

Introduction

Despite over 30 years of arts and cultural policy attention to cultural diversity, the general public and artists alike continue to hold the view that Australia's creative production does not reflect our multicultural society (Australia Council 2016a; Screen Australia 2016). As well as fulfilling traditional roles of creative expression, art is called on to contribute to social questions of national identity, social cohesion and intercultural understanding (Van de Vyver and Abrams 2017), the importance of which often stems from local and global issues of social discord (Soutphommasane 2017). Artists and their practices of exploring cultural difference in Australia are central to my research, providing insights into the arts policies that have aimed to support them.

As Jakubowicz and Ho (2013, 286) argue, and this book examines, the key challenge that remains for the arts sector is to support 'creativity that is inclusive and produces absorbing and rich representations of the reality of Australian life'. Their comment, however, implicitly echoes a kind of utopianism, probably because of the 'utopian impulse or tendency present in many of our foundational works of art and literature' to the extent that many 'think art makes the world a better place' (Noble 2012, 12). The echo can also be found in individual experiences of migration:

Once remembered cultural landscapes became increasingly reconstructed as social Utopias. In a process that shares similarities with Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities', migrants used the past to consolidate contemporary identities and norms that offered empowerment in the Australian context. (Mason 2010, 7)

The 'imagined communities' went on to become a sociopolitical vision 'of multiculturalism that contained an implicit form of cosmopolitan humanism—which Lippman [founding chair of Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria] defined in terms of "empathy of interaction"' (Papastergiadis 2013a, 6).

Various modes of leadership that enable the interactions of arts practice and cultural difference are explored in this book. It is valuable to think about identity beyond the simple evocations of the nation found in much cultural policy such as *Creative Australia* (Parliament of Australia 2013). For example, most of the Australia Council's 'multicultural arts' policies were aspirational statements to elicit a vision of artistic participation that was informed by, and reflected, society. The theme of leadership frames an exploration of the relationship between experience, practice and policy, and the environment that surrounds artists of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and their work.

My starting point is the premise that artistic participation is not simply a matter of individual artists' intentions or having better policy documents per se, but involves big questions of leadership and collaboration within the sector. The fostering of an arts policy and practice that captures the aesthetic and symbolic expressions of a multicultural society is not necessarily a 'smooth' process. Critiquing the notion of 'unity-in-diversity', Ang (2003a, 33, original emphasis) suggests paying 'detailed attention to the very *process* of creating a sense of "we" in the face of our heterogeneity'. My intention is that, by attending to the processes of art-making and multicultural arts policymaking across three distinct domains of leadership, an ethos of inclusion within the arts can be fostered.

The Australian Human Rights Commission estimates that '32 per cent of Australians are from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds' (Soutphommasane 2016). However, the participation rates of NESB artists are half those of NESB employees in the general workforce (Throsby and Petetskaya 2017, 143). This question of under-representation should certainly be a management issue in the arts sector, but the question of representation would also benefit from being understood more broadly, rather than in the narrow sense of multiculturalism as a tool to manage cultural difference (Rizvi 2003, 231–33). Despite their low presence in the arts, NESB (a problematic term discussed more fully below) artists find and generate support through the creative, institutional and organisational environments in which they practice. Therefore, it is valuable to consider creative, institutional and organisational leadership—domains that are critical for effecting sustained change in the arts environment as they encapsulate most arts activity.

Creative leadership refers to artists who generate new developments in creative content and expand the potential for others to do so. Institutional leadership occurs through government and their agencies, in this case the Australia Council, specifically their policies towards the arts in a multicultural Australia and the disbursement of funds. Organisational leadership refers to those in positions of influence in arts organisations funded by the Australia Council and how resources and support are made available for NESB artists—the most significant producers in the area of multicultural arts.

