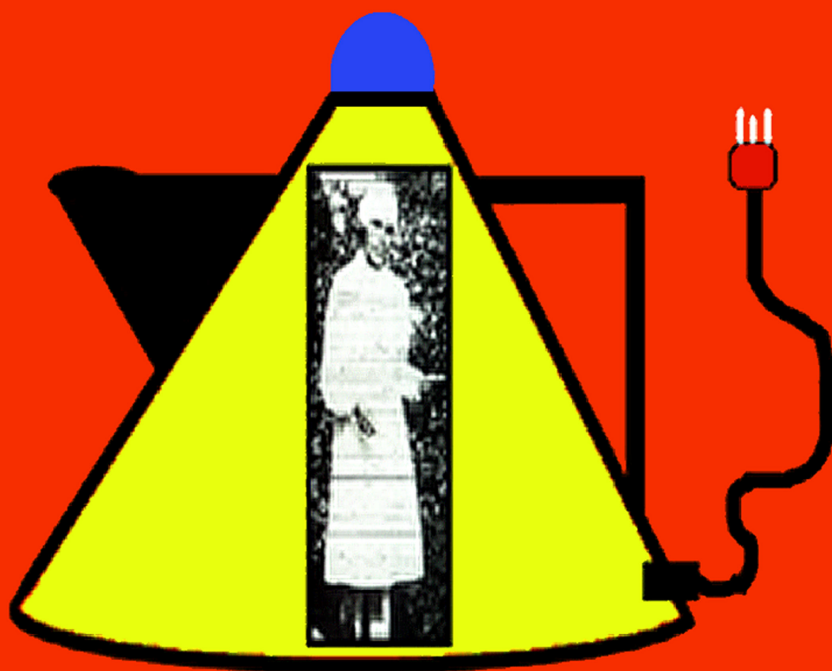


SERVANT (' se;vent) a, 1. a person employed to work for another, esp. one who performs household duties.



The Artificial as an Intelligent Indigenous/Indigenizing System

The Experimental Art and Artifice of r e a

R E A, JENNIFER L. BIDDLE, AND LILY HIBBERD

ABSTRACT

This article explores the vital importance of the sensory at the nexus of the artificial and real life. Co-existing within colonial histories, the artificial and lived are bound up with intractable violence and inequities driven by capitalist, militarist, and anthropocentric trajectories. Our collaborative article examines the 30-year practice of the non-binary, Gamilaraay/Wailwan/Biripi artist r e a. As we contend, r e a's experimental media arts practice pivots on sensory and affective truth-telling of the "artificial". Their work is a re-Indigenization of country, body, and experience, specifically because digital art represents an "unoccupied space" for counter-historical transformation.

KEYWORDS

Indigenous new media, Non-binary, Gender-Queer Art Theory, Art and Technology, Australian Contemporary Aboriginal Art

r e a is the artist and author's full name. Due to Western and academic naming conventions, some of r e a's writings are published as r e a Saunders and some as Dr. Regina M. Saunders (Morris). r e a also uses the name r e a noir as a play on the color black and the French Impressionist painter Pierre-August Renoir.

r e a, "Servant," from *Look Who's Calling the Kettle Black* series, 19 × 25 cm, edition of 15, original printed as digital photograph in Kodak continuous tone XL7700 dye-sublimation print on white Fuji film Pictro paper, 1992. The author's maternal grandmother Ruby Pearl Leslie (née Williams-Madden) is pictured in this photograph. *Source:* Image courtesy of the artist. © 1992 by © r e a is licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>

REA

rea is University of Queensland Research Fellow and an experimental interdisciplinary artist, activist, academic, educator, and creative thinker from the Gamilaraay/Wailwan/Biripi nations Australia. They create radical spaces of Indigenization through the sensorial and intersectional convergences of Aboriginality across the arts, technology, history, and colonialism.

JENNIFER L. BIDDLE

Jennifer L. Biddle is Professor, Associate Dean Engagement & Impact, and *emLAB* Director (Ethnographic Media Lab) BARC, UNSW Sydney. She has worked in the Australian Central Desert with Warlpiri for 30 years and in recent transnational collaborations. She is Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser Chair in Australian Studies, Harvard University.

LILY HIBBERD

Lily Hibberd is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and researcher concerned with frontiers of time and memory, working in collaboration with artists, scientists, historians, and communities. She is the founding editor of *un Magazine*, co-founder of Parragirls Memory Project, Associate Researcher at Université Paris Cité, and Adjunct Lecturer at UNSW Sydney.

