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Critical Visual Methodologies in the Digital Humanities: A Digital Archive of a Pioneer Tattoo Artist in KwaZulu-Natal

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APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION

Supervisor: Prof. R. J. Gaede (DTech, DPhil) Date:

Signature:



Dedicated to Harry Ramesar (1915-2011)

DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. Where it is appropriate, other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references – a bibliography is included subsequently. This dissertation is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD in Visual and Performing Arts. This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Declaration relating to research software and tools:
In addition to word processing software, I herewith declare the use of:

Digital archive software: Adobe Lightroom, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, WordPress
Interview software and tools: Microsoft Transcribe, Nvivo Transcribe, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Samsung Voice Recorder
Qualitative analysis software: Nvivo
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Writing assistance software: Grammarly for Microsoft Office
3D environment software: Blender, Adobe Photoshop, Substance 3D Painter, Unity Engine

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on two areas, the first being the scholarly advancement of visual digital humanities, and the second being the creation of a digital archive that documents the work of a pioneer tattoo artist in KwaZulu-Natal, Harry Ramesar (1915-2011). The literature review chapters of the study emphasize the intersection of the digital humanities and visual methodologies from four main perspectives, namely information design, semiotics, archival science, and digital heritage. The field work component was grounded in a methodological framework by Rose (2006), and involved 17 in-depth, open-ended interviews with participants who have personal knowledge of Harry Ramesar and his practice as a tattoo artist. The study details the processes of digitization, metadata creation, and community engagement involved in curating Harry Ramesar's tattoo artifacts into a digital archive, and highlights the role of digital curation in preserving these cultural materials for future generations. Through a combination of visual analysis, critical methodologies, and qualitative interviews, the research offers insights into the personal narratives and societal influences surrounding Harry Ramesar's work as a tattoo artist. The digital archive not only serves as a repository of tattoo artifacts but also as an interactive educational tool and a platform for ongoing scholarly and community engagement. The dissertation underscores the transformative potential of digital archives in safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting a deeper understanding of pioneering tattoo art in South Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the field of study

The research's central focus in this study is on the digital humanities and critical visual methodologies, specifically through the lens of preserving visual culture via digital means in the form of a digital archive of pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. The study is positioned within the broader discourse on visual culture (Rose 2023), emphasizing the role of digital archives as dynamic spaces for cultural analysis and critique. The field of study is further defined by its exploration of the intersections between digital humanities (Drucker, Kim, Salehian & Bushong n.d. 9; Rushmeier, Pintus, Yang, Wong & Li 2015; Ciula, Eide, Marras & Sahle 2023; Münster & Terras 2020; Svensson 2016; Poole 2017; Gülaçti & Kahraman 2021) and visual methodologies (Rose 2023; Pauwels 2008), underscoring the significance of these approaches in preserving and analyzing the visual tattoo related artefacts, with the focus on creating a digital archive for Harry Ramesar, a pioneering tattoo artist in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, which exemplifies the practical application of these methodologies in a specific cultural context. This study is centred around the creation and critical analysis of a digital archive dedicated to the works of tattoo artist Harry Ramesar, and the research intersects digital humanities and critical visual methodologies, exploring how digital archives can preserve visual culture and serve as dynamic platforms for cultural analysis and critique. By establishing a digital archive for Harry Ramesar's work, the study not only seeks to preserve his artistic contributions in the forms of visual artefacts but additionally to critically engage with them within the broader context of visual culture. The study is structured to delve into various aspects and begins with a literature review that sets the stage for exploring the intersections between digital humanities and visual methodologies, emphasizing the importance of preserving visual culture through digital means. This foundation supports the methodological approach, which involves the conceptualization, development, and implementation of the digital archive.

The archive is envisioned as a dynamic space that allows for the exploration, analysis, and appreciation of Harry Ramesar's work, thus transcending the limitations of traditional physical archives. The study further explores the analytical frameworks and methodological approaches used to examine Harry Ramesar's tattoo related artefacts by employing critical visual methodologies by Rose (2023), where the research uncovers layers of meaning, cultural significance, and artistic techniques embedded within these visual artifacts. The analysis is enriched by qualitative research methods, particularly in-depth interviews with individuals connected to Harry Ramesar's work. These interviews provide personal insights and contextualize the visual analysis, offering a multidimensional understanding of Ramesar's contributions. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on digital preservation, visual culture, and digital humanities. It underscores the transformative potential of digital archives not only as repositories of cultural artefacts but as platforms for critical engagement and knowledge production. By integrating critical methodologies into the creation of the digital archive, the research ensures that it serves as a tool for both preserving Harry Ramesar's legacy and facilitating ongoing scholarly inquiry and public access.

1.1.1 Visual images in the digital humanities

Digital humanities operates at the intersection of digital technology and the humanities. The term 'humanities' was first used during the Renaissance by Italian scholars who were engaged in the study and recovery of classical antiquity's works. This term marks a shift from a medieval, theocentric worldview to one where 'man [sic] is the measure of all things' (Drucker, Kim, Salehian and Bushong 2014:9). The humanities encompass disciplines such as the arts, literature, music, dance, theatre, architecture, philosophy, and other forms of human cultural expression. Digital humanities has emerged as a dynamic field that integrates computational methods with traditional humanistic inquiry, reshaping how cultural knowledge is produced, preserved, and accessed (Svensson 2016; Drucker et al. 2014; Terras and Münster 2020). In addition other than just the application of technology, digital humanities entails a rethinking of scholarly practices and epistemologies, emphasising the role of digital media in shaping interpretation and representation. Within this context, visual materials have gained increasing attention, as digital platforms open new possibilities for

analysing, curating, and engaging with images in ways that transcend the limitations of physical archives (Terras and Münster 2020; Drucker et al. 2014). Since all acts of digitisation involve remediation, it's crucial to understand the nature of 'binary code, digital file formats, the migration of analogue materials', and the characteristics of born-digital content to grasp the essence of digital environments. In addition, networked conditions of exchange significantly influence the development of digital humanities and other digital projects and the standards and practices established by communities are also essential, as they form the technical infrastructure that embodies cultural values (Drucker, Kim, Salehian and Bushong 2014).

1.1.1.1 The role visual images play in the digital humanities

Visual images have become a crucial element in the Digital Humanities, especially as vast amounts of physical works are being digitized. This digitization allows scholars to analyse not just the textual content but also the visual layout and imagery within these documents, which offers new dimensions for research. In the journal article by Rushmeir et al (2015), titled '*Examples of Challenges and Opportunities in Visual Analysis in the Digital Humanities'* they discuss the role of images and visual analysis in the context of the Digital Humanities. In one of the projects discussed in the journal article, images of medieval manuscripts are analysed not only for their content but also for material variations that might indicate the location of production. This visual analysis helps uncover historical context that would otherwise remain hidden in purely textual studies (Rushmeier, Pintus, Yang, Wong & Li 2015:2). This example highlights that images are not merely supplementary but are central to new forms of scholarly inquiry in the digital humanities as visual data enables scholars to pose new questions and derive insights that extend beyond the text. Ciula et al (2023) emphasize the importance of images and visual models in the Digital Humanities, particularly in how they contribute to the representation and understanding of complex concepts and argue that images are not only supplementary but are integral to the process of modelling in the digital humanities. This is evident in their discussion of how visual thinking and modelling are used to represent cultural phenomena, such as texts, events, and objects of study (Ciula, Eide, Marras & Sahle 2023:3).

The authors state, ‘Modelling and visual thinking can be used as explicit tools to capture the complexity of typical targets of modelling for the humanities, for example: what a text really is’ (Ciula, Eide, Marras & Sahle 2023:6). This highlights the central role that images and visual models play in translating abstract ideas into concrete, shareable forms. Visual models serve as ‘heuristic tools’ that help in reasoning and understanding by making aspects of the system under study more ‘observable’ (Ciula, Eide, Marras & Sahle 2023:20-21).

1.1.1.2 Unresolved issues regarding the role of visual images in the digital humanities

Despite the advancements and opportunities presented by visual analysis in the digital humanities, Rushmeir et. al. (2015) note that annotations and data documentation of images pose challenges, both manually and through machine-generated methods. This raises questions about the most effective ways to control access to these annotations, how to document machine-generated annotations, and how to ensure that these annotations can be efficiently searched. These unresolved issues point to the need for standardization and better tools for managing visual data (Rushmeier, Pintus, Yang, Wong and Li. 2015:5-6). The article raises concerns about whether and how to include the results of automated visual analyses in digital repositories as automated tools can generate vast amounts of data, but this data is only useful if the methods used are well-documented and if the results are accurate. The challenge lies in integrating these tools into digital humanities practices in a way that enhances rather than overwhelms the research process (Rushmeier, Pintus, Yang, Wong and Li. 2015:11).

Another unresolved issue discussed by Ciula et. al. (2023), is the challenge of formalizing visual models in a way that preserves their interpretative flexibility while allowing for computational processing. The authors discuss the ‘pragmatic relationship’ between a visual and its target, emphasizing that while visuals are essential for operationalizing complex systems, there is always a risk of oversimplification or loss of important contextual details (Ciula, Eide, Marras and Sahle 2023:11).

1.1.1.3 The need for the emerging field of the visual digital humanities

An increase in the amount of research done is needed in the emerging field of visual digital humanities due to the fact that visual digital humanities, while increasingly important, remains underexplored compared to text-based digital humanities. Münster and Terras (2020) note that 'a scope of digital methods related to images and other visual objects based on vision rather than close reading remains, despite various attempts, essentially uncharted' (Münster and Terras. 2020:366). This indicates a significant gap in the field where the complexity and diversity of visual artefacts have not been fully addressed by existing research methods. In addition, the field's interdisciplinary nature, which draws from art history, archaeology, cultural heritage, and other visually oriented disciplines, presents unique challenges that require more focused study thus emphasizing the need for research that bridges these disciplines, particularly in developing methods and standards that can handle the 'diverse nature of the methods used' in these fields (Münster and Terras. 2020:366). The necessity of understanding and developing visual literacy, which it defines as the 'abilities to understand (read), and use (write) images [and spatial objects], as well as to think and learn in terms of images [and spatial objects]' results in this aspect of visual digital humanities still being relatively underdeveloped, with few publications linking visual literacy to digital humanities, underscoring the need for further investigation (Münster and Terras. 2020:367). Therefore, more research is needed in visual digital humanities to address the unexplored methodologies, interdisciplinary challenges, and the development of visual literacy within the field. This research is essential for advancing the understanding and application of visual data in the digital humanities, thus ensuring that this emerging field reaches its full potential.

1.1.1.4 Problem Statement: Preserving Visual Culture through Digital Humanities

While the digital humanities have advanced significantly in integrating computational methods with traditional humanistic inquiry, the subfield of visual digital humanities remains underdeveloped, particularly in relation to the preservation and critical analysis of visual artefacts. Existing research and archival practices often privilege text-based materials, leaving visual culture, especially in culturally specific contexts such as South Africa's tattoo heritage,

marginalised in both scholarly discourse and digital preservation initiatives. This gap is evident in the absence of standardised methodologies for digitising, annotating, and critically engaging with visual artefacts in ways that preserve their cultural significance and interpretive richness. The lack of comprehensive, methodologically rigorous digital archives dedicated to visually rich, yet academically overlooked, forms of cultural expression, such as the work of pioneering tattoo artist Harry Ramesar, underscores the need for research that bridges digital humanities, visual methodologies, and cultural heritage preservation. Without such initiatives, significant visual contributions risk being lost to time, depriving both scholarly communities and the public of vital cultural narratives.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The primary aim of the study is to create and utilize a digital archive of Harry Ramesar's tattoo works to preserve and critically examine his contributions within the broader context of visual culture and the digital humanities. This includes not only safeguarding the artist's legacy but also providing a platform for ongoing scholarly engagement and public access. The study aims to explore and demonstrate the transformative potential of digital archives in preserving cultural heritage, while also engaging with critical visual methodologies to offer a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and political dimensions of Harry Ramesar's work as a tattoo artist. The study's objectives revolve around the preservation and critical examination of visual culture through the development of a digital archive, applying critical visual methodologies from Rose (2023), and the enrichment of this archive with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. These objectives aim to create a comprehensive understanding of Harry Ramesar's contributions to tattoo culture in South Africa while contributing to broader discussions in digital humanities.

1.3 Research questions that directed the investigation of the study

The research questions form the foundation of this study, guiding the direction and scope of the study (Terras and Münster. 2020:367). They provide a structured framework that helps focus the investigation on key areas of interest and relevance. The aim of this study is to

advance the field of the visual digital humanities, a novel 'umbrella' term to cover research approaches in the digital humanities (Terras and Münster 2020:366), whilst utilizing the visual tattoo related artefacts of Harry Ramesar. The five primary research questions are accompanied by several sub-questions, each designed to delve deeper into various components of the topic, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis. This study's research questions are:

1. What are the main features of the intersection of the digital humanities and visual methodologies?
2. What main theoretical perspectives inform the intersection of the digital humanities and visual methodologies, especially with regard to the digitization of heritage?
3. To what extent do the methodological theories of Rose apply to the artefacts of Harry Ramesar?
4. What are the main ways in which digital archives preserve historical artefacts?
5. What is the broader relevance of the digital archive produced in the course of this study?

These primary research questions are accompanied by several sub-questions as seen in chapter 6.3 of this study , each designed to delve deeper into various components of the topic, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis. These questions serve as a roadmap, shaping both the methodology and the overall approach of the research (Terras & Münster 2020).

1.4 Study design and methods

This study employs a multifaceted approach combining critical visual methodologies with qualitative research methods (Brinkmann 2008). Central to the study is the creation of a digital archive, which involves several key steps: selection of materials, the digitization processes, metadata creation, and the development of a user-friendly interface. These steps are guided by principles of critical visual methodologies, ensuring that the archive offers more than simple preservation, but also a critical framework for understanding the visual tattoo related artefacts. Additionally, the study incorporates qualitative research methods,

particularly in-depth interviews, to gather first-hand insights into Harry Ramesar's tattoo career and the contributions he made to the tattoo industry. These interviews serve to enrich the digital archive, providing context and depth that complement the visual analysis of the tattoo materials. Tattoos from Interview participants who were found on the digital archive whilst the interview was conducted, were analysed using the visual methodology principles of Rose (2023).

1.5 Overview of the remaining chapters

The remaining chapters of the study are structured to build upon the foundational concepts introduced in the study. Chapter Two establishes the literature review, setting the foundation for a detailed exploration of the intersections between digital humanities and the critical visual methodologies. Chapter Three explores the conceptualization, development, and implementation of the digital archive, providing a detailed account of the processes and methodologies employed within the study. Chapter Four focuses on the analytical frameworks and methodological approaches used to examine the tattoo works of Harry Ramesar, highlighting the importance of visual methodologies in unpacking the complexities of visual tattoo artefacts. Chapter Five provides an overview of the qualitative research methods utilized, particularly the role of interviews in capturing the personal dimensions of Harry Ramesar’s contributions and finally, Chapter Six presents the rich empirical data gathered through in-depth interviews, offering a nuanced understanding of Harry Ramesar’s work through personal narratives and first-hand accounts, which are synthesized with critical analysis to enhance the understanding of his contributions to visual culture.

CHAPTER TWO

VISUAL INFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter lays the groundwork for the study by reviewing key literature that informs the research methodology and sets the stage for further exploration. The literature discussed in this chapter highlights the intersection of the digital humanities and the critical visual methodologies, therefore underscoring the importance of preserving visual culture through digital means. It also emphasizes the potential of digital archives as dynamic spaces for cultural analysis and critique, with an overview of how these concepts will be applied to the digital archive of Harry Ramesar, a pioneering tattoo artist in KwaZulu-Natal, thus setting the stage for the detailed methodological and practical discussions in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Main perspectives of the roles visual images play in the digital humanities

Visual images in the digital humanities are enriched by multiple perspectives that contribute to a deeper understanding of how visual media functions within this interdisciplinary field. This study has identified and explores four key perspectives as seen in figures 2.1 below, namely: *Information Design, Semiotics, Archival Science, Digital Humanities and Digital Heritage Design.*

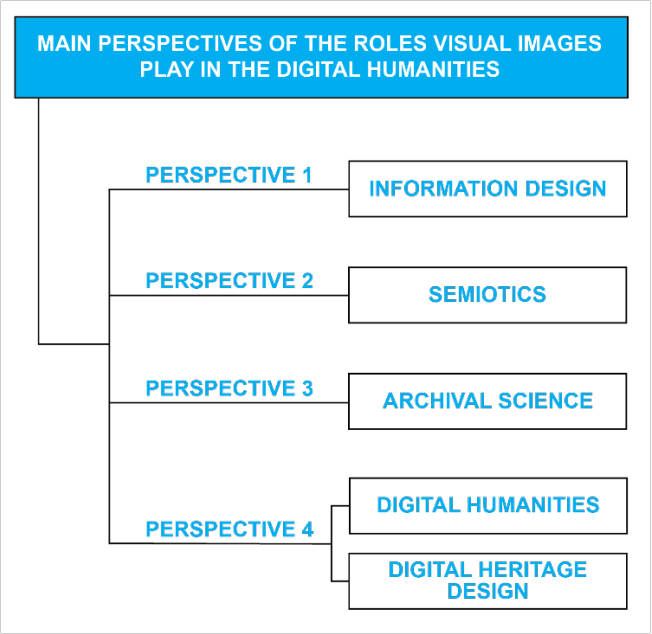


Figure 2.1 Main perspectives of the role visual images play in the digital humanities

From a scholarly perspective, several intersecting disciplines contribute critical insights into the study and application of visual communication and archival practices in digital contexts. Each field brings distinct concerns and frameworks that collectively inform a comprehensive understanding of how visual information is designed, interpreted, preserved, and recontextualised.

Information Design

Centres on the human-oriented practice of effectively conveying information to users. It engages with both the content and form of visual elements to enhance clarity and usability, with a fundamental aim to make complex data more accessible and understandable, particularly through thoughtful design that responds to the cognitive and cultural needs of its audience. Within this framework, the role of the viewer is foregrounded, as audience perception shapes the design of visual artefacts. Key considerations include the control of information density and the artefact's capacity to communicate meaning effectively within its cultural and historical context.

Semiotics

Offers a critical interpretive framework for understanding visual images as systems of signs that convey meaning, through a lens which allows for the deconstruction of visual elements as symbols operating within specific cultural frameworks. Through semiotic analysis, visual communication is situated not only as an aesthetic act but also as a communicative one, bridging the space between design and cultural interpretation. Context plays a pivotal role in this process, as meaning is generated through the relationships between signs, users, and the surrounding cultural environment.

Archival Science

Intersects with visual communication through its concern with the management, organization, and long-term preservation of visual materials, particularly in digital formats. It ensures that visual content is systematically retrievable and remains accessible for future research and educational use. This field emphasises the need for sustainable digital preservation practices that maintain the integrity and usability of visual materials over time. Such practices are crucial in safeguarding the historical and evidentiary value of visual content as part of the broader cultural record.

Digital Humanities and Digital Heritage Design

Expanding on the intersection between visual culture and digital technology, this interdisciplinary area explores how visual images contribute to the construction and communication of historical narratives within digital spaces. It foregrounds the importance of archival practice in digital humanities research and critically engages with the creation and application of digital tools that represent and preserve cultural heritage. Digital Heritage Design, in particular, focuses on how visual media are used to digitally recreate and interpret historical and cultural sites, allowing for new forms of engagement and preservation. Central to this discourse is the use of technology not only to protect but also to reinterpret and disseminate historical narratives within contemporary digital environments.

Together, these perspectives highlight the multifaceted role of visual communication across disciplines, underscoring its relevance in both contemporary practice and scholarly inquiry. These four perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for analysing the roles

that visual images play in the digital humanities, each contributing unique insights that deepen our understanding of visual media in this rapidly evolving field.

2.3 Perspective 1: Information Design

In the area of communication and information design, scholars such as Williams (2024) have emphasised the demands of user-centred design and digital interaction, specifically the importance of aligning scholars and practitioners in information and visual communication design have emphasised the importance of aligning information with cognitive and perceptual principles to improve comprehension and engagement. Williams (2024:588), in his comprehensive historical survey, identifies information design as a core practice within user experience (UX) design, highlighting its evolution from document and graphic design into a cross-disciplinary strategy that enhances usability across print and digital environments. Williams (2024) argues that effective communication design should 'transform data into high-quality information,' thus emphasising clarity, user orientation, and plain language as essential to usability (Williams, 2024:588). His work demonstrates how principles from usability research, such as those developed by Nielsen and Norman (1998), have increasingly informed the way information is structured and visualised in educational and archival settings.

Complementing the writing by Williams (2024), Yang et al. (2024) examine the role of cognitive and visual thinking in shaping communication strategies for information visualisation. They present a model that integrates visual attention mechanisms and information hierarchy design to optimise reading efficiency and user experience. Their work exemplifies a recent trend in communication design that foregrounds how individuals perceive, process, and act upon visual information. As Yang et al (2024) note, 'information visualisation design guided by cognitive thinking and visual thinking can effectively optimise the user's reading experience' (Yang et al. 2024:715). This growing body of literature underscores the shift from traditional, one-way communication paradigms to more interactive, user-responsive frameworks. These insights frame communication not only as transmission but also as a user-engagement strategy, reflecting the convergence of human-centred design, visual literacy, and digital interaction.

Against this backdrop, the work of Visocky O'Grady (2008) remains an accessible and foundational reference. Their practical approach to communication design in 'A Designer's Research Manual' emphasises the iterative nature of the design process and the need to conduct audience research to inform communication strategies. They explore techniques for gathering user insights and translating them into design decisions that foster effective messaging. While their book predates many of the technological innovations and UX frameworks discussed by more recent authors, it continues to provide valuable methodologies for understanding and responding to communication problems in visual form.

Therefore, while the analysis that follows draws extensively on Visocky O'Grady (2008) for practical frameworks and illustrative examples, it is important to acknowledge their place within a much broader and evolving field of study. By situating their work in relation to contemporary research by Williams (2024) and Yang et al. (2024), this section affirms the enduring relevance of their methods while recognising the expanded scope of current communication design scholarship. Information design is ultimately a human-centred practice. 'Careful consideration of the user's needs determines the appropriate content' (Visocky O'Grady 2008). 'Substance and form of the information and the user are therefore the determining factors in information design' (Hoonhout, Zwaga and Boersema 1999). Both references can describe the relationship between the tattoo artist and the client in a tattoo setting. The client is the 'user' and the tattoo artist the conveyor of the information, which in turn could refer to the tattoo artist as the information designer. Artefacts that are most commonly associated with information design can perform various functions from visualization of pure data, which aid in the understanding of complex content and large quantities of information (charts and illustrations) to the delivery of immediate nonverbal messages (Toilets and poison), the simplification of complex concepts and or content and the imaginative help to visualize entirely new connections. Visocky O'Grady (2018), note that the design piece's function and or physical form is primarily determined by two factors: a) the information density and b) the audience. In the scope of this study, the 'information density would be the tattoo, and the 'audience' would be the tattoo recipient and or an individual who views the tattoo (Visocky O'Grady 2008).

In the publication titled : Visual information for everyday use : design and research perspectives, Dewar states that one of the oldest forms of visual communication among

people involves pictorial representation (Hoonhout et al. 1999). Pictorials commonly refer to symbols, pictographs, pictograms, icons and glyphs (Hoonhout et. al. n.d.). During the period that Harry Ramesar tattooed, most tattoos were simple flat monochromic pictorials with a limited colour pallet. They were not as elaborate or as colourful as today's designs. Visual analysis of interviewees' tattoos will be conducted and documented later in this study.

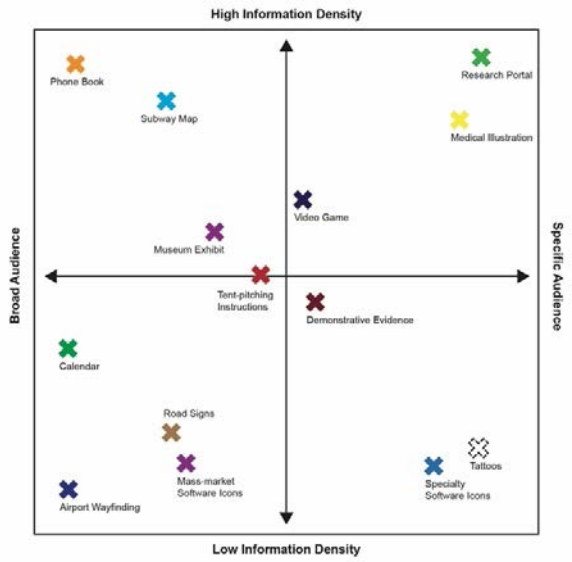


Figure 2.2 Form and function of information design artefacts. Taken from (Visocky O'Grady 2008:24). Re-drawn by R. van As.

Figure 2.2 above shows the two determining factors of information design and where various design artefacts fall within that scope. If one were to assign a space for tattoos regarding this study, the principles of audience and density would need to be applied based on the time frame that these tattoos were designed and produced. During this period, spanning from the

early to the late twentieth century, tattoos were regarded as deviant[1] by the vast majority of the South African population, therefore resulting in the trajectory toward the 'specific audience'. The tattoo designs were more basic and consisted of mainly flat two-dimensional visual representations hence containing a lower 'information density'. The tattoo artefact is represented by a dashed line cross figure 2.2 above. These two-dimensional images play an essential role as they both indicate elements of fantasy and magic. Twyford explains that:

> 'Graphically designed pictures communicate information about actions, images and symbols. This information may be read from a picture or within the picture. How we respond to these pictures is a complex issue; our reactions may be learned within our culture, as much as derived from our perception of the images' (Twyford 1981:75).

One can ask, why do certain marks mean something? Furthermore, how can one thing represent another? Twyford (1981) argues that the symbols may work by analogy or association and should be considered within the cultural context in which they are used and understood. For example, figure 2.3 depicts wavy lines which are often used to visually represent the concept of water, resulting in people associating wavy lines with water.

[1] Tattoos have commonly been 'associated with criminality, mental illness, deviant subculture groups' or strange and dangerous foreign or savage others (van As 2009:45). Citing my Masters study in this PhD study is appropriate and necessary for four reasons. Firstly, the masters study provides a foundational understanding of the subject matter, including key insights into the individual being studied and by referencing the study, I can build on the established knowledge base, ensuring continuity and coherence in the research trajectory. Secondly, the previous study includes relevant empirical data, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks that are directly applicable to the current research, which allows me to efficiently connect past findings with new inquiries, thus deepening the analysis and avoiding redundancy. This approach ensures that this study is informed by prior work, making the research more robust and comprehensive. Thirdly, referencing the earlier study is essential for contextualising the current research within the broader scholarly conversation which shows that this study is part of a larger, ongoing exploration of the topic, demonstrating both the relevance and evolution of the research focus. This continuity not only strengthens this study's credibility but also highlights the importance of the subject matter across multiple investigations.

And fourthly, since both studies deal with the same individual, citing the previous work aids in providing a complete and nuanced picture of the subject, which allows for a more thorough examination by a) considering previous observations and conclusions, and b) identifying potential gaps that the new study might address.



Figure 2.3 Sailing Ship Tattoo Flash. Source: Flash Card22, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

2.3.1 History, Innovation and Impact

Creating a detailed historical account of information design would take several years to compile notes Visocky O'Grady (2008). An overview of the critical innovations in communication can be discussed with commentary on their impact on society and design practice. This overview is broken down into ten key innovations, which will be discussed below.

2.3.2 Cave Painting and Petroglyphs

Visocky O'Grady (2008) note that:

> 'images were used to communicate 30,000 years before early writing first appeared in Mesopotamia (circa 3000 BCE). These prehistoric images in the form of rock paintings, cliff drawings, and petroglyphs (pictures, symbols, or other imagery carved into natural rock surfaces) can be found all over the globe and represent the first attempt at information utilizing visual representation of data.

Opinions differ regarding the symbolism of early cave painting, but two dominant theories that take centre stage are empiricist and trance theories'.

Visocky O'Grady (2008) state that:

'The empiricist approach considers mankind's early markings to be motivated by a need to record important events in the life of the individual and the community, as well as to educate the young and provide a cathartic means of self-expression. Trance theory, born from ethnographic studies of contemporary hunter-gatherer cultures, argues that cave paintings were created by shamans, members of the community who attained altered states of consciousness and created images to contact spirits, control the lives of animals, change the weather, and heal the sick' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:28).

2.3.3 Pictographic Writing

Even though humans have been creating visual imagery for several thousand years, the first recognizable writing was not developed until 3000 BCE in Sumer in the region of Mesopotamia. These early writings as seen in figure 2.4 were developed as a means of accounting and used for commerce in the form of imprinted tokens. These tokens later became clay tablets to keep records of agricultural and trade goods. Visocky O'Grady (2008) comment that:

Original Sumerian writing read from top to bottom with the pictographs oriented along a horizontal line (similar to 'stacked' type). Over time, the figures rotated and became more abstract and wedge-shaped, leading to what we now recognize as cuneiform script. As the writing evolved, marks began to represent phonetic sounds, in addition to their pictographic symbolism. A similar phenomenon was concurrent in China and Egypt. Eventually, phonetic representation became the dominant form (Visocky O'Grady 2008:29).

Visocky O'Grady (2008) note that 'writing provides a more precise means to share and distribute ideas among a large population'. Whilst imagery is still important, 'writing enables us to record history, exchange information beyond geographic boundaries, communicate knowledge to future generations, and build upon the ideas of the past' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:29).

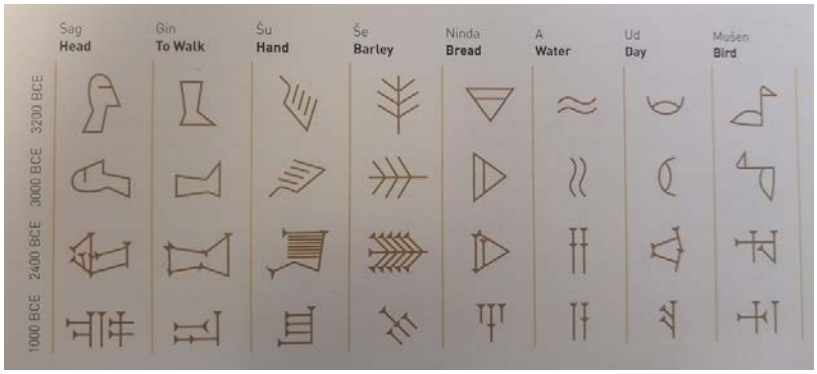


Figure 2.4 Illustration of early Sumerian writing. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:29).

2.3.4 Early Cartography

Countless cartographic evidence is found in cave paintings worldwide, but historians are unsure of their use. Ethnographic research into the contemporary hunter-gatherer societies indicated that early humans would have had a highly developed sense of direction, which relied primarily on memorization for survival (Visocky O'Grady 2008:30). These societies would travel vast distances to hunt prey, not relying on maps for geographic wayfinding. The town plan of Nippur, inscribed into clay circa 1300BCE, is one of the earliest cartographic documents, but there is academic contention about which should be considered the first map. The Nippur map as seen in figure 2.5 depicts the town's layout, indicating waterways and the location of man-made structures with notations in cuneiform. They were believed to be instrumental in fortifying defences and rebuilding the town (Visocky O'Grady 2008:30). This was the first known example of combining several critical elements of mapmaking: orientation, notation, and scale. The impact of this innovation is that once humans

transitioned from hunter-gatherer to agrarian societies and began to develop more sophisticated technology, maps became more complex.

Ethnographic research, broadly defined, is a qualitative method that seeks to understand how people interpret and navigate their cultural and social environments (Handwerker 2006). Mason (2002) emphasises that despite the diversity of theoretical traditions underpinning ethnographic work, ranging from phenomenology and semiotics to symbolic interactionism, ethnography is unified by its aim to elicit in-depth understandings of human experience, often through immersive, long-term fieldwork (Handwerker 2006:106). The three most important areas ethnographers typically investigate include: (a) lived experience and meaning-making practices; (b) the impact of structural conditions on everyday life; and (c) the negotiation of identity and representation across different social contexts (Wilson and Chaddha, 2009; Handwerker, 2006; Salinas, 2024). These areas are not mutually exclusive, but rather intersect in ways that enable a varied account of how people make sense of their lives in situated contexts.

The relevance of ethnographic research to this study allows for a commitment to grounded, context-specific inquiry, thus allowing for the exploration of complex social dynamics that are often obscured in macro-level quantitative research. As Wilson and Chaddha (2009) argue, ethnography excels in both the context of discovery and validation: it not only uncovers patterns of meaning and interaction but also refines or challenges existing theoretical claims (Wilson and Chaddha 2009). Ethnography thus serves a dual purpose by generating new hypotheses through inductive immersion and testing existing frameworks deductively through focused observation and theoretical sampling. In the case when researching marginalised or vulnerable groups particularly, Salinas (2024) illustrates how artistic and embodied approaches within ethnographic practice can process trauma, slow down the pace of inquiry, and deepen the ethical responsibility of representation, therefore underscoring the emotional and intersubjective dimensions of ethnography. This resonates with Handwerker (2006) insistence that rigorous ethnography must attend to internal validity, the positionality of the researcher, and the temporal nature of field engagement (Handwerker 2006:112). Together, these perspectives reaffirm the value of ethnographic methods for this study and offer not only methodological tools but also ethical and epistemological

orientations, allowing this research to engage with its participants in a respectful, reflexive, and theoretically informed manner.



Figure 2.5 Map illustration. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:31).

2.3.5 Charts and Graphs

Although the precise dates of the previous innovations are difficult to trace, Visocky O'Grady (2008) notes that most historians credit a single person with the origins of charts and graphs. Scottish engineer and political economist William Playfair believed that the visualization of data, in some cases, was easier to understand than the written word. Playfair wanted his:

> Audience to be able to visualize the connections between economic factors. Instead of using tables of data as had been done previously, Playfair created line graphs, bar graphs, and pie charts which he then coloured by hand. Playfair's designs enabled the reader to gain an improved understanding of quantities relative to one another and to see economic patterns over time (Visocky O'Grady 2008:33).

The development of Playfair's modern charts as seen in figure 2.6 bridged the significant knowledge gaps in data visualisation, where there was no longer the need to be able to interpret complex numerical or statistical information, thus making it far more widely accessible, and data sets could be more easily compared.

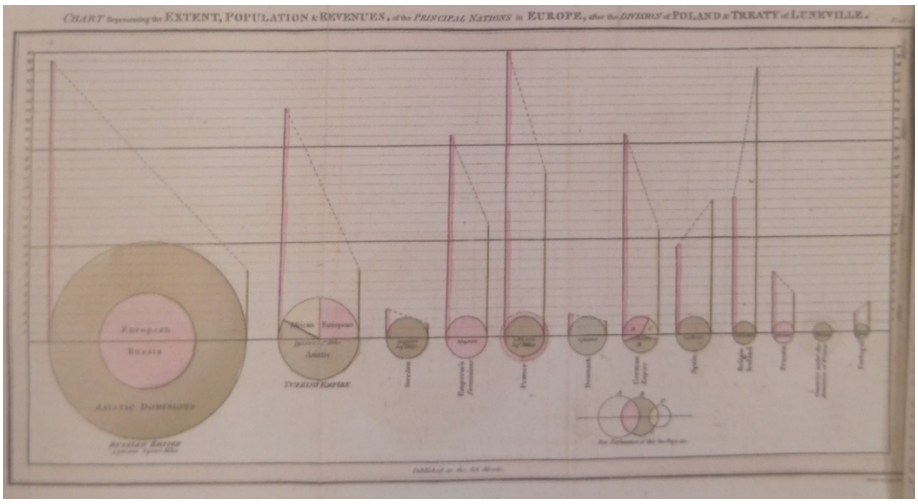


Figure 2.6 William Playfair graph. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:33).