Throughout this book, I explore the relationship between Australian arts and cultural policies and the fostering of NESB artists' creative practices, particularly in relation to the federal government's arts agency, the Australia Council for the Arts, and their 2000 and 2006 Arts in a Multicultural Australia (AMA) policies. I approach this relationship through creative use of the idea of 'friction' and the ways in which gaining 'trust' can generate the 'traction' to increase culturally diverse art practice. I also explore whether Australian multicultural arts policies enabled the 'mainstream' to change, and whether NESB artists continue to work in marginalised spaces. 'Mainstream' in this context refers to those, usually, major arts organisations within the subsidised arts sector who receive the bulk of government and philanthropic funds and whose programming is generally drawn from the 'Western' artistic 'heritage' canon. I also analyse the range of creative tensions and artistic opportunities that are produced in an Australian multicultural society that has increasingly become the social 'mainstream' (Ang et al. 2002, 4). At a deeper level, 'mainstream' points to the 'workings of power and privilege [within] prevailing structural norms' (Rizvi 2003, 234) that, in the arts, are viewed as "establishment" arts organisations' (Khan 2010, 184). Khan (2010, 190) identifies the issue of multicultural arts within the 'mainstream' context as a 'normative and problematic one [that] complicates questions of what multicultural arts are, and who they are ultimately for'. The relationship to the 'mainstream', in turn, prompts questions about the ways in which NESB artists maintain their arts practices and how they draw on their hybrid and multiple identities to describe, influence and/or critique Australia's cultural landscape.

Research Context

Published research has paid attention to broader questions of the arts in a multicultural Australia in the 1990s (Gunew and Rizvi 1994; Hawkins 1993, 86–88; Blonski 1992) and to culturally diverse audience development strategies in the 2000s (Kapetopoulos 2004; Rentschler 2006). Artists face issues in terms of their identity, creative production and relationship to their discipline fields and organisational infrastructures, all of which are further complicated by a perception that ‘multicultural arts’ are pigeonholed by ‘mainstream’ organisations as ‘community arts’. Kalantzis and Cope (1994, 13) detail the impact of confusions and contradictions of the range of terminologies around ‘excellence’ in the arts, ‘showing the concept of excellence in the arts to be a contested one’ because elite art was considered the domain of Anglo-Australians. Their hope that Australia was at a crucial turning point towards cultural inclusion in the arts 20 years ago is yet to be realised. Since 2000, there has been limited research published on the connections between national multicultural arts policy and the fostering of multicultural arts practices.

The text unfolds around my discussions with artists, cultural practitioners, former Australia Council Multicultural Advisory Committee (ACMAC) members, and senior arts bureaucrats. There emerged a focus on the experiences of creative practitioners, an examination of institutional practices, and an analysis of the effectiveness and impact of policy aims. A bureaucrat at the Australia Council may see the policy as imperfect but effective, but cultural practitioners may point to the lack of diversity in the arts available to the public, while artists working in multicultural arts may express frustration at the slow pace of change in the arts sector when it comes to normalising their inclusion.

The resulting tensions paint a picture of a lack of comprehension and/or relevance of multicultural arts policy within the creative sector. This includes the apparent cyclical nature (not unlike a vicious cycle) of debate around the naming, strategic focus and positioning (mainstream or not) of multicultural arts. The public record of attempts to address issues across multicultural arts is incomplete. This uneven documentation results in limited historical memory or legacy in the field. National research with a dedicated focus on NESB artists and the arts in a multicultural Australia has not been published since 1994 (Gunew and Rizvi 1994). By reprising the work undertaken through

the 2000 and 2006 AMA policies, I aim to address that gap. Further, by exploring the current state of multicultural arts practices in Australia, and critiquing the relevance of past and present arts policies, I intend to unravel some of the complexities that NESB artists encounter, and profile their creative and strategic responses.