I am always the queer non-binary blak¹ body that I am repatriating in all my work. I carry the past and the present within my blak body. I am the old and the new. I am driven by culture, the senses, the ancestral guides, I am an artist! rea (2021a)

This article is a three-way dialogue between the First Nations Indigenous Gamilaraay/Wailwan /Biripi experimental artist rea, non-Indigenous anthropologist and activist Jennifer L. Biddle, and non-Indigenous artist Lily Hibberd, who has collaborated extensively with childhood institutional survivor communities at Australian sites of trauma. Collaboratively, we explore rea's 30-year practice, tracking a counter colonial historical trajectory of their work in the shift from analog to digital technologies through to sensory-based immersive media and experiences. We propose that rea's way of working subverts the neocolonial expected naturalism(s) of Aboriginal art. Their work reclaims a sovereign story of Country² through a distinctive use of the digital as performative, a shape-shifting subversion of the artificial to counteract the historical dominance of realism in the historical canon of European art. Our collective analysis outlines a history of creative resistance to technological determinism, exclusion, and oppression at the intersection of nonbinary, gender-Indigenous experience.

rea's work enacts a form of Indigenous "hyperreal" or "faking it with the truth" (Biddle and Lea 2018) that is kindred with a greater network of activist, Black, and feminist artists, as well as transnational networks of Indigenous, First Nations,³ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and scholars (although not uniformly or homogenously). Here, as we collectively explore, experimental media art can act not only as a circuit breaker to the systemic entrapments of Western neocolonial applications of technology but also as an agent of intelligence: a sensory transmitter and transformer. While we foreground rea's media art practice in this chapter, their work spans many fields: from visual arts (photography, performance art, sound, video, and art installation art) to electronic and interactive/immersive media (virtual and augmented reality). These new artificialities represent the work of an Indigenous, queer, nonbinary, feminist blak artist as well as the work of a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and activists who have used technology to confront the violence of colonial forms of representation.

The notion of the circuit that we adopt here is more than a metaphor. First, the electronic circuit is understood as a material relation that drives the alive and enlivening capacity of the machine-human interface. Second, the senses are both an

input and output to this literal “plugging-in.” As this article highlights, *re a* regards technology as a space of practice and purpose, in what they call “unoccupied space”, which exists beyond the colonized terrain of traditional arts. For *re a*, unplugging from the colonial system of representation empowers an Indigenous artificial intelligence and a freedom to perform nonbinary Gamilaraay/Wailwan/Biripi ways of being and of Country that are embodied, affective, alive, powerful, and sovereign. This thinking echoes a lineage of First Nations Turtle Island artists and scholars, whose initiatives are enabling new and autonomous platforms for Indigenous activism. Contributors to this lineage include Âhasiw Maskêgon-Iskwêw, co-founder of Drumbeats to Drumbytes (1994); Skawennati and Archer Pechawis, co-curators of CyberPowWow (1997–2004); and Skawennati and Jason Edward Lewis, co-founders of Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC) (2005–present).⁴ While in Australia, Murri artist and Yugambêh woman Jenny Fraser inaugurated important online exhibitions from the late 1990s, including CyberTribe and Blackout.⁵

Heather Igloliorte, Julie Nagam and Carla Taunton (2016, 11) argue that “‘technology’ has always been a tool of Indigenous resilience, cultural continuity, and a conduit for storytelling.” Indigenous new media forms and practices are designed based on relational knowledge and grounded in recognition and principles of care, what Angie Abdilla identifies as distinctive forms of “Aboriginal social cohesion, well-being, environmental sustainability, culture, and spirituality” (Abdilla 2018, 67). In this worldview, machines are not treated as enslaved or subservient to human will but as human relatives for Indigenous and First Nations peoples (Lewis 2018). Such notions exist in counter distinction to the dominant Western model of *man* as the owner/inventor of the machine, who stands *himself* at the apex of the man/machine hierarchy.

