

POLITIK

UNSW International Affairs Review

Who Fits?

EXPLORING INCLUSION
AND MARGINALISATION
IN OUR MODERN WORLD

2021 Special Issue

DEAR READER ,

We are excited to present this special edition of *Politik* to celebrate Social Sciences Week 2021. Now in its fourth year, Social Sciences Week commemorates the role of social sciences in contemporary Australia, helping us understand relationships between individuals, organisations and society, as well as highlighting social and political tensions both in the domestic and broader global context.

This year's theme, '*Who Fits? Exploring Inclusion and Marginalisation in our Modern World*', brings together prominent social science scholars exploring issues of exclusion and inclusion in a wide range of contexts. A number of important considerations for contemporary society are critically explored, with a view to challenging the dominant rhetoric about who maintains an 'insider' role and who remains on the periphery. By disrupting and questioning this positionality, collectively we can move towards a just and equitable society.

We would like to thank the *Politik* team for their amazing work and collaboration in releasing this special Social Sciences Week edition, as well as the students who have contributed their excellent work.

Dr Phillipa Evans
Lecturer
Deputy to the Deputy Head of School – Student Experience

Welcome to Politik's Special Issue for Social Sciences Week 2021.

Politik has been fortunate enough to be involved in this special week championing social sciences since 2019, where we featured interviews with Dr Elizabeth Thurbon and Dr Deborah Barros Leal Farias in our very first special print. Continuing in 2020, we featured the competition-winning essays and photographs in our momentous issue, Ignite.

This year, we are especially thrilled to publish a standalone issue for Social Sciences Week, featuring the winners of the undergraduate and postgraduate essay and photo competitions. We are proud of our partnership with the School of Social Sciences and our shared passion for student voice, which we intend to showcase through this Special Issue. We sincerely thank the School for their incredible support.

We commend the depth of analysis, creativity and nuance with which our winners approached this year's Social Sciences Week theme, '*Who Fits? Exploring Inclusion and Marginalisation in Our Modern World*'.

Alexander Ho, joint winner in the undergraduate category, explores the construction of the Vietnamese Australian identity, drawing insightfully on personal experience to discuss the generational determinants of identity and how diasporic narratives influence the development of identity in second generation migrants. Sharing the title of 'Winner' in the undergraduate category, Mitchell Price guides us through the phenomenon of algorithmic exclusion and argues creatively against the neutrality of algorithms. In doing so, Mitchell eloquently explores the reproduction of social stigmas, racism, ableism and sexism in the cartographies of digital space. Postgraduate winner, Ellen O'Donnell, discusses the digitisation of museum art collections through Google Arts & Culture. She argues persuasively that, despite facilitating increased access to and engagement with museum content, the platform fails to shake off the constructed Euro-American narratives and bias towards white male artists that traditional institutions commonly embody.

The winners of the Social Sciences Week Photo Competition demonstrate that a picture truly does tell a thousand words. Christopher Mulia's winning photograph beautifully emphasises diversity and secularity in society, while Claudia Kent highlights so impactfully societal responses to Indigenous identity.

We hope you enjoy these incredible contributions from the talented group of UNSW authors and photographers in this Special Issue.

Nimaya Mallikahewa & Andrew Loomes
Executive Editors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Politik acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we study, work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of Australia.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that have contributed to this publication and are a vibrant part of our Politik community.

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DIASPORIC DINNERS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXAMINATION OF VIETNAMESE AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

ALEXANDER HO

2021 SOCIAL SCIENCES WEEK
ESSAY COMPETITION JOINT WINNER,
UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY

Alexander is in his third year of a combined undergraduate Law and Arts degree at UNSW, with a major in Politics and International Relations and Minor in Philosophy. He is particularly interested in exploring the way that individuals mould themselves into collectives and how these collectives come to mould the individual. Alexander takes inspiration from writing that connects the individual reader to academia, and he hopes that this quality is reflected in his own writing.

