Schama has described, while “wilderness” suggests the natural world untouched by human intervention, “the very act of identifying ... the place presupposes our presence.”⁵⁴ Skinner Prout’s approach to landscape would inhabit this paradox. Mirroring developments occurring in England, he would harness such stylistic vocabularies to reinvent the land as a colonial inheritance.

Skinner Prout’s pencil and watercolour sketches “from nature” select and frame the lush overgrowth of the forest floor, fallen logs, and decaying leaves. Where Glover’s Claudean works celebrated prospect views of clear, sunlit tracts of sparsely forested and semi-pastoral grasslands, Skinner Prout and his circle sought proximity under the canopies of fern trees, whose roots once constituted an important food source for Tasmanian Aboriginal nations. In such environments, eucalypts stretch upwards towards the available light, in turn sheltering the temperate understorey below from wind and heat.⁵⁵ *In the Valley of the Ferns*, represents a eucalyptus tree scarred to the artist’s right (fig. 17).⁵⁶ This permanent mark calls up the Indigenous use of bark for shelters, canoes, and windcreens, a practice that extracts bark while preserving the living tree. Early European travellers observed trees scarred and notched by Tasmanian Aboriginal people, often to mark seasonal access routes through country.⁵⁷ It is more likely that this tree was blazed—a European explorer’s or surveyor’s mark (an example illustrated below).⁵⁸ Providing both physical and pictorial evidence of his route within unknown territory, the artist marks his own paper with a brush, adjacent to the tree that has received its own mark, a cut through the veneer of a supposedly unpeopled landscape.⁵⁹



Figure 17

John Skinner Prout, *In the Valley of the Ferns*
Hobarton, Novr. 28, '46, 1846, watercolour, 39.6 ×
29.4 cm. Collection of National Library of Australia
(NK307). Digital image courtesy of National Library of
Australia.

Landscapes of Exile

As Skinner Prout and his sketching parties roamed Mount Wellington's foothills, the clanspeople rounded up during Robinson's travels lived in exile on the remote Flinders Island. What began as 170 Indigenous men, women, and children dwindled to a community of approximately forty-four by the time Skinner Prout and his sketching companion Francis Simpkinson de Wesselow visited the settlement, called *Wybalenna*, in 1845.⁶⁰ During their stay, Skinner Prout and his fellow artist produced dozens of portraits of Indigenous sitters and documented *Wybalenna*'s surrounding landscape.⁶¹

Wybalenna's rigid Evangelical geometry appears in the form of a terrace block at the middle distance of the lithograph *The Residence of the Aborigines, Flinders Island* (fig. 18). In this work, which Skinner Prout included in his series *Tasmania Illustrated*, are a man and woman who gaze neither at the mission settlement nestled into the hill nor at the alien country. Their role as figures in the landscape contrasts with many colonial landscape representations; as staffage, the Indigenous presence thwarts the viewer's entrance into pleasures of identification with the embodied viewing of picturesque scenery. Rather, the composition deflects our gaze onto the elsewhere of the figures' attention, the cordon of fencing running behind them leading the eye off the page rather than towards the horizon.

Critical details in the foreground of a very similar—and perhaps preparatory—watercolour gesture towards the persistence of Indigenous economies (fig. 19). Grasses and lilies point to the local source of plant fibre for basket-making, a practice transferred to Flinders Island by individuals like the *Nuenonne* woman, Trucanini. Her baskets constructed from flag iris were noted by the diarist Sarah Mitchell: "Truganinni ... who lives with Mrs Dandridge gave papa a basket and piece of rope, her own make, which came last night too."⁶² "Mrs. Dandridge" was Skinner Prout's daughter, who married and remained in the colony after her father's return to England in 1848. One of the last baskets Trucanini made, supposedly during this period with the Dandridge family, was masterfully constructed with the fibres of the white flag iris (fig. 20).⁶³ It is an object that speaks to the portability of Indigenous technology and memory, a material manifestation of Trucanini's connection to Country and her intimate knowledge from her first teachings on Bruny Island—carried with her along journeys with Robinson's "Friendly Mission", in exile on islands in the Bass Strait, and to her final lodgings with Skinner Prout's daughter. At weekly markets on Flinders Island, held between 1836 and 1838, women made and sold baskets, *maireener* shell necklaces and other material goods.⁶⁴ These practices have been revived by contemporary practitioners such as the scholar and elder Patsy Cameron, who gathers local plants near her home at Leengtenner (Tomahawk) to create baskets in the way of her ancestors. She splits green leaves down the middle by hand and runs leaf sections over the coals of the fire, which render them ready for twining.⁶⁵



Figure 18

John Skinner Prout, *The Residence of the Aborigines, Flinders Island*, 1846, lithograph, 27.8 × 38.6 cm. Collection of National Library of Australia (S1748). Digital image courtesy of National Library of Australia.