The collective of Jason Edward Lewis, Noelan Arista, Suzanne Kite, and Archer Pechawis (2018) have revealed that an Indigenous artificial intelligence (AI) protocol has been taking shape in recent times. According to the authors, this new intelligence is based upon “kin-making with the machine”, generated through a collaboration that aims “to understand the “new territory” of the computational, virtual world and “knit it into our existing understanding of our lives lived in real space, and claim it as our own.”⁶ This collective also contends that the importance of AI has been overlooked, and there is an urgent need to “figure out how to treat these new non-human kin respectfully and reciprocally—and not as mere tools, or worse, slaves to their creators” (2018). *re a*’s work has plugged-in to this framework, as well as the

powerful sensory lineage of what Abdilla and Lewis (2020) call the “artificial intelligences” of First Peoples. These intelligences have notably emerged through transnational networks, as Aboriginal media artists have taken up art and technology as “circuit breakers”—as agents of social change, survival, and sovereignty. To plug-in to this thinking and history, we discuss two of *re a*’s digitally generated art works: *Look Who’s Calling the Kettle Black*, a 1992 digital print series, and *PolesApart*, a 2009 photographic and video composite work.

Look Who’s Calling the Kettle Black, 1992

In this series of digitally generated color photographic prints (Figure 1), ten common twentieth-century household appliances are presented as orthogonally drawn pictorial symbols. Each print is rendered in high-octane colors, echoing Pop Art screen printing and mid-twentieth century poster art design, which was also proliferating in the Sydney art and activist scene in the early 1990s. The colors in this series could not be further from the (supposed) naturalism of the Indigenous art palette commonly used by Aboriginal communities across Australia, including ochre earth-based pigments. And its style could not be further from the (supposed) traditionalism of Australian Aboriginal Western Desert acrylic painting. These aesthetic traits subvert what Kahnawá:ke Mohawk Audra Simpson (2018) calls “settler colonial expectations.”

In the most primary sense, these works scream *artifice*. They break the circuit of representation as they refuse realism, playfully subverting colors and shapes, and wreaking havoc with the object’s relationship to the real. Within each of the non-objective objects is a small black and white photo of a different woman, all of them visibly Aboriginal and dressed in white servant uniforms. The roughly cut-out photographic portraits are uncomfortably squeezed into the companion appliance, as if the object were a custodial zone and the figures incarcerated. The women seem to loom, haunt, and occupy the objects—ghostly apparitions of historical witnessing. The only free element is the live-wire power cable, standing alert and at attention because it is unplugged, the active agent and defining subject of the series (Figure 2). Along the top of each image is a lexicon: a single word typed in capital letters, followed by its English phonetic pronunciation and a one-line definition, embodying the orthographic look and feel of a dictionary entry (neutral, a-historic, authoritative). The words are *woman*, *maid*, *black*,

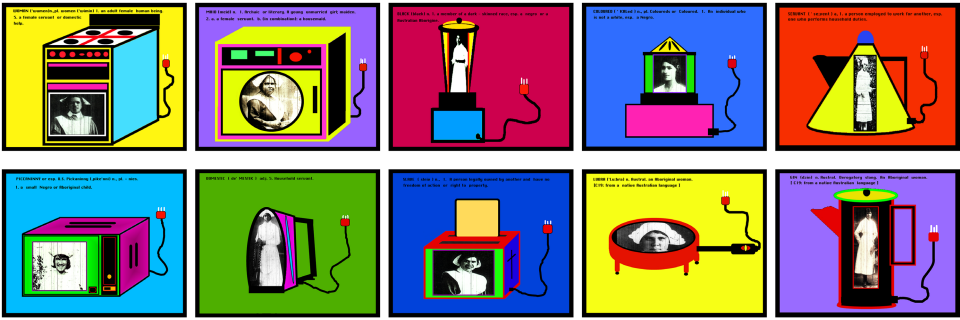


FIG. 1

colored, servant, piccaninny, domestic, slave, lubra, gin—each word hearkening the racist, derogatory, and oppressive ways they have been used in colloquial Australian English to refer to Australian First Nations peoples and to women.

At the core of the *Look Who's Calling the Kettle Black* series is the life of r e a's maternal grandmother, Ruby Pearl Leslie (née Williams-Madden), and Ruby's sister, r e a's great aunt, Sophie, and their extended internment at Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls, a state-run welfare institution in rural New South Wales, Australia.⁷ This home was one of a network of Australian institutions that incarcerated children, now known as the Stolen Generations (HREOC 1997), who were forcibly removed from their Aboriginal parents to be Europeanized and trained as domestic servants in an eugenic exercise designed to erase Indigeneity.

