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# Figure/Ground (Zero):
*The Camouflage Works of Gordon Bennett and Andy Warhol*

*[Pop art] is an involvement with what I think to be the most brazen and threatening characteristics of our culture, things we hate, but which are also powerful in their impingement on us.*
Roy Lichtenstein, 'What is Pop Art? Answers from Eight Painters', 1964[1]

The challenge of profiling the diverse work of a prolific artist like the late Gordon Bennett is not necessarily where to start or end, but what to include and what to omit. This is the particular burden of the survey exhibition format. That *Unfinished Business: The Art of Gordon Bennett*, the recent Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art exhibition,[2] succeeds at its task amongst this pressure is a testament to the skill of its curatorial team, Zara Stanhope and Abigail Bernal, and the collegial support of The Estate of Gordon Bennett, who provided access to a number of works not seen to date. These unseen pieces are some of the exhibition's greatest successes, reflected in the central work on paper section that the broader show feels held in orbit by—it is a particular pleasure to witness the germs of ideas on paper flourish and expand in the larger works surrounding it. The role of the critic and art historian in these contexts is perhaps more leisurely, but also important —the opportunity to reflect on a show's successes also affords an opportunity to consider what is lost in the necessary capacities of exhibition formats. This essay considers thus an intriguing omission from *Unfinished Business*, the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series of 2003 (also known as the *Camouflage* series) and examines these works as an important turning point for Bennett's later practice. As part of its analysis, it considers the unexpected influence of pop art and the late Andy Warhol on Bennett's work, the rise of a more overt abstraction in Bennett's late oeuvre, and the significance of 2003 as a similarly catalytic time for broader society—reflected in the invasion of Iraq as part of the 'War on Terror'.

THE ARTIST EMERGES

Before beginning a deeper analysis, some background on Gordon Bennett's life and practice must be introduced. Bennett emerged from the Brisbane art scene in the late 1980s. A mature age student, he graduated from the city's Queensland College of Art in 1988, the same year as the bicentennial of Australia's settlement (invasion) by the British Empire. For some, 1988 was a significant milestone of the country's development; for others, the First Nations' peoples of the broader continent, a grim marker of two centuries of violence and dispossession, but also ongoing survival. As an artist of Anglo-Celtic and Aboriginal ancestry, Bennett engaged deeply with this contested dialogue via his practice, challenging the cult of historical amnesia that dominated broader Australian culture. He described the dominant narrative of this society as a "pop history"—one ridden by destructive stereotype, erasure, and ignorance that attempted to bury 120,000 years of history.[3] His work aimed to disrupt these prevalent tales and assert in its place a discourse guided instead by truth, nuance, and a pursuit of freedom.

As part of this process, Bennett's practice consistently acknowledged the influence of external forces upon Australian identity and this "pop history". Bennett taught through his work and writing that when examining a legacy of colonial abuse, the crime scene extends far beyond national borders and typical temporalities. From the beginning, Bennett's art imbricated global influences into his art, in particular those of Western modernism (and thus modernist art), which he associated deeply with colonial psychology. Bennett's practice examined culture as a mechanism of the seemingly undead influence of imperial power. As art historian Ian McLean describes, Bennett was

"acutely aware that the idea of an Australian art or identity has long been an ideological smokescreen for the global aspirations of European Empire."[4] By appropriating the work of Western 'greats' such as Vincent van Gogh, Jackson Pollock, Piet Mondrian, Margaret Preston, Kazimir Malevich (amongst many others), Bennett articulated Australia's constant mediation from abroad, but also how this history erased or othered existing cultural history in this country in the process. Though these artistic engagements were not always simple critiques—often Bennett felt a sense of empathy with the experiences of these creatives, such as van Gogh, or admired their creative output, like Pollock and Malevich.