INTRODUCTION

Once a week, my extended family sits down to have dinner. Amongst the talking, laughter, and general noise, I often glimpse moments where the identity of my generation and that of my elders intersects. This paper provides an autoethnographic lens in examining how personal experiences construct Vietnamese Australian identities within my family. This paper recognises that Australian discourse homogenises the identities of Vietnamese Australians under a singular generational lens. This paper, through personal histories, attempts to rationalise familial observations to extract a generationally nuanced approach to examining how Vietnamese Australian ethnic identities are constructed.

Whilst I am cognisant of the binary I may be perpetuating, I observe that the Australian discourse forces the Vietnamese Australian identity to fit into one of two identities: a historical diasporic construction, or an economic construction (Megalogenis 2017). I observe that when Vietnamese Australian identities are viewed as either only one or the other, intra-group tensions that arise within the Vietnamese Australian community are not adequately addressed. To rectify this discourse, I attempt to relate my personal narrative to a broader social reality.

This paper is sectioned into three parts. Section I outlines my observations of the Vietnamese diasporic identity. Section II recounts how the diasporic narrative influences second-generation experiences. Section III outlines minor intra-group tensions that arise between the two identities within the Vietnamese Australian community.

THE WORST WORDS

Between 1975 – 2000, many Asian refugees arrived on Australian shores. These refugees were displaced from countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and southern China; most of them arriving due to the Vietnam War or the Khmer Rouge. This shared displacement experience created a ‘victim’ diaspora (Cohen 1996, p. 512-3). This diasporic narrative was then utilised in constructing domestic identities formulated through negative relations with their homeland (Baldassar, Pyke and Ben-Moshe 2017, p. 950 – 3), largely due to evocations of trauma arising from human rights violations which led to their original removal. When asking aunts, uncles, and grandparents to comment about their experiences under the Ho Chi Minh government from which they fled, I (unsurprisingly) received responses such as: evil, disgusting, and stupid (amongst other words I’d rather not disclose for courtesy reasons).

This diasporic narrative of Vietnamese Australians also created identities that reflected positively upon Australia as a nation. During the Vietnamese diasporic period, Australian social development programs operated to provide, and protect, new economic, social, and political Australian values to its Vietnamese immigrants. For this reason, my family members have extended gratitude to their new home nation, particularly by aligning their identities with Australia’s civic national identity alongside Australian institutions, values, and citizenship (Clark 2009, p. 35 - 41). This integration (Hugo 1990) comes in the form of cheering for Australia during the Olympic Games (socially), inquiring about security issues related to China (security), and peppering in the word ‘mate’ as much as humanly possible (linguistically).

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS AGAINST COMMUNISM

Second-generation Vietnamese Australians, born from first-generation migrants, internalise a diasporic past. Second-generation Vietnamese Australians construct their identities through a ‘generational consciousness’ that arises from narratives and anecdotes (Eyerman and Turner 1998). For example, my cousin recounts the times her father substituted bedtime stories with his epic journey on a boat from Saigon to Australia. These narrative experiences have shaped second-generation Vietnamese Australian ontologies and in turn, shaped our epistemologies. As an ode to the diasporic narrative, my cousins’ second-generation identity appreciates institutions of democracy, whilst harbouring a learned scepticism of the Vietnamese government arising from her parents. This practice of generational transference is not necessarily subtle. On two occasions, at the ages of four and five, I was brought to anti-Communist protests staged in Canberra, Australia (VCA Vic). Whilst I was too young to understand the Vietnamese expletives I was yelling at the time, this culture and diasporic discourse continued throughout most my life. However, despite these narratives, second-generation Vietnamese



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Australians are fundamentally removed from their parents' first-hand accounts of trauma. So, whilst this diasporic narrative contributes heavily toward the attitudes and constructions of the Vietnamese Australian, their identity also grows in tandem with the Westernised Australian ethos in which they are brought up.