Look Who's Calling the Kettle Black was created in 1992, one year after the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.⁸ r e a states that the series “highlights the devastating loss of Indigenous women and the dismissive acts of covering up black deaths in custody ... the many Indigenous women who died in [welfare] institutions. I made this work in memory of those women, a memorial of images to pay homage to their loss” (2021a). With the permission of their grandmother and mother, r e a accessed the photographic archives created by the organisation then known as the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board,⁹ the primary agency in charge of Aboriginal child removal during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (r e a 2019, 34). The archive contains photographs of r e a's grandmother and other young women who were in the home at the same time.¹⁰ Yet, this series is far more profound than a reconstituted photo album of forgotten women. r e a's digital montages are an instantly recognizable index

FIG. 1 r e a, *Look Who's Calling the Kettle Black* series, 10 single prints, each 19 × 25 cm, edition of 15. Originals printed as digital photographs in Kodak continuous tone XL7700 dye-sublimation print on white Fuji film Pictro paper, 1992. Source: Image courtesy of the artist. © 1992 by © r e a is licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>

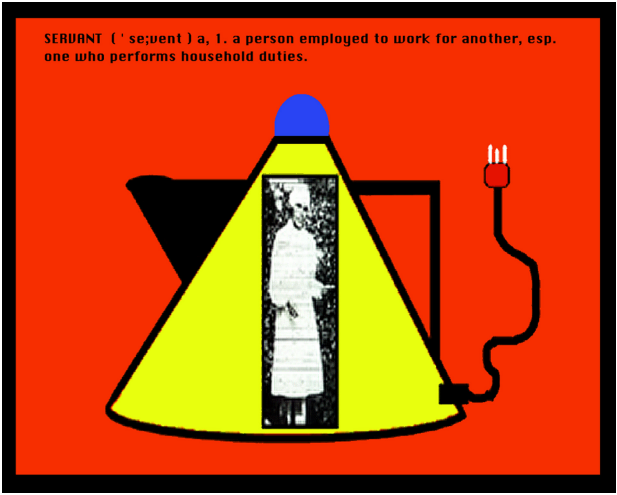


FIG. 2

for the thousands who were institutionalized based on their Aboriginality, for whom the photographic archive represents a vital connection and access point to regain identity and Indigeneity. The photographs offer an indexical link and material testament to lives and identities lived and living-on today, not despite colonialism but because of it. These photographic images encode and plug into a history of (re)connection that was unplugged by colonialism, as well as the specific violence of feminizing that made Aboriginal women into implements or appliances of servitude—and in turn, subjected them to the subservience of the colonial gaze through the photograph itself.

re a's early work emerged from new approaches in experimental arts that have proven to be a vital means for a number of Australian First Nations artists to contend with the history and experience of Stolen Generations as a past entwined with institutionalization and forced domestic labor that was represented by the perpetrators through photography. Artists who have worked on this subject include Melbourne-based Destiny Deacon from KuKu and Erub/Mer peoples of the Torres Strait Islands, Badimaya First Nation woman Julie Dowling, Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra woman Brenda L. Croft from the Victoria River region of the Northern Territory of Australia, Bigambul descendant Leah King-Smith, Palawa from southeast Tasmania Karen Casey, and Brisbane-born Tracey Moffatt. These artists have intervened in colonial archives in important and differing ways through their practices (Andrew and Neath 2018; Croft 2018). re a was one of the first

FIG. 2 re a, "Servant," from *Look Who's Calling the Kettle Black* series, 19 × 25 cm, edition of 15, original printed as digital photograph in Kodak continuous tone XL7700 dye-sublimation print on white Fuji film Pictro paper, 1992. The author's maternal grandmother Ruby Pearl Leslie (née Williams-Madden) is pictured in this photograph. Source: Image courtesy of the artist. © 1992 by © re a is licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>

among these artists to grapple with Aboriginal child welfare photographs in the early 1990s. In so doing, they have sought to liberate colonized bodies—including those of r e a’s own family—from the (photographic) welfare archive.

