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Walk Through History: Interactive self-guided discovery walking tour of Melbourne based on selected works from the Miegunyah collection

I found Melbourne to be a strange city when I first visited in 2010. As a year nine students, I did not know much about Melbourne, or Australia in general. I was told that Australia is a "young country", which confused me when I saw all the Victorian style buildings and cobbled bluestone laneways. Little did I know that the Aboriginal people- the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation- have been living on this land for thousands of years. I vividly remembered walking around Melbourne and constantly being surprised or amazed by how the city compares home- even trees looked different and many were of a strange shade of green!
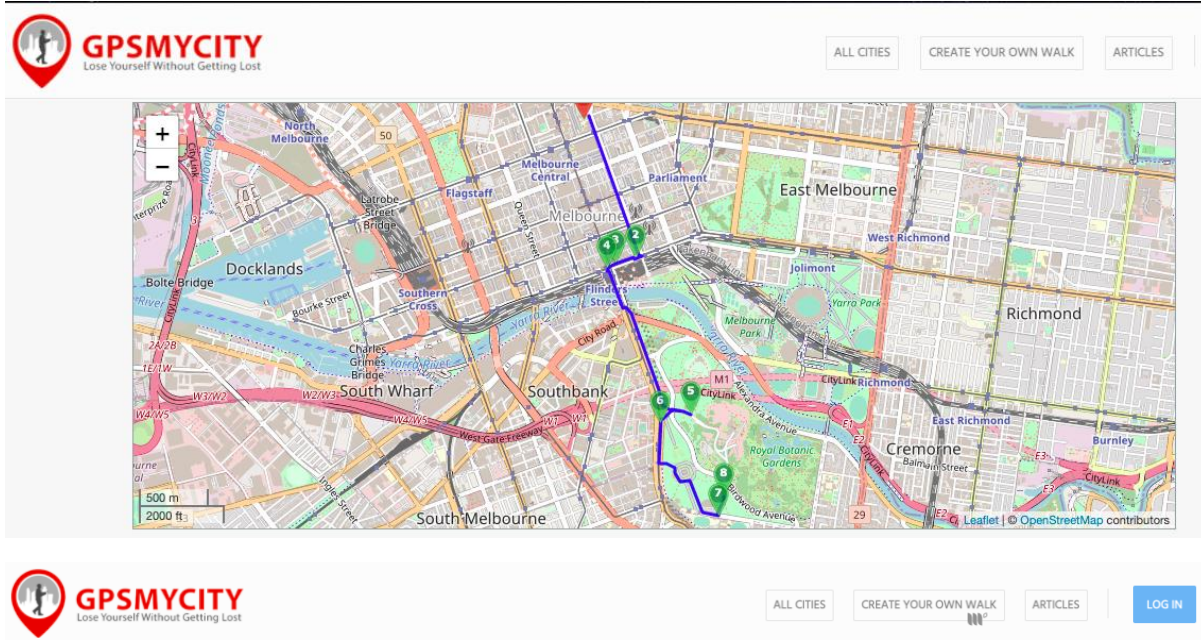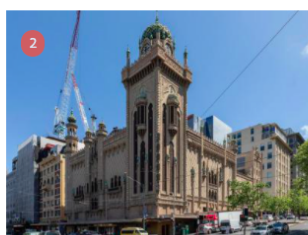
Years passed and I have now been living in Melbourne for almost a decade. The cityscape became familiar and predicable- until the Covid-19 pandemic hit. The city went into lockdown for several times in the past 18 months, and as part of the lockdown restrictions individuals were not allowed to travel beyond 5km of their homes. I started to stroll around the CBD and surrounding suburbs during lockdown, exploring new laneways and unfamiliar buildings, and the aimless wanders brought me sparks of excitement, which was rare during the pandemic.

My project, based on the Russell and Mab Grimwade's 'Miegunyah' Collection, was inspired by my own experiences exploring Melbourne. I was deeply intrigued by the prints and photographs of Melbourne in the Miegunyah collection, especially the albums by Sir Russell Grimwade, and by Charles Nettleton, at the beginning of my research. I wanted to create a project of comparative narrative on how the city of Melbourne has changed throughout the decades. Combining with my own field of interest- art curatorship, art education museum education, I decided to curate a self-guided walking tour around Melbourne based on works from the collection that can be used by newly-arrived students.

I started my research by identifying relevant works from the Miegunyah collection- most of the works chosen are prints and photographs of Melbourne. Once I short-listed the works from the Miegunyah collection, I research on both the work itself and on the locations or points of interest. I also walked to each of these sites in person to study how time has

changed the buildings or landscape, and took photos of the current sites to create a comparative narrative.

Additionally, I researched on different mapping services to explore the possible formats for my project. I also looked at museum education resources of similar theme, such as the National Gallery of Victoria's *Colony to Nation* resource that is about the history of Melbourne, for inspiration on what information to include and how to present them for the text entries.[i] I particularly liked Gpsmycity, a web-service that allows users to design, share and download tours of various themes in cities around the world. I found tours on Gpsmycity easy-to-follow and user-friendly, and decided that my walking tour would be presented in a similar format: a map marked with the planned route followed by an entry of both images and text for each site and stop.

