



**Remnant and Reliquary:**

Fragmentary traces reconciled as object and knowledge.  
Reading and registering the artefact through material culture  
research and the lives of women, Australia 1788-1901.

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**Doctor of Philosophy: C02001V2**

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Certificate: Notice of Originality

VERITAS *[truth]*

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.

Production Note:  
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.....  
Signature of Student

I acknowledge the Eora nation  
who are the  
Traditional Custodians of this Land.

From the journal of the 'Endeavour'  
Botany Bay, 23 April, 1770:

“They calld to us very loud in a harsh sounding Language...shaking their lances  
and menacing, in all appearance resolvd to dispute our landing to the  
utmost...In this manner we parleyd with them for about a quarter of an hour,  
they waving to us to be gone...”

J. Banks, 1770, 'Endeavour Journal', Vol. 2, 15 August 1769 - 12 July 1771, State  
Library of New South Wales, p. 299, ML Safe 1/12-13.

FOR YOU BEAUTIFUL ONES MY THOUGHT  
IS UNCHANGEABLE

ΣΑΦΦΟ, 7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E., *The Complete Poems of Sappho*, 2009, p .iv.

## Acknowledgements: Acclamation of Support

### GRATIA [*thank you*]

*“The woman who dances without reason causes no end of trouble at home”*

C. Warnke, 2004, folio 84.

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Preface: In the Words of Others

AMOR VINCIT OMNIA [*love conquers all*]

*I thought once how Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished for years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:  
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,  
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,  
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung  
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,  
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,  
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,  
'Guess now who holds thee?'-- 'Death,' I said. But there,  
The silver answer rang ... 'Not Death, but Love.'*

E. Barrett Browning, 1995, 'Part I, Sonnets from the Portuguese', *Aurora Leigh and other Poems*, Penguin Books, London.

“Writing can be displayed as both object and knowledge”

S. Stewart, 1984, *On Longing*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

“Historians are not analysts, they are lovers and believers”

M. Clark, 1995, *History of Australia*, Penguin Books, Sydney.

**“Any truth can be manifested in two ways: by things or by words”**

T. Aquinas, 1926, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*; cited by Gombrich, 1972.

## Table of Contents: Theoretical Framework

### ARGUMENTUM [*contents*]

“We are often taught to value ideas as the highest form of knowledge”

R. Shattuck, 1996, p. 9.

#### **PART I: Cogitatio [*concept*]**

<b>List of Illustrations: <i>Aspicio</i> [<i>behold</i>]</b> Fragmentary traces	8
<b>Abstract: <i>Propositum</i> [<i>propose</i>]</b> Remnant and reliquary	10

#### **PART II: Conlectio [*collection*]**

<b>Introduction: <i>Introduco</i> [<i>introduce</i>]</b> The artefact placed in context	13
<b>Chapter One: <i>Recordatio</i> [<i>record</i>]</b> The collection, museum & representation of self	22
<b>Chapter Two: <i>Voce</i> [<i>voice</i>]</b> Documenting ephemera between memory and decay	39

#### **PART III: Res Ipsa Loquitor [*object speaks for itself*]**

<b>Chapter Three: <i>Artifex</i> [<i>artefact</i>]</b> Registration of the lives of women	55
<b>Chapter Four: <i>Progenitum</i> [<i>outcome</i>]</b> Artwork explained	106
<b>Chapter Five: <i>Prolatio</i> [<i>exhibit</i>]</b> Artwork revealed	127

#### **PART IV: Litterae [*bookworks*]**

<b>Chapter Six: <i>Terra Firma</i> [<i>terrain</i>]</b> Language as an aesthetic landscape	211
<b>Conclusion: <i>Animæ</i> [<i>souls</i>]</b> Fragmentary traces reconciled as object and knowledge	220

#### **PART V: Cognosco [*examination*]**

<b>Appendix One: <i>Succendo</i> [<i>set fire</i>]</b> Archival research	247
<b>Appendix Two: <i>Substantia</i> [<i>substantiate</i>]</b> Original image register	270
<b>Appendix Three: <i>Incendo</i> [<i>inspire</i>]</b> Bibliography	272



**PART I**  
**COGITATIO**  
*[concept]*



List of Illustrations: Fragmentary traces

ASPICIO [*behold*]

