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DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Visual Modality in Historic Narrative Illustration

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates critical methods for approaching aesthetic design decisions in illustration. As a method of communication illustration qualifies its subjects through aesthetic choices, or modalities. The qualifying nature of these modalities can affect communication in an image and this research seeks an explicit understanding of how this communication occurs.

This practice-based research project employs two aesthetic extremes, line and tone, in the creation of four historic visual narratives designed to fill visual gaps in the history of 1 Commando Fiji Guerillas. Line and tone are tendered as a means of visually negotiating the informing records of the Fiji Commando experience, records characterised by both conflict and absence. Can these disparate, conflicting, yet necessary records of experience be visually acknowledged in an illustrated expansion of the Fiji Commando's visual history?

This position serves as the point of departure for research. An understanding of the communicative properties of line and tone is followed by investigation into their relationship to the propositions they represent, with initial research suggesting that modalities reflect the social contexts from which they encode. This relationship implied a means to negotiate the historic records necessary in a contemporary visual articulation of the Fiji Commando experience through the strategic use of aesthetic modalities to acknowledge the nature of informing source material.

This practice-based approach to research allowed the consolidation of both the possible and the probable in the creation of a new visual, historic text, while revealing analytical approaches to aesthetic choice.

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