Screenshots from: Vickyc, "Historical Buildings Walking Tour (Self Guided), Melbourne", Gpsmycity. https://www.gpsmycity.com/tours/historical-buildings-walking-tour-3104.html

An image of the Miegunyah collection work, a contemporary photo of the same site, and an introduction text entry are included for each point of interest. I wanted the text entries to be informative yet fun. Besides information about the works from the Miegunyah collection and the history of the sites, interactive prompts, such as a small activity or some reflection questions, are also included in the text entries to better engage participants. These prompts aim to encourage participants to respond creatively to works from the Miegunyah collection, and were carefully designed following similar principles of museum education resources.[ii]

Considering the target audience for this project, I also made sure that the paragraphs were written in plain, easy-to-understand English. Links to further information about the work from Miegunyah collection and the sites are included at the end of each entries as well.

After careful consideration, I decided to use the "My Map" function on Google map for my project. I chose Google map instead of Gpsmycity, as I can attach more than one picture for each site. As a popular free app, Google map would also be more accessible to the participants as they likely have the app on their devices already.

Once I familiarised myself with Google map, I marked all the sites of interest on the map and colour-coded them with relevant symbols. I then plan the most reasonable route. I am currently planning to separate the walking tour into two parts, with the first part centring around the University campus and Carlton area and the second part centring around the CBD and Southbank. Participants would be able to either finish the whole tour in 1 day, or do it on two separate occasion.

Below are screenshots of the prototype walking tour map on Google map, and an example entry on Princes Bridge, in blue:
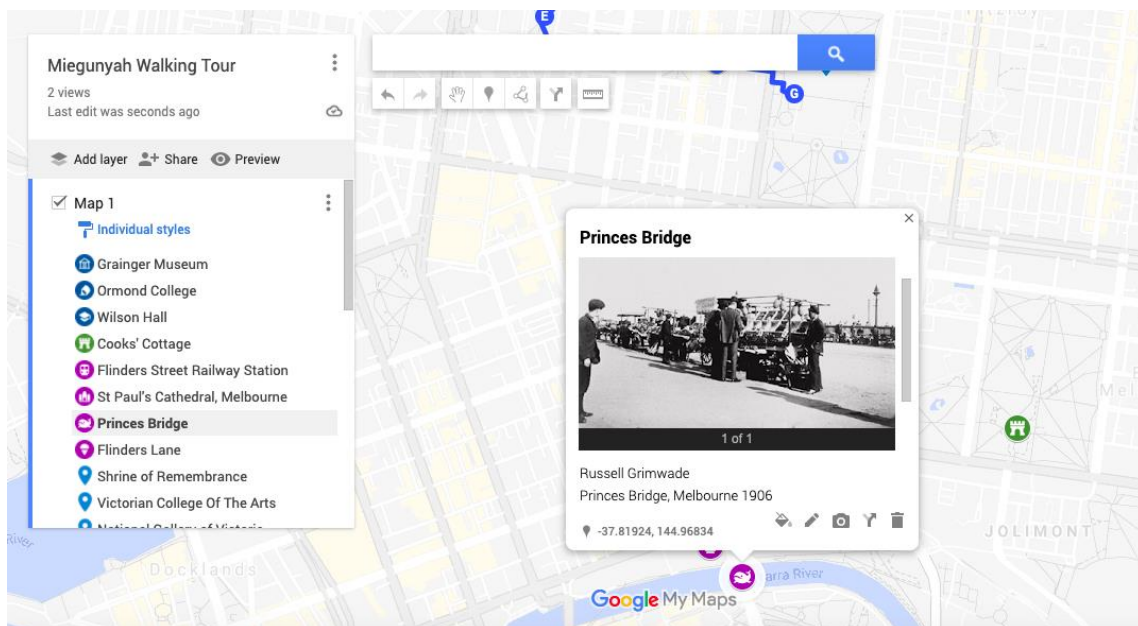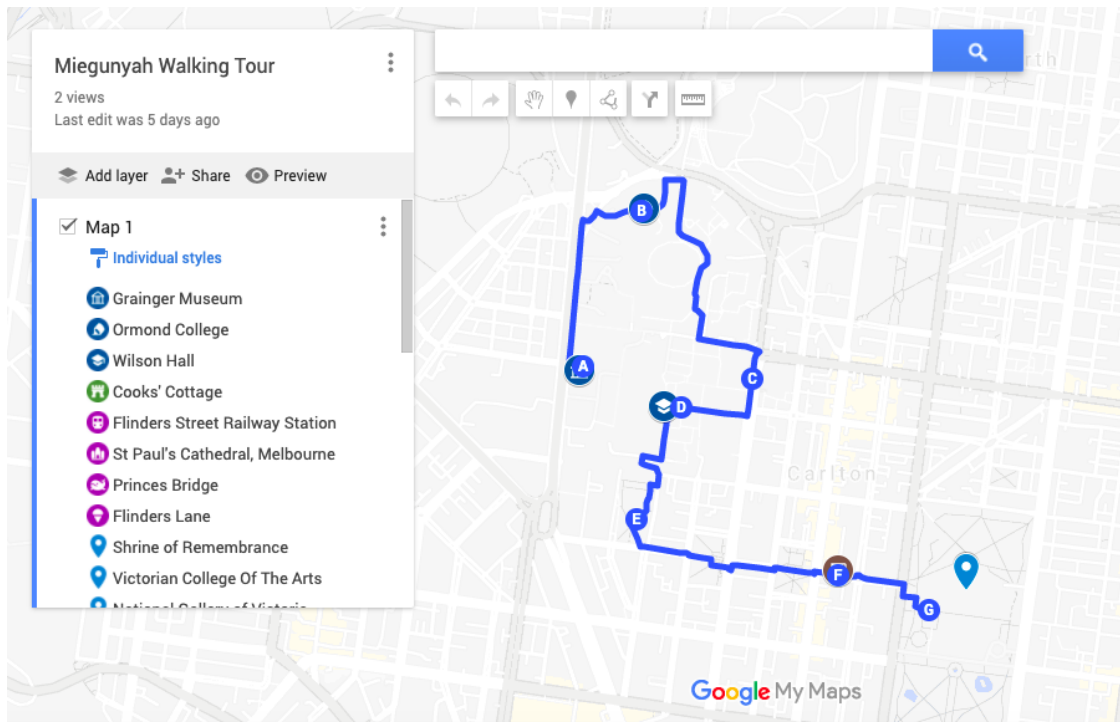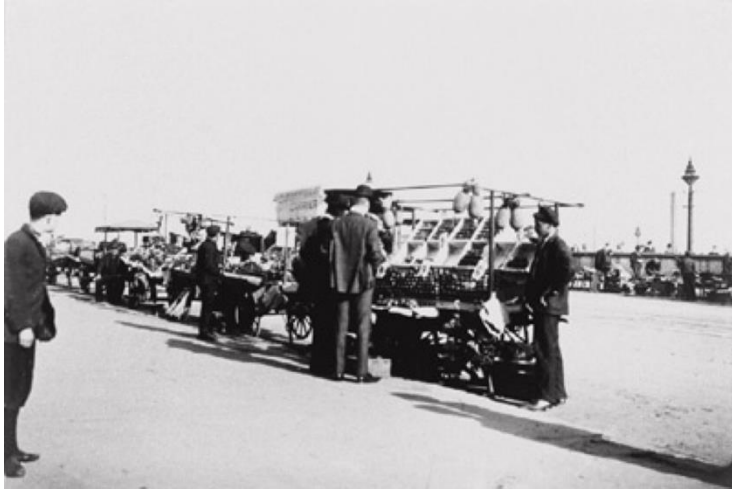
Russell Grimwade
Princes Bridge, Melbourne 1906
Photographs
6.7 x 10 cm
The University of Melbourne Archives