Bennett grew up not knowing of his mother's Aboriginal heritage. What he learnt at school in the 1960s and early 1970s was this same 'pop history' that told of 'peaceful' settlement, of the 'civilized colonists' and 'primitive natives'; and despite Indigenous peoples' overt and sovereign presence here, this place's declared status by James Cook/British Empire as *terra nullius*: land "belonging to no one."[5] This was the too neat fiction that the young Bennett learnt at school, as most Australian children did at this time. Fed this regimen, he grew up 'colonized' in body and mind—the cultural subject matter perhaps available if his upbringing was different now largely inaccessible to him.[6] When Bennett found art to be a helpful language of critique toward this experience, the only subjects he felt available were those born of this Western condition. He began his process of disruption then from within the belly of the beast. Thus, Bennett's art flourished in the context of postmodernism: specifically, its related processes of appropriation, deconstruction and intertextuality. The irony, looking back from the present, is that 'Australian art' then was predominantly ruled by a white and largely linear history descended from (and mediated by) the perceived centre of the Northern Hemisphere. Today, the truly global success of this country's First Nations' artists, as McLean also acknowledges,[7] adds a particular note of defeat to the former's desperation. Bennett, and also Tracey Moffatt—though acknowledging both artists' resistance to strict identification—represent two of the most recognizable names in contemporary Australian art.

THE WAR ON TERRA (NULLIUS)

This is the narrative of Bennett's art and perhaps due to the sense of urgency in the work of his 'early' years (which for the purposes of this essay, I recognize as 1986–2003 and the 'late' period as 2003–2014) too often this is where scholarly and public attention is focused. Following this trend, *Unfinished Business* stumbles slightly in representing Bennett's later career more fully—tellingly squeezed into the final room of the exhibition. This space features Bennett's 'turn away' from the postcolonial project that had defined his earlier career as reflected in the *Stripe* series (2003–08) and his eventual return to postcolonial critique in ensuing years with the *Abstraction* (2011–13) and *Home Décor (After M. Preston)* series (2010–13); the latter his final body of work before his untimely passing in 2014. Omitted from this room is the focus of this essay, the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series—a short-lived, but important body of work from 2003 that represents a critical turning point in Bennett's oeuvre, reflecting the moment of his transition from what McLean describes as his "reportage" on the impacts from colonial abuse,[8] to what I see as a less overtly critical mode of abstraction that is emblematic of his later career.

As I have described elsewhere,[9] Bennett's initial retreat from this discourse in 2003 was because he felt "[he] had gone as far as [he] could," but also that he was emotionally drained after fifteen years of the exacting analysis it demanded—a period of intense, image-led examination of the racist bedrock of the Australian settler-state, and increasingly, a broadening of this study's scope to

an international stage. To enter into this essay's engagement with the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series, it is helpful to consider the body of work that preceded it, the *Notes to Basquiat: 911* series. A sub-section of the broader *Notes to Basquiat* series begun in 1998 and concluding in 2007, the *911* works extended Bennett's inhabitation of the distinctive aesthetic of the late American artist of Haitian and Puerto Rican descent Jean-Michel Basquiat, to interrogate the events and aftermath of al-Qaeda's attacks on New York City and Washington on 11 September 2001 ('9/11'). In these works, the distinctive gestural forms of Basquiat's are replicated with careful attentiveness by Bennett—a mark of the latter's respect for the former.

The *911* works continue this same aesthetic but introduce salient details from the '9/11' attacks: in particular the shattered, grid-like forms of the World Trade Center's facades—monumental, knife-like shards of the broken buildings after their aerial devastation. These are interspersed and overlaid with X-ray figures and synonymic word lists, as well as Arabic lettering and *shamsa* patterning, which Bennett scanned from images of the inside covers of the Qu'ran found online.[10] Bennett then abstracted the *shamsa* further—stretching and distorting it using Adobe Photoshop to disguise the imagery's prominence. In these works, Bennett's postcolonial critique had extended to America and reflected on the attacks as a symptom of broader and ongoing processes of colonial dispossession vis-à-vis neocolonialism. In *Notes to Basquiat: Death of Irony* (2002), a skeletal Cook appears to summon a series of planes to fly toward the already flaming ruins—with a diminutive Statue of Liberty standing benignly below. These works are the products of the first years of the 'War on Terror'—the vast, unilateral military attack led by American forces on firstly Afghanistan in late 2001, which extended after this work's creation to Iraq in 2003, and on into Horn of Africa in later years. Though the rhetoric of this 'war' became more understated in the Obama and Trump years, it still effectively rages on—with no clear end date. Australia, a member of the ANZUS Treaty,[11] declared its commitment soon after '9/11'; though the presence of Australian troops fluctuated based on the impact of various insurgencies between the war's beginning and now. To date, Australian troops remain on the ground in the region.[12] These works thus critique the new frontiers of colonial domination: the blurred attitudes of 'necessary' invasion, the 'humane' face of peacekeeping—not far removed from the same wilful blindness of hierarchical attitudes of the past, like those of *terra nullius*.