Figure 19

John Skinner Prout, *Untitled*, from *Collection of Views*, 1840-1848, watercolour on mounted board, 53 × 40.5 cm. Collection of Dixson Galleries, State Library of New South Wales (DGD 16). Digital image courtesy of State Library of New South Wales (CC BY 4.0).



Figure 20

Trucanini, *Basket, white flag iris (Diplarrena moraea)*, 1874, basket. Collection of Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston (QVM1993:H:151), donated by Miss Sarah EE Mitchell, 1909. Digital image courtesy of Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.



Figure 21

Patsy Cameron, *Maireener temarerar*, 2007, Leengtenner (Tomahawk), white flag iris (*Diplarrena moraea*), king maireener shells (*Phasianotrochus eximius*). Collection of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (1415.pc.4). Digital image courtesy of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Skinner Prout's watercolour also hints to men's material culture, framed by a thicket that forms a natural archway, framing two silhouettes, one of which holds a spear (see fig. 19). This detail

corroborates textual accounts that spears and ochre, though unpermitted in the settlement, were kept and concealed in the bush.⁶⁶ Men made spears on hunting trips, and occasionally performed spear throwing demonstrations for visitors such as the missionary and naturalist James Backhouse, who describes Wybalenna's residents setting out on frequent hunting excursions. Backhouse was also gifted a waddy, or club (fig. 21).⁶⁷ Now in the British Museum, the hunting implement and weapon is perhaps made from the island's tea tree wood—a material trace of an enduring connection to the environment outside the settlement's confines. Beyond the settlement, certain resources furnished Flinders Island residents with a connection to hunting and gathering, activities revealed in a watercolour by Skinner Prout's sketching companion, Francis Simpkinson de Wesselow (fig. 22). A still life composed of wild game—mutton birds and crayfish—reveals a bounty heaped to the ground. Supplementing the monotony of salted beef rations, the settlement was particularly dependent on Indigenous hunting in its early years. Muttonbirds, or *yolla*, were a staple of the communities formed by the union of sealers and Indigenous women.⁶⁸ The “Englishness” of Wybalenna's white terrace houses belied the traditional food sources piled up in their interiors, evidence of which was unearthed in an archaeological dig.⁶⁹ Simpkinson de Wesselow's watercolour functions as an allegorical connection between the perceived transience of this resource economy and the endangered population at Flinders Island. Clearly visible in his composition are rabbits, an invasive species brought to the islands in the 1820s. While hunting practices, especially muttonbirding, remain to this day deeply connected to Indigenous communities in the Bass Strait, rabbits continue to compete with local wildlife for resources and pose a threat to native vegetation.⁷⁰



Figure 22

Tasmanian Club, early nineteenth century, wood club, Length: 62.5 cm Width: 2.2 cm Depth: 2 cm. Collection of The British Museum (Oc1921,1014.81). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Conclusion

In the early British settlement of places in Oceania, artists responded to a landscape exploited and shaped by competing cultural and environmental orders. Countersigns point up the persistence of Indigenous cultural practices and protocols, and the operations of ongoing erasure perpetuated by art and history. As coded emblems, woodland functioned as a redirection of the

signs of Indigenous land management and the violent removal of Indigenous peoples from that same land. To maintain and yet disguise this fundamental contradiction, British artists not only deployed but *relied* on the elaborate apparatus of the picturesque.⁷¹ In their refusal to suppress the representation of Indigenous survival, Skinner Prout and Simpkinson de Wesselow's Flinders Island pictures transgressed an aesthetic threshold for contemporary audiences (fig. 23). The exhibitions in Hobart (1845), Sydney (1845), and London (1849; 1851) featured "Fern Tree Valley" subjects, while Skinner Prout's Flinders subjects have rarely been shown.⁷²



Figure 24

Julie Gough (video) and Jemma Rea (editing), *The Grounds of Surrender*, 2011, 2 channel 32:9 video projection, colour, sound, 19:17 mins. Film courtesy of Julie Gough / Jemma Rea.