2.3.6 ISOTYPE

The International System of Typographic Picture Education aimed to create a standardized visual language. 'Created by Austrian sociologist and political economist Otto Neurath in 1940, with the help of German artist Gerd Arntz, the aim was to develop easily understood symbols which would present complex socioeconomic data to a broad audience' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:34). Neurath believed that 'words make division, pictures make connections' and that information should be accessible, regardless of education or cultural background (Visocky O'Grady 2008:34). ISOTYPE was primarily used to display statistical data combined with traditional charts and graphs. Visocky O'Grady (2008) explain that:

> Comprising over 1,000 different images, Neurath also developed a set of rules to ensure ISOTYPE's consistent application. These governed the use of colour, orientation, the addition of text, and more. The ideas leading to the development

and standardising use of ISOTYPE are referred to as the Vienna method of statistical display, which was widely used in Europe between 1940 and 1965. Its use eventually began to fade because of labour-intensive and expensive production, as each diagram had to be configured by hand using the printing technology of the time (Visocky O'Grady 2008:34).

The impact of ISOTYPES on contemporary information design is evident in the abundant application of internationally recognised icons. Many of the symbols we encounter in airports, museums, and public transportation systems trace their origins back to this concept, even though Neurath's utopian vision never came to fruition. Figure 2.7 below gives an example of an ISOTYPE used in a children's book, *Adventure of the World* by James Fisher, depicting various climates and the appropriate attire for each.

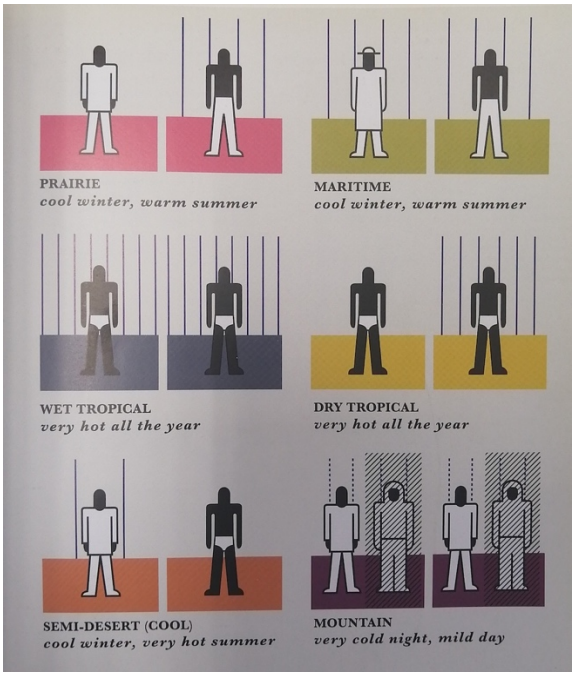


Figure 2.7 ISOTYPE from the children's book, *Adventure of the World*. Source: (Visocky & O'Grady 2008:35).

2.3.7 Guides for Structuring Information

One of the pioneers of information design was Czech modernist Ladislav Sutnar. Educated at the Prague School of the Decorative Arts, he became a professor at the age of twenty-six and a decade later became the director of the Prague State School of Graphic Arts. Sutnar's work was dominated by strict, functional, typographic grids, sans-serif typefaces, white space, and the whimsical use of colour and form (Visocky O'Grady 2008:38). Sutnar would develop innovative systems of organizing, structuring, and displaying information, which in turn made the document easier to read. Visocky O'Grady (2008) note that he would 'design in spreads rather than single pages (the dominant period format) and use parentheses, brackets, small images, and icons to reinforce hierarchical structures of content. This rapid scanning of the page enabled the reader to find information quickly' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:38).

This systematic approach of structuring content from Sutnar, in conjunction with the use of spreads as seen in figure 2.8, may seem simple at face value but proved revolutionary in its application. As a result, results have been widely adopted in both print and digital media. The data comprehension was accessible by inventing parentheses, brackets, and other typographic details. Sutnar is credited with placing the parentheses around American area codes, and this seemingly minor detail is now a part of American visual vernacular.

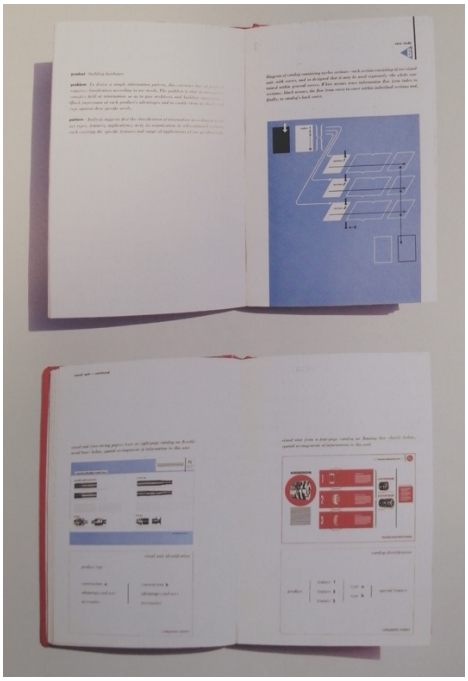


Figure 2.8 A spread example of Sutnar's use of brackets, icons, and linear elements. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:39).

2.3.8 The Interactive Exhibit

Partners Charles and Ray Eames, who were 'remembered for their contribution to furniture design and film', were said to be ahead of their time in the creative efforts of information and exhibition design. The couple's first major commission from the IBM corporation as seen in figure 2.9, entitled *Mathematica: A world of Numbers and Beyond,* for the California Museum of Science and Industry created the notion that math could be fun. Visocky O'Grady (2008) note that the couple:

> Created a 3,000ft2 (278.7m2) exhibit that explained heady mathematical concepts using graphic displays and interactive experiences. Centre to their theme was the notion that math could be fun. Nine interactive displays demonstrated the laws of probability, multiplication, celestial mechanics, and other complex topics. The Eameses engaged museum-goers by creating

interactive spaces that required visitor participation. In the Probability Machine, for example, a button pressed by the patron would cause 30,000 plastic balls to fall into a screen and create a ball curve (Visocky O'Grady 2008:40).

The success of this commission led to other notable commissions, such as The *World of Franklin and Jefferson*, an exhibit and film created to celebrate the United States Bicentennial. These experimental influences by the couple have permeated many facets of information design, namely contemporary museum and exhibition design and retail spaces. A trip to the museum would prove a testament to the transformative powers of interaction and play on modern contemporary exhibits.



Figure 2.9 Mathematica: A World of Numbers and Beyond exhibition in 1961. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:43).

2.3.9 The Pioneer Plaque

Information design, in most cases, can be defined with an audience of a) language for human use and b) human-centred. There is a third audience, an audience that is not limited to mankind but instead travels beyond the boundaries of our solar system. *Pioneer 10* as seen

in figure 2.10 was the first man-made artefact to travel into interstellar space on March 2, 1972, by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Although this mission was critical for many scientific reasons, 'it also transports an example of information design intended as possible first contact with alien life (Visocky O'Grady 2008:44). Attached to the spacecraft's exterior is a 6x9in (15x23cm) gold anodised aluminium plate carrying a message about the spacecraft's creators.

> The communique, called the *Pioneer* Plaque, was designed by Frank Drake and Carl Sagan, both astronomers and astrophysicists (the artwork was created by Sagan's wife, Linda Salzman Sagan). Descriptions of the spacecraft's creators, its launch date, and the location of Earth and its solar system are etched onto the plaque. Anatomical illustrations of a man and woman are superimposed on a graphic of the spacecraft to indicate scale. The man's hand is raised as a symbol of greeting and welfare (NASA used similar plaques on Voyager missions with the female figure's hand raised in greeting). Across the bottom of the panel are depictions of the planets in our solar system, also indicating the launch and trajectory of the spacecraft.
>
> There were intersecting dashed lines on the panel attempting to pinpoint our solar system in relation to 14 pulsars (neutron stars that emit radio waves). To communicate this complex information without a common language, Frank and Sagan used the hydrogen atom (thought to be the most abundant element in the universe) as a map key for this pulsar illustration. They assumed that any life-form encountering *Pioneer* 10 in space would be familiar with the atomic structure of hydrogen (one electron rotating around a single proton. They used an illustration of this element in a single rotation to create an icon for a singular unit or the value of 1. That hydrogen key then provides a means of measuring the radio waves emitted by the illustrated pulsars. Our solar system is located at the centre of those pulsars. So, what may appear to be a starburst is an interstellar map (Visocky O'Grady 2008:44).

Although the success of this form of communication remains to be seen, the perceived value has been embraced by the inclusion of similar plaques on all subsequent NASA interstellar space probes. NASA engaged 300 artists at the turn of the millennium to 'submit work for developing a new plaque, exploring holographic technology as a more information-dense medium (Visocky O'Grady 2008:44). While vastly different in scale and context, the Pioneer Plaque offers a compelling example of visual communication designed to transcend language, culture, and even species. Like tattoo designs, it functions as a semiotic system, which is a carefully curated set of images meant to convey identity, intent, and context not only to the recipient of the tattoo but to an unknown viewer. Both the plaque and the tattoo artefacts in the Ramesar archive rely on encoded symbolism, conventions of visual language, and assumptions about the viewer's interpretive capacity. As Visocky O'Grady (2008) describe, the plaque uses simplified anatomy, atomic structure, and cosmic positioning to convey meaning without text (Visocky O'Grady 2008:44). This mirrors how tattoo iconography distils complex cultural narratives into visual forms that are intelligible within a community, and potentially enduring across generations. By exploring such examples of non-verbal, highly intentional visual communication, one begins to understand how meaning can be embedded in form, whether carved into skin or etched into metal sent across the galaxy.

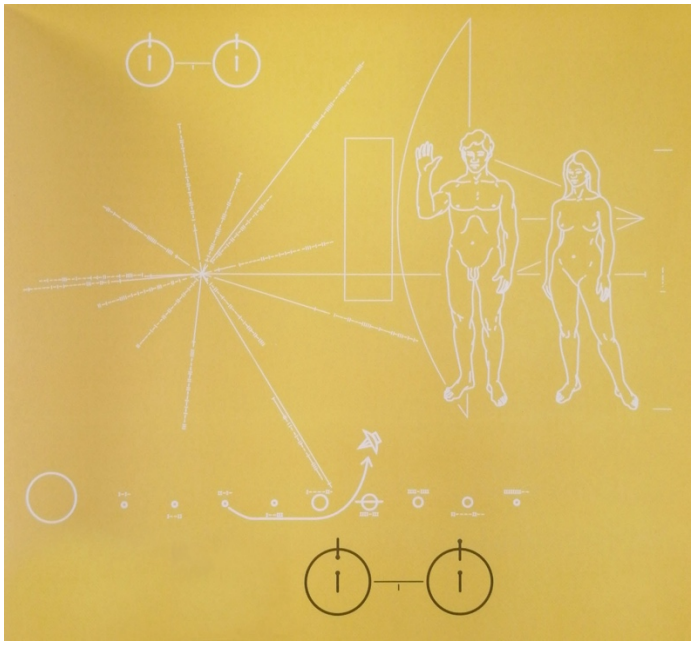


Figure 2.10 The Pioneer Plaque - check for a better image. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:45).

2.3.10 The Visual Language Workshop

As we venture closer to the digital age and the contemporary digital experience, Muriel Cooper is widely recognized as one of the most influential designers. Her work with the Visual Language Workshop at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab helped frame our contemporary digital experience (An example of student work in figure 2.11) . After attending a computer programming workshop, 'she felt bewildered by the nonvisual approach to human-computer interaction and the cumbersome manual coding of computer languages' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:46). As a highly regarded book designer with over 100 book awards and over 500 titles, Cooper noted the 'vast, unexplored potential that new technology held for graphic design' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:46).

In 1974, Cooper began teaching a class called 'Messages and Means with Ronald MacNeil to investigate the relationship between graphic design and technology', laying the foundation for the Visual Language Workshop. A collaborative platform where designers, programmers, and computer scientists come together to explore and experiment. Cooper was one of the founding members of the Media Lab at MIT, arguably the premier think tank

of the digital revolution, where she forged her legacy in the design field, not only in the artefacts that she created but for the inspiration she gave and 'focusing on developing new ways to interact with and organize content and typography within the digital space' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:46). Even though she knew little about programming, she was a pioneer in interactive design.

Today's interactive digital environments feel the impact of 'The Language Visual Workshop' as an influence on a generation of some of the brightest students on earth. Muriel Cooper installed her vision of exposing the potential of marrying design and technology when encouraging enthusiastic cooperation between diverse specialists, thus ultimately creating interactive, functional and meaningful experiences. A lab colleague from the Media Lab, Nicholas Negroponte, said: 'The impact of Muriel's work can be summed up in two words: Beyond Windows. It will be seen as the turning point in interface design. She has broken the flatland of overlapping opaque rectangles with the idea of a galactic universe' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:46).



Figure 2.11 Example of student work from the Visual Language Workshop at MIT. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:47)

2.3.11 The First Website

Developed in 1989, the internet as we know it today was created by Tim Berners-Lee, a physicist working at CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (originally Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire). Berners-Lee proposed connecting hyperlinks[2] to the internet to allow researchers to share information more quickly. Visocky O'Grady (2008) notes that Berners-Lee was joined by Robert Cailliau, a systems engineer at CERN, and the pair built the first web browser, editor, server, and server web page on a NeXT computer as seen in figure 2.12. The pair also coined the phrase 'World Wide Web'. This web browser, with the first web address http://info.cern.ch/hypertext/WWW/TheProject.html, explained the technology behind the web, how to build a website, and how to undertake an effective search. Berners-Lee and Cailliau noted that the NeXT machines were more potent than the average personal computer on the market. Therefore, they developed a universally compatible browser, which they then distributed for free. As a result, web servers and sites started emerging across Europe and the United States. This hyperlink-based platform was soon replaced by a browser named Mosaic in February 1993 by Marc Andreessen, a student at the National Centre for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), which could display image files. Andreessen would develop Netscape Communications Corporation, 'where the internet revolution would begin in earnest' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:50).

The impact of the initial website platform on the platforms we operate today in our daily lives is monumental. They have infiltrated nearly every facet of our lives in one form or another. Visocky & O'Grady (2008) describe that:

> 'In a short time since the release of Mosaic, websites have changed the way we do everything: conduct business, consume media, shop, interact with friends and family, and maybe even find a spouse! With rates of digital inclusion on the rise worldwide, it is evident that we are making new connections at an exponential rate. Those in the technology sector often pat themselves on the back for opening the floodgates of the world's knowledge, but it is not a story of technology alone'.

[2] Links that are embedded in on-screen text that connects the user to other documents or files.

> In its earliest forms, the web was an austere tool used primarily by the scientific community. Fuel for the revolution was the practical application of a user-centred graphic interface. Designers were able to harness the potential of this new tool and forge it into something that people could use.

Visocky O'Grady (2008) reveal further that both the websites, 'look and feel and function' began to follow familiar contexts. One could now view an image of a sweater online, zoom into that sweater to view the sweater in greater detail and then quickly place it in the shopping cart if you decide to purchase it. Without the visual impact provided by information design, public acceptance of the web might have been much harder to achieve, as technology alone represents only half of the equation.

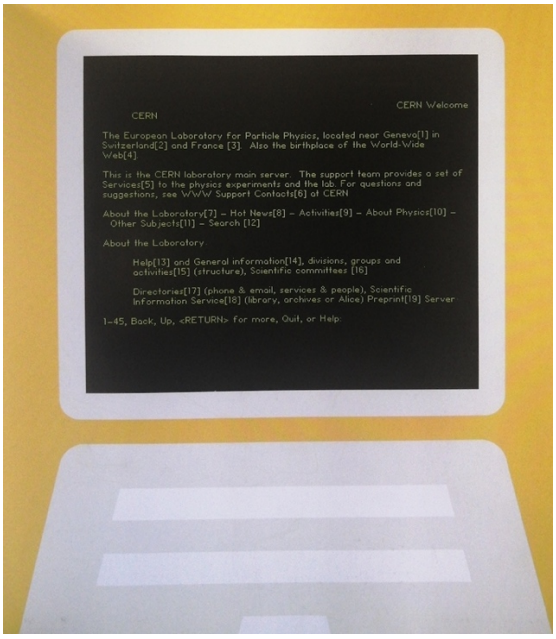


Figure 2.12 The first website hosted by CERN. Source: (Visocky O'Grady 2008:51)

Having discussed a brief history of the significant influences in information design, one can create a timeline utilizing the pioneering principles discussed above. This visual timeline uses the various principles innovated throughout history to refine how we design information today.

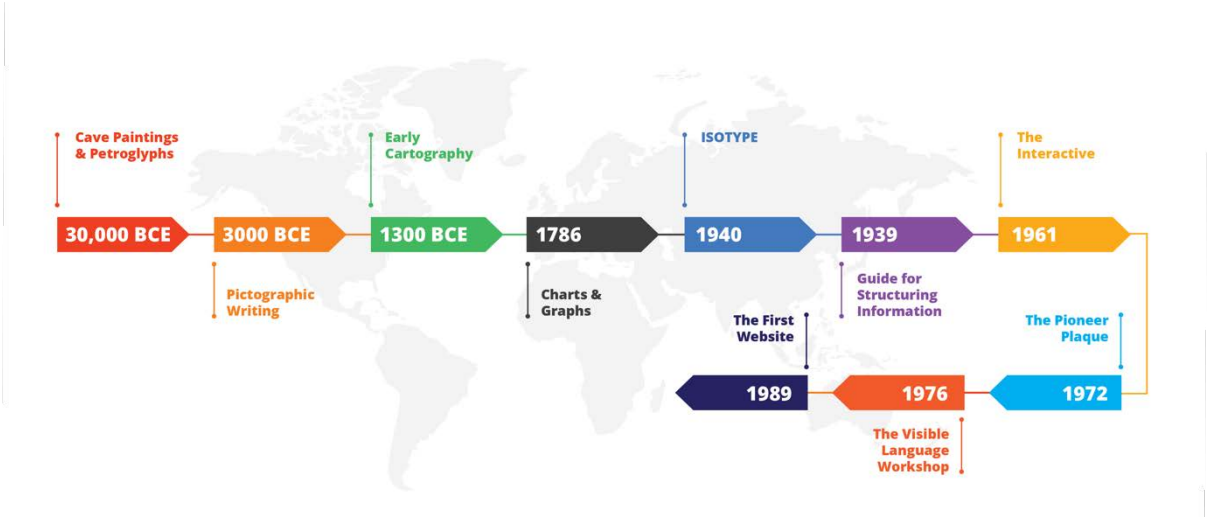


Figure 2.13 A timeline of Information Design History and Innovation. Source: Rory van As

2.3.12 The Principles of Information Design

Designers take inspiration from numerous sources, such as popular culture, nature and art. This can be said for tattoo artists as they draw inspiration from the originals, creating information design on the skin. Visocky O'Grady (2008) note that 'to understand the end-user so that we can target our messaging, we need to learn more about how they will receive and decode the information sets we send. Designers (tattoo artists in the case of this study) need not become behavioural scientists; knowledge of principles framing cognition, communication, and aesthetics provides illumination of our craft'.

This section below will discuss the three Information design principles which explore the intersections and convergences between human perception, thinking, and learning. How does the visualization of messaging affect the information process through language, structure and legibility?

2.3.13 Cognitive Principles

A designer can spend hours researching the subject matter of their intended audience and incorporating creativity, conceptual elements, and technical and production capabilities to craft the desired creative solution carefully. Visocky O'Grady (2008) describe that 'the goal of

any information design task is to communicate a specific message to the end-user in a clear, accessible, and easy to understand manner'. The study of human perception and thinking provides a designer with tools to create creative outputs that champion the end-user's needs. Below is table 2.2 that describes the three cognitive learning style models associated with information design. Although these models vary in complexity, all individuals 'prefer some particular sensory method (or mode) of experiencing, interacting with, and remembering new information' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:55).

Table 2.1 The three most common learning styles. (Visocky O'Grady 2008:55).

THREE MOST COMMON LEARNING STYLES		
		
Visual	**Auditory/Verbal**	**Kinesthetic/Tactile**
• Visual Learners prefer images (pictures, maps, charts or films) when encountering new information. • Create flowcharts, diagrams, or other forms of graphic organization to master new knowledge. • Tend to have a strong awareness of aesthetics and space. • People who learn best by seeing new information often think in terms of	• Verbal learners prefer experiencing new information in the form of written and spoken words. • Prefer information presented in the form of lectures, written documents, and group discussions. • Study by reading, writing, notes, listening and talking. • Tend to think in words rather than pictures and often have strong written and verbal	• Kinesthetic learners acquire knowledge by moving. • Need to physically experience new information by using large and small muscle groups and need to touch and feel content. • Prefer labs, demonstrations, and learning through play. • Act out skits, role-play, or devise other forms of physical manipulation to master new skills.

movies or pictures rather than words.	communication skills.	Tend to work well with their hands and are physically coordinated.

When identifying which learning styles played a role in the tattoo artist profession during the period of Harry Ramesar, all three styles would be required but not at the same strength. The dominant style would be *Visual*, as tattoo artists were artists of the skin. New information is designed visually and placed permanently on the skin. Secondly was *Kinesthetic/Tactile*; the act of producing a tattoo relied on equipment that required 'using large and small muscle groups, and the need to touch and feel content'. The content, in this case, would be the clients' skin. The third, although a relatively small percentage, would be *Auditory/Verbal*. Verbal communication skills were required to be a tattoo artist during the time period of this study. The majority of the population saw tattoos as a sign of deviance; therefore, the tattoo artist needed communication skills to a) converse with the client on tattoo designs and procedures and b) leave a good impression on the customer to return and/or be a good reference for new customers.

2.3.13.1 Memory

Memory allows us to store, retrieve, and supply knowledge which is a cognitive process. Visocky O'Grady (2008) state that 'educators and psychologists have spent years studying human information processing and how it relates to our ability to remember that information'. A widely accepted framework for understanding this fundamental process is The Stage Theory Model, also known as the Atkinson and Shiffrin model. Below is a diagram which illustrates the three specific stages of memory development.

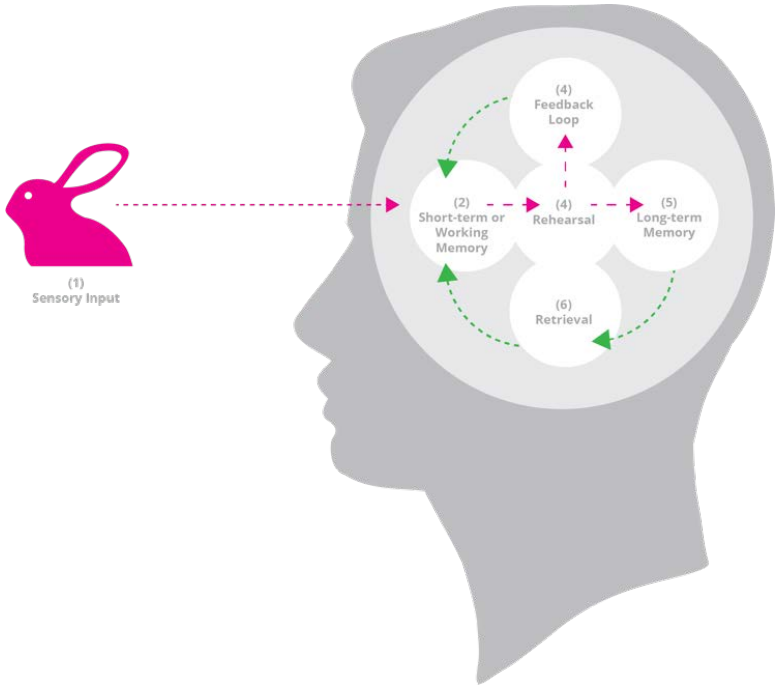


Figure 2.14 The Stage Theory Model. Illustration redrawn by Rory van As (Visocky O'Grady 2008:59).

'The Stage Theory Model asserts that human memory develops in three stages: sensory input, short-term memory, and long-term memory' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:58). A simplified explanation of this mode gives reference to notice, storage, and retrieval when outlining the creation of memory. The process works as follows:

(a) Sensory Input (Notice)

Our senses detect and briefly store incoming environmental stimuli in sensory memory. The brain either ignores or forgets the new stimuli or passes the new information to the short-term memory. When viewing visual stimuli, the human mind holds the imagery in sensory memory, known as iconic memory. This information takes milliseconds to transfer to the short-term memory store.

(b) Short-term Memory (Storage)

Information is processed actively and consciously, with the option to discard this new information or continue thinking about it. The more this information is processed, the more

likely it will be remembered later. Visocky O'Grady (2008) notes that 'we are capable of storing information in the short-term memory for about 20-30 seconds before it is either forgotten or entered into the long-term memory'. With sufficient rehearsal or mental processing, known as the feedback loop, it becomes part of long-term memory, where it can be stored indefinitely for future retrieval.

(c) Long-term Memory (Storage and Retrieval)

Information is stored and retrieved as needed, with long-term memory acting as a permanent repository where it remains indefinitely.

2.3.13.2 Perception and Discernment

Perception, which is our ability to absorb and assess stimuli from our environment rapidly, is interlinked with discernment. Visocky O'Grady (2008) describe that 'the latter allows us to comprehend a stimulus and then distinguish it from others. Studying the 'why' of perception and the discernment from a cognitive perspective can help designers target their messages for maximum reception. Three perceptions will be briefly discussed below: *Difference Threshold*, *The Gestalt Principles of Perception* and *Eye Tracking*.

(1) Difference Threshold

Sensory stimuli can be measured simply from a light's brightness to the sound's volume. Even the saltiness of food is subject to modulation. The speed at which we note these changes is of interest to cognitive psychologists, social scientists, and marketers alike. 'Weber's Law of Just Noticeable Differences defines the minimum amount of change required in any sensory stimulus for an individual to take notice' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:62).

> Weber's Law postulates that the amount of change, once determined, remains a constant and can be predicted for future stimuli. For example, if a viewer is shown a type specimen that is 10 points in size, and the following noticeable change in size that they recognize is at 12 points, the rate of change is equal to 2 points. This change is known as the 'difference threshold,' and as the value of the stimulus increases, the difference threshold remains the same. Therefore, according to

> Weber's Law, the subsequent change would be apparent at 14 points, 16 points, 18 points and so on (Visocky O'Grady 2008:63).

However, it must be noted that Weber's thresholds do not apply when the stimulus reaches extreme levels. These threshold principles can be applied to visual communication projects, thus aiding creatives in making constructive design choices. Using Weber's law in the foundation phase of a creative project helps establish clear communication with the target audience.

(2) The Gestalt Principles of Perception

The principle 'views the workings of the human mind as an holistic process that strives to self-organize'. Visocky O'Grady (2008) give a summary of this principle that states:

> In the 1930s, Gestalt psychologists Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Köhler, and Max Wertheimer applied this theory to visual perception. They believed that humans perceive compositions as a whole rather than a collection of individual forms. At the same time, individual design elements might possess unique information; when they are viewed in relation to other details, their meaning and context change. Koffka, Köhler, and Wertheimer theorize that in terms of visual perception, understanding is achieved by recognizing the interplay between design elements and concurrently reading the composition as a whole. Their experiments in visual perception sought to describe how we group multiple factors into complete compositions (Visocky O'Grady 2008:64).

The result of these studies revealed four principles, now commonly referred to as the Gestalt Principles of Perception, which aided in supporting the methods designers use to shape forms and establish hierarchy and meaning. Below is table 2.3 that breaks down these four principles.

Table 2.2 Gestalt Principles of Perception (Visocky O'Grady 2008:64).

GESTALT PRINCIPLES OF PERCEPTION			
The Principle of Proximity	**The principle of Similarity**	**The Principle of Prägnanz**	**The Principle of Closure**
'States that when viewers see adjacent objects, they process them as a group and consider them to have like meaning'.	'States that objects which share similar attributes – such as size, colour, shape, direction, orientation, weight, and texture – are perceptually and cognitively grouped'.	Also known as the figure-ground relationship, it states that objects appear either dominant or recessive when looking at a visual field. 'Dominant objects are perceived as figures, and recessive objects are seen as the background. When images or patterns are reversible, it becomes hard to differentiate the figure-ground relationship'. A related concept is the Principle of Area, which dictates that 'smaller objects are generally perceived as figures in a larger visual field or background'.	'States that we mentally close up or form objects that are visually implied'. For example, a series of adjacent points include a visually implied line- the viewer sees the line rather than the individual dots.

(3) Eye Tracking

Various types of eye movements are used to study where a person's gaze is directed. The human eyes are in perpetual motion, creating image data and then transferring this data to

the brain.

'If we were to hold our eyes perfectly still, the images would eventually fade away for want of fresh stimulus, so our eyes are in a constant state of motion to acquire and reacquire visual data (Visocky & O'Grady 2008:66). These movements can be divided into three categories, *Fixation*, *Saccade* and *Scanpath*.

- **Fixation** occurs when our eyes appear to pause in a particular position.
- **Saccade** is the movement between one fixation and the next, or the movement that occurs when the eye changes position.
- **Scanpath** is a term used to describe a series of fixations and saccades.

Visocky O'Grady (2008) explains the eye-tracking process by tracking the location and duration of the fixations, 'the number of subsequent saccades, and scan path lengths to determine what test subjects are looking at and for how long. These tests can be recorded, and data from different subjects can be compared to determine whether there is any continuity in the users' experiences. Dominant fixation points are sometimes called 'hotspots' and are considered prominent areas of interest'. When similar imagery is encountered, research indicates that the human eye has a tendency to follow the same scan paths. This situation then results in an unexpected or unpredictable area of fixation and distraction.

2.3.14 Communication Principles

Communication studies seek to understand how people convey knowledge, share ideas, and process information through language, which is a fundamental aspect of communication. These communications can be directed at various topics and methods, for example, economic, commercial, cultural, social, or political. The study of messaging delivery methods has two main focus areas: interpersonal communication and mass communication. These delivery methods may include one-on-one discussions, group discussions, oratory, rhetoric,

advertising, journalism, broadcast media, the internet, and fictional representation through film and literature.

Visocky O'Grady (2008) define the two by stating: that interpersonal communication focuses on interactions between a pair of individuals or groups of individuals; it concerns the relationship between sender and receiver, message and feedback. Mass communication is concerned with relaying information to broader populations and the effect of media on messages. 'Often the vehicle for distributing information rather than content determines whether the intended communication is interpersonal or mass' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:79). The feedback received from the communication can be characterized as either direct or indirect. Immediate responses primarily come in the form of verbal communication, for example, the phrase 'I like you', whilst an indirect example could be represented by 'blushing' or 'smiling', which is often delivered by one's body language. Thus, during interpersonal communication, the sender of the communication can adapt or revise the message based on the immediate feedback received from the audience. When one looks at mass communication, the sender is often separated or disconnected from the audience by time and physical location; therefore, they cannot receive real-time feedback. Visocky O'Grady (2008) note that the advent of the internet has highlighted convergences between the tenets of interpersonal and mass communication, especially regarding direct response time.

> The study of communication is broad, continually evolving, and spans many disciplines. Designers can gain great insight by studying its tenets, indeed, many now refer to graphic developments as 'Visual communication design'. Numerous lessons from communication theory can be applied directly to information design projects, providing insight on message structuring, language use, and audience needs and expectations (Visocky O'Grady 2008:79).

2.3.15 Organization

The way we receive a message is directly affected by the organization of content. If a viewer is subjected to overwhelming or cluttered information, this can result in a 'disconnect' before

the transmission is even completed. The following communication models and theories will be discussed as they relate directly to the structure and accessibility of information.

Inverted Pyramid Writing

This style of writing framework is a typical style in journalism and has been widely adopted by the web development community. Although this is the case, similarities in this framework can be utilized for tattoo communication. Visocky O'Grady (2008) explains that traditionally:

> This style places the most important or newsworthy information at the beginning of the story and orders the remaining information based on relative importance. Inverted pyramid copy starts with a lead, usually the first sentence or sometimes the first two sentences, which explains to the reader the most relevant and important information. Most leads are short and answer details about who, what, when, where, why, and how. Hard leads are concise statements that summarize the facts. Soft leads take a more narrative or creative approach, setting a scene in which to place those facts. Leads are followed by supporting information, and the story concludes with background and technical details (Visocky O'Grady 2008:84).

The inverted pyramid takes its name from the structure of the content, with the vital information or visual at the top and the various other elements included in the order of importance. This allows the viewer to process the core message quickly and in the view of visual communication, using aesthetics to implement the information hierarchy. The figure 2.15 below illustrates how the Inverted pyramid style can be applied to the visual communication of a tattoo design which was popular during the period of this study.

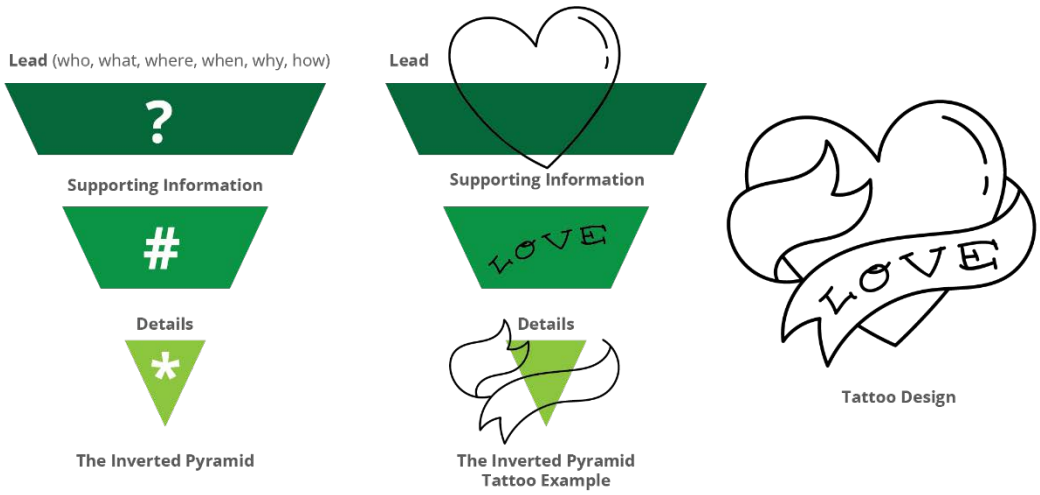


Figure 2.15 An illustrated example of the Inverted Pyramid Style. Illustration by Rory van As (Visocky O'Grady 2008:84).