FLAGS AND THE FUTURE

My family noted generalised differences between the contemporary Vietnamese population arriving in Australia and the generation that arrived circa 1980. It was observed that my extended and immediate family believed the current generation – through no fault of their own – have not experienced the anguish that comes with the diasporic realities that inform their constructed identity. Currently, most contemporary Asian migrants enter Australia from middle to upper-class sects within Asia as either tertiary students or skilled workers (Megalogenis 2017). As a result, diasporic narrative has been relegated from public discourse due to the reality of an increase in economic migration (McDougall 2019). This isn't an issue by any means, merely an observation. Most Vietnamese Australians arriving in Australia do not harbour a similar hostility toward their homeland, but rather remain connected to their ethnic identity through vertical domestic commitments such as educational, social, and familial ties (Baldassar et al 2017, p. 938). These competing groups – whilst not violently hostile to each other – do seemingly stand in minor opposition.

Homogenised views of Vietnamese Australian identities would not be able to notice these intra-group tensions that manifest between generational narratives. For example, in 2021 a

petition was signed by Vietnamese Australians to deport a young Vietnamese international student for stamping on the Southern Vietnamese flag – a symbol of anti-Communism (The Seattle Times 2015). This petition, written by diasporic Asian-Australians, described the act of the student as ‘against the Australian ethos [as it] hurt the Vietnamese Community in Australia’ (SBS 2021). My aunties and uncles, when they heard about this, were similarly outraged. What I recognised then as misplaced anger I now see as a logical response arising from their constructed diasporic identity. As second-generation Vietnamese Australians ourselves, my cousins and I were fundamentally removed from this anger.

CONCLUSION

Through an autoethnographic approach, this paper hopefully incites further consideration of one’s own identity construction. It also notes that the experiences spoken about are localised to one individual. Despite this, this paper invites academia to consider the role of narrative in examination of policy and politics, particularly in examining new generational, and regional, determinants of identity. Ultimately, this paper hopes that the narratives of four-year-old anti-communists, dinner table conversations, and heart-felt bed-time stories are always included in academia. For the sake of ourselves, and our stories.

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SOSS WEEK PHOTO COMPETITION

JOINT WINNER

CHRISTOPHER MULIA
BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS

PHOTOGRAPHER BIO

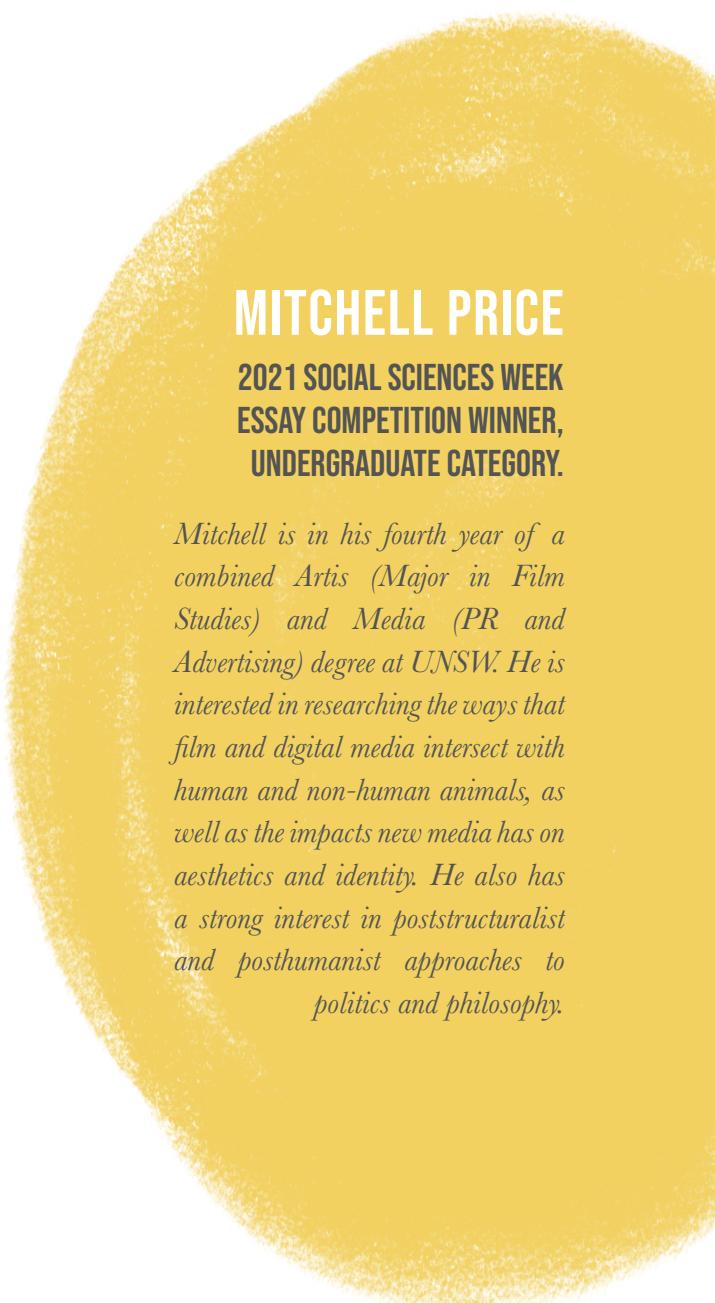
Christopher is in his second year of a Bachelor of Fine Arts at UNSW, majoring in Studio Practice. While Chris enjoys a variety of artworks from all around the world, he takes particular inspiration from a mixture of Westernised practice and East Asian cultural thinking. He is particularly interested in exploring minimalism, abstract and conceptual photography.