As Navin A. Bapat argues, understanding the purposes of the 'War on Terror' beyond its vast public narrative—of ridding the world of terrorism and extremism in response to the '9/11' attacks, a vastly non-specific target for warfare—must be accompanied by the acknowledgement of its further purpose: securing Western access to increasingly precarious energy resources within the Middle East and transport corridors extending through this region.[13] Australia's participation in this war did not rest lightly on the country's populace—perhaps reflecting a distrust with the dominant reasoning for the war—and Bennett's art, despite its seemingly consistent attentiveness to the 'past', was frequently laser-focused on the political and cultural context of the present.[14] Bennett's work of this period was no exception, and this is particularly true of the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series. Here, Bennett abandoned Basquiat's style entirely, but of particular interest to my analysis of this succeeding body of work is a somewhat surprising figure who had an intermittent influence on Bennett's practice, but is largely undiscussed in existing scholarship: the American pop artist Andy Warhol. The series also heralds an important, but gradual shift for Bennett: from the largely figurative depictions of his early career toward a fuller interest in abstraction in the later years.

## *FIGURE/GROUND (ZERO)* SERIES

At the centre of *Camouflage No. 6* (2003) is a silhouette. The work is one of sixteen major paintings that constitute the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series. The shadowy form at its heart is somewhat familiar; the curve of its top suggestive of a slouched hat or beret. It hangs at the edge of recent memory. Further detail is veiled, obstructed by a bright camouflage pattern drawn across the figure. Rather than blending into the background, the pattern's effervescent, eye-catching palette actively neuters its typical use value—it announces itself overtly, yet still sustains its coding as a means of concealment. The work that precedes it, *Camouflage No. 5* (2003) reveals the figure beneath this disguise: the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. The base image is one infamous because of its repetition: circulated widely as a stock image of Hussein in his military guise in the context of the invasion of Iraq in the same year as Bennett made these works. As the artist described, the series was realized "as a response to the government-generated paranoia surrounding Iraq, Saddam Hussein, and the so-called 'weapons of mass destruction'."[15] Bennett's veiling here of the central figure plays on the extended purpose of camouflage patterning in military operations: not simply to conceal soldiers in the field, but also artillery and other heavy weapons—referring thus to the reasoning for Western military intervention: Iraq's supposed stockpile of (and intent to produce more) "weapons of mass destruction".

The period of these works' production, between mid-January and May 2003, straddles the same time of the West's pre-invasion sabre-rattling, the beginning of the actual invasion on 19–20 March, and the ongoing operations within the Persian Gulf. During this period, Hussein's status transferred rapidly from head of state to fugitive, remaining hidden from Western forces until his capture in December. On the run, Hussein's symbolism entered into a period of similarly dramatic flux: a process visible in his image as reproduced in Bennett's series, shifting between obstruction, semi-visibility, before disappearing altogether in the final works: *Camouflage Nos. 10–14* (2003). At times, like in *Camouflage No.1* (2003), Hussein's image is replaced entirely for an unknown soldier donning a military gas mask—with his allegiance left ambiguous, yet via its allusion to chemical weapons such as anthrax or sarin gas, reflecting the opposing Western intervention. Bennett establishes thus a series of visual and textual binaries across these works: veiled/unveiled, Hussein/Masked soldier, Hussein/Hussein silhouette, Masked soldier/Masked soldier silhouette, camouflage/*shamsa*, and iconic/unknown.