The issues of intermittent leadership and paucity of historical knowledge in the development of multicultural arts practices in Australia continues a cycle of frustration at the lack of recognition of, and engagement with, artists working in this sphere. Via a framework of creative, institutional and organisational leadership, this book aims to provide ways to think through some of the ‘messes’ that frequently accompany multicultural arts policies. I entwine elements of art-making and policymaking together, and consider whether cultural policies have embraced ‘multiculturalism as an aesthetic issue’ (Rizvi 2003, 135). I also ask whether the complexity of multiculturalism challenges a ‘smooth’ arts policy process.

Exploring the Issues

Due to the ‘lag’ between arts policy and practitioner experience, NESB artists are required to navigate their practices with determination and creative persistence. Tsing describes the need for dynamic small gestures among groups and individuals to disrupt the large-scale demise of the planet. Addressing cosmopolitanism and complexity, she notes that the ‘challenge of cultural analysis is to address both the spreading interconnections and locatedness of culture’ (Tsing 2005, 122). Modes of leadership are used in this text to explore the agency of artists who connect across cultures to ‘locate’ their multicultural art practices.

Creative, Institutional and Organisational Leadership

Three domains of leadership are considered useful for examining the challenges and opportunities in the relationship between the arts and cultural difference. These domains provide a way to analyse the possibilities that enhance a milieu that is more supportive of artists whose work contributes to ‘multicultural arts’ practice. The three domains—creative, institutional and organisational—entail a range of leadership modes, such as transactional, transformative, distributed and relational leadership

(Hewison and Holden 2011, 28–40). I explore how those modes are used in conjunction with processes of ‘accompaniment’ (Lynd and Lynd 2009, 93) and ‘attunement’ (Gibson 2005, 272–73), and how they are relevant to many NESB artists in their collaborative practices.

Friction, Trust and Traction

Notions of friction, trust and traction are used as conceptual tools to discuss the issues and aspirations encountered by artists across creative, institutional and organisational domains of the arts. These ideas emerged throughout the empirical research and reviews of federal policies directed towards the arts in a multicultural Australia. The agency of the artists and cultural practitioners who exercise and/or experience creative, institutional and organisational leadership is explored through how they exploit frictions and gain trust to generate longer-term traction. I suggest that translating the friction into longer-term traction sees trust act as a hinge to enable change across the arts.

This book explores constraints experienced by NESB artists who, in their creative leadership roles, can be typecast on stage and within their artform practice. I explore how the friction arising from these constraints is used to develop intercultural practices that strive for creative and cultural autonomy. The notion of trust is also explored across all three domains as a marker of how artists and cultural practitioners engage and participate in multicultural arts. The moments of change towards greater support for the arts in a multicultural Australia are identified through the notion of traction.

The theme of friction and its role in generating creativity addresses both the political and the experiential context. Friction is a multidimensional force caused by the ‘rubbing of two bodies (physical and mechanical); the resistance a body encounters when moving over one another; clash of wills, temperaments, opinions’ (*Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1982, 393). In innovation and management studies, friction as a ‘discomfort’ is seen to aid innovation because divergent views can create new solutions. Innovation is a synthesis of fresh ideas into new forms of production that resonate within contemporary society. Friction in organisations can also signal when things are being made ‘too hard to do’ (Sutton and Seelig 2017).

Trust, by way of contrast, is established ‘when you do what you say you would do’ (Punt and Bateman 2018, 39). This includes fulfilling those aims ethically and confirming whether the ‘processes, platforms and people’ are in place to achieve those aims (Punt and Bateman 2018, 39). It is arguable that the past decades of friction, whether experienced as an NESB artist, arts sector, government or its agencies, have produced a lack of mutual trust. Trust, succinctly defined as a ‘specific solution to risk’ (Luhmann 2000, 95), is required when faced with an unfamiliar situation from which ‘a bad outcome would make you regret your action’ (Luhmann 2000, 98). The relationship between trust and risk relates to the establishment of a multicultural arts milieu. To encourage the culturally unfamiliar (the risky) would open up new creative possibilities, and the allocation of (or trust with) resources would provide adequate support for the unfamiliar.