*"I have always liked the idea of history as a series of changing tableaux"*

G. Cochrane, 1997, p. 56.

Frontispiece Musei Wormiani Historia Catalogue	28
Cabinet of Curiosity I by Ceruti & Chiocco	29
Cabinet of Curiosity II by Ceruti & Chiocco	30
Victorian 'Carte de Visite' Album	65
Victorian 'Carte de Visite' Album, details	76-77
Catherine Joyce, albumen print	79
Cross, oak bog	83
Alice Fry Artefact by M. Laird	87
Bottle fragment, photograph	88
'Interment Register' 1868-1872	95
Pauper's Portion I and II	96
Morte Collar by M. Laird	98
Love Token 'AE'	100
Love Token 'Daniel Bates'	104
Beauty Revealed (Self-Portrait) by S. Goodridge	112
Harriet Mackie (Dead Bride) by S. Goodridge	113
Crucifixus by M. Laird	114
Broken by M. Laird	117
<i>On the Wallaby Track</i> by F. McCubbin	122
Forecourt Hyde Park Barracks Museum, photograph	130
Inventory of artworks	132
Remnant and Reliquary, Hyde Park Barracks Museum	133
VALEDICTION: Mourning & INSCRIPTIONS: Hauntings	134
VALEDICTION: Mourning & INSCRIPTIONS: Hauntings	139-147

LACRIMAE: In Memoriam	148
Bottle fragment & Alice Fry Artefact, photograph and drawing	151
X: 1816	152-153
<i>Portrait of Il Netunno, later Marquis Cornwallis</i> , by F. Solvyns,	157
Selected pages from the ships log, 'The Marquis Cornwallis'	157
INVENTORY: Fragment	158
Margaret Pascoe Inventory	161
PASSION: Threads	162
FRAILITY: Threads	163
DIARY: Traces	167-168
Diary, Mary McLeod	169
ENTOMOLOGY: Bookworm	173
NARRATIVE: Life Miniatures	175
NARRATIVE: Life Series	178-192
CYCLE: Gesture	194
PORTRAIT I: Memory Series	197
PORTRAIT II: Memory Series	200
<i>Female House of Correction (after J W Beattie)</i> , A. Ferran	202
PALIMPSEST: Object and Knowledge	204-206
Manicule	225
Skin, S. Jackson	232
PALIMPSEST: Object and Knowledge	238
Artists' Book I-III, 'Remnant and Reliquary'	240-242
FLORA: Botanical Studies & ALLEGORY: Temples for Flora	258
Original sketches	260-262
Oak bog crosses	263
UNESCO Project	264-269

Abstract: Remnant and Reliquary

**PROPOSITUM [*proposal*]**

*“An attempt to see through objects, not just the objects themselves, to the cultural meanings to which they relate or that they might mediate”*

T. Schlereth, 1992, p. 31.

This thesis conducts a number of examinations which serve to articulate the artefact as a carrier of meaning, as a signifier of historical time and place. Furthermore, the artefact or its fragmentary remains are considered within the collection where they rest; the museum, library and exhibition spaces are explored as repositories assigned with notions of identity and cultural significance. Additionally, artworks are created and displayed as artefacts whose particular aspects raised as a result of research are interpreted using contemporary ideals. The thesis is reconciled as an artefact in its own right, built on the foundations of the ‘book’ as a vehicle for the transmission of ideas; as object and knowledge.

Women’s historical memory is framed through a series of such examinations centred in colonial Australia, 1788-1901, where the artefact is traced to reveal its particular aureatic character, then read, registered and (re)read. Artefacts have been collected, observed, grouped, exposed, used, drawn, described and recorded as the focal point for research which reveal the artefact’s own narrative and mythology. The concepts of disposal and dispossession, dormancy, provenance and procurement enrich readings. Consideration is also made of the environments in which the objects have come to reside, enabling slumbering latency, time and decay, protection and secrecy. Artefacts included in this project are those designed and made for pragmatic or ritual use, some collected as memento, as the ephemera of daily life, or for the protection and adornment of the fragile and sensuous body. Fragmentary remains within this study have been granted an elevated status traditionally reserved for artefacts of historical significance or great beauty. My original artwork reframes these fragmentary artefacts for a contemporary viewer, placed in the exhibition environment. Series of drawings

and photography, assemblage, collage and jewellery works to adorn the body, comprising over fifty individual works, further reinforce the themes addressed through the text. These artworks were exhibited at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum on March 8, 2009 as part of an International Womens' Day celebration. An additional exhibition has been planned for late 2009. This intimate exhibit will be installed as part of the Museum's archaeology exhibits on level 2. *The* Artists' interpretation of Barracks archaeology, such as undertaken in this thesis, has been cited as part of the Museum's application for World Heritage Listing as a convict site to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in August, 2009.

These research findings are presented in specially crafted volumes, designed to illuminate the themes explored in the research as a contemporary frame for womens' historical memory. *The* Artists' books, which speak of the materiality of the artwork and exhibition, have been crafted using the ideologies which underpin the thesis. A nineteenth-century photograph album traditionally regarded as a repository for memory is mapped, examined and then recontextualised as the conclusive aspect of my assessment. My research findings are united, in graphic sympathy with this original volume, to create a unique textual curiosity; a modern palimpsest embodied with the spirit of the past, the reconciliation of historical memory presented as object and knowledge. In this way, the research serves to frame womens' historical memory using fragmentary remains as the focal point for scholarly investigation.