Bennett was no stranger to binary oppositions, referencing them in his writing and has a significant influence across his artistic career. Oppositions such as black/white and self/other abound. Russian linguist and structuralist Roman Jakobson described binary oppositions as an imposed order on the experience of the world.[16] The realities of their structural dynamic play out most palpably in colonialism's damaging insistence of civilized/primitive culture. As literary critic Catherine Belsey describes: "Western culture… depends on binary oppositions… these oppositions are always hierarchic. One term is highly valued, the other found wanting… But these terms can never sustain the antithesis on which they depend. The meaning of each depends on the trace of the other that inhabits its definition."[17]

Within the narrative of president George W. Bush's 'War on Terror' this same logic plays out in his articulation of an "Axis of Evil", represented by Iraq, Iran and North Korea, and their opposition in the form of Western ('good') forces. The use of such structural hierarchies is emblematic of neo-colonial desire for structural power, reflected in the oversimplification and manipulation of the 'moral' issues guiding the military invasion. In these works, Bennett chooses to reflect these machinations, yet also ground its message in a local context: including indirect references to the
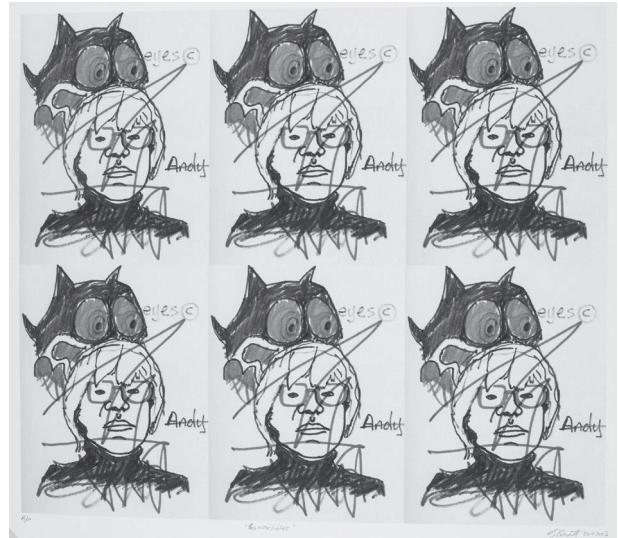
'Tampa Affair',[18] an event emblematic of Australian then Prime Minister John Howard's broader politics of xenophobic nationalism, and the ongoing internment of predominantly Arab refugees in Australian camps.[19] As McLean notes, Bennett recognizes the racism at the heart of these behaviours —camouflaged itself beneath claims of "national security."

However, Bennett describes the importance of a particular ambivalence toward his subject matter here, which runs counter to the dominant oppositional language (good/evil) described above, and perpetuated within Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation at the time of the Iraqi invasion. He said of this ambiguity palpable within this series: "I took no definite position on the issues," before articulating his consistent desire to implicate viewers in a more active process of comprehension.[20] This attempt at involving viewers more immediately in decoding these images is visible in Bennett's insistent scrambling of the source material in its reproduction on the canvas, utilizing the clashing patternation and colours, but with enough details so as to generate an ability to see what were very familiar images at the time "in hopefully new ways, and more critically."[21] In a sense, Bennett's engagement with Hussein is both a recognition of his image's sheer ubiquity, but further than this, his transition to an empty cipher for 'evil', the othered icon of the binary (good/evil) that Bush doggedly perpetuated. It is unavoidable to recognize a xenophobic tone to these narratives pushed by the US administration and eagerly consumed by the broader American (and to an extent *global*) public.

WARHOL

As alluded to earlier, an unstated but crucial influence on this series is that of Warhol. The connection, though at first odd, is a relevant one. Basquiat and Warhol were friends and collaborators; having concluded the *Notes to Basquiat: 911* series just prior to these new works, it appears that the two artists' parallels were on Bennett's mind.[22] Bennett's art was no stranger to the influence of pop art more broadly—with whole series, such as the *Mirror* works of the mid-1990s, informed by the work of Roy Lichtenstein of the 1960s.[23] The benday dot, the printerly process of mid-century comic books to achieve fields of colour, was an influence on Lichtenstein's works, which also informed Bennett's *Notes on Perception* series (1988–90). Warhol more specifically is visible in a number of works on paper by Bennett from this period, including *Untitled (Dance Step)* (2005) that appropriated the American pop artist's dance diagrams like *Dance Diagram (Fox Trot: The Double Twinkle-Man)* (1962). Warhol equated these diagrams with Pollock's 'dance' around his canvases during production, which Bennett asserts in this work. Pollock was an artist also of consistent interest to Bennett—and he had recently engaged with in works such as *Notes to Basquiat (Bird)* (2001). From October 2002 to May 2003, just prior to the inception of the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series through until its conclusion, Bennett also experimented with prints and image multiples—including titles such as *Basquiat and Warhola, Basquiat and Double Warhola,* and *Six Warholas* (2003).[24]