Photo #1: Monochrome colours describe diversity and secularity in creating a just and equitable society, with no biases and discriminations, led by competent and transparent assemblies. However, without one realising, time plays an essential role in the process of adaptation. These are my motivations and relations in producing this photograph.

ALGORITHMIC EXCLUSION: THE FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

The modern world has a flat geography. The cartographies of digital spaces – defined by algorithms and big data – are built upon the quantitative logic of constant disassembly, reassembly and totalising commonality (Haraway 1991). For a long time, there was a general belief that data and algorithms are necessarily objective and neutral (Noble 2018). However, there is expanding public interest in the ways that algorithms often reproduce racism and sexism. Whether it's news stories of TikTok's algorithm censoring disabled creators and banning mentions of 'Black Lives Matter' (Dias et al. 2021), or the racist results received when Googling 'unprofessional hairstyles' (Alexander 2016), it's apparent that digital spaces are far from impartial. While it can be argued that algorithms merely reflect the world that surrounds them, it's also clear that algorithms accommodate some identities more than others. Instead of focusing on specific instances of marginalisation, this essay will examine the ways that algorithms discriminate at a subjective level, arguing that an algorithm's incessant need to categorise and translate the world is inherently exclusionary. As algorithms and data 'increasingly [shape] power, access, governance, and culture in the realm of the digital and beyond' (Ruberg & Ruelos 2020, p. 3), the fight against automated marginalisation becomes a fight for recognition.



MITCHELL PRICE

**2021 SOCIAL SCIENCES WEEK
ESSAY COMPETITION WINNER,
UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY.**

Mitchell is in his fourth year of a combined Artis (Major in Film Studies) and Media (PR and Advertising) degree at UNSW. He is interested in researching the ways that film and digital media intersect with human and non-human animals, as well as the impacts new media has on aesthetics and identity. He also has a strong interest in poststructuralist and posthumanist approaches to politics and philosophy.

Some identities are more translatable into code than others. Or perhaps more accurately, code is designed to understand some people more than others. In their writing about the politics of representation in official censuses, Hannah (2001) develops the notion of ‘statistical citizenship’. This means to gain entry into an officially recognised group based on commonality and assumed solidarity. It also connotes the idea that one becomes recognisable only when they are statistically intelligible. To acquire statistical citizenship means to have the privilege of being apprehended. Similarly, algorithms are constantly evaluating the behaviour of the individuals that come in contact with them, always categorising and tagging them. Since data favours unchanging and normative notions of identity, people that don’t fit into these relatively fixed conceptions are excluded. For example, many LGBTIQ+ individuals ‘cannot be understood as a set of static, fixed data points. Rather, these identities are sites of complex temporality and intersectional multiplicity’ (Ruberg & Ruelos 2020, p. 2).

A COMMON LANGUAGE

Algorithms therefore depend on the dream for a ‘common language’ (Haraway 1991). In her foundational 1985 essay, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto’, Donna J. Haraway (1991) describes common language as universal translation. Communication technologies and biotechnologies, she suggests, are marked by a move towards:

‘the translation of the world into a problem of coding, a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange’ (Haraway 1991, p. 164, emphasis in original).