For r e a, the photographic and digital technologies of the 1990s were crucial to undoing the colonial history, legacy, and traditionalism that saturate fine art forms as well as its combined lineages. The legacies of art history are not only aesthetic but are deeply lived and affective, as r e a elaborates in their 2019 doctoral thesis:

One of the most important discoveries for me as an artist working at this time, was that new media technology did not have a colonial [art] history. ... Unlike traditional Western art forms of painting and sculpture—with their long and dominant colonial pasts and their fixed historical trajectories of art theory, schools, practices and periods—I found in digital media a creative space of seemingly limitless experimental possibility; a space where colonial trajectories were not dictatorial. There was no colonial canon through which digital representations had colonized Aboriginal people; even if there were photographic colonial archives, there were no digital colonial archives. There was no framework telling me how Aboriginal people should look or be—that is, how I should look or be. This absence offered a space in which I felt freed from the implications of colonisation for the first time; an unoccupied space where I have been able to begin to explore my multiple identities and histories. (2019, 32, emphasis in original)

Upon arriving at UNSW College of Fine Arts (or CoFA, as it was called formerly, now UNSW Art & Design), the first work r e a created was *Look Who’s Calling the Kettle Black*. r e a (2021b) recounts: “As I continued my practice, I began to realize that there was this non-conscious act of making work in the digital space that was not yet dominated by a colonial ideology; a way to be in the world without being colonized, segregated, a way to escape subjugation (even for only a short while!) in my art making.” In one of our three-way conversations (2021c), r e a states: “In the early 1990s, many conceptual artists were trying to decode the art system and the way that images were circulating. I was trying to disrupt the system of encoding of images, which I also understood as being bound into the kinds of technologies that were available to us.” As such, the *Look Who’s*

Calling the Kettle Black series does not simply decolonize photography but rather counteracts the colonial role of photography to tame, shame, and frame the bodies of Aboriginal people. The series specifically acts on the senses through its own visual intelligence, arising from a computational-Indigenous shape-shifting logic and counter-visual strategy of disruption through experimental digital imaging: jarring colors, dysfunctional appliances, and the melding of uncanny domestic objects-as-bodies to techno-electric circuitry.

This harkens to what Faye Ginsburg (2018, 69) describes as the emergence of “an Indigenous uncanny”. Ginsburg argues that “the fabled visual evidence of the camera lens” can convey the “realities and ongoing impact of the destruction of the lives of Aboriginal people during European settlement,” and that these methodologies entail “‘hyperreal’ possibilities whose truth value is difficult to establish.” In this way, Indigenous artists working in camera-based experimental modes can be said to be “faking it with the truth” (Biddle and Lea 2018), as they adopt these purported technologies of the “real” as means to engender otherwise unrepresented historical realities.

Beyond the realm of the visible, r e a emphasizes (2021c) that their entire series of 10 prints acts as “a transmitter, an easy way to get myself into the system,” signaling that all machines—including domestic and photographic devices as well as experimental imaging technologies—form part of a hackable zone, into which r e a might insert themselves.

***PolesApart* Series, 2009**

Seventeen years later, r e a made *PolesApart Series* (2009) (Figure 3). Composed of a silent single-channel HD video and four triptychs made of c-type photographs (a traditional photographic print produced from a digital file rather than a negative), *PolesApart* shows an unnamed yet visibly Aboriginal woman fleeing through a burnt eucalypt landscape from an invisible, unnamed enemy (Figure 4). For r e a, the work is about finding a way back home from Aboriginal institutions. During its creation, r e a’s mother disclosed that their aunt (Sophie Levene Williams-Madden) had run away from Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls and made it back to Country, but their grandmother had not been able to escape and had stayed on at the institution until she was 18 years old (2021b). According to r e a (2021d), “the video reflects the ongoing journey of running for one’s life. ... by placing [my] body, the black/queer/trans body in Country, it is disrupting the narrative of peaceful settlement!”

PolesApart references and repositions work by the colonial Australian group of artists known as the Heidelberg School. It specifically calls up Frederick McCubbin's canonical painting *The Pioneer* (1904, National Gallery of Victoria collection), which depicts a romanticized scene of a young white settler family camping in an idyllic Australian bush. For r e a (2021a), "the language of colonialism—specifically the language of art history—has proven to narrate me and my history in a *backwards* direction. We as Aboriginal people are everywhere and nowhere in the European paintings, drawings, documents and stories that are told by British colonisers." In a mimetic recreation of this same landscape, *PolesApart* shifts the gaze elsewhere, not only to see the violence of history excluded but also to see the violence of visibility itself. r e a elaborates (2021d) that the series "displays the sense of loss and being lost in someone else's country; as the black body is tracked across the same Heidelberg (Victorian) country."