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

This style provides insight into social interaction as an interpersonal communication principle which defines how individuals cope when meeting strangers. This theory is simple in its premise and utilizes language and communication to reduce the uncertainty of meeting a stranger for the first time. Visocky O'Grady (2008) explains 'that when encountering a new person, or group of people, we move through three different phases of discovery: Entry, Personal, and Exit. The end goal of this process is to build a level of understanding so that we can more easily predict behaviour, thereby reducing uncertainty and discomfort' (Visocky O'Grady 2008:88). Below is a table which demonstrates the three phases of discovery.

Table 2.3 The phases of discovery in Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Visocky O'Grady 2008:88).

Uncertainty Reduction Theory Phases of Discovery		
		
Entry Phase	**Personal Phase**	**Exit Phase**

'Commonly accepted social rules regulate communication. People may shake hands or engage in other customary nonverbal greetings; introduce themselves in either a casual or formal fashion, or engage in polite generalities of conversation'. **Example** 'The weather is great today!'	'It begins when the involved parties begin to feel relaxed and start to share information more freely. The exchange of dialogue in the Personal phase will allude to beliefs and values without addressing any contentious issues. At this point, conversations may seem to flow more easily'. **Example** 'Where do you work?' or 'What kind of music do you listen to?'	Negotiations determine whether the relationship will continue or conclude. **Example** 'May I have your business card?' or 'It was nice to meet you!'

Although the main focus of this theory is centred around interpersonal exchanges, the principle can be applied equally to visual communication. The following three statements can be utilized when exposed to new or unfamiliar content to receive and process knowledge actively.

- When we are uncertain, we actively seek information
- Certainty is enhanced by similarities and minimized by differences.
- That of which we are uncertain becomes less favourable.

(Visocky O'Grady 2008).

Literacy

The phrase literacy has expanded over the years from simply being 'reading and writing skills to the focus on the ability to find, process, interpret, and apply information'. These literacy related concerns are particularly significant for information designers and, in the context of this study, for tattoo artists, as they directly influence the audience's capacity to interpret and engage with communicated messages. The three fields of literacy below form the foundation

for modern communicators. According to Visocky O'Grady (2008:93), literacy within the context of design can be understood through three interrelated fields: information literacy, visual literacy, and semiotics. These domains provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals navigate and interpret complex messages in a media-saturated environment. Information literacy refers to an individual's capacity to recognise when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, analyse, and effectively use that information. This form of literacy is crucial in an age where information is abundant but varies widely in quality and credibility. An information-literate person is able to identify trustworthy sources, assess the legitimacy of content, and filter out information that lacks integrity. This skill set underpins critical inquiry and supports informed decision-making across both academic and professional contexts.

Visual literacy, while closely aligned with information literacy, specifically addresses our ability to interpret, appreciate, and create visual content. As an essential component of design education, visual literacy enables individuals to decode visual messages and understand their cultural, emotional, and functional significance. It supports cognitive processes such as thinking and decision-making, enhances learning outcomes, and plays a vital role in strengthening communication through imagery. Semiotics, the third field, involves the study of signs and symbols as core elements of language and communication. It provides tools for interpreting how meaning is constructed and conveyed through various sensory inputs. Semiotics explores how different meanings emerge depending on the sender, the receiver, and the specific cultural or contextual framework in which communication occurs. This field deepens our understanding of visual language by illuminating the subtle, often unconscious, ways in which meaning is assigned and interpreted. Together, these three literacies form a critical foundation for design practice, supporting the development of designers who are not only visually articulate but also capable of navigating complex informational and cultural landscapes.

2.3.16 Aesthetic Principles

The emergence of the modern marketplace has augmented traditional aesthetic skills. Still, Visocky & O'Grady (2008) explains that 'historically, the designer's primary concern has been

the visual presentation of a message'. In the realm of information design studies, two overlapping categories of aesthetic principles need to be discussed—namely, *structure* and *legibility*. The table below shows these various aesthetic principles.

Table 2.4 The Aesthetic Principles (Visocky O'Grady 2008:97-131).

Aesthetic Principles			
STRUCTURE			
Organisation	**Movement**	**Grouping**	**Hierarchy**
The geometric divisions create a framework for typographical and pictorial content. Consistency is critical to usability as viewers can process content more rapidly when they are familiar with information structure.	Direct and implied alignments of visual elements provide links between information sets and move the viewer's eye through the content. The complexity of the content may affect the time the viewer is engaged with the design piece. By controlling the viewer's eye movement through the content, the design can impart a sense of time or direction.	Arranging information in a certain way creates new contexts and can suggest different meanings than if the information were viewed independently. Proximity and placement lead the viewer to believe that the items in the grouped information sets are related.	In graphic design or tattooing, for that matter, 'hierarchy refers to the ordering of pictorial and typographic information sets, which allows the viewer to understand their relative importance quickly'. The comprehension of informational hierarchy requires two processes: *quick-grab* or *overview* and *detailed consumption.* **Quick Grab/Overview** The user searches for the fundamental message, and average attention spans dictate that there are only seconds to find it. 'The use of colour, anomaly, dramatic contrast and positioning can all affect the focal point of a design piece. That focal point, the first thing that really catches the viewer's

			eye, strongly influences their overview of the message'. **Detailed Consumption** During this phase, typographic differentiation, composition structures and consistent alignments, principles of contrast, and colour coding can help the viewer connect and rank information sets.
LEGIBILITY			
Colour		**Contrast**	**Typography**
Most designers have a love for colour, but there are those who prefer a limited colour palette. This is evident for the latter as tattoo artists during the time of this study had a limited colour pallet of inks to work with. Similar to print designers who would 'adjust for the way the paper will absorb ink, how the ink changes based on the hue of the paper stock on which is it printed, and how saturation and value change from coated to uncoated stocks', tattoo artists performed similar tasks with a customer's skin. A thorough understanding of the audience's perception of colour is necessary. Physical, environmental, and cultural influences affect the way we		The study of visual opposites, such as light versus dark, and small versus large, said that 'contrast is to design what salt is to cooking. Layouts are simply dull without it (and too much makes them unpalatable)'. However, beyond the qualitative statements, 'contrast can significantly influence the legibility of a design piece. The use of contrast to control information utilizes the human ability to see patterns, notice differences, and fixate on anomalies'. 'These components of perception and cognition can be manipulated to help the information	Observant attention needs to be made to both legibility and readability for the end-user to access your message clearly. **Legibility** 'Refers to the traits that affect the recognition of individual letters and words. As we read, we recognize the shape of familiar words rather than processing every single letter to make a phonetic group. This allows us to process content much faster'. **Readability** 'Refers to the clarity and the speed at which typographic content can be read in large quantities. Readability is also subject to design and layout decisions'.

see and interpret colour. Interpretations of a colour's meaning highly influence cultural considerations. For clear communication and unambiguous information delivery, it is essential to understand the end user's needs, customs, and attitudes.	designer create, structure, control hierarchy, sequence information, and ultimately create meaning'.	

2.4 Perspective 2: Semiotics

Semiotics is defined by Harrison (2003: 47) as the 'Study of signs, and for a sign to exist, there must be meaning or content (the signified) manifested through some form of expression or representation (the sign)' (Harrison 2003: 47). Harrison elaborates on these definitions by adding that 'signs exist within semiotic systems and encompass the entire range of human practices' (Harrison 2003: 47). Similarly, Harrison (2003) notes that 'signs exist within semiotic systems and encompass the entire range of human practices' (Harrison 2003: 47). Lester (2000) defines semiotics as the study or science of signs as vital because signs filter through every message; therefore, signs can simply be defined as something that stands for something else. Almost any object, image, action, or physical representation will have some meaning for someone somewhere. 'Any physical representation is a meaning beyond the object itself. As a result, 'for something to be a sign, the viewer must understand the meaning' (Lester 2000: 49). As a result, the meaning of signs must be learnt and within this wider semiotic landscape, this study draws upon the work of several key semioticians whose ideas are especially relevant to visual and graphic communication, particularly as it pertains to tattoo visuals. Harrison (2003) presents a pragmatic and pedagogically accessible framework that introduces semiotics as the study of signs embedded within socio-cultural systems. His insistence that 'we see only what our sign systems allow us to see' underscores the centrality of interpretation and context in understanding visual meaning (Harrison 2003:48). Lester (2000) echoes this emphasis by offering a typology of signs, namely iconic, indexical, and symbolic which will be discussed in 2.4.1, that aligns closely with Peirce's classification and is

particularly useful for analysing visual culture. Lester's assertion that 'any physical representation is a meaning beyond the object itself', therefore underlining the interpretive labour required of viewers and forms a key analytical lens in the visual semiotics of tattoo imagery (Lester 2000:49).

Lemke (1990), working within the realm of educational semiotics and meaning-making, expands this discussion by exploring the hypothetical contexts and semiotic potentials of visual elements. His work helps to unpack the choices behind visual construction by noting 'what other plays might have been made?', which is a resonant idea in the creative design process (Lemke, 1990:188). Sonesson (2008), a cognitive semiotician Sonesson adds a crucial dimension by emphasising the inseparability of expression and content by insisting that any explanation of interpretation must account for the sign vehicle, its meaning, and the connection between them, which supports a holistic approach to visual meaning-making. Complementing these theoretical insights within this study are contributions from Twyford (1981), who focuses on graphic communication as a system of visual representation shaped by cognitive, social, and developmental factors, which six critical questions (discussed in 2.4.2) regarding the nature and function of pictorial communication, thus framing a practical methodology for decoding visual artifacts such as tattoos. Clerk (2008), meanwhile, anchors semiotic analysis in historical and cultural contexts, for example: tracing how maritime tattoos served as semiotic expressions of identity, ritual, and survival in seafaring communities.

Together, these scholars provide a richly layered and interdisciplinary perspective on semiotics. Their selection for participation in this study is not arbitrary: each brings a particular lens, pedagogical, cognitive, cultural, or historical characteristic, that is critical to unpack the layered meanings within Ramesar's tattoo artefacts. Therefore, the remainder of this section draws primarily on these theorists to frame the semiotic interpretation of tattoo visuals as a practice of culturally and visually situated communication. The semiotic approach has three types of sign variants that are outlined below.

1. **Semioticians believe that all people see the world through signs** (Harrison 2003).

Harrison (2003) notes that 'although things may exist independently of signs, we know them only through the mediation of signs. We see only what our sign systems allow us to see. Semioticians argue that signs are related to the sign fields by social conventions in our use of various media that seem 'natural', and it can be difficult to realize the conventional nature of such relationships' (Harrison 2003: 48). Harrison adds that:

> In addition to successful professional communicators' use of intuition to imagine the audience and draw on their internal representation of the audience as a guide to writing, this internal representation will include a highly sensitized understanding of the sign conventions in a commentator's particular language semiotic system (Harrison 2003: 48).

2. **'The meaning of signs is created by people and does not exist separately from them and the life of their social/cultural community. Resulting in signs having different meanings within different social and cultural contexts'** (Harrison 2003).

An example of this statement is the spoken English language in the United States versus the English spoken in India. These signs have 'different social and cultural contexts; hence the meanings within these languages can range from the subtle and nuanced' (Harrison 2003: 48).

3. **Semiotic systems provide people with a variety of resources for making meaning** (Harrison 2003:48).

The use of signs is controlled by the communicator, who has the power to use the sign in unconventional ways, therefore affecting and even altering the signs' meanings. Lemke (1990) explains that:

> these are the contexts of 'what might have been'… In the same sentence, what other words could have been used? At what point in the game, what other plays

might have been made? For the same detail in the painting, what different colours could have been used? (Lemke 1990: 188).

Cognitive semiotics professor Göran Sonesson (2008) comments that all semioticians are:

> Committed to the view that any explanation of an act of interpretation should account not only for the content but also for the expression involved in the process, as well as for the general connection (which is not necessarily a convention) joining expression to content (Sonesson 2018: 68).

Whilst keeping Sonesson's perspective in mind, tattoos should not only be viewed as markings on the skin but follow the same semiotic procedure mentioned above.

2.4.1 Visual Semiotics

In the realm of visual semiotics, three essential principles are applied by social semioticians when analysing a semiotic system, such as imagery and language. These three visual semiotic sign types are described in the table 2.7 below with a description of each sign type and a related tattoo design example from Harry Ramesar.

Table 2.5 The three signs of the Semiotic Approach (Lester 2000).

THREE SIGNS OF THE SEMIOTIC APPROACH	
Iconic	
	• Closely resemble the things they represent. • Simple Drawings

Source: Flash Card20, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/	
Indexical	
 Source: Flash Card23 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/	• Logical, 'common-sense connection to the thing or idea they represent rather than a direct resemblance to the object'. • Mostly learnt from 'everyday experiences'.
Symbolic	
 Source: Flash Card23 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/	• Most abstract of the three types, with a 'logical or representative connection between the symbol and the things they represent'. • Most signs in this category need 'to be taught. • Social and cultural considerations influence the signs greatly'. • Symbols have 'deeper roots in the culture of particular groups, with their meaning passed down from one generation to the next'. • This sign type 'usually evokes a stronger emotional response for viewers'.

A simple example would be the green light at a traffic stop. Harrison (2013) comments that the 'green light in a traffic signal is a sign meaning 'go' within the semiotic system of traffic control; words are signs in the semiotic system of language; gestures are signs within the semiotic system of nonverbal communication; and so because semiotic systems encompass

the entire range of human practices', therefore semiotics offers a cohesive way of thinking, along with a shared set of tools and terminology, that can be applied to a wide variety of meaning-making practices, such as body language, clothing, written and spoken language, and visual media such as photography, film, and television (Harrison 2003: 47). The visual semiotics of the green light example can additionally be used when analysing tattoos or images on the skin. These tattoo signs have their own individual compositions and viewpoints. These principles can vary from location to location, as many communities view signs differently. Harrison (2003) gives an example that 'the colour red indicates mourning for people in Ivory Coast, whereas, in contrast, it represents procreation and life for people in India' (Harrison 2003: 48)

2.4.2 Graphic Communication

The responsibility of graphic communication described by Twyford (1981) is to use 'pictorial images that characterise special acting and thinking of man, which then enables an individual to change their world by using representations or models of reality, rather than by acting directly on the world itself (Twyford 1981). These pictures or signs clearly and ambiguously transmit and translate information in specific contexts. In Twyford's book, Graphic Communication, he suggests six questions that might aid in considering graphic communication.

1. How does 'anything' represent 'something'?
2. What sort of information may be represented, and how is it portrayed?
3. How do we perceive pictures?
4. What are the social and cultural needs and implications of picture-making?
5. Are there any factors of human development which relate to drawing skills and ideas?
6. What sort of drawing is being taught and why?

The questions above can be applied to the graphic communication of Harry Ramesar's tattoo designs and tracings. They each have a role to play in the initial tattoo idea, which was drawn

by hand, a tracing was made, and finally, the design was permanently inked on the skin. Below is an example of one of Harry Ramesar's tattoo designs on the chest of a male. The six questions mentioned above will be answered using this example, with the tattoo meaning and mythology based on traditional tattoo meanings.



Figure 2.16 Harry Ramesar tattoo design electronically placed on the chest. Source: Flash Card22, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

At the outset, it is essential to give an historical perspective of tattoo meaning and mythology when dealing with the tattoo design displayed in figure 2.16. This will aid in answering the six questions of graphic communication. Ever since the first days of maritime tattooing, sailors and seafarers used visual emblems that encompassed the entire experience of being at sea. Clerk (2008) comments that these experiences included: 'vessels and everyday duties, military purpose and patriotism, shore leave, faraway loved ones as well as enemies, achievements and comradeship, superstitions and religious beliefs, hopes and fears, and their acknowledgement of those who perished beneath the waves (Clerk 2008: 56). One of the most iconic maritime tattoos noted by Clerk (2008), rich in graphic attributes, is the sailing ship in full sail. These tattoos commonly depicted a clipper or a fully rigged sailing ship, and the placement on the body was usually on the centre of the subject's back or chest (Clerk

2008: 56). Commonly accompanied with the ship would be writing script of sayings, prayers or superstitious verses.

> Many maritime tattoo designs would use the ship in their composition, and seafarers would practice certain superstitions and rites of passage to entitle one to qualify for a specific tattoo. For seafarers of the south pacific, completing the journey around Cape Horn entitled them to a sailing ship tattoo. The waters around Cape Horn were notoriously hazardous, as this is the location where the Atlantic and Pacific oceans collide, creating strong winds and currents. This route was necessary when circumnavigating the globe along the trade routes. Fully rigged sailing ships under full sail represented strength and fluid motion, with her bow splitting the waves with seabirds and clouds in the background. The sailing ship was a metaphor for life, sometimes, the sea is calm and smooth, and on other days, she is rough with gale-force winds…but keeps on sailing, gathering experience as you travel through life (van As 2009).

Tattoo depictions of sailing ships were not only depicted as scenes of serenity and positivity. Tattoo designs of ships sinking or forced onto the rocks or reefs were common. Clerk (2008) explains that these negative scenes were generally accompanied by the slogan 'sailors Grave', a stark reminder of how harsh the sea could be. Some sailors also viewed it as a talisman for protection and safe passage (Clerk 2008: 61). Having this background knowledge of the tattoo subject matter in the example, the six graphic communication questions can be answered:

Q: How does 'anything' represent 'something'?

A: The visual representation of the sailing ship tattoo has been associated with seafarers in general over time. These visual representations were refined on superstitions, rites of passage and evolving sea-faring profession.

Q: What information may be represented, and how is it portrayed?

A: Traditionally, the sailing ship was a symbol of maritime passage to specific destinations but has been known for its strength, fluid movements and sense of adventure. The sailing

ship is portrayed as both a ship at sea or a ship forced onto the rocks. Simplified visual tattoo illustrations are used to depict the detailed subject matter.

Q: How do we perceive pictures?

A: In the eye of the sailing ship tattoo, we see a visual of power that has helped man explore for centuries, conquer distant lands and discover trade routes to the unknown. On the flip side, we see the vulnerable side of the sailing ship when mother nature forces the sailing ship to sink or be forced onto the rocks. Our personal experiences and or visual experience help relate to the visual communication depicted in the tattoo design.

Q: What are the social and cultural needs and implications of picture-making?

A: The sailing ship tattoo directly resembles the actual subject matter but is simplified to a basic line and flat colour. This allows the individual tattoo to be customised easily to reflect the social and cultural needs of the customer. The ship, in general, is a representation that forms part of most social and cultural communities throughout history.

Q: Are there any factors of human development which relate to drawing skills and ideas?

A: Due to the nature of tattoo design in general, drawing skills are required to simplify visual representations. Complex images of sailing ships are simplified and refined to primary line and limited colour palette yet still retain the critical visual indicators that will make the sailing ship tattoo recognizable on the skin.

Q: What sort of drawing is being taught and why?

A: During the time of this study, tattoo machinery, needles, and inks were not as sophisticated if compared to today. As a result, tattoo artists had to develop a drawing skill that could transform complex visual subject matter into simple flat visual representations that, once tattooed onto the skin, will be easily recognized and associated with that original subject matter.

Twyford (1981) deals with three main facets in graphic communication, namely 1) *Looking at Pictures*, 2) *Using and understanding Pictures* and 3) *Forming Pictures*. Each element will be discussed through the lens of the graphic communication of tattoos, with particular reference to Harry Ramsar's tattoo designs.

2.4.3 Looking at Pictures

Twyford (1981) notes that: 'any picture may produce any number of reactions from different people. It may also contain more than one piece of information' (Twyford 1981: 9). The direct representation in pictures may result in people reacting immediately to its subject matter. An example could be the drawing of a hand, which could be viewed by some as a 'real' hand and not the drawing of a hand. Our association with images may affect how we view images based on the meaning we have learnt, and being aware of how we react to the picture helps us understand what the picture is communicating. Sometimes special knowledge will be required to fully understand the pictures, meaning as it may not always be immediately apparent to the viewer. With the simple characteristics of tattoo equipment during the time period of this study, tattoo designs had to be designed to achieve maximum visual output and strong visual communication.

To begin to understand the picture, our reaction to the picture needs to be taken into account. This is done by recognising our natural response to a picture, essentially our perception of the marks made. In addition, we may realise the power of the picture's imagery and symbolism, which is depicted by the artist's intention in what is being communicated. When looking at a picture, we need to exercise our own aesthetic judgement on what we see and consider the form of the picture and the meaning of the picture. This understanding will be heightened by studying the picture within its historical and cultural context. Reacting to information communicated by pictures may allow us to understand the information conveyed in the picture, as the information in an image usually sets the picture in context (Twyford 1981: 16).

2.4.4 Using and Understanding Pictures

When looking for picture information, three categories are observed: *objects*, *actions* or *ideas* or a combination of the three. Twyford (1981) explains that:

> Pictures of objects may be used to recognize, explain, relate, record or explore particular facets of what an object is. Pictures which describe the notion of action may explore movement, sequence, incidents or cause and effect. Similarly, pictures may be representational or arbitrary, which means they may explore ideas concerning basic concepts, images, signs, graphical symbols or mathematical notions, as well as encompassing aesthetic significances (Twyford 1981: 22).

Within the study of graphic communication, it is essential to understand the different functions of drawing. Initial sketches have an important role in the formulation of tattoo designs. As in various other creative professions, sketches contain original ideas, composition and layout, which sets the foundation for shaping and forming new tattoo designs. Twyford (1981) describes these drawings as the 'thinking' drawings as well as 'private' records of ideas' (Twyford 1981: 22). This phase is the key for observation as it is economical in the way it helps create new designs. Due to the nature of tattoo designs, observation is a crucial part of tattoo designs, as complex imagery/subject matter has to be simplified in order to be tattooed on the skin, yet still safeguarding the visual characteristics and emotion depicted in the original visual reference.

Twyford (1981) notes that graphic communication can be broken down into three broad themes, *The Natural World*, *Man-made Objects* and *Symbol*s, when analysing the information of pictures, their context and their form in the way they are drawn. These three themes are discussed below, with an example of Harry Ramsar's' tattoo designs for each.

The Natural World

Within this phase, illustrations and drawings effectively explore the nature and character of people, their work and our feelings towards our circumstances. Photographs are often

considered to represent reality. Joined in this category are animals, birds, plants and other living things. Twyford (1981) explains that when drawing life, it is vital to understand the anatomy, gestures and animal behaviour, the study of how the natural world moves. The example below titled ‘snake’ is a solid visual representation of the natural world, with reference to an animal-plant subject matter.

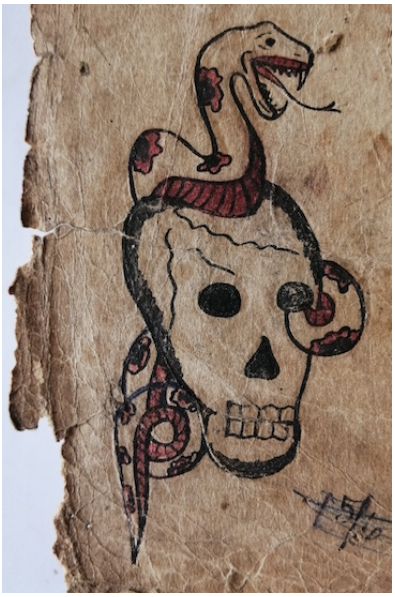


Figure 2.17 Snake and skull tattoo design. Source: Flash Card19, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

Figure 2.17 gives an example of the natural world with the depiction of a snake and skull, representing both animal and living subject matter. Both elements have strong behavioural characteristics, and the viewer can easily make sense of the anatomy of both the snake and skull. The use of simple lines and colour palette allows the design to reflect high visual accuracy, which in this example is the snake and the secondary visual element, the skull.

Man-Made Objects

As humans, we construct visual models of our world; this includes the natural world. Twyford(1981) explains that:

> These models, or templates, may be expressed through language, theories, and ways of ordering and calculating, but also by pictorial and diagrammatic conventions. We can manipulate our representations or models of reality rather than always acting directly on the world itself; this offers great economy and powers of organisation. We can form templates which represent what we see and do, and use these models to extend our knowledge into new possibilities for action (Twyford 1981: 48).

When objects are used and made, multiple forms of drawing and picture-making communicate the information about the object. Twyford (1981) breaks this process down into three ways objects are used and made. (1) Drawings are a flexible and creative tool for modelling and representing the things we encounter or construct. (2) Drawing can also help clarify predictions about how ideas may turn out, and (3) Generally, drawing used in a design process is either concerned with the 'private' thoughts and ideas of a designer or the 'public' expression of a proposal for action (Twyford 1981: 48). Thus we use drawing to communicate information about things to ourselves or others.

This form of communication is essential to form the viewpoint of tattooing as drawing shapes the backbone of the industry itself and is an essential method of communicating the general principles of a proposed tattoo design before it is permanently inked onto the skin. Twyford (1981) notes that the style and form of the design need to reflect specific values and notions. 'This is essential because a designer's drawing is a highly selective and personal version of what may exist. The gap between fantasy and reality can be enormous. Sometimes a drawing as a model of reality may not be entirely reliable. Design by drawing is not the only process by which design values and issues can be resolved' (Twyford 1981: 48). This statement rings true regarding the tattoo equipment available at the time of this study, which could form the Achilles heel by not allowing the tattoo artist the luxury of designing and tattooing detailed tattoos contrary to what we see today. The creation of the tattoo design illustration consists of accurately constructed initial drawings with consideration of any illustration effects that will assist in viewer recognition. Twyford (1981) elaborates by indicating that:

> At each stage of the drawing decisions are made about the form of the final picture. The processes may be intuitively arrived at or consciously thought through so that the particular technique chosen suits the final form and message of the illustration. The form and meaning of a picture are consistently intertwined (Twyford 1981: 48).

An example of man-made objects is the sailing ship, seen below in figure 2.18. This example depicts a fully rigged sailing ship under full sail, navigating using the stars. The visual reality and complexity of the sailing ship have been transformed and converted into a simplified design that is still recognizable and can be tattooed onto the skin successfully. Technical drawing principles have been utilised to produce the correct proportions of a real sailing ship, allowing the viewer to relate to and recognize the visual subject matter.



Figure 2.18 Sailing ship tattoo design. Source: Flash Card8, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

Symbols

Twyford (1981) notes that graphic design may be seen as the formation and use of two-dimensional images with practical and symbolic significance. The graphical techniques are used to generate highly innovative visual representations. Twyford (1981) explains that:

> Graphically designed pictures communicate information about actions, images and symbols. This information may be read from a picture or within the picture. How we respond to these pictures is a complex issue; our reactions may be learned within our culture, as much as derived from our perception of the images (Twyford 1981: 75).

Pictures convey concepts and one can ask the following two questions: Why do certain marks mean something? and, how is it that one thing can represent another? Twyford (1981) states that symbols may work by analogy or association, and they should be considered within the cultural context in which they are used and understood (Twyford 1981: 75). A simple example is the visual representation of wavy lines representing the concept of water. This is a generally accepted notion that many have associated with water. The sample below illustrates an anchor with a nautical star.



Figure 2.19 Anchor with a nautical star. Source: Flash Card16, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

If the above design is considered within the cultural context of the seafaring community, the nautical star was commonly tattooed as a tribute to ancient navigational methods and as an appeal for guidance and protection. The anchor tattoo has roots in Western tattooing for two centuries. A young sailor would be eligible to get an anchor tattoo after his first crossing of the Atlantic and it 'was often a symbol of a highly experienced sailor' (Clerk 2008:61). Furthermore, Clerk (2008) notes that:

> The anchor is a symbol of stability, steadfastness, hope, trust and a strong foundation. Just as in its actual purpose to secure the ship to the bottom of a body of water, keep it in a specific position and provide stability, so too its mythological meaning (Clerk 2008:62).

2.4.5 Forming Pictures

Our reasons for drawing strongly relate to how we draw. Tattoo artists must hone their drawing ability to represent best the subject matter they are drawing. The value of the drawing gauges the interaction between the form of the image and the associated meaning. This is imperative when the objective of a picture is to transmit clearly and translate information within a given context (Clerk 2008:102). Clerk (2008) explains that:

> The decisions artists make about drawing techniques, and effects generally relate to their understanding of the subject they are drawing. This is why drawing is a creative and powerful tool for man. Confusion often arises when traditionally recognised skills and techniques are used in such a way that they appear to be the only way of drawing and representing certain information tasks. We need to realize the value of aesthetic judgements as well as practical skills. Observation, self-expression and understanding and appreciation of drawings are key issues in the study of graphic communication. The process involved in being a designer, a craftsman or an artist are also important approaches to the study of drawing. Effective techniques are derived from an understanding of the need to

communicate, or to express particular knowledge, feelings or fantasies through pictures (Clerk 2008:102).

When looking at a picture, colour plays an essential role in the perception of what we see in that picture. This is elevated by the limited colour palette tattoo artists had to work with, which elevates the use of colour. Colour has a direct effect on our senses and, in some cases, our emotions as well. Clerk (2008) notes that observing colour and colour relationships is an essential experience in picture-making (Clerk 2008:111). Figure 2.20 below depicts how Harry Ramesar uses red to elevate his rose tattoo design.



Figure 2.20 Rose tattoo design. Source: Flash Card16, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

Emotion is added to this tattoo design with the inclusion of the colour red. In the 1940s, during the Second World War, the rose tattoo became extremely popular amongst sailors who would get them in the honour of loved ones they left behind while away at sea (van As 2009:34). The rose has the symbolism of beauty, and the colour red represents emotions of 'True Love', with Clerk (2008) noting that: 'the rose – by far and away from the most popular flower tattoo – was an unmistakable declaration of love and romance (Clerk 2008:214). When looking at an image or, in the case of this study, a tattoo design, there are three different ways in which we

can interpret that design, according to Peters and Coombes (1977). Table 2.8 below has a tattoo example for each aspect.

Table 2.6 The ways to interpret a design (Peters and Coombes 1977:4)

The picture as an object =	
 Source: Flash Card7, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/	The picture is its material quantities: the substance of which it is made; its size, extent, and shape; the picture as perceived by the senses.
The picture as representation =	
 Source: Flash Card11, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/	The content of the picture that we can imagine with the aid of a picture, i.e. the depicted object.
The picture as form =	

 Source: Flash Card18, https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/	The way in which the depicted object appears in the picture, i.e. the way in which the maker sees the object or the way in which the object represents itself to the viewer.

2.5 Perspective 3: Archival Science

With the ever-developing technology, people are being exposed to real-time data, and this content or structure must be similar to the time it was captured and processed. Paper records have their content, structure, and form physically present in their foundation. In comparison, digital records have their data, content, and structure in a digital foundation of representation. Even though archival science was in its infancy primarily perceived as, is now increasingly recognised as an independent, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary field that engages with social, technological, and cultural paradigms (Klasinc 2018:11). This reconceptualization has been particularly influenced by the growth of digital technologies and a shift toward participatory and community-centred approaches in cultural heritage management. A growing body of literature emphasises that archival science is no longer limited to the management of static records but is deeply entangled in processes of memory-making, identity construction, and societal engagement. Cook (2013) identifies four paradigm shifts in archival theory, with the most recent emphasizing pluralism, community collaboration, and identity politics, which he calls the participatory turn. This approach foregrounds the involvement of users, creators, and communities in shaping the archival record, particularly in digital environments that allow for greater interactivity, personalisation, and decentralisation. In this evolving context, Gilliland-Swetland's (2000)

foundational articulation of the 'archival paradigm' remains highly relevant. Gilliland-Swetland's (2000) work defines archival science as a discipline informed by theory, methodology, and professional practice, emphasising core principles such as provenance, original order, and the sanctity of evidence. While these principles originated in analog recordkeeping traditions, Gilliland-Swetland highlights their continued applicability in digital contexts, particularly regarding metadata, authenticity, and long-term digital preservation. These concepts remain critical even as archives embrace new digital platforms and community engagement strategies.

Klasinc (2018) proposes that archival science is not only scientific in its methodology but is also responsive to societal needs, embedding itself in educational, cultural, and political systems. Klasinc (2018) argues for a redefinition of archival science as 'an independent, academic, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary science', grounded in both traditional archival theory and new approaches to digital recordkeeping (Klasinc 2018:10). The emergence of computational archival science (CAS) further illustrates this transformation, which defined by Ambacher and Conrad (2021), as the integration of computational and archival theories to manage large-scale digital records, emphasising interoperability, user accessibility, and the evidential integrity of digital data (Ambacher and Conrad 2021:219). The adoption of international standards such as ISO 14721 (OAIS Reference Model) and ISO 16363 (Audit and Certification of Trustworthy Digital Repositories) reflects a growing commitment to preserving not only the digital object but also its context, provenance, and interpretive frameworks across time.

In parallel, the participatory turn in archival science has brought to the forefront the importance of inclusivity and co-curation. Archives are no longer seen merely as institutional repositories but as dynamic spaces where communities can co-construct histories and negotiate memory (Cook 2013; Popovici 2017). This is particularly pertinent to the digital archive discussed in this thesis, which aims to document and preserve the tattoo works of Harry Ramesar, by foregrounding the contributions of clients, collaborators, and the wider community, the archive reflects a participatory model in which archival authority is shared rather than centralised. Whilst this section continues to draw extensively on Gilliland-Swetland (2000) for its theoretical clarity and articulation of core archival principles, Gilliland-Swetland's work is situated here within a contemporary scholarly conversation and the

integration of more recent research highlights how archival science has expanded its scope to include digital stewardship, user-centred practices, and interdisciplinary collaboration, thus providing a robust foundation for evaluating the design and function of digital archives like the one developed in this study.

Cultural changes are being facilitated by technology; Ketelaar (2007) notes that 'People do not want to wield a P.C.: they want to record their ideas 'somewhere', develop them by involving other people 'in communion', by communicating through space and time' (Ketelaar 2007). Ketelaar (2007) defines archival science as:

> Archival Science, as any other science, examines received notions for their pertinence and relevance, it is continuously speculating, experimenting, inventing, changing, and improving. The digital age implies not only technological opportunities and challenges but is foremost a social and cultural phenomenon (Ketelaar 2007:169).

The term 'archival science' has had contrasting distinctions among archivists in the past, such as anglophone archivists would find this term so foreign that you would not find it in their glossaries. They would refer to the term as either *archival theory* or *archives studies*. However, the term archival science is a 'science in the German and Dutch sense of *Wissenschaft* or *wetenschap'*, which Anthony Giddens defines as the: 'systematic methods of empirical investigation, the analysis of data, theoretical thinking and the logical assessment of arguments' (Ketelaar 2007:167). Ketelaar (2007) notes that 'archivists in the Netherlands compile the characteristics of records in a) their social and b) cultural contexts, c) how they were created, used and selected, and d) how they have been transferred through time'. In order to 'improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current and future record keeping' and the use of archives as historical sources, we need to better understand the procedures people in an organization utilize to create and maintain records.

Ketelaar (2007) notes that 'archivists as a discipline should be distinguished from archivists as a profession. Theory informs the archivist's methodology and practice, but that practice is not driven by theory' (Ketelaar 2007:168).

2.5.1 The Archival Paradigm

Archival science is constituted by the inclusion of archival theory, methodology, and practice. 'because archival science is scholarly as well as practical and uses a distinct methodology to gain knowledge, it can be considered both a discipline and a profession (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:15). The disciplinary and professional aspects of archival science compose the archival paradigm, which Gilliland-Swetland (2000) refers to as a set of assumptions, principles, and practices common to the archival community and a model for its activities and outlook (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:15). Although archives have existed for thousands of years, much of the archival paradigm was consolidated between the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) notes that:

> The archival paradigm has been extensively influenced by the so-called auxiliary and ancillary disciplines – diplomatics and history, Law, textual criticism, management and organizational theory, and library science. Perhaps most influential have been the research methods of modern scientific history and legal theories of evidence that developed during the nineteenth century primarily from diplomatics. Diplomatics was developed to help establish the authenticity of medieval ecclesiastical records. It is the study of the genesis, forms, and transmission of archival documents; their relation to the facts represented in them; and their relation to the their creator, in order to identify, evaluate, and communicate their nature (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:15).