Bennett's work in this series also borrowed more overtly from Warhol. This is visible in a number of ways. The look of Bennett's paintings appears to echo, through their emphasis on heavy blacks and outlines, Warhol's iconic screenprinted works of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe. Suggestions of the repetition offered by screen-printing, which Warhol relished for its association with industrial production, are replicated by Bennett's own process of production. Bennett's compositions were pre-constructed within Photoshop, built-up within the program by scanning a source image, manipulating it, composing the new painting's elements using individual layers, before printing out each layer on separate acetate sheets and projecting these one-by-one onto a stretched linen.[25] Though

this method retained Bennett's dedication to more 'traditional' painting with a brush, he spoke of his desire to function in this mode like a machine—recalling my previous argument of Bennett's desire for impersonality,[26] and thus echoing Warhol's own factory-like production of many of his works. On this, Bennett said "part of the reason I'm using projectors… is to remove myself to the point at which I become like a printing press. I'm not painting what I feel, I'm tracing it on the surface of the thing."[27] Though a happy accident, the acetate's presence is revealed somewhat in *Camouflage No. 5* (2003), where Hussein's bright blue outline is displaced—stuttering slightly above the black outline beneath it. The 'error' which Bennett welcomed,[28] links back to similar glimpses of what art historian Caroline A. Jones describes as "simultaneously… the pleasures of unlimited supply, and the flattering choice of individual variation" visible in Warhol's screenprints—which relished "off-kilter lips, overlapping images, and purely accidental effects."[29] The enjoyment of these lapses reflected Warhol's desire for machine-like precision with glimmers of humanity, seemingly echoed in Bennett's own pleasure of these similar accidents.

Secondly, Bennett's use of military camouflage patterns directly mimics Warhol's own series of abstractions informed by these designs: the *Camouflage* series of 1986–87, one of the last bodies of work produced by him prior to his death in 1987.[30] In these works, Warhol playfully shifts the original's colouration from the typical copying of various conflict environment hues to psychedelic and outwardly loud tones, like Bennett in the early 2000s, defiantly negating the pattern's purpose. Warhol also incorporated camouflage elements into a series of self-portraits utilising a black and white photograph as a base image in the same period,[31] a conflation that was not lost on Bennett, who produced a separate series of photographic self-portraits simultaneously as he was working on the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* works.[32] Similarly, the influence of portraiture is obvious through Bennett's use of Hussein's portrait amongst the camouflage and *shamsa*. For Arthur C. Danto, Warhol's combination of a subject related to disguise with images of himself reflect "the hiddenness of his own truth."[33] Perhaps Bennett's imbrication of Hussein and the masked soldier alludes to a sense of emptiness behind these figures as icons? Hussein, a sort of straw man for neo-colonial, extractivist desire, the protected soldier as symbolic of non-existent weapons to conduct chemical warfare.

Finally, Bennett's use of one of the more (in)famous portraits of Hussein taps into similar processes of Warhol's when selecting his images. Jones argues that Warhol's use of Monroe's and Elizabeth Taylor's portraits (amongst many others) acknowledge "the social nature of images" enabled by their "iconic, high-contrast appearance."[34] For Jones, Warhol's engagement reflects not a personal one, but a distilled graphic sign, a visual symbol that is universalized, which signifies these subjects as cultural icons. Thus, crucially, Bennett replicates only the elements of Hussein's features which have achieved social familiarity: the beret, the uniform, the distinctive moustache. As Jones summarizes "only those aspects of the image that have salience across a wide spectrum of society are incorporated; personal detail drops away."[35] In a similar way, much the same could be said of camouflage's ubiquity and social traction, which Danto summarizes as becoming "as ordinary and everyday as violence itself in the modern world."[36] Building from this, the ambivalence at work in Bennett's series here may comment too on warfare's seeming ubiquity and increasing banality—in itself a critical comment on our desensitization and acceptance. Where some critics saw Warhol's camouflage works as ready-made abstractions, Danto argues that their meaning is the complete veiling of the subject, or that the very subject is that of disguise. He continues, embedding greater violent affect in the pattern's symbolism than Bennett's work seems to describe, that "the camouflage swatch has in fact become the portrait of the political reality of our time, too horrifying to look upon