Rather than showing, the video evokes its subject matter. Fear is palpable and deeply felt as an embodied state, transmitted directly, or so it seems, in a synchronic register of emotional circuitry, plugged-in to the indexical rhythm and texture of bodily movement: flight, fall, flee. As spectators, we are suspended in the existential condition of the Stolen Generations and welfare institution survivors: not-knowing, having neither identity nor place nor anywhere safe or grounded—fugitives from Country, place, and family.

For r e a, *PolesApart* emanates from a series of questions: "How did the Aboriginal body become so absent within a landscape in which we are entirely, culturally interconnected?"



FIG. 3

FIG 3. Still from r e a, *PolesApart*, HD 16:9 video, silent, 06:55 minutes, from the *PolesApart* series, edition of 5, 2009. <https://vimeo.com/108870026>. Source: Video courtesy of the artist. © 2009 by © r e a is licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>. [Correction added on December 1, 2023, after first online publication: Video 1 was changed to Figure 3; In the above caption, "edition of 10" was corrected to "edition of 5".]



FIG. 4

Further, how am I able to digest this loss and reclaim this absence of the body—of my body—within my work?” (Saunders 2021d). These questions provided the methodological imperative for r e a’s 2019 PhD research, linking their own story to their grandmother’s and auntie’s in an intergenerational counter history and narrative. r e a inquires (2019, 25): “How might a photograph be reworked from within an Indigenous and queer working methodology? Further, how might co-opting the original trace elements to speak to new subjectivities, assist in creating what José Esteban Muñoz (2009, 65) posits as queer evidence-making through ephemera?” r e a considers these questions in their PhD thesis, stating that it was:

... during a thematic residency program at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Turtle Island (Canada), in 1996—that I became connected to a group of Indigenous artists which included Maskêgon-Iskwêw and L'Hirondelle. These artists were themselves exploring and experimenting in new technologies through hypertext software that converted text, sound and image into what would later become known as multimedia or interactive media works on the web... At a time when the internet was being anticipated as a liberatory space for LGBTIQ+ people, these artists were challenging colonial ideologies from within a similar utopic impulse. This was a technologically fluid space, which—while accessible only to few—was not as yet defined by a colonial, hegemonic language. (2019, 16)

PolesApart is significant to r e a, because it plays on “the blurring of imagination and reality past and present ... deliberately located in a temporality outside of the chronological canon of Australian art history, which knowingly left the blak body out of its own *landscape*” (r e a 2019, 86).

Akin to Australian media artist Tracey Moffatt, r e a harnesses the camera and its indexical claims to truth to take photography beyond the documentary reproduction of real events. r e a joins a history of Indigenous artists and community members who utilize the camera for what Biddle and Lea (2018, 11) call “radically Indigenous-specific purpose. ... from the documenting of Warlpiri Ancestral travels in early works of PAW Media (Michaels 1986), to making present Pitjantjajara Ancestral presence, in the work of digital portraiture by Rhonda Unurupa Dick (Biddle 2016)”. Along these lines, Métis visual artist, curator, and critical arts writer David Garneau (2018, 85) argues that Aboriginal artists “cannot afford to be non-representational” because there is simply too much at stake in the claims to the real. The subversion of documentary film and photography cultures in *PolesApart* pivots on the emplacement of r e a’s own body in *the way of* naturalistic filmic or photographic framing, with sensory signals that confuse, confound, and disrupt how to look. r e a’s body becomes a canvas for the dramatic, violent conclusion of the video/performance, as red, white, and blue paint is splattered on r e a’s black mourning dress in “a representation of the ongoing impact of the British and a new generation of colonists, the USA!” (r e a 2021d). Whoever is throwing the paint is unseen, attesting to what Quandamooka

FIG. 4 r e a, *PolesApart* series, c-type photographs (4 × triptychs), each triptych 100 × 92 cm, 100 × 110 cm, 100 × 92 cm, edition of 5, 2009. Source: Image courtesy of the artist. © 2009 by r e a is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/> [Correction added on December 1, 2023, after first online publication: Figure 3 was changed to Figure 4; In the above caption, “edition of 10” was corrected to “edition of 5”.]

academic and activist Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2004) identifies as the ubiquity of the “possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty” in its “invisible” yet “transparent” naturalism. Deeply violent to witness, the thick, heavy paint halts, wounds, and coats in red, white, and blue—the only hues in a world otherwise drained of color. r e a (2021b) regards *PolesApart* as a work of collective “mourning” because “my body is embodying all those others, as well as my own, because I was experiencing discomfort in terms of my own queer identity. It was really hard to wear that dress!”