In modern times, archivists have had to adapt to a) the emergence of electronic record-keeping technologies, b) new modes of scholarly research, and c) the increasing user expectations that archivists should provide automated information access. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) explains that the debate first centred on appraisal, the process by which archivists identify materials of long-term value. Issues discussed were what and how much to keep and how, in new electronic formats, to identify records in the often undifferentiated mass of digital information. Extensive discussion ensued about the need for descriptive standards developed from the archival perspective and how to reconcile the different descriptive

traditions of the various information professions as well as within the archival community (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:17). This debate led to the reformulation and extension of essential principles supporting the archival perspective listed below:

a) The sanctity of evidence.
b) Respect des fonds, provenance, and original order.
c) The life cycle of records
d) The organic nature of records
e) Hierarchy in records and their descriptions.

Each of these principles will be discussed below, especially concerning knowledge management in the digital information environment. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) explains that: 'these principles reflect the concerns of a profession that is interested in information as evidence and in the ways in which the context, form, and interrelationships among materials help users to identify, trust, interpret, and make relevant decisions about those materials' (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:18).

a) The Sanctity of Evidence

The relationships that information professionals build interact closely with other disciplines and outlooks. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) gives an example: 'the practices and perspectives of information scientists have been strongly influenced by science and computer science. Archives are closely aligned with professions such as law, history, journalism, anthropology, and archaeology (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:18). A definition for the evidence in the archival science can thus be defined as:

> The passive ability of documents and objects and their associated contexts to provide insight into the processes, activities, and events that led to their creation for legal, historical, archaeological, and other purposes (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:18).

The archive needs to maintain the importance of evidential value not only for the creators of the materials but also for the researchers as they are subject to legal or regulatory requirements. Data reformatting and preservation are fundamental practices in the process of digitising library and archival materials. Information professionals, when digitally reformatting their collections, need to be mindful of the intrinsic characteristics of the subject matter they are preserving, such as a) the weight of the paper, b) when a digital copy will suffice, c) whether a copy needs to be high or low res and d) colour of black or white. Equally important, the information professional must decide the scope of the collection that needs to be digitized and what metadata will enable a user to place information objects in context.

Both collective and contextual descriptions play an essential role within the context of archival science. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) explains that the key is to describe the collection's physical aspects and intellectual structure that may not be apparent and to provide enough contextual information for the user to understand the historical circumstances and organisational processes of the creation of the objects. The description should also demonstrate that the physical and intellectual forms of the materials have not been altered in any undocumented way (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:19). As a result, the preservation of digital materials is where the evidential value is at most risk of being compromised. With the constant refining and upgrading of both hardware and software, the digital collections must be preserved and are compatible with any system or hardware upgrade.

b) Respect des Fonds, Provenance, and Original Order

These clusters of principles, even though they can be interpreted differently, utilizing different archival traditions, represent the core components of archival theory and practise based on the blend of intellectual and pragmatic rationales. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) defines these three principles in the table 2.9 below.

Table 2.7 Three Principles of archival theory (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:20).

Respect des Fonds	States that records should be grouped according to the nature of the institution that accumulated them.
Provenance	It has two components: records of the exact provenance should not be mixed with those of different provenance, and the archivist should maintain original order.
Original Order	In which the records were created and kept.

With the inclusion of these three principles, we can ensure the 'intellectual integrity of aggregations of records is maintained and that individual records are always contextualized' (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:21). This creates a less resource-intensive solution for accessing high-volume collections rather than collections classified by subject and the cataloguing of individual documents. Due to the large volume of digital information that has not gone through editorial and publication processes, the archival approach noted by Gilliland-Swetland (2000):

> Offers the concept of collective arrangement and description according to the provenance of the materials; these provide benefits even when information managers or users are not interested in the evidential value of the materials. Applying these concepts makes it possible to unite related digital, nondigital, and predigital materials according to their intellectual rather than physical characteristics. These concepts build context, which is a powerful and underused tool for facilitating understanding and ultimately creating knowledge. They prompt the user to consider the degree to which the material's source is authoritative. The archival approach focuses on the context, organic development, and content of the collection, allowing the user to ask the 'how'. 'why', and 'so what' questions so integral to research (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:22).

c) The life Cycle of Records

Traditionally the model to record the lifecycle of records contained two phases. In the *first phase*, the archive administrators create and use records for their primary use. Logical systems were created to classify and register the records whilst implementing procedures to ensure the integrity of the record. Archivists would ensure that all active records were scheduled for permanent retention or systematic elimination as records age; they become referenced less frequently until finally becoming inactive. In the *second phase*, the long-term integrity of the record is ensured by a neutral third-party archive. Duranti (1996) states that when the records enter the archives, they are physically and intellectually integrated with other archival materials of the exact provenance, thus establishing the archival bond (Duranti 1996:55). Gilliland-Swetland (2000) refines the characteristics of this archival bond by stating that the records' physical integrity is ensured through preservation management; their intellectual integrity through their archival description. Archival records are then available for secondary use (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:23).

Changes in record creation methods in relation to the digital environment have led archivists to consider how to apply the discussed traditional life cycle model. An example of a life cycle model based on a nonarchival digital information framework named the Information Life Cycle model, developed in 1996 at the National Science Foundation Workshop on the Social Aspects of Digital Libraries at the University of California, is depicted below in Figure 2.21.

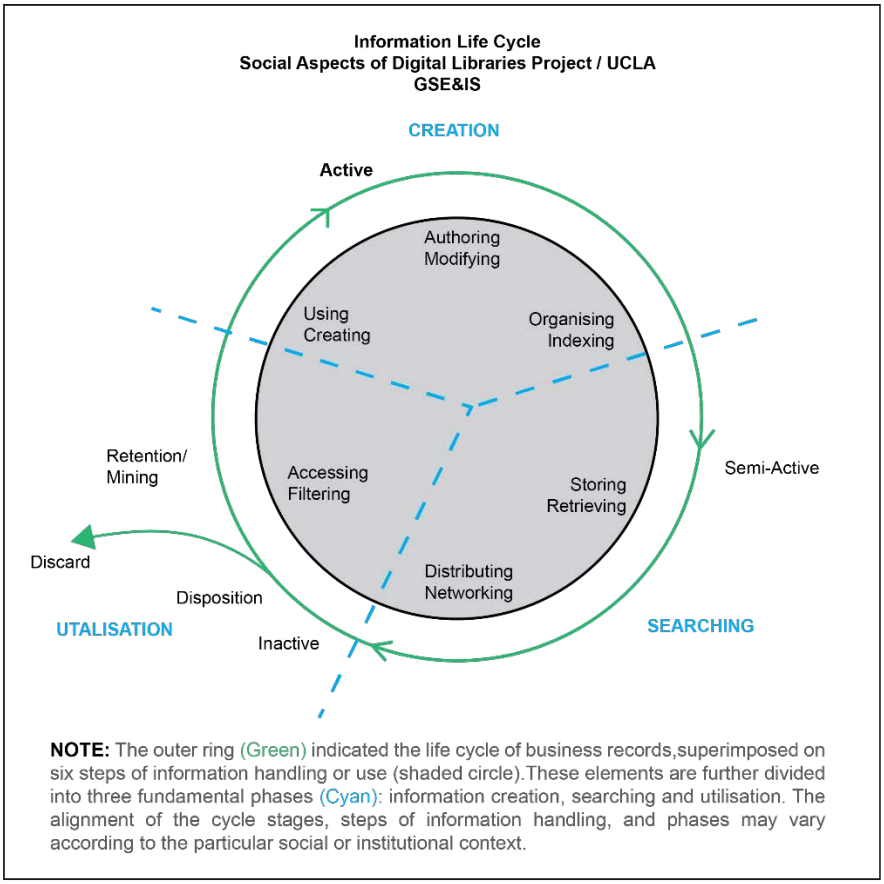


Figure 2.21 The Information Life Cycle. Taken from (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:23).Re-drawn by R. van As

This model represents the flow of information in a given social system. It emphasizes the technologically based information storage and retrieval aspects of a digital library, as well as the belief that digital libraries should be constructed to accommodate the actual tasks and activities involved in creating, seeking, and using information resources (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:24).

d) The Organic Nature of Records

When an individual or organization generate materials, there is an independent relationship between the material and the creator. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) explains that: 'a complex web of relationships also exists between the materials and the historical, legal, and procedural contexts of their development, as well as among all materials created by the same activity. The organic nature of records refers to all these inter-relationships, and archival

practices are designed to collectively document, capture, and exploit them' (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:24). This makes it easier to recognize the value of an individual record within its location, while also allowing for consideration and understanding of its historical, legal, procedural, and documentary context. When it comes to web resources, the perspectives gained above aid in preserving these web resources:

> Resources created on the Web are not unlike archival *fonds* in that they include a complex of hyperlinks to pages related by provenance, topic, or some other feature. An advantage in the Web environment is that hyperlinks are explicit rather than largely implicit, as is the case with paper records. As a result, those who manage and use these resources can more easily identify and exploit organic relationships. A Web page without hyperlinks may be less valuable to users because of its diminished evidential content (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:26).

d) Hierarchy in Records and their Descriptions

The structure of information content and its metadata can be both intellectual and physical, which exist within an information object, collections of information objects, and descriptions of those information objects (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:26). Hierarchical structures are exploited and recognized, developing and utilizing these hierarchies to model information for humans, resulting in information systems having hierarchical characteristics. To maintain the authenticity and intellectual form of records, diplomatics is used. There are three primary components, *protocol*, *text* and *eschatocol,* supported through diplomatics that help maintain the intellectual formation of records. For example, the 'protocol' element of an artefact could include the name of the author, the date the record was created, the name of the person to whom the record is directed, and the subject of the record. The 'eschatocol' for the artefact would contain elements that validate the document, such as the official title of the author and signatures of witnesses and countersignatures (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:26). Gilliland-Swetland (2000) gives more clarity in the area of hierarchy by noting that:

> Records have an innate hierarchy imposed by the creating agency's filing practices and position in a bureaucratic hierarchy and by the processes through which the

> records were created. A *fond* may contain *sous-fonds,* or a record group may contain subgroups, which may, in turn, contain many series of records, each relating to a different activity. Individual record series may be divided into subseries and even subsidiaries, which may be further divided into filing units that contain individual documents (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:27).

Traditionally, the archival description, based on the inventories and registers, referred to as finding aids, has reflected the hierarchy. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) notes that: 'a high-level summary description provides essential intellectual control and collection management information for a set of records; progressively more granular descriptions are prepared for subordinate levels in the hierarchy (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:27). Gilliland-Swetland (2000:27), note that there are four key advantages to employing high-level summary descriptions in archival practice. First, such descriptions serve to document the entirety of records associated with a specific provenance, capturing their original arrangement as well as the full chain of custody that led to their arrival under archival control. This comprehensive overview reinforces the contextual integrity of the records. Second, high-level summary descriptions offer significant economic benefits by describing records collectively rather than at the item level, therefore archivists can reduce the time and financial resources required for processing. This hierarchical approach allows for selective, more detailed description only where the value of the materials or anticipated patterns of use justifies it. Thirdly, this method aligns well with the practical needs of both historical and bureaucratic research. Because it often mirrors the original arrangement of the records, it presents users with a logical structure through which materials can be searched and understood. And finally, high-level summary descriptions are adaptable across various types of collections. They do not depend on the nature of the materials or require customized approaches for different formats, making them a versatile tool within archival systems.

Hierarchical and collective descriptions in a digital environment lend themselves to object-orientated metadata structures such as SGML[3]. This turned descriptive practices from cumbersome into a robust infrastructure, ideal for online information systems. In addition, EAD (Encoded Archival Description) is an archival metadata standard that allows for the hierarchical structuring of archival information. Gilliland-Swetland (2000) discribes that EAD facilitates the preservation of intellectual and physical relationships among records, thus supporting the archival principles of origin, original order, and respect des fonds. In the context of this thesis, EAD is important not only that it was directly implemented, but because it exemplifies the broader challenges and frameworks involved in structuring archival metadata for digital collections. Although the digital archive developed in this study did not adopt EAD in its technical implementation, the conceptual importance of hierarchical description and contextual metadata strongly influenced the approach to organising and interpreting the tattoo works of Harry Ramesar. Including EAD in the literature review thus anchors the project within professional archival discourse and highlights the need for metadata structures that preserve both the evidential and cultural value of visual records. A data structure for preparing encoded digital finding aids, EAD permits a collection to be searched at different levels of description and links to be built to descriptions of organically related materials or digitised versions of the materials (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:27). The high-level model of the EAD document type has three major intellectual components:

a) **eadheader**: provides bibliographic and description information about the encoded finding aid.
b) **frontmatter**: contains the pre-factory information about the creation, publication, or use of the finding aid.
c) **archdesc**: describes the content, context, and extent of the archival materials being described.

[3] Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) is the parent language to HTML (“SGML” n.d.)

(Gilliland-Swetland 2000:27).

The figure 2.22 below gives an example of the high-level model with the three major intellectual components discussed above.

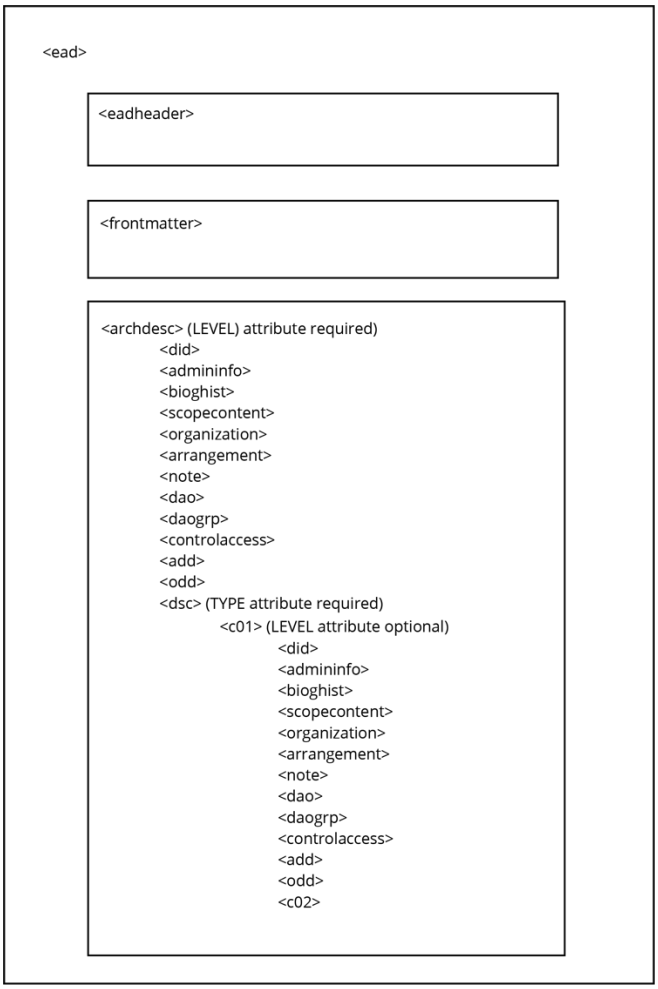


Figure 2.22 High-level model for the encoded archival description document type definition (Society of American Archivists Encoded Archival Description Working Group 1999). Taken from (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:28).Re-drawn by R. van As

Gilliland-Swetland (2000) breaks down the structure of this high-level model by stating that: 'each component contains a complex hierarchy of nested elements, the most complex of which is *archdesc*. As indicated in the high-level model, *archdesc* contains many elements, each of which is also available for use at lower levels in the hierarchy. The LEVEL attribute

indicates the level at which the element is occurring within the descriptive hierarchy. The tag for the description of subordinate components (<dsc>) indicated how components at each level are further subdivided. Up to 12 numbered or unnumbered components can be nested with each <dsc> (Gilliland-Swetland 2000:28).

2.5.2 The Progression of Archival Science

The blueprint of archival science, as in any other science, is continuously evolving through the factors of speculating, experimenting, inventing, changing and improving. Social and cultural phenomena are at the forefront of the digital age, not just the technical opportunities and challenges that develop. Ketelaar reviews the 1995 book titled *Being Digital* by Nicholas that:

> Negroponte explores the digital age where the creation and communication of digital information have become more important than the production and distribution of physical information or, as Negroponte expresses it: from atoms to bits. Moreover, Negroponte foresaw that intelligence would move from sender to receiver, from push to pull: bits are no longer pushed to the people, but people and machines themselves pull them. Information on request will rule digital life: we are going to ask what we want, explicitly and implicitly, the moment we want it and in what format we want it. This means that we will not all watch the eight o'clock news at the very moment, but that I, as an individual, will watch or read the news in the measure, the quantity, and at the time I wish to do this: broad catching instead of broadcasting. Information is being strongly individualized with the aid of intelligent machines that understand people as individuals, not as part of the masses (Ketelaar 2007:170).

Being Digital predicts that the physical interface will disappear, echoed by the writings decades ago of Joseph Licklider in 1960, where he forecasted that information-producing systems are made by a link between the human brain and the computer. Currently, within our own daily lives, computers have become invisible. This is evident in the elements that play a part in our daily lives, such as cars, planes, telephones, audio, and video, as well as the

machines we utilise in industry, agriculture, healthcare and service. Ketelaar (2007) explains that:

> If we look at technology alone, we miss the sight of the cultural practice which is being facilitated by that technology. People do not want to wield a PC: they want to record their ideas 'somewhere', develop them by involving other people 'in common', by communicating through space and time. The technology changes the content of what has to be archived—technology conditions not only the form or the structure but also the content of the writing. Of course, technology is not the only factor which determines form and content because cognitive and cultural agencies also play an important role (Ketelaar 2007:173).

In the digital age we live in, potentially every object and/or device is embedded with a) some sort of computing and b) is connected to a network, resulting in people living and working in *ambient intelligence*[4]. This makes access to specified information more accessible and quicker to obtain digitally than previous methods. When one looks at the content, structure and form of paper records, they are contained in the physical arrangement of the document. Digital records, however, contain their content, structure and form in digital representations, which can be generated in various ways to engage the viewer thus making the digital archive accessible to anyone with a data connection.

2.5.3 ISO 15489 - Records management

ISO 15489 was created to establish the core concepts and principles for creating, capturing and managing records (ISO 2016). This provides guidance and instruction on the concepts,

[4] Ambient intelligence is an emerging discipline that brings intelligence to our everyday environments and makes those environments sensitive to us. Ambient intelligence (AmI) research builds upon advances in sensors and sensor networks, pervasive computing, and artificial intelligence (Cook, Augusto & Jakkula 2009).

techniques and practices for creating, capturing and managing records based on several International Standards and Technical Reports. Records are assets that inform both evidence of an archive and the information they possess. ISO (2016) notes that managing records encompasses the following two functions:

a) Creating and capturing records to meet requirements for evidence of business activity (in this study, the 'business' will refer to the archive);
b) Taking appropriate action to protect their authenticity, reliability, integrity and useability as their business context and requirements for their management change over time.

(ISO 2016:v).

To ensure that the digital archive aligns with international standards for recordkeeping, the project incorporates key principles from ISO 2016 regarding records and record systems. At the core of these standards is the understanding that records serve both as evidence of activity and as information assets. Records must possess four essential characteristics, namely authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability, which are to be considered authoritative. These qualities are safeguarded through proper creation, capture, and long-term management practices, all of which were considered in the design of the Ramesar archive. The system's compliance is further reinforced through clear policies and defined responsibilities, which include the assignment of roles for record creators and managers, supported by procedures that ensure consistency in record creation, metadata entry, access control, and monitoring. Competence and training are also emphasised, highlighting the importance of ensuring all individuals involved in recordkeeping are properly equipped to carry out their duties in a manner consistent with best practices.

A central component of the records framework is appraisal, which is the process of determining which records need to be created, how long they should be retained, and under what circumstances they may be disposed of, thus ensuring that only the necessary and meaningful records are preserved, reducing digital clutter and focusing the digital archive on its most valuable artefacts. Appraisal also involves understanding the functions and business

activities driving record creation, which in this case includes client interviews, tattoo design documentation, and cultural narratives tied to Ramesar's work as a tattoo artist. Ultimately, the processes for creating, capturing, and managing records are fully integrated into the workflow of the digital archive. Metadata standards based on identity, description, use, events, and relationships were adapted to support access, retrieval, and preservation and permissions and access rules were implemented to safeguard any sensitive material while allowing meaningful interaction with the digital archive. Together, these practices provide a structured and sustainable approach to digital archiving, ensuring that the Ramesar collection remains accessible, reliable, and culturally respectful over time. The full tabulated standards and documentation on record management, which this study follows in accordance with international guidelines, are provided in Appendix F of this study.

2.6 Perspective 4: Digital humanities and digital heritage design

Digital humanities at present encompass a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary concerns, from visual culture and gamification to AI ethics and sensory media. This reflects a move away from Anglo-American canons and toward a global, pluralistic approach that embraces social critique and posthumanist theory (Duridanov 2018). Duridanov (2018) notes the new conceptual frameworks such as 'digitally born' aesthetics and project-based, where participatory labs exemplify a pedagogical shift that connects creative practice with cultural critique thus laying the groundwork for new forms of digital cultural literacy (Duridanov 2018:27). This is particularly evident in initiatives like the Digital Humanities Creative Lab at New Bulgarian University, which demonstrates how visual immediacy, emotional AI interfaces, and multimodal storytelling contribute to the emergence of a new 'visual language' for digital natives (Duridanov 2018:27–30).

In parallel, digital heritage design has expanded beyond the digitization of static collections toward interactive, immersive, and participatory models that challenge the presumed neutrality of visual technologies. Rico (2013) argues that the dominance of scopic regimes and technoscientific rationalism in heritage conservation tends to obscure the political dimensions of cultural memory and identity (Rico 2013:539). These critiques emphasise the importance of addressing whose heritage is represented, preserved, or erased

through digital intervention. Critical heritage studies provide a crucial theoretical anchor for this critique. Pioneered by Gentry and Smith (2019), the field repositions heritage not as an objective truth but as a 'discursive construction' that is deeply entangled in questions of power, affect, and representation (Gentry and Smith 2019:1149). According to Winter (2013), critical heritage studies is obligated to go beyond critique to engage productively with global issues such as urbanisation, displacement, sustainability, and digital colonialism. Winter (2013), calls for a 'post-western' heritage perspective that speaks to emerging epistemologies and localised digital practices (Winter 2013:532-543).

This study contributes to this discourse by integrating the epistemic frameworks of both digital humanities and critical heritage studies to examine digital heritage design as a contested and creative site of cultural production. It responds to calls from both fields to reconceptualise digital technologies not merely as tools, but as cultural artefacts embedded within broader ethical and political ecologies (Duridanov 2018; Gentry and Smith 2019; Winter 2013). Through this lens, digital heritage is understood not just as a medium of preservation, but as an active, situated practice of negotiation, where one that must account for a variety of identities, local narratives, and non-western temporalities. The inclusion of Broderick (1983) in this study is deliberate, serving to ground the research within the early theoretical discourse surrounding the digital as a transformative cultural paradigm. Broderick's work provides a valuable historical lens through which to examine the origins of digital thinking, particularly in relation to communication, memory, media systems, and the concepts that remain central to contemporary digital heritage practice. While more recent scholarship has expanded the scope of digital humanities and critical heritage studies, revisiting Broderick enables a critical reflection on how foundational theories continue to inform present-day digital design frameworks. Broderick (1983) contribution bridges the speculative, emergent digital epistemologies of the early nineteen eighties with current interdisciplinary approaches, offering a conceptual continuity that strengthens the theoretical grounding of this study. Positioned alongside more contemporary voices such as Smith (2006), Winter (2013), Duridanov (2018), and Broderick's (2018) work reinforces the argument that digital heritage design must not only be innovative and participatory but also critically self-aware and historically situated.

This study falls within the broad scope of the humanities. Understanding the humanities as a foundation will allow this study to be refined and find its mark within the humanities umbrella. Broderick (1983) notes that: 'a useful place to start is the law that defines the orbit of National Endowment for Humanities[5]: 'The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism, and theory of the arts; those aspects of social science which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life' (Broderick 1983).

The classification of the disciplines mentioned above is not enough as areas that fall outside these disciplines, for example, biology, could fall under the umbrella of the humanities. Broderick (1983) states that 'the true test of the humanities arise from the state of mind, an approach to truth, a manner of commitment, not from a list of disciplines' (Broderick 1983). According to Broderick (1983), the humanities occupy a distinct space within the broader landscape of human knowledge. First and foremost, they are defined by a central concern for human beings themselves, rather than the impersonal processes of nature or the structural dynamics of society. This human-centred orientation distinguishes the humanities from other domains of inquiry. In addition, the humanities place primary emphasis on the individual as opposed to the collective. This is particularly significant for this study, which similarly resides within a framework that prioritises individual perspective and experience. The focus on the individual fosters a deeper engagement with personal meaning-making and subjective interpretation. A third characteristic of the humanities is their cultivation of a quiet, self-conscious awareness, an epistemological sensitivity to how we come to know what we know. This introspective dimension encourages critical reflection on the nature and limits of human understanding. The humanities maintain a sustained attention to moral values, regardless of whether these are understood to originate from divine

[5] an independent federal agency based in the United States that provides funding and support for research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities.

authority, human agency, or the natural world. This ethical dimension underscores the role of the humanities in grappling with questions of right and wrong, purpose, and meaning.

Finally, Broderick argues that intellectual growth within the humanities necessitates a process that integrates forthright moral judgment alongside the pursuit of accurate, descriptive knowledge. In this view, moral evaluation is not merely an complement to knowledge, but a coequal partner, integral to the full development of human insight and understanding.

2.6.1 Digital humanities

Throughout the history of technologies, for example, the printing press, engagement with information technology is not new to humanists. Svensson (2016) notes that: 'there is a rich critical literature on older media and technologies within the humanities. Although humanists may not have been the foremost adopter of new layers of digital technology, this pattern also applies to other parts of the academy' (Svensson 2016:1). The intention of digital humanities is not to cure the technophobia that may exist in the humanities or elegantly incorporate technology into the humanities, creating a 'split between the humanities and the digital humanities'. Svensson (2016) gives the following example:

> Research materials in most humanities disciplines are increasingly available in digital formats. This is true not only of cultural records that have been and are being digitized but also of digitally born materials that are becoming more and more relevant for humanities research and teaching. Both types of materials typically require careful digitization processes, encoding, and systematization. Such processes are methodologically laden and come with competing worldviews and assumptions. Expertise, collaboration, and well-thought-out practices are needed to ensure the quality and rigour of the materials (Svensson 2016:1).

Many large scale digital materials require tools and applications to 'manage, retrieve, and search for the data'. When attempting to define digital humanities, Svensson (2016) observes that: 'The field of digital humanities has a reputation for being difficult to define and

preoccupied with defining itself. The instability and imprecision of the term ‘digital humanities’ results not only from the field that is new and growing but also from a set of uncertainties and a reliance on binary oppositions (such as individual-collaborative and methodological-critical). Some of these uncertainties and oppositional pairs must be overcome, while others may well be constructive and useful to the development of the field’ (Svensson 2016:4). Ramsay (2011) notes that, ‘Nowadays, the term can mean anything from media studies to electronic art, from data mining to edutech, from scholarly annotating to anarchic blogging, while inviting code junkies, digital artists, standards wonks, transhumanists, game theorists, free culture advocates, archivists, librarians, and edupunks under its capacious canvas' (Ramsay 2011).

A significant factor is the growth in the scale and visibility of digital humanities; while previously a relatively niche and often overlooked field, it has expanded considerably in scope over the past two decades. For example, Ramsay’s broad definition of digital humanities (2011) reflects an early stage of this development, whereas Svensson (2016) builds on this by highlighting the field’s increasing institutional presence and interdisciplinary reach. Svensson (2016) explains that 'scope is critical for the current discussion of how to define the digital humanities. Big digital humanities rely on the large scope and an inclusive notion of digital humanities. According to this definition, the field encompasses the area between the humanities, its full richness, and 'the digital'. The digital is taken to include information technologies, digital media and different types of digitally enabled modalities, tools, and expressions. Being in between (liminal) is important for facilitating this kind of digital humanities’ (Svensson 2016:4). The function of the digital humanities is not to promote one tradition or field that is either being changed or challenged but instead to allow curiosity and exchange to drive intellectual and material development. Svensson (2016) lists below in Table 2.8, the modes of engagement when describing the interaction between the humanities and the digital.

Table 2.8 The Five Modes of Engagement. Source: (Svensson 2016:5) and (*Making Things and Drawing Boundaries* 2017:23).

Five Modes of Engagement Describing the interrelation between the humanities and the digital.	
1. Technology as a tool	highlights the instrumentality of production and related processes. It has been especially strong in text analysis, text encoding, and mark-up systems in corpus stylistics, digitisation, preservation, and curation.
2. As a study object	digital is an object of analysis, aligning the field more closely with cultural studies and critique.
3. As an expressive medium	benchmarks new modes of communication, including born-digital and multimodal forms of expression ranging from long-form blogging to interactive hybrids of text, image and sound, engaging authors and designers in collaborative production.
4. As an experimental laboratory	has become an important site for exploring ideas, testing tools, and modifying data sets and complex objects.
5. As an activist venue	it aligns digital humanities with change, prioritising inclusion, accessibility, and the democratic imperative of social justice.

Svensson notes that these five modes are not airtight and describes them as 'both borders of difference and junctures of overlapping interest' (*Making Things and Drawing Boundaries* 2017:23). For example, Mode two – as a study object– aligns technology with socio-political change when one critiques the dominant structure of knowledge and information technologies. Furthermore, mode five – as an activist venue– blurs the boundaries of genre. This study encompasses all five modes of engagement. In this study, five distinct modes of engagement are used to explore the interrelation between the humanities and the digital, each contributing to the conceptual and practical framework of the research. Firstly, *technology as a tool* is foregrounded through its instrumental role in the processes of production, particularly evident in practices such as text analysis, text encoding, and the use of mark-up systems in corpus stylistics. These functions extend to digitization, preservation, and curation. These activities are central to the creation of the digital archive developed in this study, which encompasses a carefully curated collection of artefacts, brought into digital

form and preserved through systematic digitisation processes. Secondly, *the digital as a study object* positions digital material as subject to analysis, thereby aligning the work more closely with cultural studies and critical theory. In this context, the artefact collection itself becomes an object of inquiry, representing the professional and cultural contributions of a pioneer tattoo artist in South Africa. The digital archive not only houses artefacts but also serves as a lens through which broader cultural narratives and practices are examined.

Thirdly, the study engages *the digital as an expressive medium*, showcasing the potential of born-digital and multimodal forms of communication. The digital archive integrates written accounts, video, and sound recordings, enabling a layered, collaborative mode of storytelling. These forms of expression allow for a dynamic presentation of rare tattoo-related artefacts and eyewitness testimonies, thus enriching the narrative with multiple voices and formats. Fourthly, the archive operates *as an experimental laboratory*, providing a platform for the exploration of ideas, the testing of digital tools, and the adaptation of data sets into more complex digital objects. Since much of the collection has not previously been accessible to the public, its digitisation initiates an opportunity to experiment with the design and functionality of an interactive digital archive platform, inviting iterative development and user feedback. Finally, the archive takes shape *as an activist venue*, aligning itself with the values of inclusion, accessibility, and the social justice imperatives often associated with digital humanities. Through its commitment to preserving and sharing the legacy of Harry Ramesar, a South African tattoo pioneer, the digital archive becomes a means of historical recognition and cultural validation, ensuring that his contributions are not only documented but also made accessible to diverse audiences.

The digital humanities embrace ten complementary modes of work with a variety of tools that provide support to these practices. These modes are digitization, crowdsourcing, archives and databases, digital curation, texts, editing, visualisation, geospatialisation, gaming and code. The Table 2.14 below explains each mode.

Table 2.9 Complementary Modes of Work. Source: (Poole 2017:99-104).

Complementary Modes of Work
1. Digitisation The creation of a computerised representation of printed materials. Digitisation allows the republication or display of out-of-print materials or materials in previously inaccessible formats, the reunification or enrichment of collections, searchability, media integration, the opportunity for user participation, crowdsourcing, remote user access, and overall institutional visibility.
2. Crowdsourcing A maturing phenomenon that lacks a comprehensive definition, crowdsourcing effectively involves outsourcing a task. The crowd can assist with creating, selecting, transcribing, editing, cataloguing, tagging, annotating, and contextualizing content with problem-solving and knowledge organisation. Yet obstacles include recruiting knowledgeable and committed contributors, ensuring the reasonable quality of their work, and accounting for authority, reliability, and trust.
3. Archives and databases The archive constitutes a hub of digital humanities. More than ever, archivists meld the roles of steward, collaborator, scholar, editor, and publisher. Most commonly defined archives as online groupings of digital copies of non-digital original materials. Often comprised of materials (many of which are publications) located in different physical repositories or collections, purposefully selected and arranged to support a scholarly goal. **Databases** Some scholars argue that databases constitute the 'new' archives. In academia, databases made their debut almost coevally with computers as vehicles to facilitate organisation and retrieval. Like archives, databases are a central facet of digital humanities.
4. Digital curation Addresses the management of digital assets from their creation on to ensure present and future authentic fit for purpose. In other words, digital curation adds value and counteracts media degradation and hardware and software obsolescence.
5. Texts: encoding and mark-up, mining and analysis Text encoding and mark-up permit the representation of all types of textually-based objects; it proved pivotal in the maturation of digital editing and textual scholarship. Encoding and mark-up bring together social, historical, and dialogical concerns to identify and contextualize a document.
6. Scholarly editing and digital editions

Textual editing represents a long-time pillar of digital humanities. Early digital editions effectively mimicked print structures, thus concentrating on a 'whole text' (representational) strategy that foregrounded form and materiality.
7. Visualisation Information visualisation involves engaging persons' pattern-recognition skills and thus around spatial interactivity and perspectivity. Perhaps most importantly, it complicates facile interpretations of the past and engenders new research questions.
8. Geospatialisation Mapping in digital humanities includes memory, linguistic, cultural, conceptual, community, and counter-mapping.
9. Gaming The study of games delivers new challenges and opportunities related to narrative authority and interpretation. Optimal games allow players to tackle problems; gaming can enable multiple learning styles and engage players at several levels simultaneously through text, graphics, animation, audio, algorithms, and haptic feedback.
10. Code 'Basic' literacy in digital humanities.

This study directly interacts with nine of the ten modes of work discussed above, with the study's representation of each mode discussed below:

Digitization

This study requires transforming physical artefacts into visual representations that can be viewed digitally. During the time of this study, not during the time of the study, but when Harry Ramesar was working, there was no digital technology, which resulted in every artefact being either produced by hand or reproduced by the printing methods utilized during the time. The digitization of these artefacts is vital in creating a digital archive.