Julie Gough, a Hobart-based contemporary artist of *Trawlwoolway* descent, grapples with such historical complexities in her own archival research and video works. In *The Grounds of Surrender* (2011), trees are the spectral substance of the landscape's memory: the refuse of land clearance, some remain survivors of centuries of cultivated burning, witnesses to an ongoing disavowal of Indigenous placescapes.⁷³ Juxtaposed with the archival fragments of colonial dispatches, Gough's trees are countersigns that cannot wring meaning out of a fraught history, but must stand by witnessing its interminable repetition.⁷⁴ That a colonial landscape school was born out of the crucible of violent encounter, the clash of two ways of understanding Country, requires art historical analysis that looks also to ecological, ethnohistorical, and Indigenous place-based epistemologies; for it was colonial art's task to lay claim to the once-burnt landscape, which for millennia had maintained the island's biodiversity. And it is contemporary art's task now, through work such as Gough's, to rekindle a flame.⁷⁵

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About the author

Julia Lum is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Art at the University of Toronto. She earned her PhD in the History of Art from Yale University in 2018, with the support of fellowships from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the Getty Research Institute, and the Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada.

Her dissertation ‘Art at the Meeting Places of Britain and Oceania, 1778–1848’ argues that landscape representations of the Pacific bear the marks of encounter between British aesthetic conventions and Indigenous cultural practices—confrontations between different ways of seeing and knowing land.

Footnotes

1. The appellation refers to Glover’s known affinity for the French seventeenth-century landscape painter, Claude Lorrain. David Hansen, *John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque* (Hobart: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2003), 40. Glover (1767–1849) was born in Houghton-on-the Hill near Leicester, England, trained with William Payne and became drawing instructor at Litchfield. He was awarded a gold medal by Louis XVIII for his work *The Bay of Naples*, exhibited at Paris Salon in 1814. John Glover was founder and, in 1826, President of the Royal Society of British Artists. For additional biographical details, see also John A. McPhee, *The Art of John Glover*. Sydney: Macmillan, 1980), 6–11.
2. *A catalogue of Pictures Descriptive of the Scenery, and Customs of the Inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land [...]*. (1835), reprinted by J. Rogers, 1868. Rare Books and Manuscripts, Yale Center for British Art. Critical response to the 1835 exhibition was mostly positive, as Hansen notes. *The Morning Post* compared the exhibition to “an extensive museum ... the rarest productions of that singular country, all depicted with a fidelity to nature that only a practical geologist, botanist and ornithologist could execute, or perhaps, fully appreciate.” As quoted in Hansen, *John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque*, 94. Glover’s patron Sir Thomas Phillips complained that the introduction of native figures into views was “an objection by many”. As quoted in Sharon Morgan, *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania: Creating an Antipodean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 144.
3. Reviewer, *The Times*, 29 June 1835, as quoted in John McPhee, *The Art of John Glover* (Sydney: Macmillan, 1980), 32.
4. See Terry Smith, “Land into Landscape: the Setting of Settlement”, in *Transformations in Australian Art: The Nineteenth Century—Landscape, Colony and Nation* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 2002), 44–65. For the impact of eucalyptus trees on early colonial culture, see Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003), 143.
5. Quoted in Hansen, *John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque*, 98.
6. In my PhD dissertation, from which this essay derives, I use the term *Palawa* to refer to Tasmania’s Indigenous inhabitants. This term is no longer widely used. Moreover, as spellings derive from the incomplete orthographic recordings of colonists, Indigenous names and terminology depend on the nature of the source as well as the evolving contemporary interpretations of the roughly dozen different languages spoken in Tasmania before Europeans arrived. Ethnohistorical, archaeological, historical, and linguistic scholarship has so far identified nine nations living on Tasmania at the time of European settlement (1803): The Oyster Bay Nation, the North East Nation, the North Nation, the Big River Nation, the North Midlands Nation, the Ben Lomond Nation, the North West Nation, the South West Nation, and the South East Nation. Lyndall Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A History Since 1803* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2012), 14–17.
7. Quoted in Steve Brown, “Aboriginal Archaeological Resources in South East Tasmania: An Overview of the Nature and Management of Aboriginal Sites”, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania. Occasional Paper No. 12 (April 1986), 173.