Traction relies upon friction between components or agents in a system and, if used tactically, can produce a trajectory towards a desired outcome. I use traction to indicate movement towards a more supportive multicultural arts milieu. Traction in this sense is a result of a cultural and social understanding of the friction arising from the constraints and opportunities experienced by NESB artists and multicultural arts organisations. To enliven a multicultural arts milieu, issues of ‘trust’ (how to *generate* it) and ‘friction’ (how to *exploit* it to gain traction) are central.

Who is a Non-English Speaking Background Artist?

The issue of terminology is a vexed one for artists and institutions working broadly in the area of ‘multicultural arts’. Artists can hold significant ambivalence towards different types of labels, including NESB (which, at times, has distinguished between migrants [‘NESB1’] and children of migrants [‘NESB2’]) and multicultural arts. I have made the deliberate decision to employ these ‘unfashionable’ terms (i.e. NESB and multicultural arts) throughout this book.

The term NESB was introduced in the 1970s; although it has been abandoned by many in recent decades, it remains useful as a description. It is a category that is contested both in itself and as an artefact of social practices and government policies. It is problematic because it frames

people in the ‘negative’—that is, by identifying a person only via a language that is not their first tongue. It becomes even more problematic when considering that their children who were born in Australia (i.e. NESB2) may only speak English. The phrase ‘language background other than English’ (or LBOTE) is preferred by education departments, while the government’s most widely used term is ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ (CALD or CaLD). CALD is problematic because, while it ostensibly refers to diversity across populations (i.e. everyone), it has come to stand for groups of ‘non-mainstream’ or ‘culturally diverse’ people in the same way that ‘ethnic’ or NESB might have been used in the past. Artists’ ambivalence about their NESB classification also stems from perceived expectations that they should fit into a prescribed, at times simplistic, creative mould. Many migrant artists (and children of migrants) identify themselves through their ‘hyphenated’ and ‘ethnic minority’ backgrounds such as Greek-Australian or Polish-Australian, which can also encompass the generational aspect of migration. While the hyphen is appropriate for individuals and groups of ethnically similar artists, such as those from Arabic-Australian backgrounds, it cannot be applied more broadly. The collective genres can be described broadly as ‘multicultural arts’ but individuals are rarely comfortable being referred to as ‘multicultural artists’.

A recurring challenge for the development of multicultural arts policies is based in the fluidity of artists’ identities and the dynamic evolving nature of Australian society through emerging ethnic groups. By contrast, other demographic groups to receive attention for ‘inclusion’ in the arts are somewhat fixed and more easily identified. A young person is defined as under 26, a regional artist is defined by their residential postcode, an artist with a disability can choose to identify as such, gender options have increased to incorporate a broad range of possibilities, and an Indigenous (or ‘First Nation’) artist is recognised through their tribal lineage and peers (AIATSIS n.d.).

One criticism of the term NESB is that it reinforces ‘othering’ because it positions people in a negative category—by lacking the ‘positive’ attribute of having English as a first language. Babacan suggests that this leads to a form of ‘relative exclusion’ from access to resources and the associated cultural sense of belonging to the general community (quoted in Sawrikar and Katz 2009, 4). The term is also criticised for combining those who are economically disadvantaged with those who are not and, as such, for not assisting with the monitoring of resource distribution with a view to

ensuring social justice outcomes (Sawrikar and Katz 2009). Confusion can also arise when Indigenous language speakers are considered because many do not use English as their first language; this means that the NESB label can equally incorporate First Nations artists, adding an extra dimension of complexity. A further complicating factor is that people with English-speaking backgrounds are uniformly positioned as ‘white’, which leaves non-white English speakers querying how they might be ‘included’.

An alternative view that supports the term NESB suggests that it remains a useful category because it is factual: it states the power differential in play. English is clearly identified as the source of power, and those without it are considered to be lacking, although this becomes problematic for NESB2 artists whose first language may be English.