Crowdsourcing

The vast collection of tattoo tracings in the collection leads to the interaction of past clients of Harry Ramesar. These clients can give first-hand accounts of their interaction and experiences with Harry based on the approved interview questions, which aid in the 'creating, selecting, transcribing, editing, cataloguing, tagging, annotating, and contextualizing content, problem-solving, and knowledge organization' (Poole 2017:99).

Archives and databases

The focus of this study is an online archive of the artefacts of pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. Therefore this model forms the primary function of this study. Whilst this primary function will be an archive, all entries and/or information will be recorded in a database in the website's backend[6] for access to the relevant authorized parties.

Digital curation

The correct, authentic fit for purpose will be observed and implemented to transform the original artefacts into digital representations. The key is to capture the 'raw' nature of the artefacts in their natural form and mimic the same characteristics when creating their digital representation in the digital archive.

Texts: encoding and mark-up, mining and analysis

Text encoding was applied in the context of a WordPress-based digital archive to ensure that the metadata and content describing Harry Ramesar's tattoo designs could be structured, searchable, and contextually meaningful. The principles of text encoding, such as semantic tagging, hierarchical structuring, and metadata consistency, were adapted to the platform's capabilities through the use of custom metadata fields, and plug-ins. One of the critical components of this digital archive is the ability for individuals to submit written accounts of their interactions with Harry Ramesar. These accounts fall within the scope of stories, comments, experiences and statements. Any written text can be submitted to the archive and, once vetted by an authorised webmaster, can be uploaded to the archive.

Scholarly editing and digital editions

[6] The backend (or 'server-side') is the portion of the website you don't see. It's responsible for storing and organizing data, and ensuring everything on the client-side actually works (Ferguson 2021).

While this study is scholarly in its purpose and execution, it is important to distinguish between a digital scholarly edition and a digital archive. Although both may be underpinned by rigorous academic principles, they serve different purposes. A digital scholarly edition typically involves the critical editing, annotation, and presentation of one or more texts, often with an emphasis on textual accuracy, interpretation, and editorial transparency. In contrast to this, a digital archive is designed to collect, organise, and preserve a broader range of materials, often diverse and contrasting in form, for the purpose of long-term access and use. This study presents a digital archive that curates and contextualises the visual artefacts associated with Harry Ramesar's tattoo career, rather than producing a critically edited collection. The archive has been purpose-designed using digital humanities methodologies to ensure sustainability, accessibility, and cultural relevance as digital platforms evolve.

Visualisation

In this study, the digital archive represents not only the visual documentation of Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts, through the representation of photographs, scans, and digital reproductions but furthermore engages with broader practices of visualisation as understood in the digital humanities. While visual representation refers to the inclusion of images that preserve the look and form of artefacts, visualisation in the digital humanities typically refers to the imaginative structuring or graphical rendering of complex data (Svensson 2016). This thesis makes a distinction between these two modes. In this study, visualisation refers to the digital structuring of artefacts using metadata categories such as tattoo flash, tattoo tracings and tattoo themes, thus enabling users to navigate, search, and interpret the archive in non-linear, comparative, and thematic ways. In doing so, the archive allows users not only to view artefacts from a pioneer South African tattoo artist, but to explore patterns and relationships across the collection, thus opening up new modes of scholarly and cultural engagement.

Geospatialisation

This study focuses on one individual who applied his trade in one location throughout his entire career. This results in a 'melting pot' of information based on the definition mentioned above:

- *Memory*: Participants will reflect on their memories when contributing to this study.
- *Linguistic:* South Africa is a fusion of different languages both in the past and still present today.
- *Cultural:* South Africa is a diverse 'melting pot' of cultures, which combine to create the unique country we all see today. Harry Ramesar was of Indian descent, a minority group in Apartheid South Africa, who were treated as such, yet he still carved his way as a tattoo pioneer who tattooed all races, cultures and social statuses.
- *Community:* This can be viewed two-fold. One is the communities where Harry Ramesar worked, and two is the tattoo community that came to him for tattoos. During the height of his career, tattoos were seen as a deviant practise; therefore, there was a very niche 'community' that had or wanted tattoos.
- Code: The digital archive will be created using custom code to build a made-for-purpose archive. This code will be unique to the digital archive.

Poole (2017) notes that there are overarching concerns that the digital humanities face regarding their position in the scholarly communication infrastructure and institutions of higher education (Poole 2017:104). The following broad issues merit attention: interdisciplinarity, collaboration, cyberinfrastructure, project management, sustainability, and education. Table 2.20 below gives each issue more clarity with regards to the concern, definition and the study's solution.

Table 2.10 Overarching Concerns of Digital Humanities. Source: (Poole 2017: 104-106).

Overarching Concerns of the Digital Humanities		
Concern	Definition	Study Solution
1. Interdisciplinary cooperation	Interdisciplinary work is difficult, first because of collaborators' diverse attitudes regarding how to approach a research problem and conduct the actual work,	Interdisciplinary cooperation was limited in this study due to the focused nature of the team. However, two instances reflect disciplinary interaction:

	and second, stakeholders develop goals during rather than prior to their collaboration; continuous renegotiation is necessary.	1. As primary researcher, I operated across archival research, digital curation, and interface design. 2. Collaboration with the archive developer, though initially guided by researcher-defined briefs, involved iterative feedback and adjustments that aligned with usability and accessibility goals, reflecting an applied, if asymmetrical, co-design process. The co-creation process with the Ramesar family, while central to the project, is more accurately described as participatory design and community engagement rather than interdisciplinary collaboration.
2. Collaboration	Collaboration centres on a shared understanding of language, terminology, methods, theories, tasks and workflows, values, goals, and outcomes. Research teams need to cultivate trust and ultimately consensus through communication to effect legitimate collaboration.	The principal collaboration will be between myself, the Ramesar family and the study interviewees. Any other contributions to the online archive will be agreed upon by both parties, following the ethics guidelines approved for this study.

3. Cyberinfrastructure	The layer of information, Expertise, standards, policies, tools, and services are shared broadly across communities but developed for specific scholarly purposes. It addresses two symbiotic needs: scale (dealing with the amount of data) and specialized content (rendering said content accessible).	The online archive for this study is purpose-built to: a) accommodate any requirements of the study and, b) be developed in such a way that it is efficient, easily accessible and has the ability to update as technologies progress.
4. Project management	Digital humanities projects depend upon adept project management since human resources invariably constitute the most expensive part of a digital humanities endeavour.	While the studies digital archive's backend was configured for efficient handling of a large volume of artefacts and metadata with minimal lag, project management extended beyond technological infrastructure. In practice, the project management involved careful coordination of human resources, particularly in the stages of data collection, content preparation, digitisation, metadata entry, and review. I developed a timeline that aligned key tasks such as artifacts photography, the scanning of materials, editing images, and uploading content with available resources. For example, archive structure and artefact descriptions were scheduled early to ensure that metadata could be structured in advance of upload. The relevant stakeholders worked in

		staggered phases to allow for feedback and version control and communication was maintained through protected shared folders and regular check-ins (virtual or in-person), therefore ensuring accountability and consistency in file naming, categorisation, and narrative coherence. This phased and collaborative approach helped ensure the archive's quality and sustainability while remaining within scope.
5. Sustainability	Creators of online scholarly resources often struggle to justify the general value of their work, not least because reliable metrics are wanting. Thus even high-profile projects may rely upon short-term and one-off funding.	Funding granted for this study and the time taken to complete this study will enable the digital archive to go live in time for the in-depth interviews to commence. A minimal yearly hosting fee will apply going forward.
6. Education	Though digital humanities programs continue to proliferate, a standard curriculum – much less best practices – has yet to coalesce. Digital media undercut longstanding pedagogical boundaries regarding authorship, audience, and a work's unity and finality.	Due to the popularity of the tattoo industry today and the relatively sparse scholarly knowledge of South African tattoo artists, this study will contribute to this field and act as a 'source book' of tattoos created and produced during that time.

The term digital humanities thus broadly represents this study's principles based on the definitions given by Svensson (2016) and Ramsay (2011) at the beginning of the digital humanities section of this study. This study will take cultural records and digitize them, which

will require a careful digitalization process, encoding and systematization. Expertise, collaboration, and well-thought-out practices will be utilized to create a scholarly archive that advances the field of knowledge. Digital humanities thus create the broad disciplinary context within which this study resides. This might be sufficient, but if a delicate eco-system could support this study better within the digital humanities, this will need to be explored. Such an eco-system, namely *Visual Digital Humanities,* has been identified and will be explored below.

2.6.2 Visual Digital Humanities

Traditionally the field of digital humanities has been formulated as a text-based discipline, although the increase in the utilization of both digital visualization and visual analysis has been used for research in various humanities disciplines. Terras and Münster (2020) note that:

> Since there are several overlaps in epistemic cultures of visually oriented and digitally supported research in art and architectural history studies, museology, and archaeology, as well as cultural heritage, we introduce 'visual digital humanities' as a novel 'umbrella' term to cover research approaches in the digital humanities that are dependent on both consuming and producing pictorial, rather than textual, information to answer their humanities research questions (Terras and Münster 2020: 366).

The visual digital humanities thus refine the scope of research approaches of this study and allow for a more refined context to formulate and discuss the digital archive. Terras and Münster (2020) comment that 'visual digital humanities encompass the supported computational research on complex visual information to treat research questions and interests from the humanities' (Terras and Münster 2020: 367). Traditionally, computer supported methods have been applied in visually oriented humanities disciplines across the following areas:

- Data collection, e.g. through digitization;
- Data retrieval from database records with the transfer of knowledge;

- Examining visual humanities questions, e.g. a composition of complex figurative paintings;
- Reconstructing, simulating, and producing objects; and
- Administering and organizing people and objects.
  (Terras and Münster 2020: 367)

The scope of visual digital humanities expands the traditional aspects mentioned above by including a range of complex visual information, focusing on the collection, semantic enrichment and creation of imagery based on the context of:

- Image analysis (e.g. the pattern analysis of large-scale image collections).
- Perception-based techniques (e.g. the visuospatial analysis of architectural objects).
- Spatial modelling (e.g. 3D reconstruction of historical architecture).
- Visualization (e.g. sketching for visuospatial reasoning).
  (Terras and Münster 2020: 367-368)

These focus points thus give way to the realization that an object has a common bond as both an image and a cultural heritage artefact. Furthermore, the use of technology in the visual digital humanities is to 'understand (read), and use (write) images [and spatial objects], as well as to think and learn in terms of images [and spatial objects] in humanities work' (Terras & Münster 2020: 368). This introduces the theoretical perspective of the visual digital humanities, although the characteristics of these theoretical perspectives need to be investigated empirically.

In the journal article entitled: 'The visual side of digital humanities: a survey on topics, researchers, and epistemic cultures', Terras and Münster (2020) set out to answer the following questions:

1. How do researchers enter the visual digital humanities?
2. Which are research topics and methods in the visual digital humanities?
3. What are the standards and challenges in visual digital humanities?
4. Is there a specific scholarly culture in the visual digital humanities?

Their approach was to 'build an hypothesis on the scope of the field of visual digital humanities, or those using and generating digital pictorial, rather than textual, information in the humanities, primarily based on qualitative empirical research methods (Terras and Münster 2020: 368). Although there are various options to investigate the characteristics of a scholarly area, Terras and Münster (2020) chose three areas of interest for their investigation.

1. Scholars working in visual digital humanities.
2. Fields of research, topics and methods used by these scholars.
3. Institutionalization & disciplinary culture of these scholars.

These three areas of interest are discussed below.

2.6.2 Scholars working in visual digital humanities

The analysing of Publication records is often relied upon to research scholarly behaviour. When one explores the scholarly area of visual digital humanities, Terras and Münster (2020) note that 'publication habits as well as research habits widely spread between single disciplines in the (digital) humanities' (Terras and Münster 2020: 368). It is worthy to note that an adjacent field like digital heritage (which will be discussed next in this chapter) utilizes the same habits by means of 'either data relating to heritage artefacts or intangible heritage performances, or digital forms that are considered heritage in themselves' (Gowlland & Ween 2018:4).

The scholarly community within the digital humanities reported that researchers based in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom contributed to academic discourse, while 'researchers in the fields of digital heritage are primarily located in the Mediterranean countries and have backgrounds in various disciplines – along with information technologies and humanities, these are primarily architecture, geo- and natural sciences (Terras and Münster 2020: 369). A second aspect noted by Terras and Münster (2020) is that:

> Information habits of visual digital humanities scholars are the focus of various studies. Since older investigations found large differences in information behaviour between scholars in different disciplines, nowadays many scholars in art history as well as in architecture intensively rely on digital information as well as perform visual search strategies (Terras and Münster 2020: 369).

Thus creating the correct balance of authenticity between the original artefacts and their digital representations in this study, the digital archive is critical. This is evident as the computational literacy of visual humanities scholars with regards to empirical investigations draws an 'uneven terrain' for art creating, as 'art historians lack digital technological competency in terms of 'rather limited' awareness of electronic resources and have not fully developed the skills to utilize them to their fullest potential' (Terras and Münster 2020: 369).

2.6.3 Fields of research and topics

Terras and Münster (2020) ask the question: what are digital humanities research fields? In their journal article, they mention a) an investigation by Terras (2006) which dealt with publications prior to 2006, b) Scott, who performed a similar analysis submission for the digital humanities conference in 2017, and c) Tang *et. al*. (2017) and Given and Wilson (2018), who dealt in particular with textual orientated digital humanities while these sources mentioned above exclusively dealt with textual and few image sources (Terras and Münster 2020: 369). This leaves one with another question… 'if visual content is only occasionally mentioned by a digital humanities community as defined by ADHO[7], where does a discourse on visual digital heritage take place instead?' (Terras and Münster 2020: 369). This topic has been researched in more detail by cultural heritage studies, including disciplines such as archaeology, museology, art, and architectural history. This results from the evolution of a specific academic field by means of conferences, journals, and frequently contributing researchers and institutions. Terras and Münster (2020) refine this by stating that:

[7] http://www.adho.org

> The most prominent research areas are data acquisition and management, visualisation, and analysis. Recent topics include an unmanned airborne vehicle (UAV)-based 3D surveying technologies, augmented and virtual reality visualisation, metadata and paradata standards for documentation, and virtual museums. Moreover, conference series are most relevant for scientific discourse; especially EU projects set the pace as the most important research endeavours (Terras and Münster 2020: 369-370).

Therefore, Sprünker (2013) concludes that: 'with regards to visual digital humanities, there is still no broad consensus on a specific education paradigm, and larger studies on the education of digital methods in visual digital humanities are still missing' (Terras and Münster 2020: 370).

2.6.4 Institutionalization and disciplinary culture

Although the framework established to classify knowledge is 'disciplines', digital humanities has a large amount of research based on the aspects of institutionalization and culture, which is an essential characteristic for current research that is cross-disciplinary. Terras and Münster (2020) note that 'against this background, various new scientific fields arose, which are constructed around certain methods or approaches and often connect to multiple disciplines' (Terras & Münster 2020: 370). Institutionalization is primarily driven by curriculum setting initiatives which are provided by various publications on course programs and organizational habits. The course programs and organizational habits of the visual digital humanities are not yet known, but the interdisciplinary collaboration in digital humanities is an important feature. Terras and Münster (2020) observe that 'since the quality of cooperation is still discussed in the literature, it is undoubted that cross-disciplinary cooperation is a central characteristic of (visual) digital humanities. In contrast to philosophical approaches, there is little empirical research on practices and users of digital reconstruction' (Terras and Münster 2020: 370). In conclusion, Terras and Münster (2020) comment that:

> Since a joint object of research in (visual) digital humanities is cultural heritage in images and artefacts, there are various sub-communities related to original disciplines, specific technologies, or dedication to education, history studies or preservation of artefacts. Despite differences, joint attributes are project orientation, cross-disciplinary cooperation and dependency on technologies and data. Since there are various studies on disciplinary cultures in the visual-oriented branches of digital humanities, research often focuses on specific communities such as digital art history or archaeology (Terras and Münster 2020: 370).

Topics that deal with aspects of visual digital humanities have been established in the scholarly community, with a particular focus on digital cultural heritage. The concepts of digital cultural heritage will be discussed next.

2.6.5 Digital Cultural Heritage Design

This study has established that the scope of the study fits within the humanities. This broad domain can then be refined further to the digital humanities, which strikes a balance between information technology and humanists, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The digital archive that forms this study's backbone requires a yet more refined research approach. Hence the introduction of visual digital humanities, a novel 'umbrella' term to cover research approaches in the digital humanities that are dependent on both consuming and producing pictorial, rather than textual, information to answer their humanities research questions (Terras and Münster 2020: 366). The conclusion of visual digital humanities established that 'there is still no wide consensus on a specific education paradigm, and larger studies on the education of digital methods in visual digital humanities are still missing' (Terras and Münster 2020: 370). Although the approach of visual digital humanities is still new within the broad scope of the humanities and will progress in time, this study requires alignment to a more conventional research approach that has a firm footing in the realms of academia.

As a result, Terras and Münster (2020) note that: 'a common bond can be found in the facts that objects are cultural heritage artefacts and images and that scholars in visual digital humanities are using technologies to 'understand (read), and use (write) images [and

spatial objects], as well as to think and learn in terms of images [and spatial objects] in humanities work' (Terras and Münster 2020: 368). The scope of digital cultural heritage thus needs to be investigated in this study to form the foundation of this study's visual and digital components. Mason and Vavoula (2021) note that: ‘digital cultural heritage design explores how digital technologies and media can be used to enhance the visitor experience’ (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 406). Furthermore, Mason and Vavoula (2021) comment that:

> It is important that research focuses on design practice urgently, by refocusing the analysis of digital cultural heritage production from outcomes to practice. Design research tells us that design outcomes are the product of intertwined, complex factors of human nature and the dynamics between people, practices, and social processes; to focus on design practice is to focus on these factors and dynamics in order to understand their role in the production of digital cultural heritage as equally important to the features and potentials of the digital technology (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 406).

The formation of this field is driven by digital and physical interaction, which delivers visitor experiences and services. This combination 'raises complex design problems beyond interface usability to include the physical, social and cultural positioning of digital elements within the overall visitor experience‘ (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 407). Although predominantly utilized in museum practises to enhance socially engaging and community-orientated curatorial practices, digital cultural heritage design frames the visual digital archive of this study well. Methodological or cognitive perspectives focused on the design process are replaced by the proposal of a design-as-practice-based ontological position. Thus, design practices can be understood as situated and contingent activities, carried out both by (a) professional designers and (b) individuals who interact with or engage in the use of those designs. Kimbell and Street (2009) note that: ‘it offers a way to conceive of design as a situated collaborative accomplishment, constituted as a nexus of activities, tools and material infrastructures, knowledge sharing and know-how, and the institutional arrangements within which designs are collectively created' (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 409). Mason and Vavoula (2021) describe the 'practice' position as:

> A 'practice' is the network of everyday (inter)actions among individuals within an organisation. Accordingly, a digital heritage design practice emerges when a set of collaborative design activities, completed during interactions between museum staff, digital developers, designers, and other stakeholders, become part of everyday, routine museum work (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 409).

This is effectively the same engagement this study will execute, with the replacement of 'museum' to digital archive and the use of specialized stakeholders. Mason and Vavoula (2021) discuss the design-as-practice in more detail below:

> Design-as-practice thus transports the locus of design work from the designer's head to the nexus of workplace interactions, highlighting the systems of activity at its ontological core. Meanwhile, the human activities that constitute design practice are mediated by design artefacts and spaces (De Vries and Masclet 2013), which become an integral part of the collaborative design activity they facilitate. Central to the patterns of activity mediated by external representations of design is the knowledge embedded in individuals, design artefacts, and the social interactions between them (Ewenstein and Whyte 2009). This knowledge is mobilized as design activities take their course and result from the course design activities. It evolves as the team's design practice develops and is integral to the team's practice (Orlikowski 2002). Design-as-practice thus views knowledge as emerging from practice and existing within practice highlighting practice-as-knowledge at its epistemological core (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 409).

2.6.6 A three-point perspective of digital cultural heritage design practice.

The three interrelated perspectives proposed by Mason and Vavoula (2021) look at digital cultural heritage design. Namely, *activities*, *knowledge*, and *mediating objects and tools*. These core aspects repeatedly occur in the theoretical accounts of practice, with Reckwitz (2002) accounting that: 'a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements,

interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002 243-263). Figure 2.23 below visually illustrates the three-point perspective.

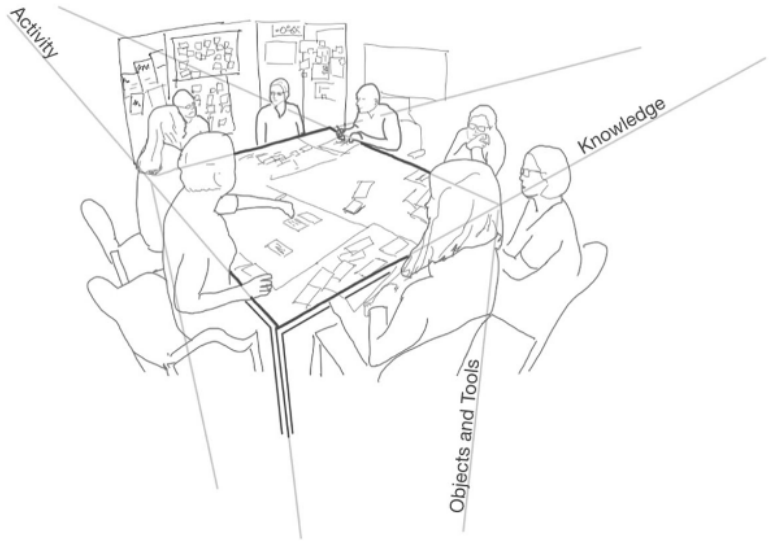


Figure 2.23 A three-point perspective of digital cultural heritage design practice. Source: (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 410).

Figure 2.23 represents a case of a digital heritage design activity system within a museum setting. 'A group of individuals (subjects) work together to understand and define a museum's family audience's needs (objective) in order to develop a mobile museum guide for family visitors (intended outcome) (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 412). Contained within this group are two educators, a curator, a digital content developer, and a graphic designer as a design facilitator/researcher, representing the various museum departments/divisions and external partners. Each member has their disciplinary knowledge, perspectives and understandings that they bring to the table. This group forms a small, diverse community that works together within the confines of social norms and the accepted rules related to the specific design tasks in which they engage. Mason and Vavoula (2021) note that: ‘Throughout the project, material and conceptual tools mediated their acting upon the objective while rules and regulations

mediated their performance as a group and an agreed division of labour mediated the group's engagement with the objective' (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 412).

Building a digital heritage design activity system for this study, whilst utilizing the template reference explained by Mason and Vavoula (2021) in figure 2.23 above, reflects the following digital heritage design archiving this study:

Table 2.11 Digital heritage design activity system for this study.

Digital heritage design activity system for this study	
Representative	**Function**
Curator (R.van As)	• Handle artefacts and authenticating artefacts. • Oversee artefact collections. • Design materials for public display on the digital archive. • Exclusively facilitate and secure artefacts and records.
Family Representative (A.Ramesar) (S. Ramesar)	• Represent the interests of the Ramesar family. • Assist in the authentication of artefacts. • Assist with the content and visual representation of the digital archive.
Digital Content Creator (R.van As)	• Create digital copies of artefacts.
Digital Platform Developer	• Design and build the digital archive. • Provide technical support.

Each member brings their different disciplinary perspectives, knowledge and understandings to the digital archive. Each of their vested interests will be communicated within this 'team', resulting in a successful, designed, represented and functional digital archive. Figure 2.24 illustrates the study four participant plan.

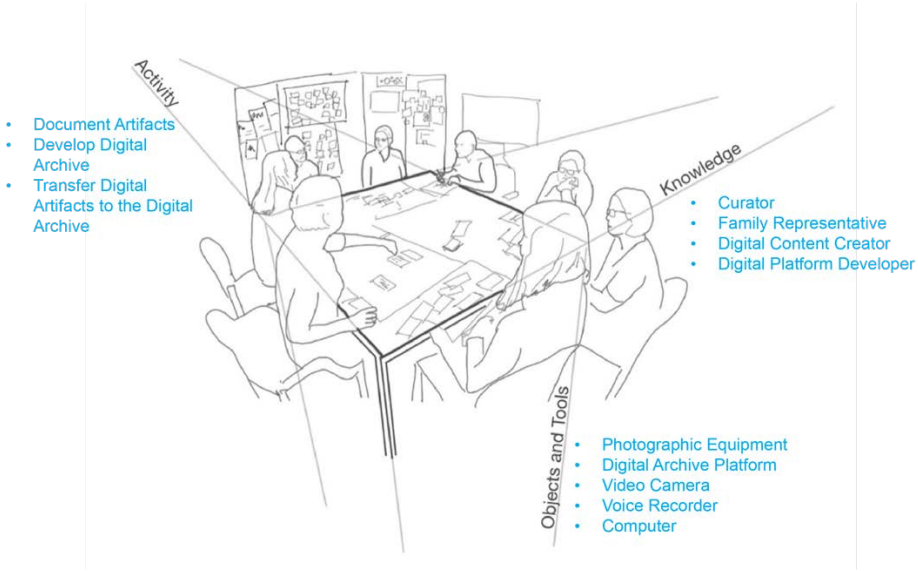


Figure 2.24 This studies the three-point perspective of digital cultural heritage design practice—source: Edited from (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 410).

Mason and Vavoula (2021) conclude that 'the development of the three perspectives draws on activity theory, studies of external representations in design, and organisational knowledge studies' (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 410). Furthermore:

> Miettinen, Paavola, and Pohjola (2012) classify these as 'classical practice theories' and argue that, in contrast to the new social theories of practice, they are better able to analyse how practice changes through the reflective processes that are activated when routines and habits break down. While our analysis is not focusing on breakdowns per se, the routines and habits of digital cultural heritage design practice are under formation and therefore subject to reflective development and change (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 410).

Therefore unpacking the perspectives of this 'multifaceted and multidimensional' practice require an empirical approach from multiple angles.

2.6.7 Digital cultural heritage design activity system

Engeström (2000) defines an activity system as: 'systematically integrating individuals, tools (physical and conceptual), and forms of sociality into a unified whole, inseparable from each other. Design activity can be analysed in terms of its constituting elements: the subjects involved (e.g. designers, educators, curators and visitors); the object of its purpose (e.g. developing engaging visitor experiences); the tools (e.g. prototyping software) and situated design methods (e.g. prototyping) that mediate action' (Engeström Y 2000). Formal and informal *rules* are governed by subjects that utilise tools to peruse an object and specify how the activity takes place. This activity is adapted within a *community* that encompasses the 'social groups to which the subjects belong and which have a stake in the common objective and is subject to division of labour, including the hierarchical distribution of power and the horizontal distribution of tasks. Such concerted work upon the object results in specific outcomes' (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 411). Deliberate goal-driven actions drive an activity system, which requires routinized operations.

> The relationship between activities, actions and operations is not static: something that starts as an activity system (e.g. a group engaging with visitor needs analysis) can become an action (e.g. visitor needs analysis becomes part of user-centred design) and, with time, parts of it are routinized into an operation (e.g. routinely testing prototypes with visitors) (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 412).

Figure 2.25 depicts a schematic representation of a digital cultural heritage design activity system based on Engeström, Miettinen, and Punamäki (1999). Mason & Vavoula (2021) break down this schematic representation as an

> Instance of a digital cultural heritage design activity system: a group of individuals (subjects) work together to understand and define a museum's family audience's needs (objective) in order to develop a mobile museum guide for family visitors (intended outcome). The group comprises two educators, a curator, a digital content developer, a graphic designer and a design facilitator/researcher,

representing different museum departments/divisions and external partners (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 412).

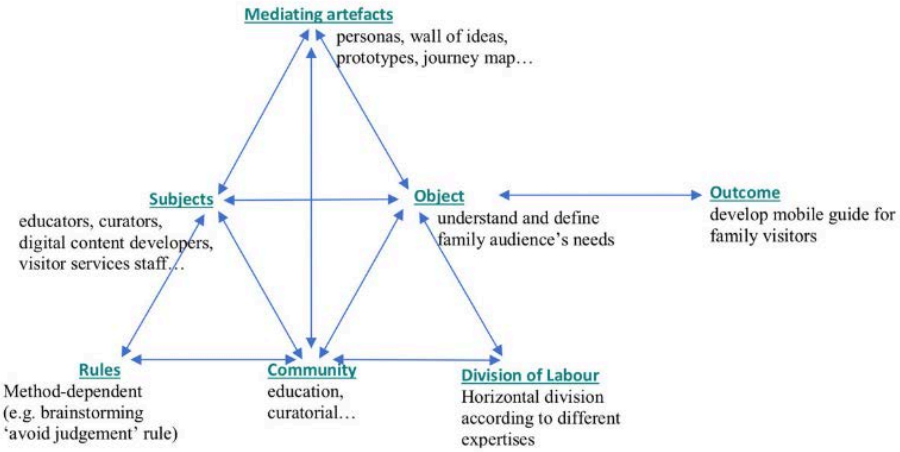


Figure 2.25 Schematic representation of a digital heritage design activity system. Source: (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 412).

The activity system as a whole depicts the implications of organisational approaches and decisions for designing digital cultural heritage. This then allows and alerts one to the tensions and opportunities that may arise when changes are made, for example, the inclusion of new members, new methods and operations. At a micro level, Mason and Vavoula (2021) note that: 'analysing activity systems helps us deconstruct digital cultural heritage design practice into its constituent actions, to understand their interdependencies and individual contributions, and how they progressively transform into routines and everyday practice' (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 413). At a macro level, Mason and Vavoula (2021) note that: 'analyzing activity systems highlights the interconnections with other kinds and forms of organisational practice and, importantly, forms of organisational change that unfold alongside the development of a digital cultural heritage design practice' (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 413).

Figure 2.26 displays a schematic representation of a digital heritage design activity system applied to this study.

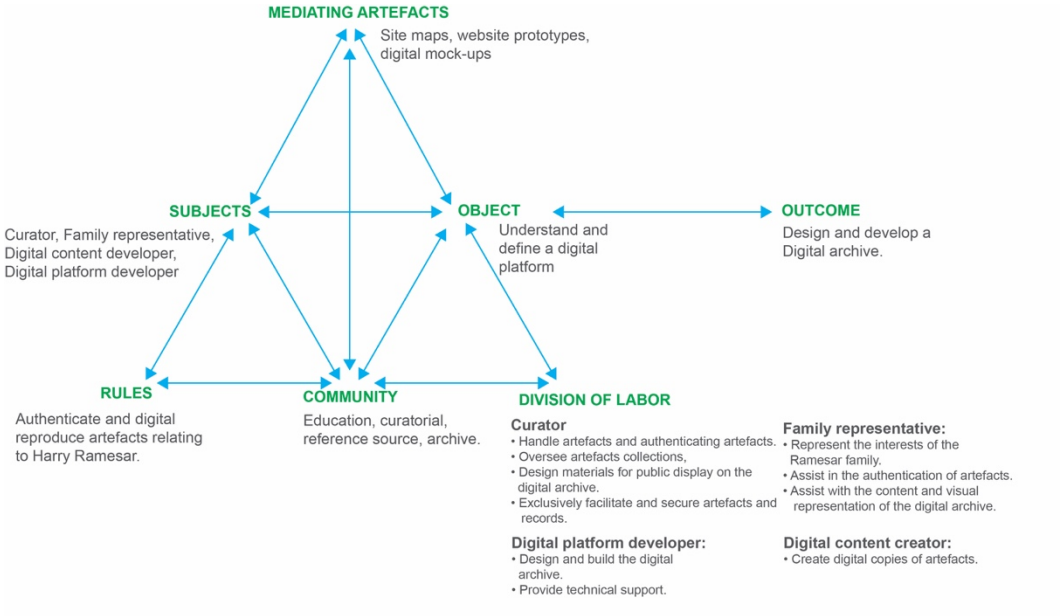


Figure 2.26 Schematic representation of this study's digital heritage design activity system.

The micro-level representation of this study's schematic representation indicates the various role-players, their role within the study, and how these routines are practised. At the macro level, it highlights how the various role-players interact to create a functional digital archive that satisfies all the participants in the schematic representation with each participant contributing their experience. Incorporating knowledge from different professionals, with a shared objective, improves the visitor experience with knowledge of shared experiences and social interaction helps generate a successful user experience. Mason and Vavoula (2021) note that 'hands-on involvement and social interaction in practice are central to the creation and sharing of design knowledge specific to the context of the cultural heritage organisation and the design problem (Mason and Vavoula 2021: 418).

2.7 A Critical Visual Methodology

The methodological framework utilized in this study is constructed on the theories of Gillian Rose, with particular reference to her book titled: Visual Methodologies: An introduction to Researching with Visual Materials (Rose 2023). The framework revolves around the four key sites: the site of *production*, where an image is created; the site of the *image* itself,

representing its visual content; the site(s) of *circulation*, indicating its journey; and the site of encounter with spectators or users, referred to as its *audiencing*. Through an examination of these sites, Rose (2023) researches the theories of visual culture and elucidates the methods employed to engage with it.

Figure 2.1 depicts the sites of modalities for interpreting visual materials and how these sites intersect. The information contained within figure 2.1 will be engaged in the following five sections within this chapter:

1. The discussion of the five sites.
2. Explore the methodologies for comprehending the site where visual materials are produced.
3. Examine the strategies for analysing the visual materials themselves.
4. Explore the methods for understanding the circulation of visual materials.
5. Investigate the locations where the visual materials are viewed or experienced by an audience.

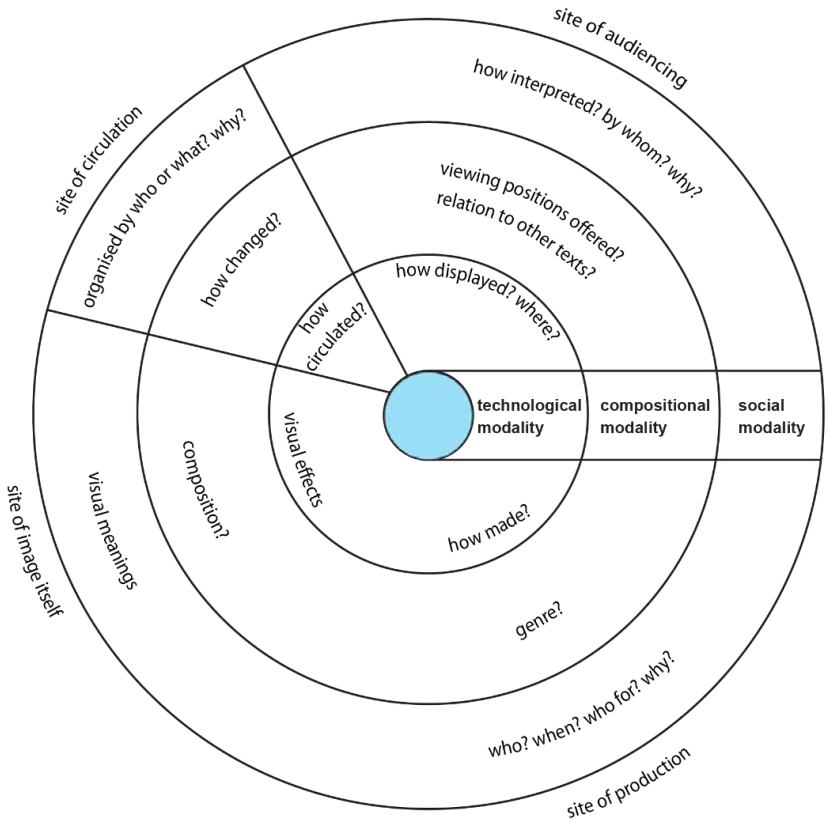


Figure 2.27 The sites of modalities for interpreting visual materials. Source: (Rose 2023:48).