directly." Such is its connotation, it is appropriate that the final works in Bennett's series remove Hussein and the masked soldier entirely, to focus purely on the camouflage pattern alone.[37] Pop art's veiled yet persistent criticality should also be acknowledged here. Rather than just a 'vacuous' engagement with the burgeoning consumerism of post-WWII America, pop art reflected an ironic examination of economic boom times, and the dark side of this popularity. As Lichtenstein describes in the epigraph, he sees the style as an engagement with the most bold and hostile facets of culture "things we hate, but which are also powerful in their impingement on us,"[38] a sentiment relevant to Bennett's present too, associations of 'evil' projected onto Hussein's visage, and broader Australian public reaction to the invasion of Iraq.

IMPERSONALITY/EMPATHY

Despite Danto's allusion to the pattern as horrifying and pop art's engagement with the abhorrent foci of dominant culture, as alluded above, I would associate Warhol and Bennett's works too with a strong quality of ambivalence. In the Bennett works' repetitions, like Warhol's "numbing serializations", they inure themselves to the viewer in a way that reflects what Jones profiles in relation to Warhol's 'disaster paintings' of the 1960s: "the deadening force" of society's violent cycles expressed via the images' serialization.[39] That feeling recalls the experience of depression, not alien to Bennett, who echoed his feeling at the political experience of that time.[40] Warhol's cool industrial aesthetic, partly a comment on this deadening force, was also a response to the "supercharged nature of preceding models of artistic creation" such as Abstract Expressionism.[41] Bennett's attempt to create his own cool mode of production was a reaction of a different kind—born from a desire in the late 1980s to move away from the expressionist outpourings of his art college works toward what he described as a "cooler, more 'conceptual' mode."[42]

The work from around 1989 onwards reveals the outcome of this desire for Bennett—illustrated by his increasing use of diagrammatic elements such as perspectival structures and grid forms, often overlaid or placed next to borrowed imagery from historical texts 'documenting' the settlement of Australia, and more fully realized by the advent of his use of Photoshop from the mid-1990s. Though these works allowed him a sense of distance from his subjects, which took less of a toll on his mental health, he remained effectively shadowed by those first years. Audiences responded to his honesty, but in this process found it permanently difficult to separate the man from the artwork—even after Bennett distanced himself from the autobiographical qualities of his college works with his "cooler" turn. The 'outpourings' of his art college works were driven by a deep desire to heal himself through his art and one that insisted on a strong openness toward and examination of his personal family history. The *Home Décor* works of the mid-1990s championed more of this colder approach to image manipulation and reproduction, the first series to make use of Photoshop, before a return to the more overt empathy of the *Notes to Basquiat* works. Thus, these represent the two 'poles' of Bennett's broader practice, what I have previously described as a "contradictory tug of war between his empathic and emotive self and their opposite—a desire for distance, even indifference."[43] The push and pull of these desires reflect an artist, nay a human being, trying to sustain an interest in the world around him, while sustaining some modicum of privacy.

Beyond the arguments presented here regarding the work of Warhol, the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* works also function intriguingly as a bridge between the postcolonial interrogations of his early career, and the next stage of his career—a turning point represented by the *Stripe* works, where he took a further step away from figurative elements toward a non-figurative abstraction. The fuller

rise of abstraction in the work of Bennett, articulated by the *Abstraction* works (which continued the use of heavy outlines begun in *Figure/Ground (Zero)*), and the final *Home Décor (After M. Preston)* series evidences an artist who increasingly desired to step back behind an image of a 'removed', yet still socially-engaged practitioner. A fuller engagement with this argument requires another essay entirely. But until this point, Bennett had carried the burden of a practitioner whose identity frequently preceded their work. He strived continuously (and perhaps succeeded) to reorient this interpretation—and champion instead a different image: that of a private and insightful human being who just happened to also be an artist.