Finally, for many Australians there is an obvious reference in the work’s title *PolesApart* to Jackson Pollock’s expressionist painting known as *Blue Poles* (also known as *Number 11, 1952*), due in part to the National Gallery of Australia’s controversial purchase of this painting in 1982.¹¹ r e a’s video sequence parodies the masculinist aggression of Pollock’s gestural “splatter” formalism, while the title’s wordplay also critiques what is kept apart: the abnegated and invisible, silenced by institutional memory, the archive, and in history. r e a comments that “When I reflect back over the past 30 years, I can now see what I was channeling through my body—that I was engaged in a physical sensory experience. I was also very influenced by the earlier work of [Peggy] Phelan’s (1993) in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, in which. ... Phelan examines the limitations of visibility politics, suggesting that there may be political power inherent in *disappearance* from the visual field.” And yet, when r e a describes the act of disappearance in *PolesApart* as “camouflaging myself in the digital” (2021d), they reiterate the capacities of new technologies to render things visible, not only to reenact colonial violence but also to reintegrate themselves in Country through their body.

Conclusion

Through a close analysis of r e a’s works, this article defines the emergence of new and yet previously undocumented historical realities. It traces how the “artifice” of the technological plug-in has enabled r e a to produce hyperreal documents of experimental truth-telling. We reveal how these works harness the artifice of the digital as a form of testimony, and as a means to provide evidence through a truth-telling of technological circuitry and certitude. r e a’s practice evolves in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and community members who are actively taking up digital media to subvert the historical use of visual culture as forms of symbolic and actual violence performed on blak and

queer bodies. Their work bears witness to state institutional and art-historical forms of incarceration and entrapment and some of the counter-colonial capacities of technological interrogation and intervention. We situate this collective discussion of r e a's work in the wider field of the digital-artificial and within contemporary First Nations Indigenous discourses on artificial intelligence as "kin-making with the machine." In this way, r e a's practice is linked with transnational Aboriginal and queer media activism and counter practice, all of which demonstrates their use of art as an electronic plug-in to machine-entangled affects and agency. In r e a's own words: "We are re-imagining ourselves in order to 'fight fire with fire' as Warlpiri Aboriginal media maker Andrew Japalarri Spencer (quoted in Michaels 1986, 36) first called it here in Australia, be it through digital photographs, video or the new territories of cyberspace... In redefining my own cultural lens through digital technologies, I have harnessed the freedom and flexibility to create a space. ... [yet] I am always in collision with histories of colonization and disrupted by theories of heteronormativity" (r e a 2021a).

Endnotes

1. The term *blak* is now widely used in Australia to recognize and embrace the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The term is attributed to KuKu and Erub/Mer peoples of the Torres Strait Islands artist Destiny Deacon.
2. The term *Country* is specific to First Nations Aboriginal Indigenous peoples. According to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS n.d.): "Country is the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity."
3. The terms *Indigenous* or *First Nations* are not used by all Aboriginal peoples. In Australia, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* is preferred. Ideally, if possible, one should use the specific clan or nation of the person/s is named instead of these generic terms.
4. See Drumbytes (1994), Wikipedia (2021), CyberTribe (n.d.-a) and Aboriginal Territories in Cyber Space (AbTeC) (n.d.) r e a's work was exhibited in CyberPowWow (CPW2K, 2001): <http://www.cyberpowwow.net/CPW2K-artists.html>.
5. See CyberTribe (n.d.-b) and Blackout Collective (2017).
6. See Indigenous Protocol and Artificial Intelligence Working Group (2019).
7. Located in Cootamundra, New South Wales, the home was operated by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1911 to 1969, to "train" Indigenous girls forcibly taken from their families by the state under the Aborigines Protection Act of 1909. See Find and Connect (n.d.-b).
8. Australasian Legal Information Institute (n.d.).

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9. This colonial government welfare agency operated under several names from 1883 up to 1969. See Find and Connect (n.d.-a). See also the NSW State Records Office archives overview: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-overview-record>.
10. re a is still attempting to identify and name the other women in these photographs.
11. The purchase of *Blue Poles* in 1973 was controversial because of its exorbitant price and people felt that public funds would be better spent on Australian art and Aboriginal artists.

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