2.7.1 The Site of Production

Visual representations are inherently influenced by the circumstances of their creation, with researchers paying close attention to the production process, especially when images are generated as part of investigative work. Methods of analysis often focus on the identities and experiences of image creators, particularly in projects where participants are tasked with producing photographs, maps, or other visual materials to reflect on their social identity and experiences. However, when working with found images, which is the case in this study, Rose (2023) notes that researchers may be less concerned with the production process and the identities of the creators (Rose 2023:49).The potential impacts of the production site on found images are explored below.

The Technological Modality

The technological influences on visual image production require thorough examination, as some effects may not solely originate from technology. Despite this, comprehending the technologies utilized in creating specific images is often highly beneficial and serves as a foundational aspect for certain methodologies.

The Compositional Modality

The second aspect of image production pertains to its *compositionality*. Scholars such as Berger (1972), Burgin (1986) and Mirzoeff (2009) argue that the conditions under which an image is produced dictate its compositionality and that compositionality is not autonomous, it emerges from the interplay between the technical, ideological, institutional, and historical conditions of production (Berger, 1972; Burgin, 1986; Mirzoeff, 2009). This argument is particularly applicable to images that belong to a specific genre but may not neatly align with it. Rose (2023) notes that 'genre' is a way of classifying visual images into certain groups. Images that belong to the same genre share certain features. A particular genre will share a specific set of meaningful objects and ways of showing them' (Rose 2023:50). This rings true for the genre of tattoos during the period of the study.

The Social Modality

The third aspect of production, as outlined by Rose (2023), is the social modality, which concerns the institutional, relational, and cultural contexts that shape the making and interpretation of visual images. This includes the practices of specific image-making industries, the roles of individual producers, and the social norms and networks within which visual artefacts circulate. While often interlinked with economic factors, social modalities should not be conflated with them. Economic processes relate to systems of labour, capital, and market production, whereas social modalities focus on how people, individually and collectively, produce, share, and make meaning of visual forms. To illustrate the influence of economic restructuring on visual culture, Rose draws on David Harvey's (1989) discussion of postmodernity in The Condition of Postmodernity. Harvey argues that 'the mobilisation of fashion, pop, art, television and other forms of media image, and the variety of urban life styles' reflects the fluid and rapidly shifting conditions of contemporary capitalism (Rose 2023:52). In this model, visual imagery is not only shaped by artistic intent but also by 'the enhanced mobility of capital and information', and the increasing flexibility of production and consumption structures under late capitalism (Rose 2023:52).

However, beyond these macroeconomic frameworks, Rose emphasises that 'the social modality also considers the institutions and practices that enable particular kinds of image-making' (2023:54). This includes not only the cultural industries responsible for producing images but also the identities, norms, and power relations that inform those images. In this study, the artefacts contained in the tattoo archive of Harry Ramesar provides a case in point: his visual productions were not merely aesthetic but socially embedded, shaped by interactions with his clientele, community narratives, and subcultural traditions. Ramesar's clients did not passively receive his designs; rather, they engaged with them actively, often selecting or adapting imagery that resonated with their own social identities and lived experiences. Rose further notes that 'most of the recent work on visual culture is uninterested in the intentions of an image's maker' (2023:55). Instead, contemporary approaches 'emphasise the interpretive power of the viewer and the significance of the

broader visual field within which any image is seen' (Rose 2023:55). This observation is evident in Ramesar's diverse tattoo repertoire, which spanned genres such as maritime, religious, symbolic, and militaristic motifs to just name a few. These designs served as 'cultural resource' through which clients could express identity, memory, or aspiration, with meanings shaped not solely by Ramerar's intention but by audience interpretation within broader social and visual contexts. Therefore, in analysing Ramesar's tattoo work through the social modality, the archive is situated not only as a repository of individual artistic output but as a site of cultural production embedded within historical, social, and interpersonal dynamics.

2.7.2 The Site of the Image

The image itself serves as a significant location for interpreting its meanings. Each image comprises formal components, influenced by both technological processes and social practices, as discussed in the preceding section. Rose (2023) notes that numerous writers within the domain of visual culture contend that an image can possess effects that exceed the limitations of its creation or reception by expressing that:

> Some would argue, for example, that it is the particular qualities of the photographic image that make us understand its technology in particular ways, rather than the reverse; or that it is those qualities that shape the social modality in which it is embedded, rather than the other way round. The modality most important to an image's own effects, however, is often argued to be its *compositionality* (Rose 2023:55).

2.7.3 The Site of Circulation

It is difficult to envision an image that remains confined to its production site. The distinction between the production and the audience sites implies that images extend beyond their origins. The term *site* serves as a conceptual tool, but it also suggests physical locations where image production and viewing occur separately. Rose (2023) gives an example that : 'this is true for many kinds of images. The studio of the artist, or the cutting room of the film editor,

is not where the painting or a film is usually viewed by anyone other than those people also involved in the paintings or film's production' (Rose 2023:57-58). Once completed, a painting or film will transition to another location for display and to diverse audiences. 'The circulation of an image is influenced by various social, cultural, political, and economic factors that shape its route within the visual economy'. Rose (2023) comments that it is difficult to conceive of a visual object that remains stationary, as it often moves extensively over long distances as part of various social and other processes (Rose 2023:59).

2.7.4 The Site of Audiencing

Images circulate and are viewed by specific audiences, where their meanings are constructed. John Fiske (1994) emphasizes the significance of this site, suggesting that audiences are active participants in interpreting images rather than passive recipients. He introduces the concept of *audiencing*, which describes the process by which an image's meaning is reinterpreted or even rejected by particular audiences under specific circumstances (Rose 2023:60). The term *audiencing* is a term, according to Rose (2023), that has 'a particular analytical resonance before the pervasiveness of the digital visual technologies. The analogue era was an era when very many images were shared 'one to many': that is, one image was broadcast or printed and distributed, and more-or-less the same image was received by many people, who constituted its audience' (Rose 2023:60).

Regardless of whether the emphasis is on an audience or users, Rose (2023) proposes that the process of engaging with images involves three key aspects.

1. **Compositionality**

Various methods suggest that the formal arrangement of a picture influences how it is perceived by the audience. However, audiences and users ultimately formulate their own interpretations of an image.

2. **Technological**

Theories that prioritize the technological site where an image's meanings are constructed often suggest that the technology used to create and present the image will influence the audience's response. For instance, the viewing experience of a photograph can vary significantly depending on whether it is seen in a magazine, framed in an art gallery, or displayed on a website offering prints for sale. Rose (2023) emphasizes the example by noting that:

> audiencing also involves a number of other important questions about how an image is looked at differently in different contexts. You don't do the same things while you are surfing through a website gallery at home as you do when you are in a gallery looking at framed photographs. While you are looking at the computer screen you can also be listening to music, eating, comparing one site to another, answering the phone; in a gallery there will be no background music, you are expected to remain quiet, not to touch the pictures, not to eat… again, the audiencing of an image therefore appears very important to its meaning (Rose 2023:61).

3. Social

The most crucial aspect for comprehending an audience's engagement with images, lies in understanding the various social practices that shape the viewing experience of the specific images in particular locations. Visual images are always experienced through specific practices, and different places are often linked to distinct types of images within specific environments. Rose (2023) uses three environments to explain the *social* in perspective. Different viewing contexts, such as a cinema, a living room television, and a modern art gallery, evoke distinct modes of perception. This is attributed not only to differences in technological composition and depth between, for instance, a Hollywood movie, a television soap, and an abstract expressionist canvas, but also to the variations in how we engage with them. Visual images are experienced differently in these individual spaces, as observed by a typical example by the absence of popcorn in galleries and the communal viewing of television soaps. The distinct ways of relating to visual images define the cinema and gallery as contrasting spaces and given the increasing ubiquity of images across various platforms,

understanding the relationship between spaces and display practices is crucial, as different spaces mediate the visual impact of these images. The social modality of audience engagement involves two key aspects: the practices of viewing, encompassing both observing images and creating variations of them, and the social identities of the spectators. Some research for example Banet-Weiser, Gill and Rottenberg 2020; Tiidenberg 2018; Zappavigna 2016 have merged these aspects to suggest that specific types of individuals engage with particular kinds of images in distinctive manners. Rose (2023) expands on this by noting that:

> We know what we like, but we also know that other people will be looking at the images we choose to display. Our use of images, our appreciation of certain kinds of imagery, performs a social function as well as an aesthetic one. It says something about who we are and how we want to be seen (Rose 2023:68).

In the context of tattoos, the statement by Rose highlights how the social modality of audience engagement encompasses both the act of viewing tattoos and the creation of tattoo designs. Firstly, in the time when Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist, individuals observed tattoos on others, forming perceptions and interpretations based on cultural, personal, and aesthetic factors. This includes considering the meaning, style, and placement of tattoos within different social contexts. Secondly, individuals actively participate in the choice of their tattoos, whether as the recipient conveying their personal identity, beliefs, or experiences through their chosen design, or as the tattoo artist crafting the tattoo based on the client's desires and their own artistic style. Additionally, research in the field of tattoo culture has explored how specific social identities or subcultures engage with tattoos in distinct ways, such as how different demographics, like age groups, gender, or cultural backgrounds, may express themselves through particular tattoo styles or motifs. Overall, tattoos serve as visual expressions of personal identity and social belonging, shaped by both the practices of viewing and creating tattoos and the social identities of the individuals involved.

Research on issues related to audience engagement with images often employs qualitative social science methods such as interviews and ethnography. However, Rose (2023) notes that it's also important to recognize that understanding the viewing practices of an individual spectator can be achieved without relying on these techniques, as that spectator

could be oneself. It's crucial to reflect on how you personally view a particular image and incorporate that perspective into your interpretation or express it visually (Rose 2023:69).

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review establishes a strong foundation for understanding the significance and potential impact of creating a digital archive for pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. By exploring the intersections of the digital humanities, visual methodologies, and the preservation of visual culture, this chapter underscores the importance of digitization in safeguarding and broadening access to Harry Ramesar's work. The digital curation process ensures the authenticity and integrity of these artefacts assets, transforming the archive into a living document enriched by community engagement and personal stories. This approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also enhances scholarly research, thus making the digital archive a vital resource for understanding the broader cultural significance of Ramesar's contributions.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGNING THE VISUAL ARCHIVE 'HARRY RAMESAR'

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the digital archive, which is central to this study. It begins by introducing the conceptualisation, development, and implementation of the digital archive dedicated to Harry Ramesar and a discussion of the significance of digital archives in preserving cultural heritage, particularly in the context of visual culture and digital humanities. The chapter outlines the critical steps involved in creating the archive, including the selection of materials, digitization processes, metadata creation, and the development of a user-friendly interface, with each step guided by principles of critical visual methodologies, therefore ensuring that the archive serves as more than just a repository but furthermore as a platform for critical engagement and scholarly inquiry.

3.2 The Digital Archive Platform

When creating a digital archive, selecting the appropriate platform is the primary decision to ensure efficient organization, accessibility, and the long-term preservation of valuable content. For custom projects that are constrained by specialised or limited resources, WordPress emerges as a compelling option. Below explores the multifaceted benefits of utilising WordPress as a platform for digital archives and the justified reasons for using this platform to house the digital archive within this study.

3.2.1 Accessibility and the User Interface

In selecting a suitable platform for the development of this digital archive, several content management systems (CMS) were considered, including Drupal, Joomla, and proprietary platforms such as Squarespace. While each offered distinct advantages, WordPress was ultimately chosen for its accessibility, user-friendly interface, and robust support community.

The discussion below outlines the rationale for this decision, highlighting the specific features that make WordPress particularly well-suited to the needs of this study and digital archive administrators. WordPress offers a user-friendly interface that can be easily navigated by both content creators and visitors to the online digital archive, thus facilitating the ability to create an online archive that is both easy to navigate for the viewer and update and maintain for the administrator which is key in closing the loop? Pickett (2014) describes WordPress as:

> A content management system (CMS) is a software application used to upload, edit, and manage content displayed on a website. A CMS can perform a variety of different tasks for a website including regulating when content is displayed, how many times the content is shown to a specific user, and managing how the content connects or interacts with other elements of the website. This software also enables less technical individuals to manage content on a website easily without having an extensive coding background. It should also be noted that a CMS is a dynamic system. While a typical web page is created by an HTML file, in a CMS these pages are stored in a database and the HTML is generated dynamically when the data is requested (Pickett 2014:5).

Therefore WordPress appeals to researchers who may lack technical expertise, as it allows the easy arrangement and management of content, which is a key factor that may attract researchers to content management. With minimal training, researchers can create and update content themselves, eliminating the need to rely on external parties such as web agencies or publishers for updates. An added attribute that was considered is the fact that WordPress is free and an open source. Pickett (2014) notes that this interface is a ‘free and open source content management system and blogging tool built by a community of developers and contributors. It features a template framework of themes to provide a basic

core website structure through already developed PHP[8] and CSS[9] files that are installed onto a web server' (Pickett 2014:6).

Therefore from the point of view of the researcher who is looking for a flexible, user friendly content management system (CMS) interface, WordPress is a prime consideration for researchers seeking effortless content modifications, streamlined management of extensive content volumes, a diverse array of plugins[10] to tackle various tasks, and most importantly, the capability to accomplish tasks more efficiently, conveniently, and swiftly compared to alternative systems that a) may need external assistance or b) an in-depth technical knowledge of the platform.

3.2.2 Metadata Management

Digital archive metadata plays a crucial role in ensuring the effective organisation, retrieval, and preservation of digital content contained in the archive. Metadata provides descriptive information about the archived content contained in the digital archive – in the case of this study, information such as the tattoo related artefacts title, category, date, subject and keywords - therefore enabling users to search for and retrieve relevant content efficiently. WordPress supports metadata through the use of categories and tags, with Clobridge (2016) noting that: 'Pages can be assigned terms from a predefined hierarchical taxonomy. Blog posts also support author-defined tags. Category terms and tags are designed to promote findability and discoverability' (Clobridge 2016:61). Adding to this observation, Clobridge (2016) notes that in terms of findability, metadata helps with search engine optimisation. Terms and tags are indexed to help support improved search results on Google, Bing, and other search engines. Once on a site, tags can help improve discovery. If tags are visible on

[8] PHP is a widely used open source general-purpose scripting language that is especially suited for web development and can be embedded into HTML ("PHP: What is PHP? - Manual" n.d.)

[9] CCS is CSS stands for Cascading Style Sheets. It is a style sheet language which is used to describe the look and formatting of a document written in markup language("What is CSS - javatpoint" n.d.) .

[10] Plugins are packages of code that extend the core functionality of WordPress. WordPress plugins are made up of PHP code and can include other assets such as images, CSS, and JavaScript ("What is a Plugin?" 2014).

posts and pages, visitors are able to click tags and terms to see other related pages and posts (Clobridge 2016:61).

In WordPress, Metadata, known as meta tags, comprises small segments of code embedded within the digital archives HTML structure. These 'meta tag's serve to furnish search engine crawlers[11] with additional insights into the content presented on the page. While not visible to visitors of the digital archive, metadata plays a pivotal role in conveying the purpose of a digital archive to search engines, thus remaining a crucial component of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Operating in tandem with the visible content such as text and images, metadata assists search engines in comprehending the substance of the webpage.

3.2.3 Content Preservation and Longevity

Whilst creating and uploading a visually appealing digital archive is important, ensuring the preservation of the digital archive is a fundamental foundation that needs to be set in stone. WordPress as a content management system (CMS) has its roots in simple content management operations. Williams et. al. (2015) give the example of blogging within the WordPress platform as you:

> Create a post, persist it in stable storage such as a file system or database, and display the formatted output based on some set of temporal or keyword criteria. As the richness and types of content presented in blog pages expanded, and the requirements for sorting, searching, selecting, and presenting content grew to include metadata and content taxonomies, the line between vanilla, single-user-targeted blogging software and enterprise-grade content management systems blurred. Content management systems (CMS) handle the creation, storage, retrieval, description or annotation, and publication or display of a variety of

[11] A web crawler, crawler or web spider, is a computer program that is used to search and automatically index website content and other information over the internet. These programs, or bots, are most commonly used to create entries for a search engine index (Gillis 2022).

> content types. CMS also covers workflow tasks, typically from an editorial or publishing perspective, and includes actions such as approval and marking content for additional editing or review (Williams, Damstra & Stern 2015:7).

WordPress has a '100-Year hosting plan, that is designed exclusively for those seeking the ultimate security and longevity for their digital presence ("100-Year Plan" 2023). There is however an unfortunate hindrance to the WordPress platform which requires regular attention. This is expressed by Williams et. al. (2015) that:

> with success and popularity, you also become a target. WordPress is a successful and popular platform for websites and with that brings the attention of the hackers and bad guys. It is simple economics that bad guys looking to build a network of sites will look for the most widespread applications and attack their vulnerabilities (Williams, Damstra & Stern 2015:370).

The key counteraction to this potential breach, and foremost principle, is to maintain regular updates. WordPress developers are continuously enhancing the platform to ensure it remains secure and stable which underscores one of the primary benefits of open-source software. With numerous developers possessing diverse skill sets, the code undergoes regular scrutiny and enhancements through audits and updates, thereby bolstering its integrity. Frequently, updating and addressing security vulnerabilities pre-emptively helps mitigate risks posed by potential exploits. Notably, exploits tend to target outdated WordPress versions, while consistently updated sites remain resilient (Williams, Damstra & Stern 2015:370).

3.2.4 Cost Effectiveness

WordPress, being open-source software, offers both cost-free usage and access to a dynamic community of developers and support. Cost-effectiveness is maintained beyond the initial setup, supporting efficient and sustainable content management. In the event that researchers may lack technical expertise, they can effortlessly update and manage content, thereby diminishing the necessity for frequent and ongoing web development expenditures. While the software itself is free, hosting is a necessary ongoing cost. However, WordPress is

compatible with a wide range of low-cost hosting providers, allowing users to choose a plan that suits their budget and scalability needs. This flexibility in hosting options further enhances WordPress's cost-effectiveness, particularly for research projects with limited funding.

3.2.5 Scalability and Performance

One of the most important advantages of WordPress is that, as your digital archive expands, your WordPress digital archive can scale accordingly. The WordPress platform is engineered to accommodate both modest and intricate websites effortlessly, as it seamlessly integrates new pages, products, and features. WordPress's scalability guarantees that your online presence can adapt alongside your digital archives, growth, alleviating the need for cumbersome platform migrations in the future (e.Soft Technologies Pvt. Ltd. 2023).

In a 2017 article by Angry Creative, the question regarding the scalability of WordPress is posed, with the subsequent response being 'The WordPress website proudly boasts that '27% of the web uses WordPress, from hobby blogs to the biggest news sites online'. The 60 million plus websites that are powered by WordPress range from small blogs with only a handful of followers, to internationally-recognised news websites, attracting millions of page views a day. This demonstrates not only just how large and how dominant WordPress is, but also how scalable it is' ("How scalable is WordPress?" 2017). It is suggested that approximately 500 new websites utilising WordPress are launched daily. Not all cater to large corporations; a significant portion belongs to small and medium-sized enterprises harbouring ambitious aspirations. As these businesses scale in size and prosperity, the imperative to upscale their websites to accommodate this growth becomes apparent. WordPress's innate scalability is a primary factor driving its widespread adoption, as it seamlessly accommodates the evolving needs of diverse website owners. This facilitates researchers to leverage the foundational growth elements mentioned above, enabling and encouraging the establishment and creation of digital archives.

3.3 Digital Archive Walk-Through

WordPress operates on multiple layers, each offering varying levels of interactivity. The front end represents the layer visible to visitors, where they interact with the actual website, which functions similarly to any other website. Unless explicitly indicated by WordPress credits in the footer, visitors may not discern that the site is built on WordPress. Navigating a digital archive is comparable to embarking on a journey through time, culture, and knowledge. This section of the study provides a comprehensive walkthrough of a digital archive, delving into its multifaceted components and functionalities, from the 'engine room' of the back-end to the user friendly design of the front-end, and culminating with the structured layout of the site map, with each element contributing to the overall functionality and user experience of the digital archive.

The URL for this study's digital archive is: https://tattooharry.co.za/,the subsequent discussions within this chapter will pertain to the live digital archive of Harry Ramesar.

3.3.1 Digital Archive Back-end

The back-end of the WordPress platform constitutes the administrative layer. Access to this layer requires authorisation via a valid username and password. Upon entering this URL, users encounter a Login Page prompting them for their credentials. This layer provides non-technical access to the data, enabling administrative users to modify website content at will. Content alterations can encompass various elements such as text, images, videos, audios, and hyperlinks with administrative users possessing the capability to edit or delete existing pages, as well as add new ones. Additionally, when adding a new page, users can designate its placement on the site and update the navigation menu accordingly. Moreover, users can manage the display and archiving of artefacts through the back end, exercising control over the site's dynamic content. Once logging in as an administrator, users are directed to the Dashboard, which serves as the landing page of the administrative layer as seen in figure 3.1.

The Dashboard functions as a comprehensive summary, presenting various containers of information about the site. Administrators can conveniently monitor all aspects of the digital archive, as well as schedule updates to ensure the digital archive runs smoothly.

Additionally, the appearance of the Dashboard can be customized to align with the specific preferences of each user.

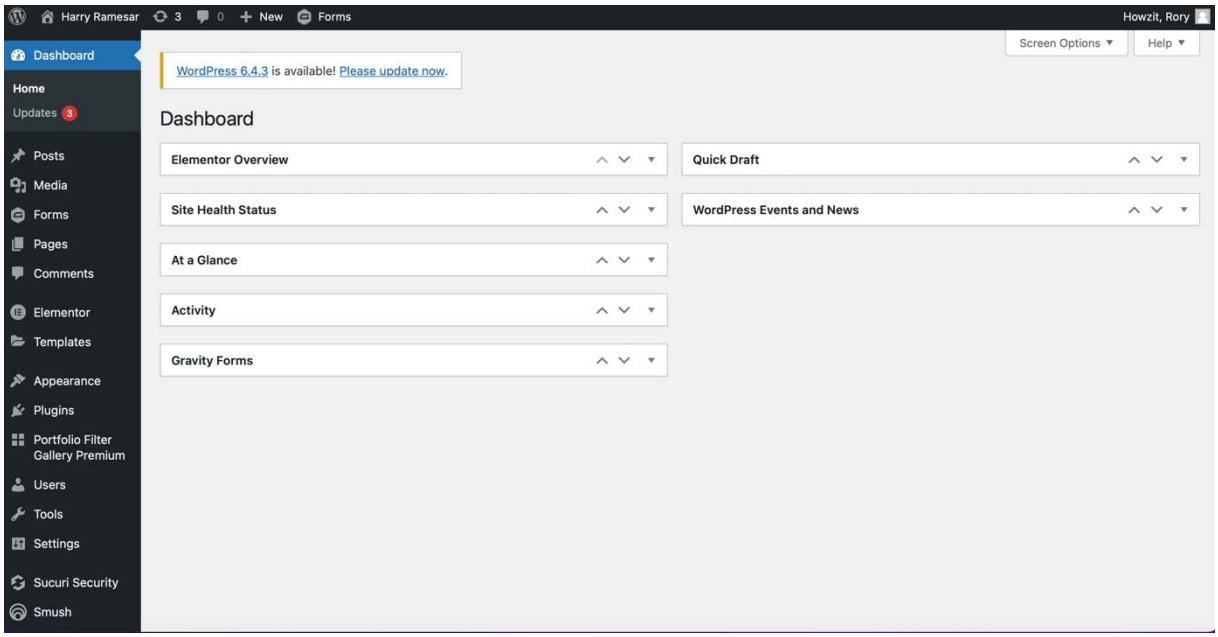


Figure 3.1 Harry Ramesar Digital Archive backend.

The left side of the Admin panel features a sidebar housing a series of clickable navigation menus, serving as the primary interface for the site management of the digital archive. Through this sidebar navigation, the researcher can perform various tasks such as adding new content such as web pages and or images of artefacts to mention a few. Contained within this navigation menu are the ‘Appearance’ and ‘Settings’ tabs, where non-technical users can make adjustments to the site's themes. WordPress Themes play a pivotal role in determining the visual appearance and functionality of the site, whilst interacting with the WordPress software without altering its core. While WordPress offers several free default themes upon installation, users have access to thousands of other themes, each varying in simplicity, functionality, and cost. The researcher can determine which theme would suit and aid in the development of a successful digital archive. Activating a theme instantly applies its design and functionality to the site. Each theme comes with integrated options, typically encompassing the minimal functionality of colour schemes and font styles, with some themes offering more specialised functionality, such as additional page layout options and customizable features.

The level of customization varies, with simpler themes providing fewer options, while more complex themes afford the researcher greater control over these elements.

From the inception of this study, the development services of a WordPress specialist were enlisted to create a skeleton framework for the study's digital archive. Engaging with the expertise of a WordPress specialist for constructing this study's digital archive is crucial for various reasons, and a selection of important factors are elaborated upon below:

Expertise in WordPress

The WordPress specialist possesses in-depth knowledge and Expertise in utilizsing the WordPress platform, including its features, functionalities, and best practices. This Expertise ensures that the digital archive is built efficiently and effectively, leveraging WordPress's capabilities to their fullest extent.

Customization and Optimization

The WordPress specialist is skilled in customizing the digital archive to meet the specific needs and requirements of this study. Elements such as the customization of the design, functionality, optimizing its performance and usability, with user experience to align with the goals of the digital archive.

Integration of Plugins and Tools

WordPress specialists are proficient at integrating plugins and tools to enhance the functionality and features of the digital archive. Whether it's metadata management, search capabilities, or accessibility enhancements, a specialist can identify and implement the most suitable plugins to meet the digital archive's needs.

Security and Maintenance

One of the most important foundations of a digital archive is building a secure and stable digital archive, which requires Expertise in WordPress security practices and ongoing maintenance. A specialist can implement security measures, such as regular updates, backups, and monitoring, to protect the archive from security threats and ensure its longevity.

Training and Support

Working with a WordPress specialist provides access to training and support throughout the development and maintenance process. They can provide guidance, troubleshooting assistance, and training for administrators and users to effectively manage and utilize the digital archive. Support is a relationship that is effective, especially once the researcher begins populating the digital archive and requires troubleshooting.

The functionality and goals of the digital archive were discussed with the WordPress specialist who was then tasked with building the foundation of the digital archive based on the criteria of the study. Two primary concerns from a researchers, point of view were expressed: Firstly, the digital archive must efficiently manage a substantial volume of visual artefacts with the capability of tagging each artefact individually, whilst ensuring optimal performance without compromising the operating speed of the digital archive. Secondly, the digital archive must incorporate up to date security measures to safeguard the integrity of the digital archive. Both of these factors were discussed and implemented by the WordPress specialist.

3.3.2 Digital Archive Site map

A site map is a visual representation illustrating the hierarchical structure of a website. Its primary function is to depict the information architecture of a site during its construction phase and, to a lesser extent, to outline the navigation structure. A sitemap was utilized to aid in the creation of a simplified visual picture of the study's online archive before actually building the digital archive. Newman and Landay (2000) note that:

> Site maps often evolve throughout the entire life of the project, being updated constantly to reflect new understandings of the site structure. Early in the design process, site maps will reflect the site's structure broadly and, as time progresses, they will be revised to become increasingly detailed. In some cases, where site maps are used more extensively, they will evolve until they reflect every single page in the site. They can then be used to support project management, content

management, and the generation of specifications. Site maps are the primary artefact of information design (Newman & Landay 2000:268).

In addition to creating the sitemap, it is crucial to acknowledge its representation of the relationships among various design domains. Newman and Landay (2000) add that, 'There are many areas of overlap between different types of design. For example, the design of an individual page must take into consideration the information that is to be presented on the page, its relation to other information found elsewhere on the site, the support for navigation to other areas of the site, and the visual presentation of information on the page' (Newman & Landay 2000:265). Table 3.1 below discusses these overlapping areas.

Table 3.1 Terms for different specialties within web site design (Newman & Landay 2000:264).

Specialisation Term	Description
Information architecture	Is an emerging specialty within web site design that refers primarily to the combination of information design and navigation design.
Information Design	Focus on the entire web site and the relationship between large-scale elements (such as pages) within the site.
Graphic Design (Visual Design)	Refers to the visual communication of information using elements such as colour, images, typography, and layout.
Navigation Design	Focus on the entire web site and the relationship between large-scale elements (such as pages) within the site.

User Interface Design	When applied in the web domain, refers primarily to the design of navigation systems, with some overlap into information design and graphic design.

The overlapping areas described in table 3.1 above are represented below in figure 3.2.

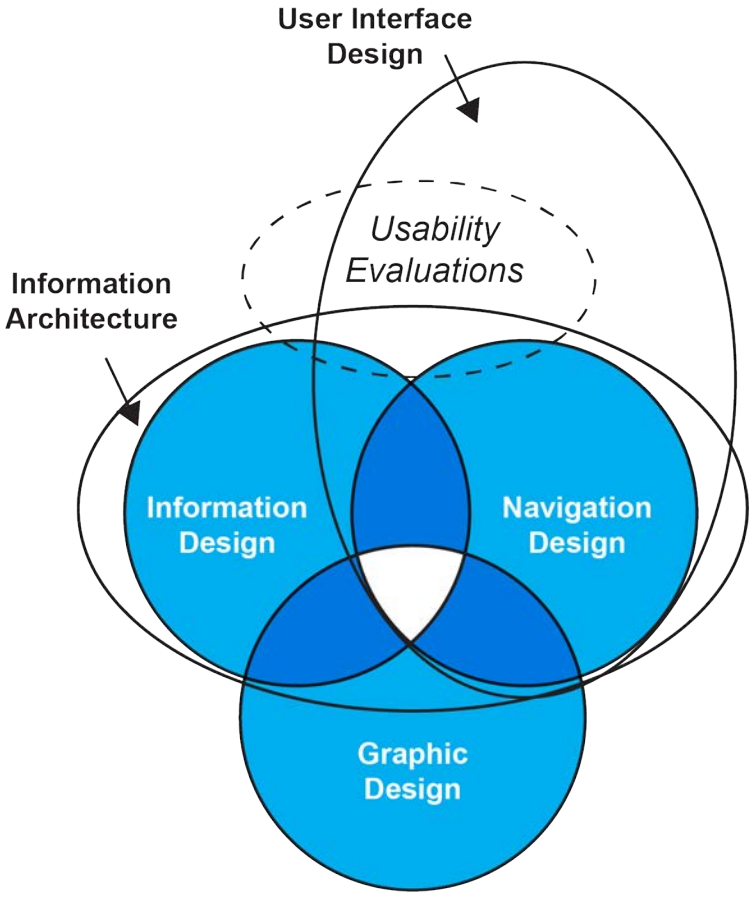


Figure 3.2 Different specialities within website design (Newman & Landay 2000:265)

Figure 3.2 above provides a visual detail depicting the site map as an essential tool for guiding the development process of a digital archive, ensuring structural organisation, enhancing user experience, optimizing platform performance, and supporting the desired creative look and feel of the digital archive. The site map for the digital archive in this study had to fulfil two main components, with the first being the scholarly advancement of visual digital humanities and secondly, the documentation of the body of work of pioneer tattoo

artist Harry Ramesar in the form of a digital archive, which will showcase original artefacts that will give access to academics and the general public worldwide. Therefore, a mindful balancing act had to be implemented to ensure the compliance of these two components. From the perspective of this study's site map, the digital archive possesses the functionality to cater to both audiences: those with the appetite for academic visual elements and those with an interest in the study's subject matter.

The site map for the digital archive in this study, represented in figure 3.3, serves as a graphical representation of a hierarchical system, illustrating the parent-sibling relationship between pages within a website, which outlines how subpages are organized under their respective parent groupings, effectively mapping out the site's structure. Discussions related to the content of elements depicted in the digital archives' site map will be examined in the 'Front-End' section of this chapter.

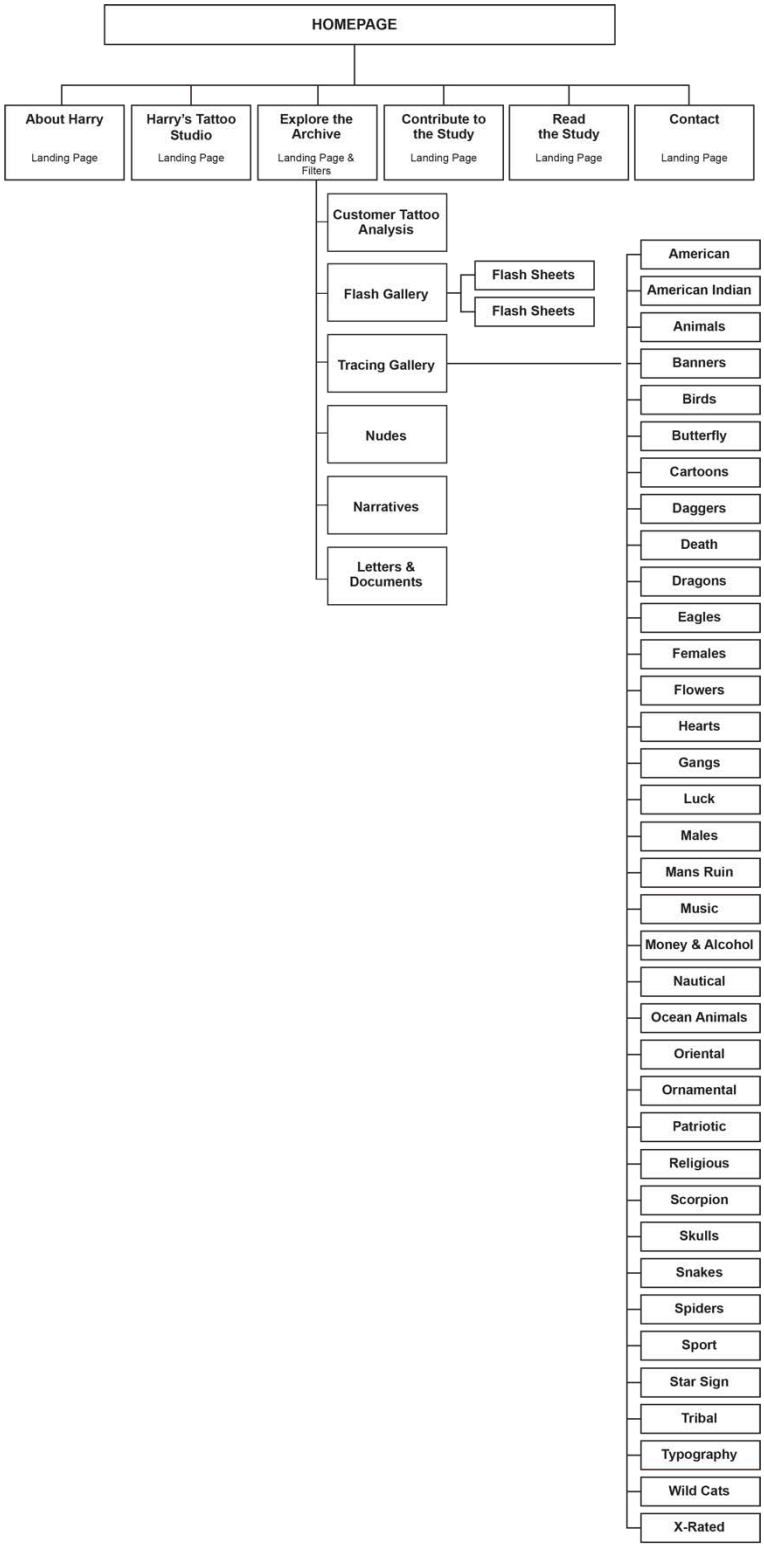


Figure 3.3 Digital Archive Site map.