8. The editors and contributors of *Landscape Theory* highlight the problems raised by the term “landscape”, which, on the one hand, refers to a product of ideological projection, and, on the other, an experience of objects in space (physical features in the land), see James Elkins and Rachel de Lue (eds), *Landscape Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2008). I use “cultural landscape” here to suggest that the term as it is used by geographers might help art historians better understand the relationship between nature and human intervention in art.
9. Greg Lehman observes that prior to Glover’s arrival in Tasmania (1831), Aboriginal peoples were largely absent from the visual record. Suggesting that this “visual excision ... presaged the physical extermination that began to be practised”; Greg Lehman, “Regarding the Savages”, in Tin Bonyhady and Greg Lehman (eds), *The National Picture: The Art of Tasmania’s Black War* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2018), 30, 59.
10. Patrick Wolfe on the settler’s paradox in Tasmania: “On the one hand, settler society required the practical elimination of the natives in order to establish itself on their territory. On the symbolic level, however, settler society subsequently sought to recuperate indigeneity in order to express its difference—and, accordingly, its independence—from the mother country. Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native”, *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (1 December 2006), 389.”
11. For a reflection on the impact of Tasmania’s dark history on its visual culture and politics of visibility, see David Hansen “Seeing Truganini”, *Australian Book Review* 321 (May 2010) 45–53. Greg Lehman wrote a critical response to this piece titled “Fearing Truganini”, for *ArtLink* magazine, 31, no. 2 (2011): 48–51.
12. See Ian McLean, *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and David Hansen, “The Picturesque and the Palawa”, in Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham (eds), *Art and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 38–52.
13. John Glover to George Augustus Robinson, 16 July 1835, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, microfilm, A7058, CY 1472, slide 329. George Augustus Robinson, a lay missionary and “conciliator” of the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples (see description below), had commissioned Glover to paint this picture for the frontispiece of his book (which was never published).
14. Bronwen Douglas, *Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 21. For a summary of her methodology, see page 101.
15. In his essay “The Australianess of the English Claude: Nation and Empire in the Art of John Glover”, Ian McLean argues that Glover’s use of the picturesque was precisely the aesthetic vehicle that could accommodate the seemingly contradictory dualities of imperial and national *genius loci*; Ian McLean, “The Australianess of the English Claude: Nation and Empire in the Art of John Glover”, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 7, no. 1 (2005): 125–142. William Gilpin first used the term “picturesque” in his 1768 publication, *An Essay on Prints* (London: J. Robson, 1768). See also “Introduction”, in Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox (eds), *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750–1880*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 6.
16. For a nuanced analysis of the relationship between the picturesque in landscape gardening and in painting, see Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 113, 126.
17. See Andrea Gaynor and Ian McLean, “The Limits of Art History: Towards An Ecological History of Landscape Art”, *Landscape Review* 11, no. 1 (2005): 4–14.