Princes Bridge:

The present Princes Bridge was built in 1888. It was mainly designed by architect John Grainger, father of famous composer Percy Grainger. Sir Russell Grimwade took photos of market stalls selling fruit on Princes Bridge in 1906. While there are no longer market stalls on the bridge now, you can visit the Arts Centre Sunday market right nearby the bridge on St. Kilda road.

Photo of Princes Bridge taken by the author.

Activity

You may notice this special symbol on Princes Bridge. This was the coat of arm for the city of Melbourne. This coat of art was designed with many symbols that represented interesting things about the city of Melbourne in 1888. For example, the fleece represented the wool industry, one of the main trades for Melbourne at the time. What other symbols can you recognise, and what do they mean?

You can read more about Princes Bridge and this coat of arm here: https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMK5MC_City_of_Melbourne_Coat_of_Arms_Princes_Bridge_Victoria_Australia

Ideally, the completed project will be an easy-to-navigate, fun and interactive self-guided walking tour around Melbourne. Participants would be able to either print out the map and information entries for each location, or download a soft copy of the map data, which can be used on their own device with the free Google Map app. Participants can either follow the route planned, or start and finished at any points of interest.

I am still in the process of sorting out the technical details, but as the map data is going to be openly available online, participants shall be able to add photos that they took on to the data. Collaboratively, participants would be able to contribute and record present date Melbourne, similar to what Sir Russell Grimwade did around 100 years ago. The city of Melbourne had changed rapidly even in the 10 years that I have spent here, and It is exciting to think of how future students may find the photos and records of our time interesting and meaningful.

Bibliography

Hubard, Olga M., '"How Does This Artwork Make You Feel?" A "No-No" Question in Art Museum Education?' *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 49, 2015, pp. 82-98.

NGV, "Colony to Nation school resource", https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/school_resource/colony-to-nation/

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[ii] Hubard, Olga M., '"How Does This Artwork Make You Feel?" A "No-No" Question in Art Museum Education?' *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 49, 2015, pp. 82-98.