Shifting identities (Ang 2011) that defy and complicate any satisfactory description are part of the fluid cultural milieu within which NESB artists operate. Initially, artists who were migrants from non-Protestant, non-Anglo origins (Gertsakis 1994) were called ‘migrant’, ‘ethnic’, ‘multicultural’, then NESB and now CALD. While these terms have each been derided and critiqued in turn, the absence of any term at all is less than ideal, particularly with regards to a multicultural arts policy framework. In considering the option to abandon the (at the time, current) term of NESB, Papastergiadis, Gunew and Blonski sought to establish the value of a name.

A name is like a container that one can accept and work within, or rebel against. To have no name is to be dropped into a vacuum; to wallow without markers. It disables rather than enables cultural intervention (Papastergiadis, Gunew and Blonski 1994, 128).

The authors pursued the option to reclaim the term NESB so as to ‘reinscribe the negativity’ (128). This process aimed to identify the excluded category; legitimise viewpoints, experiences and practices that are not part of the dominant arts discourse; transform the cultural base through critical interpretations and new agendas; and indicate cultural change by acting as a bridge between the ‘invisible and visible forms within a national culture’ (129).

Papastergiadis, Gunew and Blonski value the distinguishing terms of NESB1, those born overseas, and NESB2, who are descendants of immigrants and who maintain the linguistic and cultural links of their

parents. They evoke the trope of the journey to explain a continual process of change. For NESB1 artists, they claim the journey is associated with other dichotomies such as ‘home/exile; severance/reconciliation’. They describe the NESB2 artist as inhabiting:

A more ambiguous zone of neither home nor exile. If we could say that the perspective of NESB1 is predominantly bi-focal, then we would say that NESB2 is multivalent. Their pattern of engagement will be more complex, subtle, layered with identity formation no longer emanating primarily from the decision to leave one place, but from a mixture of inherited values and projected stereotypes. (Papastergiadis, Gunew and Blonski 1994, 130)

This description captures the sense of the intergenerational processes that contribute to a dynamic, multicultural Australia. It is a depiction yet to be captured by alternative terms.

‘Migrant’ could be used, as it is also an accurate term. Ang (2003b, 9) describes Hall and Gilroy, two key UK thinkers, as ‘post-colonial migrants’. However, in Australia, this term is less accurate, as the majority of migrants have historically arrived from the UK as native English speakers. This led to the introduction of the term ‘ethnic’ and its artistic equivalent ‘folkloric’ into bureaucracies, both of which became derogatory terms in contemporary arts lexicon (Khan, Wyatt and Yue 2014, 7).

The term CALD, which came into official use in 1996, was developed to address some of the issues arising from the ‘negative’ positioning of NESB (Sawrikar and Katz 2009, 2). The perception is that CALD ‘does not fix a characteristic from which minority ethnic groups deviate, and so it can avoid the relational exclusion and divisiveness NESB may produce for minority ethnic groups’ (3). Sawrikar and Katz suggest that CALD differentiates the range of cultural and linguistic groups in Australia. However, the term can also be seen as not providing any real level of nuance, because CALD, by its very openness, includes everyone who has a culture and a language.

CALD’s acknowledgment of the uniqueness of different (minority) groups detracts from the fact that, in its common use, the term still refers to the same groups as NESB—those who are different from the majority; it is simply less transparent about the fact that there is a majority from which others are seen to differ (Sawrikar and Katz 2009, 6). Curiously, Sawrikar and Katz (2009, 10) suggest an even clumsier term, ‘Australians ethnically

diverse and different from the majority (AEDDM)', to address issues of inclusion. However, this term faces the same issues, as it identifies people on the basis of being 'different from the majority'. Trying to identify a subject by tying the language into knots compounds the frustration for the subject and does little to creatively engage the general population, decision-makers or bureaucrats.