18. Gaynor and McLean, "The Limits of Art History", 8.
19. Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).
20. Gammage draws on contemporary photographs as well as examples of colonial landscape art as evidence for the ways Indigenous Australians managed their environments; Bill Gammage, *Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011). Ecologists, too, have referred to paintings as documentary evidence. Given that these scholars have turned to colonial art for descriptions of ecological phenomena, I contend that art history should seek answers outside its own discipline to explore the significance of landscape art in colonial Tasmania.
21. While some ecologists argue that there was a natural potential fire regime that Aborigines made use of, others argue that the reinvasion of grasslands by rainforest species shows that vegetation mosaics are not stable, but were altered through human intervention. For a summary of this debate, see Greg Lehman, "Turning back the Clock: Fire, Biodiversity, and Indigenous Community Development in Tasmania", in Elspeth A. Young, Jocelyn Davies, and Richard Munro Baker (eds), *Working on Country: Contemporary Indigenous Management of Australia's Lands and Coastal Regions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 312–315. For another discussion, see J.S. Benson and P.A. Redpath, "The Nature of Pre-European Native Vegetation in South-Eastern Australia", *Cunninghamia* 5, no. 2 (1997): 285–328.
22. R.J. Fensham, "The Pre-European Vegetation of the Midlands, Tasmania: A Floristic and Historical Analysis of Vegetation Patterns", *Journal of Biogeography* 16, no. 1 (1989): 29–45.
23. Rhys Jones, "Fire-stick Farming", *Australian Natural History* 16, no. 7 (15 September 1969), 226. Jones, the first professional archaeologist to work in Tasmania, also controversially argued that Indigenous Tasmanians were in a state of slow cultural degeneration, a claim that cannot be substantiated by any archaeological evidence. See Rebe Taylor, "Reliable Mr Robinson and the Controversial Dr Jones", in Anna Johnston and Mitchell Rolls (eds), *Reading Robinson: Companion Essays to Friendly Mission* (Hobart: Quintus Publishing, 2008), 111.
24. The *Trawulwuy* are a clan from the north-east of Tasmania.
25. Greg Lehman, "Turning Back the Clock", 209.
26. "Country has its own life, its own imperatives, of which humans are only one aspect," writes Deborah Bird Rose in *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness* (Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996), 10. I do not want to imply that Indigenous conceptions of landscape exist outside of change or social action, or that Indigenous Australian cultures have no way of representing landscape. As Fred Myers argues, places acquire their value in and through social relations and social action; see Fred Myers, "Ways of Placemaking", in Kate Flint and Howard Morphy (eds), *Culture, Landscape, and the Environment: The Linacre Lectures, 1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72–107.
27. Patsy Cameron, *Grease and Ochre: The Blending of Two Cultures at the Colonial Sea Frontier* (Hobart: Fullers Bookshop, 2016), 31. See also Robinson's description of hollow tree burials (20 September 1830; 4, 6, and 8 November 1831), quoted in Richard Cosgrove, *Aboriginal Economy and Settlement in the Central Highlands* (Sandy Bay, TAS: National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1984), 53; and a description of the practice in James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies* (London: Hamilton, Adams and Company, 1843), 105.

28. See Stephen Daniels in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
29. George Augustus Robinson, 3 April 1829, N.J.B. Plomley, *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson, 1829–1834*, 1st edn (Sandy Bay, TAS: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Kingsgrove, 1966), 54. For an appendix of the European eyewitness descriptions of Indigenous fires and burning, see Brown, “Aboriginal Archaeological Resources in South East Tasmania”.
30. In addition to livestock, British pastoralists replaced native vegetation (such as kangaroo grass) with annuals, which are killed more easily by fire and drought. See Gammage, *Biggest Estate on Earth*, 33.
31. Panshanger was seat of Earl Cowper and was remodelled according to Repton’s guidance in 1799. Woolmer Park was the seat of the Earl of Strathmore.
32. The amateur artist William Lyttleton (1786–circa 1839) was a soldier and settler in Van Diemen’s Land. He, like the Archers, modelled his Norfolk Plains property after an English family estate, Hagley Hall, in Stourbridge, Worcestershire.
33. David Hansen suggests it might have been a gift from Glover to the estate’s proprietor, Captain William Langdon, for his hospitality; David Hansen, *John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque*, 226. William Langdon’s father was vicar of the parish where Montacute House (Somerset) was located; Ronald Worthy Giblin, *The Early History of Tasmania*, Vol. 1 (London: Methuen & Co, 1928), 317.
34. Posts were erected along the boundary of the settled districts, which Tasmanian Aboriginal people were forbidden to pass. See Morgan, *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania*, 151.
35. Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 85.
36. Practices of clearing further left settlers and their stock huts exposed to attack.
37. Charles Leseur, an artist of the Nicolas Baudin expedition (1801–1803), sketched the decorated bark structures over burial mounds. See Edward Ruhe “The Bark Art of Tasmania”, in F. Allan Hanson and Pacific Art Association (eds), *Art and Identity in Oceania* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1990), 133.
38. George Frankland quoted in Eustace Fitzsymonds (ed.), *Connoisseurs in Paintings: George Frankland and the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land* (Adelaide: James Dally, 2001), 18–19.
39. “Proclamation, by His Excellency Colonel George Arthur [...]”, reproduced in *New South Wales: Copies of Instructions Given by His Majesty’s Secretary of State for Promoting the moral and religious instruction of the aboriginal inhabitants of New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land. Parliamentary Papers 19* (House of Commons, 1831), 7. Frankland’s proclamation boards (and various adaptations of its iconography) featured centrally in the 2018 landmark exhibition *The National Picture: The Art of Tasmania’s Black War* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2018). Five of the seven known boards in Australia were exhibited together in a re-assessment of the Tasmanian oeuvre of Benjamin Duterrau and the art of the “Black War”; see Tim Bonyhady and Greg Lehman, *The National Picture: The Art of Tasmania’s Black War* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2018).
40. Second Letter, Skinner Prout to Dr. J.B. Davis, 12 February 1856. Original letters in the British Museum. As quoted in Anthony Brown and Hendrik Kolenberg, *Skinner Prout in Australia, 1840–48* (Hobart: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 1986), 79. Skinner Prout had scrawled on the back of the picture board, now housed at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the following inscription: “this board was painted to