Notes

1 Roy Lichtenstein in Gene R. Swenson, 'What is Pop Art?: Answers from Eight Painters, Part 1', *Art News* 62, no. 7, 1964, p. 25

2 The exhibition ran from 7 November 2020 to 21 March 2021 and presented within the Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

3 Gordon Bennett, 'The Manifest Toe', in *Gordon Bennett: Selected Writings*, Angela Goddard and Tim Riley Walsh eds, Sydney and Brisbane: Power Publications and Griffith University Art Museum, 2020, p. 49; Bruce Pascoe acknowledges over 120,000 years of Indigenous presence in the Australian continent. See Pascoe, 'Australia: Temper and Bias', *Meanjin* 77, no. 3, 2018, pp. 59–64

4 Ian McLean, 'Camouflage', in *Gordon Bennett: Figure/Ground (Zero)*, Sydney: Sherman Galleries, 2003, n.p., exhibition pamphlet

5 "*Terra nullius*—meaning land belonging to no-one—was the legal concept used by the British government to justify the settlement of Australia." See 'Challenging *Terra Nullius*', National Library of Australia; https://www.nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/senior/cook/legend-and-legacy/challenging-terra-nullius

6 Bennett, 'The Manifest Toe', p. 43

7 McLean, 'Camouflage'

8 Ibid.

9 Tim Riley Walsh, 'A Transient Separation: Gordon Bennett's Abstract Art', in *Unfinished Business: The Art of Gordon Bennett*, Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, 2020, pp. 139–145

10 Conversation between author and Leanne Bennett, 25 February 2021

11 "The ANZUS Treaty which was signed by the United States, Australia and New Zealand on 1 September 1951, and came into force on 29 April 1952, is the security element of a broader relationship between the United States and Australia." See Gary Brown and Laura Rayner, 'Upside, Downside: ANZUS After Fifty Years', Parliament of Australia: Current Issues Briefs 3 (2001–02); https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/cib0102/02CIB03

12 For current Australian military deployments in the Middle East, see 'Operations', Australian Government, Department of Defence; https://www1.defence.gov.au/operations

13 Navin A. Bapat, *Monsters to Destroy: Understanding the War on Terror*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020

14 Gordon Bennett, 'Letter to Ian McLean', in *Gordon Bennett: Selected Writings*, p. 104

15 Bill Wright, 'Conversation: Bill Wright Talks to Gordon Bennett', in *Gordon Bennett: Selected Writings*, p. 141

16 Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language*, The Hague: Mouton, 1956

17 Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 75

18 For a full description of the 'Tampa Affair', see 'Defining Moment: Tampa Affair', National Museum of Australia; https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/tampa-affair

[19] McLean, 'Camouflage'

[20] Wright, 'Conversation', p. 141

[21] Ibid.

[22] Email between author and Leanne Bennett, 26 February 2021

[23] See Gordon Bennett, *Mirror (Abstract field II)*, 1995. Collection: The Estate of Gordon Bennett; see Roy Lichtenstein, *Mirror #1*, 1969. Collection: The Broad, Los Angeles

[24] Conversation between author and Leanne Bennett, 25 February 2021

[25] Conversation between author and Leanne Bennett, 16 February 2021

[26] Tim Riley Walsh, 'A Transient Separation'

[27] Chris McAuliffe, 'Interview with Gordon Bennett', in *Gordon Bennett: Selected Writings*, p. 132

[28] Conversation between author and Leanne Bennett, 16 February 2021

[29] Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist*, Chicago IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 206; I'd like to thank and acknowledge the insight of Nicholas Croggon here for his suggestion of Jones' text and its relevance to my research

[30] See Andy Warhol, *Camouflage*, 1967. Collection: The Broad, Los Angeles

[31] See Andy Warhol, *Self-portrait no. 9* ,1986. Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

[32] See Gordon Bennett, *Self portrait #8*, 2003. Collection: The University of Queensland

[33] Arthur C. Danto, *Andy Warhol*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 145

[34] Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, p. 214

[35] Ibid.

[36] Danto, p. 146

[37] According to Leanne Bennett, during development of the *Figure/Ground (Zero)* series, Bennett travelled to a number of military supply stores across Brisbane, collecting various types of camouflage patterns that he then scanned and utilized as the basis for the patterns applied across the whole series of work. Conversation between author and Leanne Bennett, 16 February 2021

[38] Lichtenstein in Swenson, 'What is Pop Art?', p. 25

[39] Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, p. 209

[40] "I had had my fill of politics and was getting depressed about Australia and the world in general", Wright, 'Conversation', p. 141

[41] Jones, p. 263

[42] Bennett, 'The Manifest Toe', p. 45

[43] Tim Riley Walsh, 'A Transient Separation', p. 140