3.3.2 Digital Archive Front-end

From the outset of this study, a concerted effort was made to create a digital archive with a aesthetic and minimalist design approach. The digital archive focuses on relevant information pertaining to Harry Ramesar's career as a tattoo artist and the tattoo-related artefacts that form the foundation of this study. The first point of contact when dealing with a website's front-end is the homepage.

Rouse (2023) notes that 'Homepages are located in the root directory of the website. Many home pages act as a virtual directory for a site — they provide top-level menus where visitors can go deeper into various areas of the site' (Rouse 2023). This being said, the layout of the homepage needs to capture the attention of the viewer with the site layout serving as the foundational framework that defines a digital archive's structure. Its primary function is to organize information in a cohesive manner for both website owners and their audiences. A well-designed web layout outlines the hierarchy of content, facilitates seamless navigation between web pages, and emphasizes key website elements. Crucially, it enables the digital archive to convey a message that transcends mere text to be communicated effectively through visual elements. The home page of this study's digital archive can be seen in figure 3.4 (https://tattooharry.co.za/). The digital archive features a single-column layout which presents content in a vertical, scrollable column, making it one of the simplest layout types. It is well-suited for minimalist websites, where the design is concise and does not overshadow the visual content. With ample white space surrounding visual elements, they appear larger and maintain clarity, while the scrolling experience remains smooth and uninterrupted.

3.3.2.1 Homepage

A - Header

The header serves as the topmost section of a website, often serving as visitors' initial point of contact identification upon entering the site. The header prominently features the brand of Harry Ramesar, who utilised this visual subject matter on his tattoo business card seen in figure 3.4. This creates a direct link between the business card Harry Ramesar used in the past for professional networking and branding and the visual communication of his digital archive.

In addition, the header includes the digital archive's navigation menu. This menu functions as a navigation tool for visitors. Incorporating relevant categories into the header is vital for guiding visitors to the different elements contained within the digital archive.

The goal is to keep the menu function as simple as possible, allowing viewers the freedom to explore and feel comfortable while navigating the digital archive. The white header strip is easy on the eyes and emphasizes the visual representation of Harry Ramsar's business card-inspired design.

B – Principle Homepage Image

Including an eye-catching image of Harry Ramesar tattooing a client reinforces the identity of the digital archive with the image's grainy texture providing a sense of the era when the photograph was taken and contrasts well with the clean layout of the archive. The title of the digital archive is reversed out of the image, making it prominently stand out from the background, resulting in this supporting image occupying the largest image portion of space on the digital archive, thus helping to create a strong initial impression and set the visual tone and theme of the archive.

C – Digital Archive Introduction Information and Study Link

This section encompasses a written summary that articulates the digital archive's purpose, offerings, and what visitors can expect. Digital archive content encompasses a broad spectrum of elements which can be made easier to understand with the use of a written summary. The design of this section incorporated black text on a textured background which was photographed from one of the artefact backgrounds in the digital archive. The 'Durban's Only Tattooist' imagery was taken from Harry Ramesar's business card. This section also contains a link to read this study, which will be uploaded once the study has been examined and permission has been granted.

D – Artefact Page Links

This section contains live page links to the two important pages contained in the digital archive, namely 'Harry's Tattoo Studio', a purpose built 3D environment of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio and 'Flash Gallery ' and 'Tracings Gallery '. The terms are illustrated with visual

artefact representations found within the digital archive which depict tattoo artefacts representing the same tattoo at the two stages of the tattooing process. The concepts embodied by both these terms will be thoroughly explored within chapter four of this study.

E – Footer

The content which is included in the footer can vary widely, and your choices should align with the objectives of your digital archive. The digital archive's footer represents links to all the pages of the digital archive. As the footer is the last element a visitor encounters before leaving the digital archive, it is important to have a) live links that direct visitors to important pages contained within the digital archive and b) give the viewer a lasting impression of the digital archive. The footer has four distinct elements that are worth mentioning.

1. There is a live link that allows a viewer to contribute to the study which is boxed in blue visually emphasizing the fact to the viewer.
2. The 'working hours' which were taken from Harry Ramesar's business card is used as a creative visual element that gives the viewer a feel of the time when Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist.
3. Direct links to essential pages contained within the digital archive maintain the viewer's focus on its contents throughout the viewer's visit, thus eliminating the need for the viewer to scroll back up to the header.
4. The background image was selected from the artefacts collected for this study. The images portray a hand-drawn tattoo design, offering a distinctive visual representation that distinctly communicates South African subject matter. This image frames the digital archive within both an international context, symbolized by the South African flag of the time, and a specific geographical location within South Africa, represented by the Zulu shield—a symbol associated with KwaZulu Natal.



Figure 3.4 Homepage of digital archive of Harry Ramesar. (https://tattooharry.co.za/)



Figure 3.5 The business card of Harry Ramesar. Source: The Harry Ramesar Collection

3.3.2.2 About Harry Page

The contents of this page (https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/) are sourced from my Masters entitled: A Semiotic Investigation of the Graphic Imagery by Pioneer Tattoo Artists in KwaZulu Natal with Special Reference to the Ramesar Brothers (van As 2018). This page, which can be seen in figures 3.1-3.5, plays a crucial role in providing visitors with essential information about Harry and his tattoo artist career, thus helping viewers navigate the contents effectively, and establishing a foundation for the introduction of the artefacts which are focused on in this study . This page furthermore provides visitors with an introduction to the digital archive, explaining its scope and significance. This helps viewers understand the context of the materials they're exploring in the digital archive. There are twelve topics explored on this page, which are displayed in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 About Us Discussion Topics. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

About Us Discussion Topics
The Ramesar Brothers
Tattoo Beginnings
Harry's Tattoo Studio
Tattoo History as Told by Harry

Harry’s Tattoo Process
Popular Designs
The Tattoo Experience
The Social Context
The Clientele
Tattooing Royalty
A Clients Experience
Harry’s Tattoo Career

Each topic discussed offers the viewer of the digital archive an insightful glimpse into Harry Ramesar's tattoo career. To elaborate further, there are four key aspects that highlight the significance of this page which are discussed below.

Contextualisation and Contribution to the field

Providing information about Harry Ramesar’s career helps contextualise the work of Harry Ramesar and highlights achievements within a broader narrative. This context can be valuable for viewers of the digital archive who are exploring the archive to understand the significance and impact of Harry Ramesar’s contributions to tattoo culture. Detailing Harry Ramesar’s career helps viewers understand the scope and depth of his professional accomplishments.

Inspiration and learning

Learning about Harry Ramesar’s career can be both inspiring and educational for visitors, especially those who may be interested in the history of tattooing in KwaZulu Natal and South Africa. By sharing details about his experiences, challenges, and successes, the digital archive can serve as a valuable resource for learning and professional development.

Legacy preservation

Documenting the career of a pioneer tattoo artist in their digital archive contributes to preserving their legacy for future generations and it ensures that their achievements and

contributions are recorded and accessible to others who may be interested in the tattoo career of Harry Ramesar or commemorating his work.

Personal Connection

Exploring someone's career journey can create a sense of personal connection between the individual and their audience, especially if the viewer has a tattoo from Harry Ramesar, knows someone who had a tattoo done by Harry Ramesar or remembers him. By sharing personal anecdotes, reflections, and insights related to their professional experiences, the digital archive can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of who Harry Ramesar was as a professional tattoo artist.

Overall, discussing the career of Harry Ramesar adds depth, context, and meaning to the artefacts contained within the digital archive, thus enriching the user experience and contributing to the preservation and dissemination of artefact knowledge and inspiration.

3.3.2.3 Harry's Tattoo Studio Page

This page is dedicated to the creation of a 3D environment of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio based on feedback from interview participants of this study and consultation with members of the Ramesar family. Details of the process are addressed in 3.6 of this chapter. Figure 3.6 below depicts the loading page of the 3D environment which can be increased to full screen viewing. The controls to explore the 3D environment have been set to standard default commands which most platforms are able to accommodate, namely a) using the mouse to 'look around the environment, b) the arrow keys to walk and c) C key to toggle crouch.

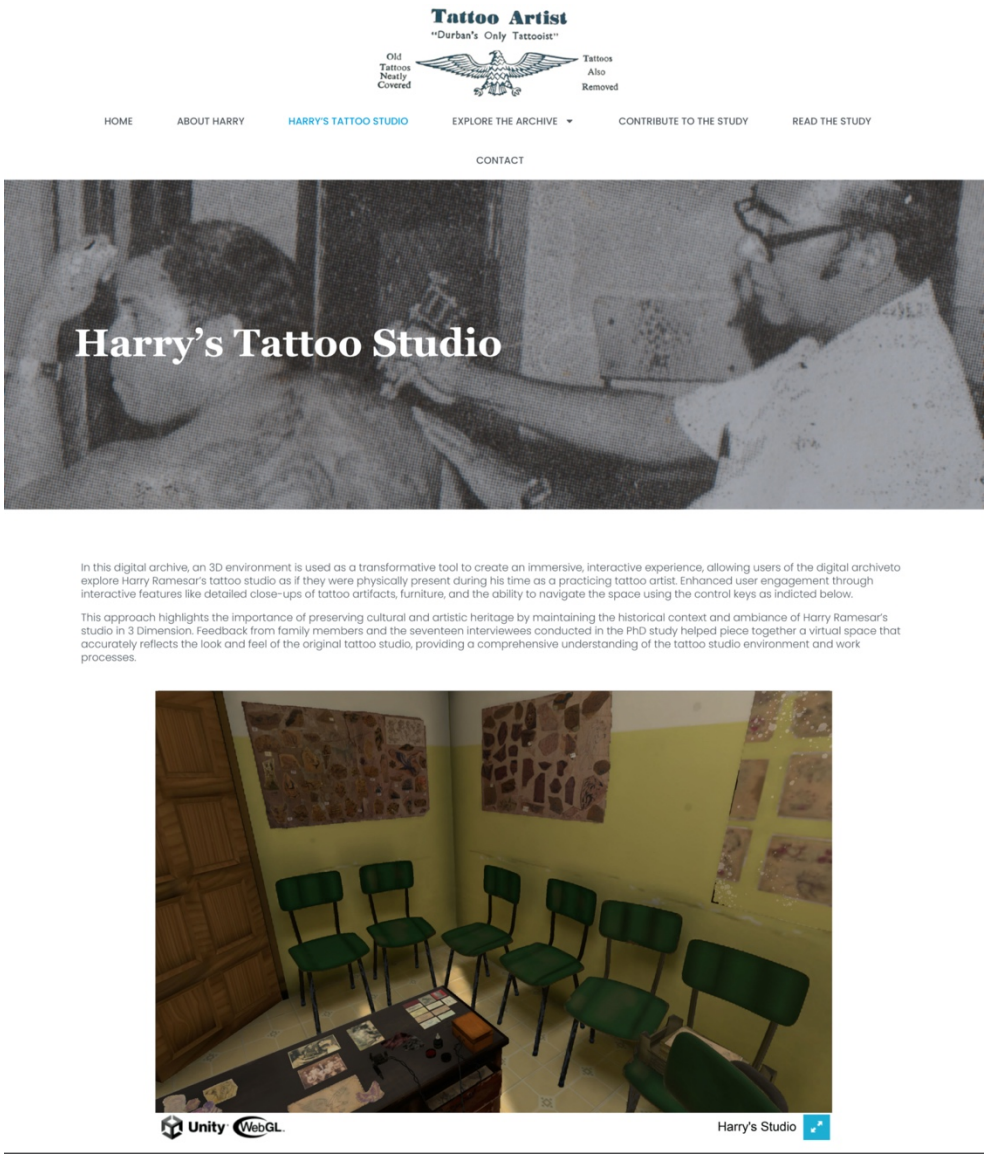


Figure 3.6 Harry's tattoo studio page Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/the-studio/

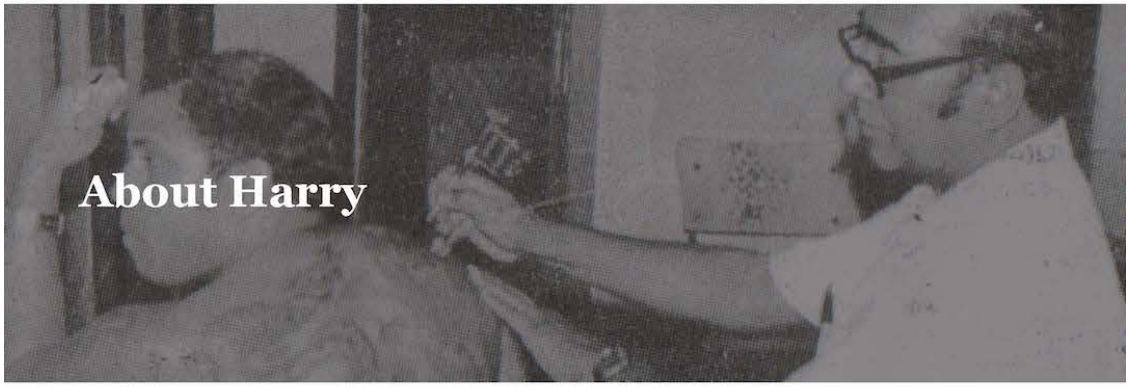
3.3.2.4 Explore the Archive Drop Down Menu

This section of the digital archive comprises the artefacts essential to this study and is accessible via a dropdown menu offering six selection options, as depicted in Figure 3.12. Option one, 'Custom Tattoo Analysis', contains images of the actual tattoos of interview participants tattooed by Harry Ramesar who found their tattoo flash design, tracing or both on the digital archive during the live interview. The Analysis of these tattoos is presented in 6.7 of this study. This section of the digital archive can increase once individuals who have

tattoos from Harry Ramesar view the digital archive and submit images of their tattoos. Option two – 'flash gallery'- is further broken down with two options namely 'flash sheets' and 'individual flash'. The second option, 'tracing gallery', allows the viewer of the online archive to access the various collections containing original tattoo tracings as first seen on the digital archive site map (section 3.3.2). The sections mentioned above are represented by figures 3.13 and 3.14 and respectively. The inclusion of the 'Nude' page in the digital archive is intriguing, as these drawings were discovered within the collection of artefacts I received from the Ramesar family. Unlike Harry Ramesar's typical tattoo flash designs, these nudes do not align with his established production methods or the usual procedures for both tattoo design flash or tattoo tracings. It is presumed that these figure drawings, which depict female anatomy, were created either as a practice to refine his skills in drawing the female form, particularly given the abundance of female and nude female tattoo tracings in the archive, or as a reflection of a personal hobby or interest of Ramesar. This assumption is plausible as the Ramesar family did not recognise these figure drawings when asked and as a result, I insisted on approval from the Ramesar family to add the 'Nude' section to the digital archive.

'Narratives' is an additional inclusion from my master's study (van As 2018), with this narrative section making use of selected quotes from data gathered during the interviews conducted in this study**.** The data that was collected was coded utilizing seven themes, and included within those themes are codes that are relevant to that particular theme. These theme and code families are discussed by making use of selected quotes from the interview participants. The interview participants are anonymous and are identified by the use of PERSINT 1-6. PERSINT refers to 'personal interview' and ARCHINT refers to an 'archive interview'. The selected quotes from the coded information fall within the following themes: 1) Visual Communication, 2) Visual Culture, 3) Locations, 4) Procedures, 5) Clientele, 6) Tattoo Industry, 7) South African Society. Including these quotes from interviews enhances the richness, authenticity, and interpretive value of a digital archive, making it a more valuable resource for researchers, and the general public. Quotes provide first-hand accounts and perspectives from individuals directly involved in or knowledgeable about the subject matter, which adds depth and authenticity to the archival materials and aids in humanizing the content by showcasing the voices, experiences, and emotions of the interview participants. This 'personal touch' creates a digital archive that is more engaging and relatable to viewers.

Quotes serve to support the research and the analysis is valuable evidence due to the fact that it can be utilized to illustrate key points, validate findings, and or highlight specific themes or patterns within the archival materials. Lastly, incorporating quotes aids in the preservation of oral history, which ensures that the voices and stories of individual study participants are documented and accessible for future generations.



About Harry

THE RAMESAR BROTHERS

The Ramesar brothers may not have been well known to the vast majority of South Africans. In fact, most people would maybe not even recognize the surname. However, if you had a professional tattoo or knew someone who did it throughout most of the twentieth century, there was a one out of two chance that it was done by one of the Ramesar brothers (Hennig 1981). The only other competition was a tattoo artist in Cape Town (Magic Needle Caters For All Tastes 1956).

The two brothers in particular with ties to the professional tattoo industry were Beharie and Harry Ramesar. Their father arrived on the shores of Durban in around 1895 from India and settled in Pietermaritzburg. The Ramesar brothers, who were nine, had four sisters (van As 2009).



The Ramesar brothers. Harry is first left on the bottom row and Beharie is the third on the bottom row (van As 2009: 93)

TATTOO BEGINNINGS

Beharie, the oldest Ramesar brother, learnt the tattoo trade from a German travelling circus that performed in Pietermaritzburg. Harry remarks in a newspaper article, published in the Natal Mercury in 1956 that: 'he learnt the work from his brother who in turn was taught by a German circus star' (Magic Needle Caters For All Tastes 1956). A touring circus that toured Pietermaritzburg in the 1920s was Pagel's Mammoth Circus, which camped on a vacant lot, directly opposite the Norfolk Hotel in Upper Street (Dixon-Smith 2005).

Dixon-Smith writes in detail below, that the circus comprised of:

> "All Star Performers from the Principal Circuses of Europe and America... and Natalian's of every race, colour and creed flocked to pay their admittance of 2, 3 or 4 shillings (children to matinees at one and two pence). Herr William Pagel was one of the greatest showmen of his day, and knew what the public wanted. He was German by birth (born in 1878) and after an early career at sea settled in Australia where he worked in a restaurant as dishwasher and bouncer. Extremely well-built (about 6 foot tall and between 280--300 lbs, with enormous forearms), he soon joined a circus as a strongman and eventually made enough capital to buy his own tent, holding 200 people. In February 1905 he sailed for Natal, and began touring South African centres. He developed his own animal training capabilities, particularly with lions, and carried the scars to prove it. Pagel was also famous for his tug o' war acts with four horses or alternatively with two elephants. He was renowned for carrying no stick or whip when in the ring, relying, as he himself said, on 'no more formidable instruments than patience, kindness and love, to gain a high degree of ascendancy over the minds of the most savage of the beasts of prey. Many people imagine that when an animal is taught to perform a feat, it is coerced into doing something foreign to its instincts and nature. This is not so. Animals possess aptitudes just as human beings, and they vary almost as greatly. The trainer observes some peculiar aptitude in an animal and guides and develops it carefully, encouraging him by every imaginable means until he is able to perform what is for that species of animal an unusual feat.
>
> **(Dixon-Smith 2005)**

Beharie therefore passed the tattoo trade onto Harry, who was in standard one at school at the time. Harry explains that he: 'helped my brother trace patterns of national flags, pretty women and strong men as customers requested. Most of them were soldiers from the Indian Malay camp that came to Pietermaritzburg during World War II' (Pillay 2001). With the tattoo knowledge that he gained under the guidance of his brother, Harry relocated to Durban after marrying Soonphathre and opened a small tattoo shop.

Figure 3.7 About Harry page. source: https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

HARRY'S TATTOO STUDIO

Harry established his tattoo studio in 1930 and occupied the same premises throughout his career: 125 Lakhani Chambers, 2 Saville Street. This was a predominantly Indian and African area of Durban, comprising mainly tailors, businessmen, herbalists, and salons (Pillay 2001).

Naidoo (1983: 9) described the interior of Harry's tattoo studio as follows:



Harry's business card (van As 2009: 95).

> The walls of his small room are crammed with charts showing hundreds ofpatterns from which his clients select the design they want transferred permanently onto their skins. One corner of the room has a few chairs and serves as a waiting room on busy days. The only other furniture is a table with four small bottles of ink, a few cloths and a small electrical tattooing machine.
>
> **(Naidoo 1983: 9)**

TATTOO HISTORY AS TOLD BY HARRY

Harry traces the history of tattooing back to the days when it was customary for Hindustani women to tattoo their arms soon after marriage. 'When raiders attacked villages in India they would take women away after killing the men. But they left the women who had tattoos because they knew they were married' (Naidoo 1983: 9).

The above-mentioned explanation could only speculate that Harry was referring to the tattoo history of India and not to tattoo history in its entirety.

HARRY'S TATTOO PROCESS

The procedure of getting a professional tattoo has not changed considerably throughout the years since the invention of the electric tattoo machine by Charlie Wagner in 1981 (Clerk 2008). In a newspaper article printed in the Natal Mercury in March 1956, Harry explains his tattoo process.

The procedure mentioned on the right was narrated by Harry in 1956 and it is presumed that Harry adopted revised procedures as the tattoo technology of the times improved.

> First, I have to shave my client's arm, then trace on it with indelible pencil one of my designs. Next, the electric needle – moving 1,000 times a minute – traces over the design in ink. There is no longer danger of blood poisoning because an antiseptic is added to the ink. Next comes the colouring. Certain colours – yellow and purple – are not used because they fade; but red, blue, green, brownand black are permanent.
>
> **(Magic Needle Caters For All Tastes 1956).**

POPULAR DESIGNS

According to Naidoo, Harry states that *'By far the most sought-after designs are eagles. Eagles make people feel bold and brave. It shows that they are one of the boys'* (Naidoo 1983). In an interview conducted by Doreen Premder in 1998, Harry remarked that: *'men took a fancy to Eagles, Panthers, Dragons, and barbwire while women chose roses, butterflies and something more feminine – the simple ones'* (Premder 1998).

Cosmetic tattoos were also performed by Harry, where 'most of my European women clients came for beauty spots... some women had black eyebrows tattooed and even red lips' (Magic Needle Caters For All Tastes 1956).

Figure 3.8 About Harry page continued. source: https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

THE TATTOO EXPERIENCE

It could be speculated that one of the most frequently asked questions that a tattoo artist receives is about the pain factor. Although pain thresholds vary from individual to individual, Harry remarked that: *'It is completely painless, people have fallen asleep while I was tattooing them. They feel the pain only when I start, but the longer it takes the easier it becomes* (Naidoo 1983).

One of his clients sat for two periods of ten hours each for an intricate design. Another has been returning regularly for the past twenty-five years – his body is now completely covered with ink-marks (Naidoo 1983).



Harry leaving his mark on the back of a man who he has been tattooing for twenty-five years. The man has 223 tattoos, 1983 (van As 2009: 102).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

South Africa was up until the dawn of democracy in 1994, a segregated population that lived under oppression from forces of colonialism and apartheid. Translated from the Afrikaans meaning *'apartness', apartheid was the ideology supported by the National Party (NP) government and was introduced in South Africa in 1948. Apartheid called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa'* (South African History Online 2016).

In the midst of apartheid in 1956, Harry stated that two-thirds of his clientele were Europeans and on average he tattooed eight men a day and ten women a month and added that he also had non-European clients, with many Indian women going to him for religious marks. With regard to African clients, Harry referred to them as 'natives' in the article and notes the Paramount chief's son as a prominent client (Magic Needle Caters For All Tastes 1956).

This cited newspaper article was written in 1956, therefore it is presumed that the term 'natives' was an accepted phrase utilised in society at the time.

THE CLIENTELE

Some images of Harry working in his studio can be seen below. Harry remarks that in the early days most of his customers were sailors. A reason for this could be due to the fact that, a) South Africa was once part of the British empire and b) Durban was a very important strategic port for the allies during the world wars. According to Naidoo:

> Time was the important thing in those days. The sailors were only allowed off the ship for a few hours, so we had to tattoo them in a very short time. Nowadays more and more ordinary people including many respected professional people are tattooing their bodies.
>
> **(Naidoo 1983)**

Pillay refers to Harry building up a clientele that ranged from navy officers, soldiers, women interested in permanent lip colour and the notorious Hell's Angels Bikers from the early 1960's (Pillay 2001). Hennig remarks that Harry's clientele included seamen, many of whom regarded the tattoo as a mark of their trade and ex-convicts, keen to change the shape of a tell-tale tattoo (Hennig 1981).

Then there are the women who change their tastes. Like the one who swopped 'For Hells Angels Only' imprinted around their midriff for a cover-up trellis of roses (Hennig 1981).



A photograph of Harry tattooing Jerry Barnett's back, an inscription on the back of the photograph reads: 'I'm rough and I'm tough and I come from the Bluff', 1981 (van As 2009: 101).



Harry tattooing the forearm of Mr D. H Nel from Durban. Looking on from left to right is Mr Hennessy, of Springs and Mr G.J. Barkworth, of England. 1956 (van As 2009: 103).

Figure 3.9 About Harry continued. source: https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

TATTOOING ROYALTY

Research has revealled two individuals that fall into the category of royalty. The first was the then Prince of Wales whom Harry met in Beharie's tattoo studio in Pietermaritzburg in 1925 (Pillay 2001).

The second and most esteemed customer as stated by Harry in 2001, a Newspaper article was King Cyprian BhekuZulu, the Zulu monarch. In the article, Pillay quotes Harry as saying:

> He casually walked in but I knew he was somebody because of his three bodyguards. He asked me to do three heart tattoos on his arm – one with his father's name, the second with his name and the third he left vacant (Pillay 2001, para. 9).
>
> **(Pillay 2001, para. 9)**

With regard to the age of tattoo clients, Harry remarked in a newspaper article published in 1956, that his:

> ...youngest client was a Rhodesian boy of seven, brought in by his mother to have a lion's head tattooed on his arm. This was his birthday present. His oldest client was a man of 84, who approached him for the third time to have this third wife's name tattooed over the names of his two deceased wives.
>
> **(Magic Needle Caters For All Tastes 1956).**

A CLIENTS EXPERIENCE

Hennig documents the tattoo procedure in a newspaper article in June 1981, where she describes the tattoo experience of Pranesh Maharaj: Its Monday morning in Harry's little workshop. A young man comes in. Pranesh Maharaj, 19, is an apprentice fitter and turner. All his friends have tattoos he says but his father made him wait until he finished school to have his done. Today's the big day. He looks over the hundreds of transfers pasted on yellowed posters on the walls. From among the roses, swords, undressed ladies, cupids, sinking ships, hearts, birds, tigers, mermaids, he chooses an Atlas---type muscle man. Harry scrapes the hair from Pranesh's right forearm with a razor blade. He wipes the skin with water then holds the indelible ink transfer in place for several minutes. His is the beginning of the sequence he has followed so often for so many years. Then he begins his human embroidery, tracing the outline with his spiked drill.

After a while Pranesh sinks slightly and asks for water. I can understand why. To get the feel, I asked Harry to write my name on my upper arm – without the ink. The pain was so intense, I stopped him after the 'W'. no wonder some psychologists say tattoos can indicate a masochistic streak! 'This only happens about once in 200 people. It's nerves.' says Harry as he waits for the recovery. 'Usually after a couple of minutes, they don't feel any more pain. It's a case of mind over matter. He's thinking about it too much. 'A half hour and a few more sips of water later, the picture is complete. 'In about two hours' time. Rub all the blood off with a wet rag,' says Harry as he gives a final wipe to the rising red bubbles. 'This time tomorrow spread on a thin layer of Vicks. Do that twice a day till the scabs fall off. 'Don't pick them or you'll spoil it. Don't rub it for two or three months and you'll have nice thin lines. You can wash it whenever you like – water does not harm. Exit one satisfied customer. (Hennig 1981)



Harry tattooing the forearm of Pranesh Maharaj, 1981 (van As 2009: 105).

Figure 3.10 About Harry continued. source: https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

HARRY'S TATTOO CAREER

Due to the fact that tattoos are permanent, Harry remarked that because people selected their tattoos so carefully, it is possible to read a man's character from his tattoos (Naidoo 1983). This could be due to the fact that people tattooed designs (a) on their bodies that they liked or (b) subject matter associated with groups they were affiliated too. Harry, therefore could pick up these character traits as a professional tattoo artist.

Throughout most of his career, Harry was not allowed to advertise his art, therefore he relied on word-of-mouth, and as a result, clients filtered in from all over the country (Hennig 1981). A large portion of Harry's tattoo career took place during Apartheid and South African history online comments that newspapers catered mainly: 'for white, upper-income city dwellers although most South Africans are neither white, well-paid; nor city dwellers (Online). In addition, the conversation regarding tattoos was not as mainstream and accepted as we observe today. Harry refused to tattoo people's faces 'on principle' although he had been asked to do this many times. He also refused to tattoo young girls (Naidoo 1983).

Pillay asked Harry in a 2001 newspaper article when was he expected to retire. Harry, eighty-four years of age at the time replied:



Harry tattooing at the age of eighty-four, in 2001 (van As 2009: 107).



Harry at the age of ninety-four in 2009 (van As 2009: 107).

> "It's going to be a while before I close up and retire. I love my job – meeting people and socialising with all sorts keeps me alive. 'The tattoo business is my life and until the day my legs give up I will continue coming to my shop and serving my customers'
>
> **(Pillay 2001)**

Harry established his tattoo shop in 1930, in Durban and completed his last tattoo at the age of eighty-nine. When asked, what was the last tattoo that he ever did? Harry replied that it was flowers. With a smile on his face he said: *'When you get old, you can't be one hundred percent right. With flowers, you can go a bit crooked'* (van As 2009).

This works out to a professional tattoo artist career of an estimated seventy-four years. A truly remarkable achievement.

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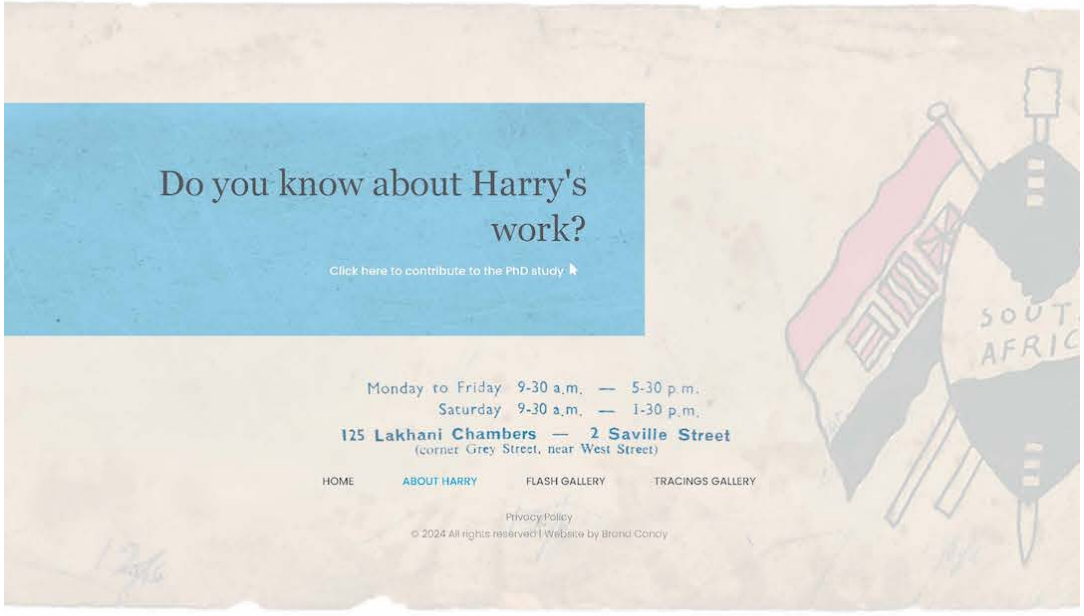


Figure 3.11 About Harry continued. source: https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

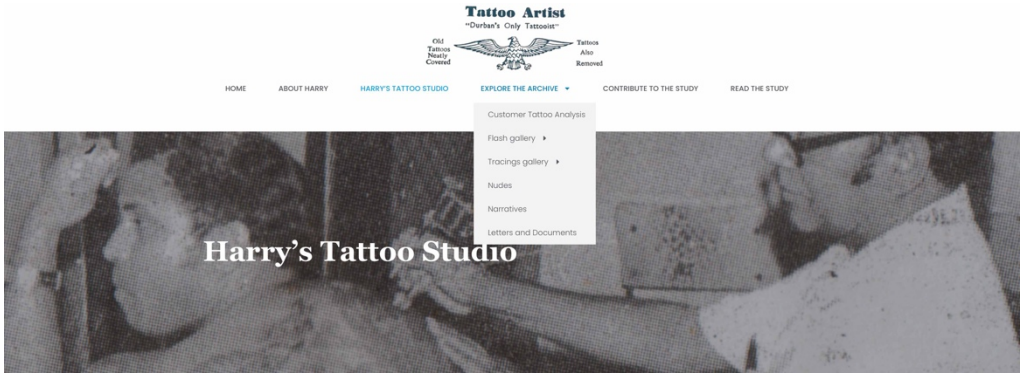


Figure 3.12 Explore the archive. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za

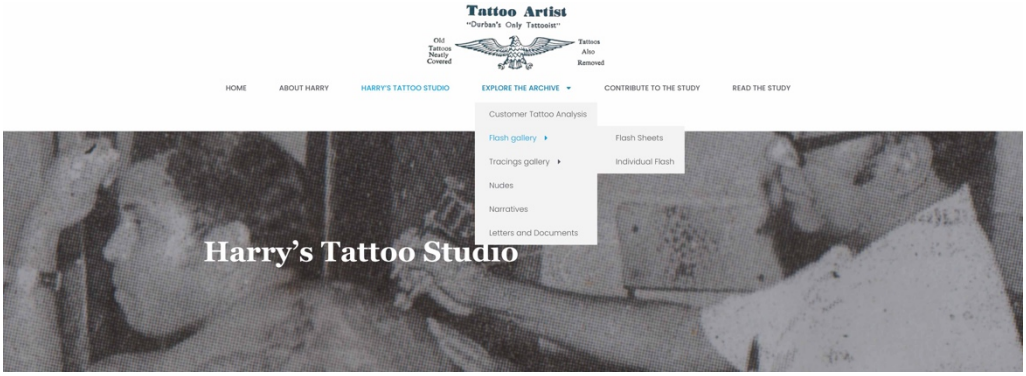


Figure 3.13 Flash gallery. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za

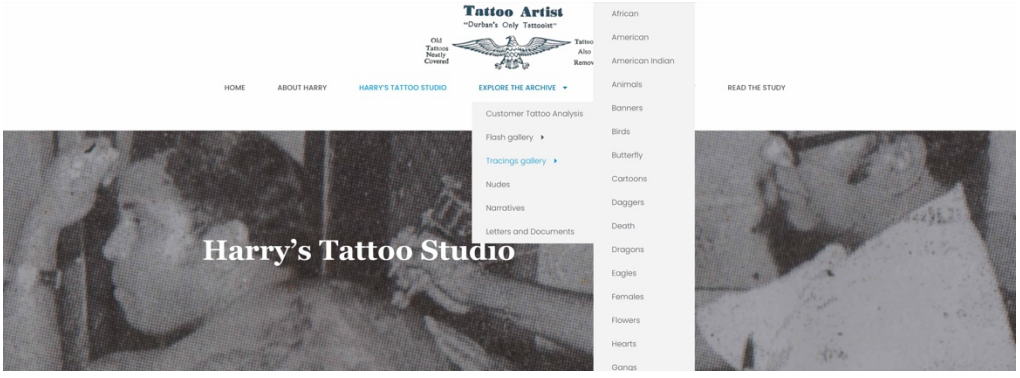


Figure 3.14 Tattoo tracings. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za

3.3.2.5 Contribute to the Study Page

The approach in this studies participatory engagement aligns closely with broader practices emerging from crowdsourcing, citizen science, and co-creation within cultural heritage and digital humanities. As Hossain and Kauranen (2015) observe, 'Crowdsourcing has proven to be beneficial in many tasks', particularly where diverse public contributions enrich research or curation initiatives (Hossain and Kauranen 2015:). Crowdsourcing, originally defined as 'company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call', has evolved to embrace complex and nuanced forms of participatory knowledge production (Hossain and Kauranen, 2015:3). In the context of cultural heritage, this often takes the form of 'volunteered geographic information' and community-curated archives, where co-creation fosters both inclusion and decentralised knowledge authority. Wiggins and Crowston (2011) describe citizen science as 'a form of collaborative research in which the participation of crowds is utilized in solving real-world problems', a model increasingly applicable to cultural heritage where lay expertise and lived experience are critical. Projects rooted in co-creation share these characteristics, offering communities a participatory stake in shaping narratives and contributing to knowledge assets that are reflective of diverse experiences. Notably, such participatory models demand careful design, echoed by Hossain and Kauranen (2015) that 'quality issues are an inherent problem in crowdsourcing', particularly in micro tasking contexts, and thus underscore the importance of structuring contributions with clarity and support (Hossain and Kauranen, 2015:9). The collaboration with the Ramesar family and contributors to this study mirrors such frameworks, not as ad hoc inclusion, but as intentionally facilitated participation that balances open input with curatorial oversight.