communicate first principles of moral treatment to the Aborigines of Tasmania ... Their language being different, it was found impossible to communicate with them orally." The board's verso is reproduced in Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, *Art in the Time of Colony* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 80.

41. Carroll, *Art in the Time of Colony*, 84.
42. "To do this we have all been obliged to contribute in some way or another," wrote the colony's Auditor G.T.W.B. Boyes. "The Lt. Governor has taken the field with almost all the Military—the Ticket of leave men, Constables and as many assigned Servants as could be spared, have been marshalled, equipped for the field, and distributed like the soldiers along the line, or formed into parties scouring the bush." George Thomas William Blamey Boyes, *The Diaries and Letters of G.T.W.B. Boyes: 1820–1832*, edited by Peter Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 380. See also N.J.B. Plomley, *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson, 1829–1834* (Launceston: Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, 2008), 31.
43. Thomas Scott, "Papers connected with the campaign after the Natives, Sept.–Nov. 1830". Manuscript and pictorial collection, circa 1820–1854, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, A1055.
44. Scott, "Papers connected with the campaign after the Natives, Sept.–Nov. 1830".
45. As M.A. Staples argues, little fencing was used in the early years of settlement. Piled up branches were often used as makeshift fencing; M.A Staples, "Comparative Landscape, European Settlement, and the Myth of Little England in Tasmania", *Tasmanian Historical Research Association* 49, no. 3, 198.
46. The Black Line was the largest military operation in Australia prior to the Second World War, and as such would have left a profound mark on every one of Tasmania's early settlers. See Nick Clements, "Army of Sufferers: the experience of Tasmania's Black Line," *Journal of Australian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2013) 19–33.
47. Hansen contends that *The River Derwent and Hobart Town* is based on Gaspard Dughet's *Landscape with Abraham and Isaac*. See Hansen, "The Picturesque and the Palawa", 41.
48. In 1837, the Surveyor General Frankland lobbied to protect the glen from quarrying, "possibly the first time a colonist had argued for protection of a particular place on aesthetic grounds"; Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth*, 7.
49. A Tasmanian Aboriginal name for Mount Wellington.
50. The settler Robert Knopwood noted the frequent occurrence of fires in the vicinity of Hobart: 1804, 1805, 1806, 1807, and 1818; quoted in Brown, "Aboriginal Archaeological Resources in South East Tasmania, 44.
51. David Bowman, personal communication, Hobart, 24 May 2016.
52. This connection was first made by the geologist and Prout expert Anthony (Tony) Brown. Together with William James Müller, Francis Danby, and Samuel Jackson, Prout had organized sketching parties to nearby Leigh Woods; see Anthony [Tony] Brown, "John Skinner Prout—his Tasmanian Sojourn 1844–1848", *Art Bulletin of Tasmania* (1984): 20–31; Anthony [Tony] Brown and Gillian A. Winter, *First Views of Lake St. Clair: John Skinner Prout (1845) & Morton Allport (1863)* (Orewa: Pear Tree Press, 2011); and Francis Greenacre and Bristol City Art Gallery, *The Bristol School of Artists: Francis Danby and Painting in Bristol, 1810–1840* (Bristol: City Art Gallery, 1973).
53. Simpkinson de Wesselow claimed that the sketchers had "discovered" the future picnic spots of Wellington that included its unspoiled waterfalls, where the source of Hobart's rivulet