Working on the assumption of a common language, algorithms presuppose that the world and its inhabitants are equally interpretable through the lens of commonality, undermining the possibility for relativism, multiplicity, irony, or contradiction. Of course, such a perspective is predicated on a Western humanist conception of ‘Man’ and unity (Haraway 1991, p. 151) that pushes the experiences of queer people and people of colour to the periphery. Like Haraway’s (1991) scepticism of totalising feminisms

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and Marxisms that build upon a common language, algorithms make sense of certain identities through the insistence of normativities and the exclusion of others, requiring that excluded individuals shift themselves in order to become recognisable.

Ultimately, the imperialising dream of a common language is an issue that inevitably reflects the binary nature of code: algorithmic systems can't be intersectional, only combinatorial. An individual becomes a series of traits instead of being understood in their specificity. An added data point in a user's cookie file becomes a quantitative addition instead of a qualitative shift. An individual's data set such as {women, 32, Australian, etc.} is coded (both literally and culturally) with the biases and exclusions that are entangled with those categories. As intersectional theorists have noted for decades, categories such as 'women' often exclude non-white women, and 'Black' often negates the experiences of Black women (Spelman 1988, p. 14). And as data-driven spaces come to reify these identities as divisible truths instead of blurry social constructions, the power of their binary logics defines who is included.

EVADING CAPTURE

The individuals that gain currency in networks become those that algorithms are designed to apprehend as they already are. This is the new insider category. Do you see yourself listed in the drop-down box? If not, do you just select 'other' to solidify yourself as the Other? In recent years we have seen a widespread push for more equitable algorithms. Some suggest making algorithms' opaque black-boxed aspects more transparent, or making machine learning more inclusive (Kusner & Loftus 2020). This is

important as algorithms are replacing human decision-making across the world in areas such as health care management, policing, and military drone strikes (Feigenbaum 2015). While being outside the grasp of algorithms potentially means restricted access to essential services, it also means being within the grasp of weaponry and warfare. Does expanding the reach of algorithms merely perpetuate the belief in a common language that can capture everything? Perhaps there's value in making yourself uncommodifiable – evading categorisation by businesses, advertising metrics, and policing.

The nature of inclusion in the modern world is shifting as new technologies reshape the self. Whether the fight for recognition will involve more expansive data or the rejection of pervasive algorithms themselves is yet to be seen. Cheney-Lippold (2011) suggests that '[w]e are effectively losing control in defining who we are online, or more specifically we are losing ownership over the meaning of the categories that constitute our identities' (p. 178). In response to this changing world, however, Haraway (1991, p. 174) proposes that we embrace a breakdown of the clean distinctions that structure the Western self and exclusionary categories. The fight is not necessarily in reclaiming control over hegemonic categories but in building a (perhaps utopian) world that challenges strict categorisation altogether. Therefore, when faced with totalising algorithms we should become ironic and contradictory. In other words: untranslatable.

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SOSS WEEK PHOTO COMPETITION

JOINT WINNER

CLAUDIA KENT

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS / BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (SECONDARY)

PHOTOGRAPHER BIO

Claudia is in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Secondary Education. She is a Darug woman living on the Central Coast. Her creative practice revolves around her experience of finding and claiming her Indigenous identity in a society where she feels it is not necessarily accepted. She enjoys creating ceramic pieces from home, and studied painting and printmaking at university, although she would not have limited herself to just those two electives if she could. Claudia shares her work on Instagram under the handle @claudiakent_art.



Photo #1: I know I am, but what are you?

I made this work to explore the denial I receive when I disclose my Indigenous identity. I screen printed these quotes.

Photo #2: Close up of 'I know I am, but what are you?'