The simple term 'minority' has merit, in part because it is not an acronym, but also because it is more easily understood and acknowledges difference as distinct from the mainstream majority of a population. It appears to be less awkward because it does not draw attention to the specific characteristics of a person. However, this is also where the term can generate confusion because it does not specifically identify the ways in which someone is a minority.

For example, 'minority' can include people with different physical and intellectual abilities, or those who live outside urban centres. It carries similar overtones to the term 'cultural diversity'—in that it is used to describe many groupings and situations and have come to be equated with multiculturalism. As Gunew (2003, 178) observes, however, the function of the term 'cultural diversity' is one of assimilation; it obviates the need for understanding because it 'signals a refusal to examine difference in terms of incommensurability'. She suggests Homi Bhabha's term 'cultural difference' as a useful alternative (178). Yet this has the potential to create confusion within the arts context, because artforms produce cultural diversity of *form* as they evolve. This is why I use the term 'multicultural arts' to indicate arts practices that arise out of the creative potential afforded by multicultural Australia.

At times, the term 'diaspora' (Ang 2003b) has been deployed in the service of the arts (*Artlink* 2011) to refer to artists caught up in global migration flows. It is useful to consider this term because it suggests the productive potential of members of the diaspora, as well as the complex relationships that must be navigated across multiple locations. However, while it encompasses the global experience for many, it does not explain the service delivery needs of specific settler groups and their particular situations within an arts context. As Ang (2003b: 8) suggests, the idea of the 'diaspora' may not incorporate the possibilities of local dynamics:

The hybridising context of the global city brings out the intrinsic contradiction locked into the concept of diaspora, which, logically, depends on the maintenance of an apparently natural essential identity to secure its imagined status as a coherent community.

In Australia, most migrant NESB artists work as individuals or in small groups, and are rarely part of a 'coherent' ethnic group through which their 'marginal' status might be maintained. Two examples of organisations with broad ethnic bases (that also retain some specificity) are the Centre for Contemporary Asian Art (CCAA) and Contemporary Asian Australian Performance (CAAP). Rather than emphasise their 'hyphenated identities', these groups highlight their contemporary practices (4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art; CAAP 2017).

A term that has yet to be matched in Australia, *métissage* is derived from the Caribbean critic Edouard Glissant's 'concept of braiding diverse cultural forms' (Gunew 2003, 190). When applied to the arts, *métissage* poetically evokes the interweaving of cultural difference through art practices, but still does not quite address the issue of terminology to describe individual artists.

NESB remains in circulation in Australia and, for some, enables self-identification for such purposes as monitoring levels of participation and assessing the distribution of resources. The cultural economist David Throsby, for example, uses NESB in longitudinal research into artists' incomes in Australia to maintain consistency in research parameters, and also because it is technically accurate (Throsby and Hollister 2003; Throsby and Zednick 2010; Throsby and Petetskaya 2017). Similarly, Sawrikar and Katz (2009, 5–6) argue that:

The word 'diverse' in the term CALD carries an emotive valence for people which the factual 'language in country of origin' does not. This valence is arguably detrimental to Australia's capacity to embrace itself as a multicultural nation.

I chose to use the 'unfashionable' term 'NESB artist'. With this choice, I intend to incorporate those artists who are either born overseas whose first language is not English (NESB1: first generation) or have at least one parent whose first language is not English (NESB2: second generation). This term is less confusing and cumbersome than some of the other, more generalised descriptors. But one of my key reasons is that, like the pejorative colloquial term 'wog', NESB 'reinscribes the negativity'

(Papastergiadis, Gunew and Blonski 1994, 129). Similarly, in writing of ‘multicultural arts’, I refer to art produced by a majority of first- or second-generation NESB artists. In particular, I am keen to be able to experience on any given day, in any given venue, the work of individual artists whose non-Anglo creative heritage and ways of creating are able to be expressed. I prefer to see more NESB artists with creative control in multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural creative pursuits. These issues contribute to what I describe as a ‘multicultural arts milieu’—an alternative to arts policy that encompasses elements that can be conducive, or not, in support of multicultural arts practices. This concept assists with the aim of identifying possible models that develop a supportive milieu.