- could transport them away from an increasingly polluted industrial townscape. See Tony Brown and Marian Jameson, *Hobart Town Rivulet: Artists' Impressions: A Journey down the Rivulet through the Eyes of the Artist* (Hobart: Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, 2008). A letter dating to 1900 from Simpkinson de Wesselow to the Bishop Montgomery describes these sketching expeditions, as quoted in Max Angus, *Simpkinson de Wesselow: Landscape Painter in Van Diemen's Land and the Port Phillip district, 1844–48* (Hobart: Blubber Head Press, 1984), 17. For information about the artists affiliated with Skinner Prout's sketching club, see Rosalyn Haynes, *Tasmanian Visions: Landscapes in Writing, Art and Photography*. (Sandy Bay, TAS: Polymath Press, 2006), 122–127.
54. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 7. Greg Lehman makes a similar observation when he writes of Tasmania that “an empty wilderness was created, not found—a dark, unknown land where the wind whispers secrets too frightening to hear”; Greg Lehman, “Tasmanian Gothic”, *Griffith Review* 39 (2012), <https://griffithreview.com/articles/tasmanian-gothic>. Accessed 18 February 2017.
 55. According to David Bowman and M.J. Brown, “mixed forests of eucalypt and rainforest species ... have been shown to be a transitional community,” a sign of eucalypt forest that has gone unburnt; David Bowman and M.J. Brown, “Bushfires in Tasmania: A Botanical Approach to Anthropological Questions”, *Archaeology in Oceania* 21, no. 3 (1986), 167.
 56. A work titled *The Valley of the Ferns, Hobart Town* was exhibited twice at the Exhibition of the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours London (number 200 in 1849) and (number 302 in 1851), which suggests Skinner Prout exhibited this work, if not a similar subject, in London. See New Society of Painters in Water-Colours, *Exhibition of the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours*. (London: W. Clowes, 1849; 1851). For a discussion of critical reactions to the 1849 exhibition, see Scott Wilcox and Christopher Newall, *Victorian Landscape Watercolors* (New York: Hudson Hills, 1992), 42.
 57. Robinson observed: “they had seen plenty of natives’ footmarks and had discovered the natives’ road, that there was one regular beaten track like the natives’ paths on the south and west parts of the island, and that they had notched the trees like the white men. I saw where the natives had notched the trees, and also their road, the track of which we had followed.” Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 549. See Steve Brown, “Aboriginal Archaeological Resources in South East Tasmania”, 33.
 58. Karl August Lentzner, *Dictionary of the Slang-English of Australia and of Some Mixed Languages* (Halle-Leipzig: E. Karras, 1892), 8.
 59. Khadija von Zinnenberg Carroll, writing about Gough’s work *Regeneration*, observes that “The skin of the gum is a kind of punctum in the image”; Carroll, *Art in the Time of Colony*, 70.
 60. Unique in the history of colonial naming practices in Tasmania, the settlement was given an Indigenous name, meaning “black man’s houses”. Patricia F. Ratcliff, *The Story of Wybalenna* (Western Junction: Stancombe, 1975), 31. The dwindling Indigenous population was displaced yet again to Oyster Cove, a former convict station near Hobart, in 1847.
 61. For more on the portrait works, see Lehman, “Regarding the Savages”, 63–65.
 62. Sarah Mitchell Diary, 1874, University of Tasmania Library Special and Rare Materials Collection, Australia, <http://eprints.utas.edu.au/7008>. Trucanini was famously hailed as the “last Tasmanian Aborigine”. From 1905 to 1947, her skeleton was on view in Tasmania’s museum, against her stated wishes. Her remains were finally returned to her people in 1976. The Aboriginal Relics Act of 1976 uses the year of Trucanini’s death as a means of

