

some thoughts on *Harvest Scene*  
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*Harvest Scene* coincides with a radio documentary that I started working on at the end of 2016. I spent several weekends in Central NSW to conduct interviews and ended up filming the harvest as well. *Harvest Scene* is part of my on-going experiment in bringing journalism and art together.

*Harvest Scene* depicts the family farm of two brothers/farmers and their father in a state of inevitable decay. The farmers tell me about the government owning the land they plow, the unsustainable farming practices that are the norm in Australia's wheat belt and the longevity of industrial farms compared to the smaller, less profitable family farms. This decay is larger than this particular family or this particular scene: in Australia, land plays a central component in issues such as energy, innovation, Aboriginal affairs and the economy.

The struggles of rural communities suggest the fragility of Australian identity - in which land and those who work the land play a vital symbolic role. In the case of this once relatively thriving family farm; its members started to grow older and sell their portions of the farm, which started to deteriorate. I also see that there are things, or a way of life, that pull the younger generation away from farming regardless of their love for the land and in some cases tradition.

My first visit to Parkes in Central NSW preceded the harvest season in November 2016. My subsequent visits were timed with the harvest. I planned my movements in Central NSW around a group of artists that I was interviewing. The two brothers/farmers are part of this artist group. My priority was the radio documentary and therefore I spent a bulk of my time conducting interviews. During this time I decided to document the harvest as well. This meant filming the tractors, trucks, wheat fields and inside the trucks - sometimes while doing interviews.

The Filipino side of my family is a fishing and seafaring family. My grandfather was a lighthouse watcher on a small island, Tanguingui Island, in central Philippines. My father was raised on Bantayan Island and decided to work overseas as seafarer instead of staying home and be a fisherman. My mother is Dutch and was working overseas when she met my father. They travelled the world together while working on international vessels. Bantayan Island is home to me so my motivation to understand places and people comes from my life there. I started writing and photography on Bantayan Island and my current work is still connected to it as it remains the glue in my projects. Since 2010 my sister and I have collaborated on art projects as a response to our personal relationship with Bantayan Island but also in response to the rapid changes that it is going through. We wanted to document this place and community of fishermen, seafarers, labourers and children and family of the Filipino diaspora; thereby using art to create a platform and community that responds to social, economic and environmental issues.

My interviews in Parkes made visible that land is a central component of this particular group of artists, who are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and Indigenous and non-Indigenous Filipinos. Farming is a literal manifestation of one's relationship with the land. Another example is how the Wuradjuri Language is linked to land and how land is the context that shapes music, art and thought.

I will show a 3-screen edit of the harvest footage as a thank you to the people who shared their time with me. Hopefully this is a way to continue a dialogue that was started with the filming/interview process - I wanted to do more than just come in for a day, conduct a bunch of interviews and leave. I am bringing my experiences to my work in Australia and also seeking ways to work in regional Australia since it is quite different from Sydney where I currently live. The Philippines and Australia are quite different but both places have a strong, intrinsic, connection to nature not uncommon among different communities in the region. When the ocean or land is manipulated, people change to adapt to that process of manipulation.