Method

My mixed research method included sourcing published and unpublished data, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data was drawn from the Australia Council’s published annual reports, strategy planning documents and commissioned longitudinal studies into artists’ incomes. Multiple requests submitted to the Australia Council for data on grants paid to NESB artists and multicultural arts organisations were declined. As one of the designers of the system to collect, enter, store and extract data, I am aware that accessing these data should have been eminently possible. However, rather than lodge a freedom of information request, I decided to extrapolate data from information that the institution was prepared to publish. The textual data relevant to the 2000 and 2006 AMA policies included Australia Council annual reports and unpublished internal reports, such as those provided by consultants commissioned to review policy and direction. I knew of the existence of these reports because I was involved in commissioning them; and I knew also that they provide a rich archive that attests to the levels of activity over the two final AMA policies.

The Research Participants

The interview data provided the experiences and insights of NESB artists, cultural practitioners, policymakers and arts managers. The artists interviewed indicate the spectrum of the art disciplines and provide some national overview. I chose to concentrate on performing artists, as the issues of participation based on language and identity appeared more

significant for them, borne out by arts participation research (Throsby and Hollister 2003). The interviews took place during 2015 in a range of locations chosen by the interviewee, such as artists' studios, coffee shops and offices; four interviews were conducted via telephone to London, Canberra and Darwin. Six former ACMAC members responded to my email inviting them to reflect on their experiences, as did Annette Blonski, who documented multicultural arts in the early 1990s.

The range of backgrounds of each of the interviewees reflects their diverse cultural heritages as well as the diversity of their arts practices. Many of them juggle 'portfolio' careers, including a variety of casual employment roles, in order to manage and support their artistic careers (Stevenson et al. 2017, 11). Eight established and four emerging independent artists from different disciplines gave generously of their time to be interviewed. Each artist has had a unique trajectory, many arcing over decades, yet their experiences often coalesced around similar concerns. A further nine interviews with bureaucrats, cultural practitioners and a consultant capture a diverse range of ethnicities and professional perspectives on the relationship between the 2000 and 2006 AMA policies and the fostering of NESB artists. All biographies are listed in Appendix A.

My Role at the Australia Council

My personal interest in this research is based on over 25 years working in the national arts sector and my experience as an advocate and policymaker in the area of multicultural film and arts practice. I was employed by the South Australian Media Resource Centre from 1990 to 1998 to increase the participation of multicultural practitioners and audiences, and then at the Australia Council from 1998 to 2011 to develop and implement AMA policy. I managed the cycles of the 2000 and 2006 AMA policies. My personal contacts in this space are wide-ranging, and I am encouraged by the genuine interest in this research shown by former colleagues and the many artists I encountered. I am in a unique position to articulate the context and content of the two AMA policy cycles but, rather than discuss this information from an autobiographical perspective, I chose to gather the reflections and experiences of those artists who remain active in the multicultural arts sector, and to aerate the reports and initiatives that appear to have lain dormant for the past several years.



Image 1: Annalouise Paul, *Mother Tongue*, 2014

Photographer: Shane Rozario

My ease of access to, and communication with, the artists and cultural practitioners who provided the empirical data was possible due to my many years of working in the field—as a visual and media artist, curator and arts administrator, and, for over a decade, as a senior policy officer and researcher at the Australia Council. The interviewees were very forthcoming, reflecting the collegiate and decades-long relationships we had developed. Similarly, I was able to establish a quick rapport with the emerging artists I had not previously met by finding common ground based on the trusting relationships I had had with their mentors.