- determining the authenticity of Indigenous material culture (anything made after is not granted protection). See Margo Neale, Sylvia Kleinert, and Robyne Bancroft (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 722.
63. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, "Tayenebe—Stories of Trucanini's Basket Making and Exchanges", *Tayenebe: Tasmanian Aboriginal Women's Fibre Work*, <http://static.tmag.tas.gov.au/tayenebe/exchange/index.html>. Accessed 16 February 2018.
 64. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, "Tayenebe—Stories of Trucanini's Basket Making and Exchanges".
 65. As for the pith, she remarked: "I've found that when that dries, it makes wonderful tinder for lighting fires. And I've been wondering if that was the wonderful tinder that's been described in the dilly bags [described by early explorers]." Patsy Cameron, personal interview, Tomahawk, Tasmania, 31 May 2016.
 66. Ochre had many uses: for status, ceremony, and protection from the elements. In 1835, Robinson wrote: "The beginning of the week the Governor chief brought me a quantity of spears and red ochre he had collected from the natives in the bush which they had concealed", 12 March 1835, quoted in N.J.B. Plomley, *Weep in Silence: A History of the Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement, with the Flinders Island Journal of George Augustus Robinson, 1835–1839* (Hobart: Blubber Head Press, 1987), 312. Prout's portrait *King Alexander (Moomereriner)* shows the use of ochre and charcoal as facial decoration.
 67. Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, 90.
 68. Cameron, *Grease and Ochre*, 18, 35, and 99. Robinson's journal is full of descriptions of hunting parties, chronicling times when large contingents of the settlement community would be away on seasonal excursions. Ceremonial activity was also cited during these periods. Women would dive for crayfish and collect mutton bird eggs. Rabbits proliferated on Prime Seal Island and Rabbit Island. See also Judith Birmingham, *Wybalenna: The Archaeology of Cultural Accommodation in Nineteenth Century Tasmania: A Report of the Historical Archaeological Investigation of the Aboriginal Establishment on Flinders Island* (Sydney: Australian Society of Historical Archaeology, 1992), 151.
 69. Birmingham, *Wybalenna*, 186.
 70. Irynej J. Skira, "Tasmanian Aborigines and Muttonbirding: A Historical Examination" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Tasmania, 1993), http://eprints.utas.edu.au/21596/1/whole_SkiraIrynejJoseph1995_thesis.pdf. A Terauds. "Introduced Animals on Tasmania's Islands," The Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE), (Hobart: State of Tasmania, 2005), 7.
 71. Ian MacLean suggests Glover's works fall into either melancholy grotesquerie or picturesque redemption, arguing that Australian artists of this period presented fractured compositions. The tree, he writes, is a "genealogical significance: it serves as a symbol of Glover's inheritance" but Glover's "pastoral arcadias" (see Tim Bonyhady, *Images in Opposition: Australian Landscape Painting, 1801–1890*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985) are haunted by Aboriginal doubles; Ian McLean, * White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.
 72. In 1845, several of Skinner Prout's pupils exhibited at the Hobart Legislative Council (the first exhibition in the colony) works deriving from sketching trips to "Fern Tree Valley". See *Catalogue of Paintings, Water-Colour Drawings, and Engravings, Exhibited in The Legislative Council Chamber, Hobart Town, in the year 1845* (Hobart Town: William Pratt,

- 1845). The same year, Skinner Prout's fellow artist and correspondent, John Rae, wrote to him several times from Sydney with requests for views of fern tree subjects: "There will be more than one person gratified by the reception of the drawings you allude to ... for one the Raffles here. Pray is fern tree valley one of the pictures?" John Rae Letter book, 10 October 1845, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MLMSS 6998. A work titled *The Valley of the Ferns, Hobart Town* was also exhibited twice at the Exhibition of the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours London (number 200 in 1849) and (number 302 in 1851). New Society of Painters in Water-Colours, *Exhibition of the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours* (London: W. Clowes, 1849; 1851).
73. Patsy Cameron prefers the term "placescapes" to landscapes. See Patsy Cameron and Linn Miller, "Carne Neemerranner—Telling History on the Ground: One Story from the Van Diemen's Land (Tasmanian) Colonial Frontier", *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 38 (Supplement, 2009): 3–9. Gough's work was exhibited in the 2015 exhibition *Robinson's Cup*: "This exhibition offers alternative perspectives of Tasmanian history. In 1835, the people of Bothwell presented the Cup to George Augustus Robinson in appreciation for establishing a conciliation with the local Aboriginal people. Today the exhibiting artists present their interpretation of the Cup and the stories around it." Damien Quilliam and Greg Lehman, *Robinson's Cup* (Launceston, TAS: Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, 2015), 3.
 74. Woretermoeteyenner, the name of Gough's ancestor, means "gum leaf". Speaking on Gough's work *Regeneration*, Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll writes: "The skin of the gum is a kind of punctum in the image, evoking a site of wounding." Carroll, *Art in the Time of Colony*, 110.
 75. In 2018, efforts to investigate Indigenous fire regimes in Tasmania will provide important data on how biodiversity is shaped by patch burns, see Damian McIntyre, "Ancient Aboriginal Patch Burning Helping Understand Fire Impact on Tasmanian Landscape", *ABC News*, 18 April 2018, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-18/aboriginal-fire-techniques-shedding-light-on-tasmanian-biodive/9673118>.

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