Nostalgia Ti Frega

A photographic topography of memory, identity, and place.

An exegesis submitted in fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate of Creative Arts

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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PREFACE

Sections of Part Two of this exegesis have been previously published in a different form in *Digital Experience Design: Ideas, Industries, Interactions*, edited by Linda Leung, 2008, published by Intellect Ltd, Bristol, UK.

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ABSTRACT

Nostalgia Ti Frega is a photographic exploration of memory, identity, and place focusing on the migrant community of a Sicilian village destroyed by an earthquake 40 years ago. It is a creative photographic project that aims to capture a sense of the virtual space the destroyed village now inhabits within the community, the memories and stories that form this space, and the role of photographs in its construction. The project is designed to depict and engage the community of villagers and their descendants, inviting them to engage and interact with photographs and experience a sense of what 'the village' is today.

Broadly the project consists of over 1200 individual postcard-sized printed photographs, presented in (and across) 5 specially designed, handcrafted wooden boxes; a 'bespoke' iPad application showcasing the same photographs within an emergent digital environment, allowing users to discover images playfully and leave comments if desired; and an exegesis that outlines the theoretical and creative framework of the project, including literature of influence during creative development, methodologies employed during research and production, and the project's contribution to broader creative practice within a hybrid post-digital media context.

Conceptually *Nostalgia Ti Frega* examines notions of memory, identity, and place by tracing a path through the disruption of post-war migration and loss of homeland to current thinking around a 'reflective nostalgia' that makes space for hybrid identities and histories. It also examines the evocative

potential of objects and touch, both physical and digital, as sources of identity, connection, and belonging.

Creatively the project has sought to experiment with storytelling, exploring how non-linear, fragmentary, hybrid story platforms may operate to enhance formation and maintenance of a collective hybrid identity. To that end it positions itself as the inheritor of a creative trajectory beginning with literary experiments in book publishing in the 1960s, moving through broadcast television during the advent of media convergence, and arriving at the mutable "post-artefact" potential of current digital technologies.

Finally, while employing an emergent creative process, the digital design and development of *Nostalgia Ti Frega* has drawn heavily from the Agile methodology of software development. The synergies and resonances with this methodology are outlined.

KEYWORDS: reflective nostalgia, memory, community, immigration, Australia, Italy, digital design, digital development, creative practice, photography, material culture, agile, storytelling, post-artefact, Sicily, comfortableness, hybridity.