I count myself fortunate to have been able to work directly with four chairs of ACMAC and more than 50 artists who took on engaged governance roles as ACMAC members during my time with the Australia Council. These experiences are complemented by my understanding of the roles played by the consultants and commentators with whom I worked to develop and review the effectiveness of AMA. This knowledge puts me in an exceptional position to be able draw on the generosity of those contacts and to incorporate unique internal content to inform this research. The impetus for me to undertake this research, four years after having left that career, came from a curiosity about whether any of that work had been effective. What began as a curiosity was buoyed by the interest

from the multicultural arts sector, especially my interviewees' repeated concerns about a lack of change and their view that it was important for this research to be done.

Overview

Chapter 1, 'Advancing Multicultural Arts: Policies, Problems and Practice', sets the social and cultural frame of multicultural arts, the case for addressing multiculturalism in the arts, and discusses how the UK, Canada and Australia have approached this policy area. The issues of creativity and the participation rates of NESB artists are discussed, including a detailed description of the range of art practices that have emerged as innovative responses to multicultural Australia.

Chapter 2, 'Leading for the Arts in a Multicultural Australia', explores a repertoire of leadership modes that have the potential to improve the situations of NESB artists and their multicultural arts practices. The themes of friction, trust and traction are expanded upon, followed by an analysis of the three domains of creative, institutional and organisational leadership.

In the third chapter, 'Shaping the Discourse of Arts in a Multicultural Australia', I analyse the issues around policy formation and present a brief history and context of AMA. The 2000 and 2006 AMA policies are reviewed, along with a close reading of the structural role of ACMAC. This chapter fills in the historical gaps in multicultural arts policy and finds that AMA 2006 appears to be the last AMA policy following the adoption of the Cultural Engagement Framework.

Chapter 4, 'Creative Leadership: The Agency of the NESB Artist', brings the research into the present and delves into the issues still being experienced by NESB artists. It explores the ways they articulate the need for trust and the role of network formation as a way to sustain and extend their practices. A case study of *Mother Tongue* by choreographer and dancer Annalouise Paul illustrates creative persistence and experimentation of intercultural performance (see Image 1).



Image 2: *Counting and Cracking*, Belvoir Street Theatre, 2019

Photographer: © Brett Boardman

Chapter 5, ‘Challenges of Institutional Leadership: Reluctance in the Australia Council’, analyses some of the issues experienced by NESB artists who participate in governance roles at the Australia Council. The chapter examines the challenging demands of post-ACMAC peer roles, as well as the issues of grant allocations to CALD artists and organisations. In this chapter, the valuable role held by ACMAC of stimulating critical discourse about multicultural arts practices is reviewed, as are the failed attempts to establish a flagship company for the multicultural arts sector.

The sixth chapter, ‘Organisational Leadership: Expanding the Multicultural Arts Milieu’, highlights the ways in which two forms of creative and organisational leadership working in tandem have the capacity to generate longer-term traction for a supportive multicultural arts milieu. Three cases form the backbone of this chapter: Shakthidharan’s epic award-winning play *Counting and Cracking* with Belvoir Street Theatre and Co-Curious (see Image 2); the multicultural arts touring work of kultour; and the shining example of the Lotus Playwriting Project (CAAP 2017), a partnership between CAAP and Playwriting Australia, which demonstrates that change can occur relatively quickly. The findings in this chapter include a ‘road map’ of stages to achieve positive change.

Both individuals and groups of artists contribute significantly to an Australian multicultural arts milieu. This in turn generates and creates the space and provenance for more art to be made and seen. This is how a genre like multicultural arts either maintains its autonomy or moves into the mainstream. A continuous history of production and presentation can shift the boundaries of, in this case, multicultural arts, to become the 'mainstream'. It could, but does not yet, follow that, because we are a multicultural society, the art that is produced here reflects our society. This book details several processes that can be scaled up or down and are found in the persistence of artists and arts organisations that focus on multicultural arts practices to improve the multicultural arts milieu.

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