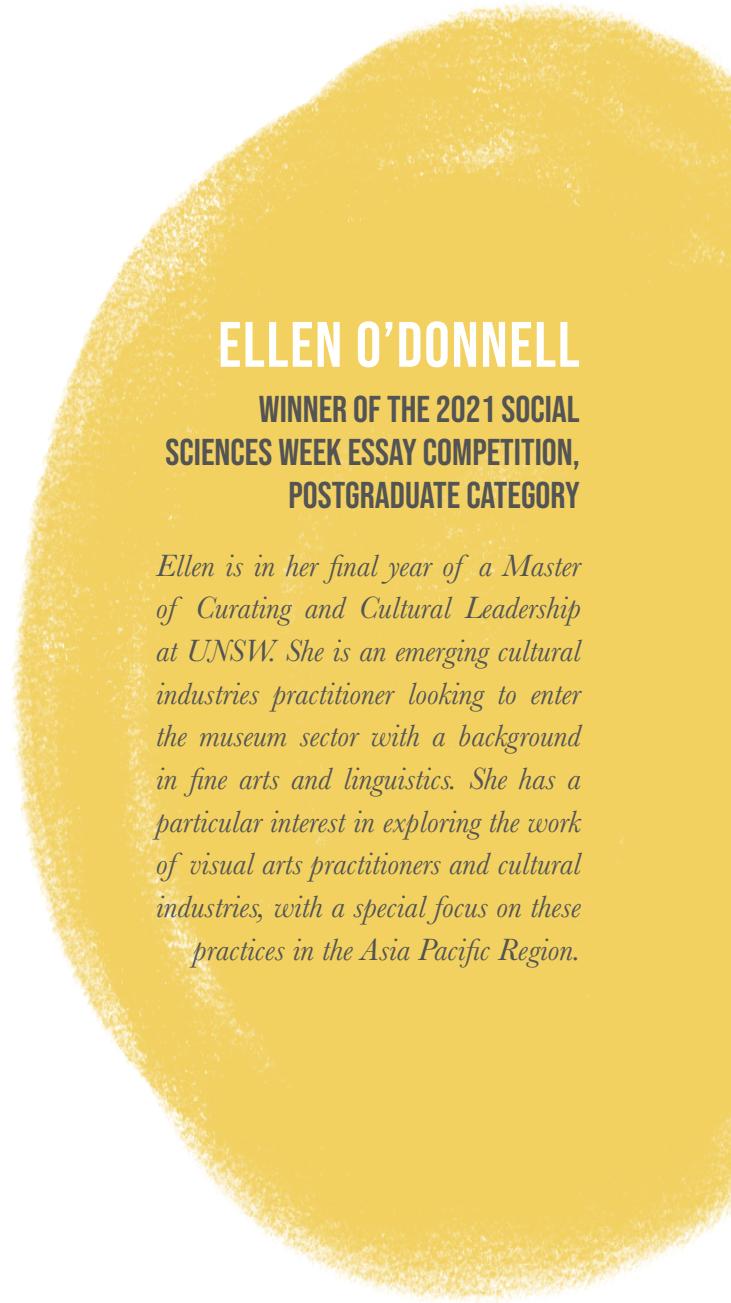
Photo #3: Close up of 'I know I am, but what are you?'



SAME OLD? GOOGLE ARTS AND CULTURE AS MODERN CULTURAL INSTITUTION

Founded in 2011, Google Arts and Culture's (henceforth 'GAC') digitisation of collections has undoubtedly expanded how audiences engage with museum content. However, the platform inherits the museum's constructed histories, continuing the art world's Euro-American focus, overrepresenting white male interpretations of culture, and marginalising voices of the Other. At the same time, the digitisation of museum collections continues to spread the illusion of Euro-American cultural superiority because of their 18th and 19th century institutionalised practices. Such practices no longer align with contemporary society's values, which progress faster than museums' and other cultural models' values (Combi 2016, p. 5). Between ethnographic museological practices of the colonial era and the ongoing privileging of white male artists in collections, institutions today have inherited their nation's constructed narratives (Stanziani 2018, p. 13), leading to the widespread marginalisation of diverse peoples.

When launched, GAC aimed to "provide a second-generation platform and be a resource without boundaries" (Wani, Ali, & Ganaie 2019, p. 112). The initial seventeen European and American museums on the platform included several of the world's leading institutions (Wani, Ali, & Ganaie 2019, p. 112). Many museums view collaboration with GAC as important for their audience numbers, hoping that participation will



ELLEN O'DONNELL

**WINNER OF THE 2021 SOCIAL SCIENCES WEEK ESSAY COMPETITION,
POSTGRADUATE CATEGORY**

Ellen is in her final year of a Master of Curating and Cultural Leadership at UNSW. She is an emerging cultural industries practitioner looking to enter the museum sector with a background in fine arts and linguistics. She has a particular interest in exploring the work of visual arts practitioners and cultural industries, with a special focus on these practices in the Asia Pacific Region.

increase their viewership by redirecting users to their museum's websites (Hylland 2017, p. 77). But once committed to participating, museums forgo their creative and curatorial autonomy (Wani et al. 2019, p.115), allowing Google to interpret their collections. Although museums surrender control, the collection remains unchanged since GAC is merely a reflection of the colonial and patriarchal legacies inherited from the bricks-and-mortar institutions. Wani, Ali and Ganaie's (2019, pp. 117-119) data from GAC's 2018 performance indicates a clear Euro-American bias where Ukiyo-e appears as the only art movement outside of Europe and North America in the top ten arts movements represented on the platform. This is unsurprising given that Ukiyo-e was influential in Paris in the mid 19th century, with many collectors acquiring prints (Meech-Pekarik 1982, p. 93).

GAC not only accentuates the bias of the institutions and their accompanying collections but also invokes a Euro-American interpretive lens through its Art Selfie function. The function is an emblem of the platform's mishandling of issues of race and gender, where algorithmic bias negatively impacts some users' engagement with the platform. The digitised collections that GAC's Art Selfie feature pairs users' selfies with artworks from the database. It is an example of how information-rich websites can harness their data to create personalised services to better support users engaging with unfamiliar museum collections (Ardissono, Kuflik, & Petrelli 2012, p. 78). However, GAC's Art Selfie was criticised for how the program prefers white users; perhaps unsurprising as a digital platform's standard user is based on who their creator is (Wright 2019, p.811). Given that Google headquarters is in Silicon Valley, alongside other technology companies, it is assumed that 'the rules of the web are set there' (Lewis 2020).

As a result, their influence is felt most strongly, with American culture presumed as the 'default state of humanity' (Lewis 2020). Furthermore, given that white male artists painted many of the artworks in the museums' collections, non-white users are often compared to stereotypical images of people of colour as slaves, servants or sexualised beings (Chen 2018). Noble (2018, p. 10) notes that 'there is a missing social and human context in some types of algorithmically driven decision making', which allows for such problematic comparisons to be drawn. Although presenting a new means of engaging with audiences, such pairings alienate users by furthering the racial Othering of people of colour and continuing problematic and oppressive representations of race. Computational technology's origins have unwittingly imposed exclusionary barriers to digital platforms (Wright 2019, p. 811), negatively impacting museum engagement. However, GAC is limited to the collections that they have access to, and by extension, what the museums deemed valuable when acquiring these works. Therefore, GAC's Art Selfie allows a select type of user to feel a deeper connection to museums and their collections whilst others are still discriminated against by what Noble calls "technological redlining" (Noble 2018, p. 1). Whilst the understanding and appreciation of culture is meant to create a sense of belonging and identity for all audience members (Combi 2016, p. 4), historic collecting and exhibiting practices continue to systematically exclude oppressed groups. In Maurice Berger's 1992 essay *Are Art Museums Racist?*, he explains how the art world's skewed recruiting practices lead to the continuation of white Euro-American cultural interpretations of taste (Berger 1992, p. 150). Until new museological

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practices that encourage white Euro-American users to actively unlearn and decolonise their biases (Turunen 2020, p. 1013) are adopted by museums more universally, their collections will continue to elevate narratives of colonial pride and patriarchal superiority. Moreover, museums must engage in consistent and diverse hiring of marginalised professionals to oversee such collection development.

GAC is not a unique example as the digital realm is rife with instances of marginalisation of people on the basis of race or gender; from Amazon’s AI hiring tool that preferred male applicants (*BBC News* 2018) to Twitter’s image-detection algorithm that cropped out Black faces (Epps-Darling 2020). Whilst GAC can shift the blame of this racist algorithm to its 18th and 19th century museum predecessors, newer, more intangible cultural institutions must take responsibility for themselves. This includes TikTok, who in 2021 censored users who were pro-Black Lives Matter and prevented them from monetising their content through its Creator Marketplace (Murray 2021). As such, increased critical awareness of the implications of these technological biases on the various digital means of cultural dissemination is crucial in a world where inclusion and marginalisation are increasingly dictated by apps and algorithms. While GAC continues to reflect the past, it is time that we turn to our modern technologies to shape a new and just future.

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POLITIK EDITORIAL TEAM

EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Nimaya Mallikahewa

Nimaya is in her Honours year in Politics & International Relations. She has a particular interest in Indo-Pacific geopolitics. Her thesis focuses on the correlation between national identity, domestic politics and foreign policy in Sri Lanka as it navigates its relationship with the United States in the Indo-Pacific. She graduated in 2020 with a double degree in International Studies and Media (Public Relations & Advertising).

Andrew Loomes

Andrew is in his final year of a combined Law and International Studies degree. Andrew is passionate about pursuing international humanitarian issues, with specific research interests in forced migration law and practice, ethical and responsible global business, and the climate crisis.

SENIOR EDITORS

Abida Aura

Abida is a graduate of Law and Arts degrees. She is a politics, history, literature, and philosophy enthusiast. In particular, Abida is passionate about 21st-century migration, global poverty, the ongoing Uyghur and Rohingya genocides, and the intersection of humans and technology.

Rose Huang

Rose is in her fourth year of a Laws and Criminology combined degree. She is especially interested in social and economic equality and international movements.

EDITORS

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Freya is a fourth year International Studies and Media (Communications and Journalism) student, with professional experience in marketing. She is passionate about ethical fashion, improving financial literacy, and encouraging corporate accountability in the sustainability space.

Michela Castiglia

Michela is a fifth-year Arts and Law student, majoring in international relations and politics. She has a passion for history, diplomacy, and understanding the impact of genocide and violence on communities. She is especially curious about how the current period of global instability has impacted law, diplomacy and security regionally.

Kate Mesaglio

Kate is a fourth-year Social Work and Arts student, majoring in Politics and International Relations, and minoring in Global Development. She is interested in how democracy is actualised in self-declared democracies and the ongoing impact of sexual and gender-based violence on women in varying contexts across the globe. She is particularly passionate about topics including gender equality, Indigenous rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and climate justice.

Sam Pryde

Sam is in his sixth year of a combined Law and International Studies degree. He has enjoyed studying the politics of access to water, micro-level agricultural development projects, and emerging technological resources for access to justice. He has contributed to research on Modern Slavery and is curious to learn more about development in the Pacific and forced migration due to climate change.

Ashraf Olife

Ashraf is a fourth-year student studying Law and International Studies, minoring in Asian Studies. He is keenly interested in security and development in East Asia, as well as Australia's place in the Indo-Pacific. Ashraf aspires to be a diplomat or researcher in the long, distant future, but in the meantime you can find him watching anime, discovering music or drawing in his spare time.

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Niduni is a first-year Politics, Philosophy and Economics student. She is interested in exploring the effects of informal imperialism and discussing the relationship between race, identity and politics.

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Sanjay is a fifth-year Law and International Studies student. His research interests include economic and political security in the Indo-Pacific, the dynamics that shape countries' elections, climate politics, and technology's impact on informed public discourse. He has gained valuable experience with the Young Diplomats Society, the Australian Institute of International Affairs NSW, the United Nations Association of Australia NSW and the Toongabbie Legal Centre.

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Simran is in her fourth year of an International Studies and Media combined degree. She has developed a strong passion for analysing the complex and dynamic nature of the world. In particular, she is interested in politics and international development.

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Ruby is a sixth-year Law and International Studies (International Relations) student. She is interested in the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific, the geoeconomic influence of China, and water security.

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Tennyson is a Master of Laws candidate in international law. He also studied commerce and international relations as an undergraduate at the University of Sydney. Tennyson's interests are focused on trade relations, security, sustainable development, and geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific.

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