A strategic decision concerning the digital archive of this study was to develop and launch the archive live, leveraging it as a potential recruitment tool to attract interview participants for the study. Including a page for contributions in a digital archive is important as one of the study participant recruitment options. Cashwell (2021) notes that, 'as technology swiftly evolves, researchers have many new technological options to aid in all parts of the research process, including recruitment and data collection' (Cashwell 2021:88). The addition of this interviewee recruitment option allows viewers of the digital archive to

actively participate in the archival process by contributing their own artefacts, knowledge, and perspectives, which enhances the depth and diversity of the archive and fosters a sense of community engagement and collaboration. Cashwell (2021) notes that the evolution of digital platforms:

> Technology has opened new avenues for conducting research across vast distances. Within the last decade, researchers have begun to use one form of technology, social media, as a cost effective way to recruit participants and an effective way to recruit people from within hard-to-reach populations (Cashwell 2021:80).

A well-designed contribution page provides clear guidelines and mechanisms for submitting materials, ensuring that the contributions align with the digital archive's goals and standards set out in the study. Figure 3.15 depicts the 'contribute to the study' page on the archive (https://tattooharry.co.za/contribute/). The purpose of this page was twofold. Firstly, it is aimed to inform and provide viewers with comprehensive details about the study, while ensuring that the page layout remains easy to navigate and complete, should the viewer choose to contribute to the study. Secondly, the information gathered from the completed contribution page enables me, as the researcher, to review the applications and contact potential interviewees through the *potential interviewees* requested platform.

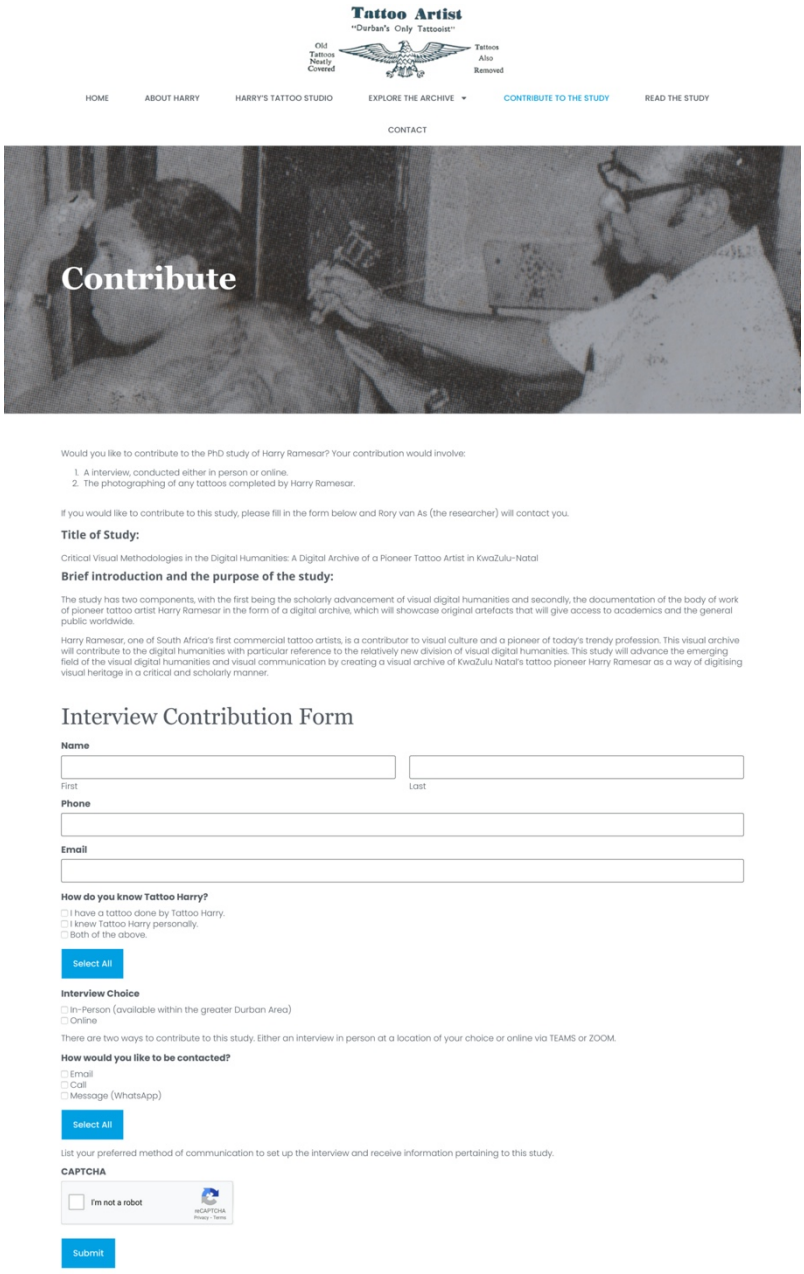


Figure 3.15 Contribute to the study page. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/contribute/

3.3.2.6 Read the Study

Reading the dissertation of this study on the actual digital archive is important as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the archive's purpose, methodology, and significance, allowing users to better grasp the rationale behind the selection, organization, and

presentation of the archived materials in the digital archive, allowing for contextual understanding, which is crucial for appreciating the archive's content. The dissertation is viewable in a e-publication-like format as seen in figure 3.16 allowing for an integrated research experience. Viewers can directly explore the artefacts being discussed, see how theoretical frameworks apply to the actual data, and better appreciate the connections between the research and the archival content. This integrated approach enhances user engagement by encouraging a more active and informed exploration of the archive, as users can immediately reference the dissertation to clarify or expand on the content they encounter.

Housing the dissertation within the digital archive ensures the preservation of scholarly integrity, which helps maintain the academic context, including the research methodologies, data collection and conclusions. This preservation is essential for ensuring that future users understand the intellectual foundation of the collection. The dissertation will be uploaded to the digital archive once the study has been examined and approval has been granted.

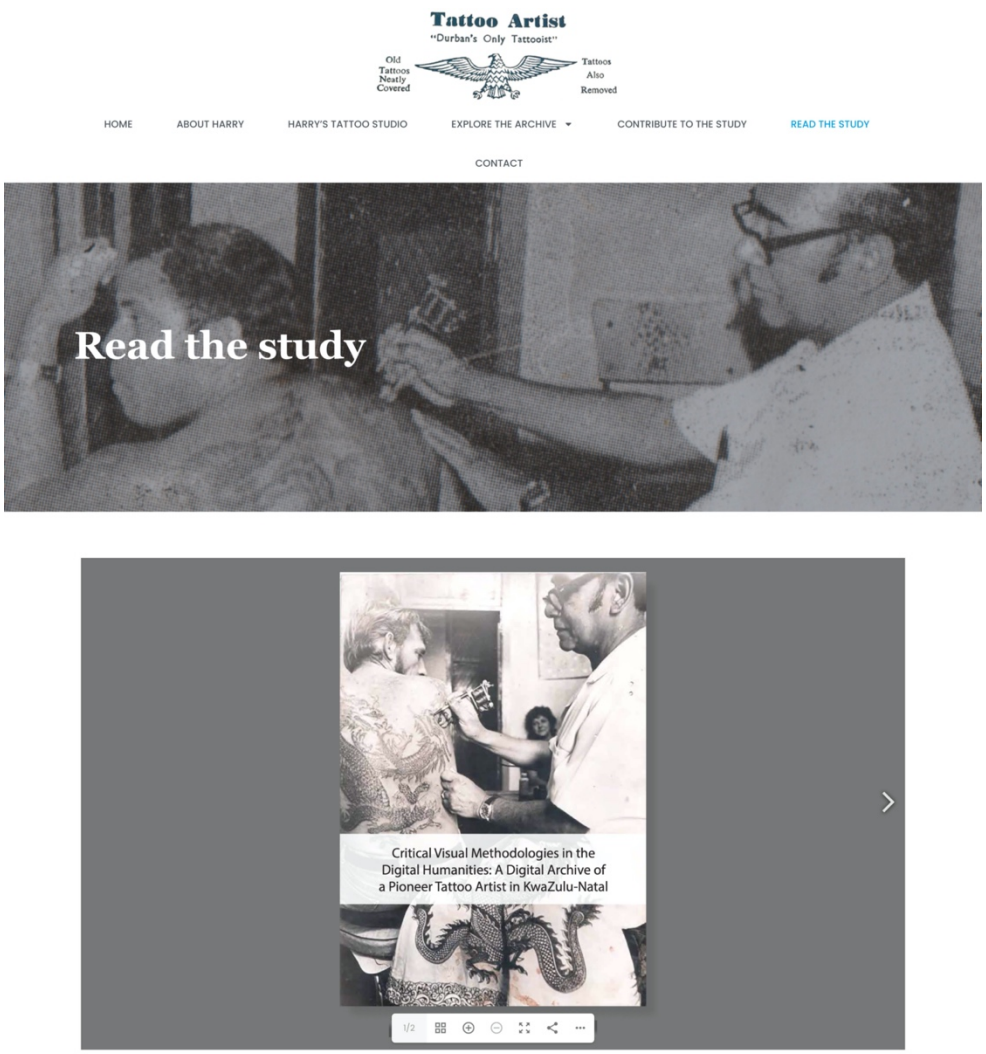


Figure 3.16 Ready the study page. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/customer-tattoo-analysis/

3.3.2.7 Contact Page

The ability to facilitate communication and engagement with viewers is crucial to any digital archive. A tailored contact form as seen in figure 3.17 (https://tattooharry.co.za/contact-us/) provides viewers with a convenient way to reach out to the administrators of the digital archive. It ensures accessibility for individuals who may have questions, feedback, or inquiries about the materials or the archive itself. The utilization of a contact form not only serves as a contact mechanism but provides an element of protection. Abazher (2023) elaborates that:

Spambots have learned to collect email addresses directly from websites. Therefore, you need to learn how to find new methods of bypassing "junk" messages. If you leave the email address on your website, it can easily become the object of spammers' attention. If you receive your online form response, you can be sure that it was sent by an interested client. The online form creates a layer of defence against robots that flood your inbox with unnecessary letters. Of course, this will not prevent you from receiving all the spam messages. You can also receive some spam letters via your contact form. To reduce their number, you can try using the reCAPTCHA to check if the user is human (Abazher 2023).

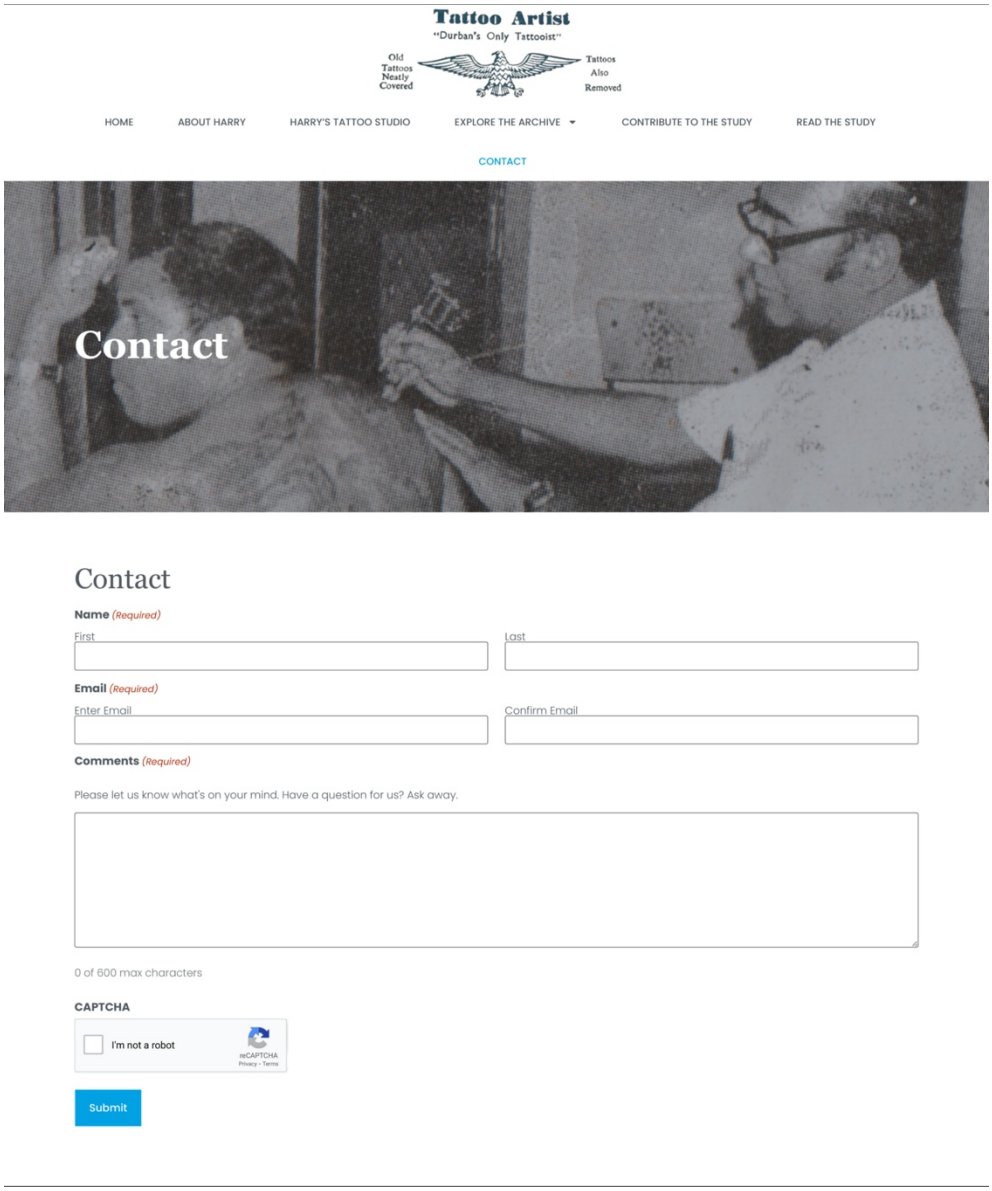


Figure 3.17 Contact page. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/contact-us/

3.4 The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Visual Images and the Digital Humanities

With the advancement of new technologies, Artificial intelligence (AI) poses a potential threat to visual images primarily because it can easily manipulate or generate highly realistic images that blur the line between reality and fiction (Gülaçti & Kahraman 2021). In some cases AI can create images that are indistinguishable from real photographs and or visual images, thus raising concerns about the authenticity, ownership, and ethical use of visual content. This

capability makes it increasingly difficult to determine whether an image is genuine or artificially created, potentially leading to misinformation, copyright issues, and challenges in preserving the integrity of the visual contained in digital archives. As AI technology continues to evolve, these threats to the credibility and reliability of visual images become more pronounced, making it a critical issue for both creators and consumers of visual content.

A study by Gülaçti and Kahraman (2021) examines recent developments in AI-generated images, with a particular focus on the impact of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) on art and their potential implications, with emphasis on how AI, especially through the use of GANs, is reshaping the concepts of creativity, authorship, and authenticity in the visual arts (Gülaçti and Kahraman 2021). The study highlights how GANs are blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality in art, which could have significant implications for visual repositories such as digital archives. AI-generated images challenge traditional notions of what constitutes an authentic work of art, raising important questions about the nature of artistic expression. The study notes that 'the increasing prevalence of artificial intelligence in arts has drastically changed what seems to be the underlying constants, such as artistic creativity and authorship of artworks' (Gülaçti and Kahraman 2021:243). The study also raises concerns about the challenges of authenticity and authorship in AI-generated works, which could become a significant issue in digital archives by questioning who should be considered the author of an AI-generated image, whether it is the AI itself, the creator of the algorithm, or the individual who curated the final output. This issue is particularly relevant for digital humanities, where the preservation of provenance and authenticity is critical. As Gülaçti and Kahraman (2021) asserts: 'If creating the image makes one an artist, then AI is the author of that image. On the other hand, if having a vision or message to communicate to the rest of the world is what counts to be the artist, humans are the authors' (Gülaçti and Kahraman 2021:261). While this section has focused primarily on the difficulty in distinguishing human and AI-generated visual material, it is also important to note that copyright concerns extend to the use of existing creative works, often utilised without consent as training data for AI systems. This represents a parallel ethical and legal challenge, where the misappropriation of original artworks during the training of generative models raises questions about intellectual property rights and fair use, even before AI outputs are created or disseminated.

Ethical and legal challenges posed by AI-generated images, including issues of copyright and the potential misuse of deepfakes[12] are potentially crucial concerns for digital archives, as the escalation of AI-generated content could complicate the task of preserving and verifying the authenticity of visual artifacts. Gülaçti and Kahraman (2021) warn that 'it may soon become impossible to identify what is fake and true, even with novel techniques and countermeasures' (Gülaçti and Kahraman 2021:263). These discussions highlight the potential of AI-generated images to become a burning issue in digital archives, as the digital humanities may increasingly grapple with the preservation, attribution, and authenticity of visual content in the age of AI. This topic has merit in discussing and recognising the potential of AI generated imagery in digital archives such as the one in this study, as they deal with artefacts that a) have not been seen before by the general public unless you had been to Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio, b) Harry Ramesar is deceased and the living relative who supplied the artefacts for this digital archive is the only authenticator alive with first-hand knowledge and c) the tattoo profession within Western and European society – to which Harry Ramesar subscribed, utilized similar trends of tattoo flash designs and tracing methods thus opening a potential loophole for AI manipulation

3.5 Digital Archive Artefacts

As we enter the artefacts section of this study, we embark on a journey through a curated collection of visual items that capture the essence and significance of the subject matter of this study. Each artefact offers a distinctive window into South African tattoo history and culture, inviting exploration and providing valuable insights. Before delving into the artefacts themselves, it is crucial to first explore how these items came into my possession. In 2020, I scheduled a meeting with Harry Ramesar's son, Anil Ramesar who I had become familiar with whilst compiling my Master's study. Anil actively participated in the master's study through

[12] 'an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said' (Merriam-Webster.com n.d.)

an in-depth interview. Subsequently, we would meet informally on occasions to discuss the study's progress and various topics related to Harry Ramesar during his time as a tattoo artist.

On one such occasion post my Master's study, Anil noted that he had some of his father's tattoo 'stuff[13]' in the garage[14]. This piqued my interest as it was the first time Anil had mentioned the existence of such documentation. Two worn out travel suitcases housed a collection of assorted tattoo-related artefacts. As a researcher I immediately realised the potential of the artefacts contained in the two travel suitcases. Uncovering rare artefacts for a potential digital archive carries significant importance on several fronts, with five key aspects outlined below:

Preservation of Tattoo and Cultural Heritage

Rare tattoo artifacts often represent unique aspects of cultural heritage that may be at risk of being lost or forgotten. Digitising and preserving these items in a digital archive allows for the cultural significance of the tattoo artefacts to be safeguarded for future generations.

Research and Scholarship

Rare tattoo artefacts provide valuable insights into historical events, cultural practices, and artistic traditions. Scholars and researchers can study these artefacts to gain a deeper understanding of the past and contribute to academic knowledge.

Enhanced User Engagement

Rare tattoo artefacts can generate significant interest and engagement among users of the digital archive. They offer a sense of discovery and intrigue, attracting users to explore the archive further and learn about lesser-known aspects of South African tattoo history and culture.

[13] a substance, especially when you do not know or say exactly what it is ("STUFF | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary" n.d.)

[14] a building where a car is kept, built next to or as part of a house ("GARAGE | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary" n.d.)

Broadening Perspectives

Rare tattoo artefacts often represent marginalised or underrepresented voices and perspectives. Including these artefacts in a digital archive allows for more inclusive and representative diverse cultural experiences and narratives.

Educational Resources

Rare tattoo artefacts can serve as valuable educational resources for educators, current or aspiring tattoo artists and the general public at large. The digital archive can be used to enhance teaching materials and promote a deeper appreciation of South African tattoo history and culture.

I requested permission from Anil Ramesar to temporarily hold the artefacts for safekeeping and to develop a preservation plan in the form of a digital archive, to which he consented. I then took the artefacts contained in the two suitcases into my possession and transferred the contents into two large airtight, waterproof storage boxes. Thus began the exhaustive process of sorting through the contents. When handling fragile artefacts for the digital archive, several important factors were considered to ensure their preservation and safety (Christian 2004). Firstly, the artefacts were handled with extreme care, using gloves and avoiding excessive force or pressure. Each artefact was taken out one by one and assessed for potential relevance to the digital archive. Adequate support was provided to prevent bending, tearing, or breakage, and when artefacts required unfolding and or straightening, that was done with the utmost care. It was crucial to maintain a stable environment with controlled temperature and humidity levels to prevent deterioration, whilst avoiding exposure to direct sunlight, extreme temperatures, or fluctuations in environmental conditions and to limit unnecessary handling of the artefacts, to reduce the risk of damage or deterioration over time.

3.5.1 The Study Preservation Plan

Today, various tools are available to support a range of preservation strategies, including migration or emulation. However, the diverse preservation needs across institutions and settings can make it challenging to decide which solution to implement (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber. 2007:32). Preservation planning, which involves assessing preservation strategies and selecting the most suitable approach, has become a critical decision-making process. It depends on both the characteristics of the objects and the requirements of the institution. The preservation plan framework for this study was 'refined based on practical experience and feedback from role-players with the result of this process' seen on figure 3.18 below.

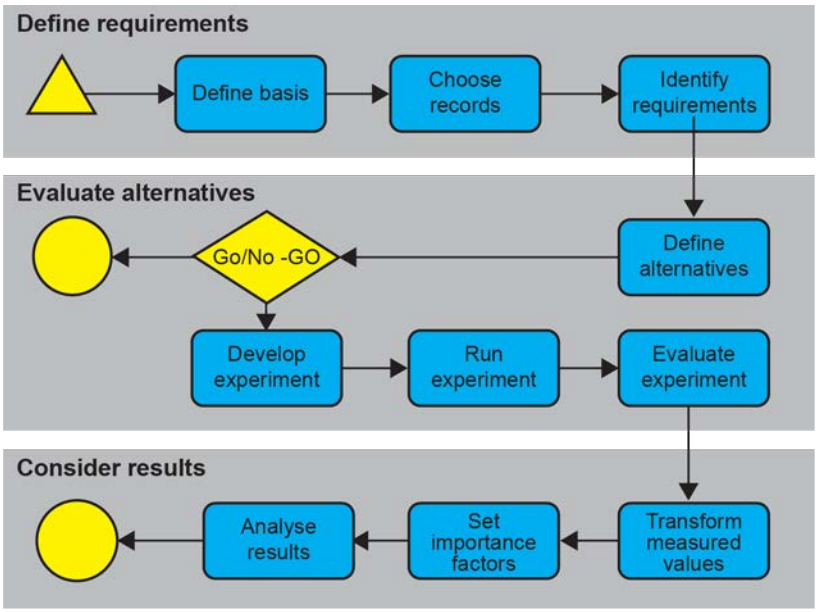


Figure 3.18 The preservation plan framework. Source: (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer & Rauber 2007:33).

Two frameworks were developed concurrently to support the establishment of digital preservation solutions with. Strodl et al. (2007) focused on, 'the Utility Analysis approach developed at the Vienna University of Technology and the Dutch testbed designed by the National Archive of the Netherlands. The advantages of these two were integrated and form the basis for the DELOS Preservation Testbed' (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:32).

> The strength of the Utility Analysis is the clear hierarchical structuring of the preservation objectives, which documents the requirements and the goals for an optimal preservation solution. Its second advantage is the numerical evaluation of the objectives, allowing a direct mathematical comparison and ranking of the alternative solutions. The strengths of the Dutch testbed are the detailed definition of the environment and the standardized experiment procedure (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:32).

Within the digital archive of this study, the DELOS Preservation Testbed serves as the foundation for the 'Preservation Planning' approach. The outcome of this iterative process is the Preservation Planning approach presented in table 3.3, a '3-phase process, comprising a total of 11 steps, begins with defining the preservation scenario, selecting sample records for experiments, and delineating the requirements and objectives for the preservation scenario'.

The second phase of the process involves defining and evaluating potential preservation alternatives. This includes identifying alternatives, specifying technical settings, and determining the resources needed for conducting experiments. Within the scope of this study, the Go/No-Go decision point was applied after the initial prototyping phase of the digital archive was achieved, following the design and testing of early features, such as the metadata structure, user interface layout, and artefact upload process. At this stage, the experimental results, for example archive test entries, user feedback, and performance metrics were evaluated against the initial objectives defined during project planning. Based on this evaluation, adjustments were made to the navigation structure and tagging system. Once the adjusted system consistently met the original requirements, the project proceeded with full-scale digitisation and content population. This phased evaluation ensured that the core functionality was sound before committing further time and resources. Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of the eleven steps along with the preservation strategy employed at each step of the study.

Table 3.3 The Preservation Plan Framework. Source: (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).

The Preservation Plan Framework.	
Step Description	**Digital Archive Workflow**
Define Basis	
'In the first step the preservation scenario is described in a semi-structured way including the collection to be considered. The information about the collection consists of types of records or files, their numbers and legal issues. Moreover, the environment is described in which the preservation process takes place, including institutional policies for preservation'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer & Rauber 2007:33-34)	Two travel suitcases held potential artefacts, which were then sorted into various categories related to the tattoo profession of Harry Ramesar. Permission to use the artefacts was granted by Anil Ramesar, the custodian and son of Harry Ramesar and the artefacts were stored in two airtight, waterproof storage boxes in a secured office at the Durban University of Technology.
Choose Records	
'This step selects sample records representing the variety of object characteristics of the considered collection. These samples are later used for evaluating the preservation alternatives'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	Preliminary investigation of the artefacts revealed four dominant categories: Tattoo Flash Tattoo Tracings Nudes Letters and Documents
Identify Requirements	
'The goal of this decisive step is to clearly define the requirements and goals for a preservation solution in a given application domain. In the so-called objective tree, high-level goals and detailed requirements are	Each of the four categories we defined as follows: **Tattoo Flash:** Two preservation techniques would be utilized, namely studio

collected and organised'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	photography and digital scanning at 300dpi[15] resolution. **Tattoo Tracings:** One preservation technique would be utilized, namely studio photography at 300dpi resolution. **Nudes:** One preservation technique would be utilized, namely digital scanning at 300dpi resolution. **Letters and Documents:** One preservation technique would be utilized, namely digital scanning at 300dpi resolution. All artefacts were handled using sterilized surgical gloves.
Define Alternatives	
'Different preservation solutions, such as different migration tools or emulators, are selected. An extensive description of each alternative including its software environment and parameters ensures a clear understanding. For each alternative defined, the amount of work, time and money required for running experiments	Three preservation platform solutions were investigated, which include: WordPress, WordPress was selected as the platform of choice based on the elements discussed in 'The Digital Archive' section in this study.

[15] 'this means that every inch contains 300 dots of ink. Photographers and graphic designers typically use 300 DPI as a benchmark for printing high-quality images' ("DPI Meaning | What is DPI & How to Check/Change it | Adobe" n.d.).

are estimated'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	
Go/No-Go	
'This step considers the defined requirements, the alternatives and estimated resources to determine if the proposed alternatives are feasible. The result is a decision for continuing the evaluation process or a justification of the abandonment or postponement of certain alternatives'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	With all necessary requirements and resources in place to achieve the study's objectives, the green light was given to proceed.
Develop Experiment	
In order to run repeatable tests, a documented setting is necessary. This stage produces a specific development plan for each experiment, which includes the workflow of the experiment, software and hardware system of the experiment environment, and the mechanism to capture the results'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	Consultations were conducted with the WordPress specialist to plan the development plan for the digital archive. This is discussed in 'Digital Archive Walk Through' section of this study.
Run Experiment	
'An experiment will test one or more aspects of applying a specific preservation alternative to the previously defined sample records'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	Testing the performance of the WordPress-based digital archive is crucial to guarantee optimal user experience and efficiency. Below are the performance tests conducted: 1. **Page Loading Speed**: The digital archive loading speed was tested and

	the reports analyzed to optimise the loading performance. 2. **Performance Monitoring of Plugins**: Plugin performance monitoring was conducted to help identify performance bottlenecks and offer recommendations for improvement. 3. **Browser Testing**: Performance across different web browsers was conducted to ensure compatibility and consistent performance across all major browsers. 4. **Mobile Responsiveness**: Viewing the digital archive would not exclusively be viewed on a PC or laptop therefore tests were conducted to check performance on various mobile devices. This ensures that the digital archive is responsive and displays properly on different screen sizes. 5. **Uptime Monitoring**: This helps identify server issues and ensures that the digital archive is always accessible to users. 6. **Database Optimisation**: The digital archive database was optimized to remove unnecessary data and improve performance. 7. **Security Scans:** Security scans were performed to detect and fix

	vulnerabilities that could impact the digital archive's performance.
Evaluate Experiments	
'The results of the experiments are evaluated to determine the degree to which the requirements defined were met'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer & Rauber 2007:33-34).	The data was collated and reviewed by the relevant parties involved and amendments were implemented where necessary.
Transform Measured Values	
'The measurements taken in the experiments might all be scaled differently. In order to make these comparable, they are transformed to a uniform scale using transformation tables. The resulting scale might, for example, range from 0 to 5. A value of 0 would in this case denote an unacceptable result and thus serve as a dropout criterion for the whole preservation alternative'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	The seven performance tests were scaled in terms of importance to the function ability of the digital archive platform discussed in step nine.
Set Importance Factors	
'Not all of the objectives of the tree are equally important. This step assigns importance factors to each objective depending on specific preferences and requirements of the scenario'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	Although there are many factors that could influence the a) functionality of the digital archive and b) the security of the digital archive, the seven steps mentioned above were set as the important factors in the preservation plan framework for this study.
Analyze Results	

'In this step, the performance measures for the individual objectives are aggregated to one single comparable value for each alternative'. (Strodl, Becker, Neumayer and Rauber 2007:33-34).	Each of the seven experiments results were analyzed and amendments made to enhance performance and allow the digital archive to perform optimally.

The outcome of this 'preservation planning process is a concise, objective, and thoroughly tested list of alternative solutions for a specific preservation task'. By offering both comprehensive and detailed performance metrics derived from a standardized and repeatable experimental framework, it lays the groundwork for informed and accountable decisions regarding which digital archive platform solutions to adopt. Investigations of the artefacts received from Anil Ramesar revealed four dominant categories, namely:

Tattoo Flash

Tattoo Tracings

Nudes

Letters and Documents

These various categories will be discussed in chapter six of this study.

3.6 Digital Archive 3D Environment

The 3D environment developed for this study employs technologies that are both sustainable and adaptable, allowing for seamless progression to other potential outputs in the future. Creating the 3D environment for the digital archive of this study utilizes virtual reality (VR) design principles, which offer numerous benefits and strategic advantages. One of the primary benefits is the enhanced user engagement that VR provides by immersing users in a fully interactive 3D environment. VR makes the exploration of a digital archive more dynamic and captivating with this immersive experience leading to deeper engagement with the content of the digital archive, as users can navigate through the virtual space of Harry

Ramesar's tattoo studio in ways that mimic real-world interactions, thereby making the exploration of the digital archive more intuitive and enjoyable. Another significant benefit is the ability to visualize spatial relationships within the digital archive as traditional 2D images and or render can limit the understanding of complex spatial data and relationships. In contrast, a 3D VR environment allows for a more nuanced representation of these relationships, enabling viewers to see how different pieces of information are interconnected in a virtual space.

From a strategic perspective, incorporating VR design principles in the creation of a 3D environment for a digital archive can lead to innovative research methodologies and outputs, with VR facilitating new forms of data visualization and analysis, thus allowing researchers to experiment with novel ways of presenting and interpreting data. In addition to its application in this study's digital archive, the use of VR design principles opens up a range of potential creative outputs in the future. For example, the VR environment can be used to create virtual exhibitions or exhibitions with VR components that showcase the archive's contents. Therefore the technologies and methodologies discussed below will be based on VR principles, with the final environment being a 3D environment.

'The use of new technologies in archives such as virtual reality (VR) can enable new experiences in cultural narratives and storytelling', but Hoang and Cox (2017) note that there 'can also be a distraction when the audiences focus on the technology over the exhibitions, experiences, and cultural transmissions' (Hoang & Cox 2017:402). Giaccardi (2006) argues that in the realm of VR technology, the focus on virtual information often supersedes or seeks integration with physical environments. Traditional VR experiences prioritize full immersion, emphazing virtual elements to enhance user presence. However, this emphasis on technology risks overshadowing the cultural heritage content itself, potentially diminishing its significance and relegating it to a secondary role in digital communication (Hoang & Cox 2017:402). Therefore it is important to carefully create a virtual reality experience that strikes a balance between visual artefacts contained on the digital archive and virtual reality. The virtual reality component of the study is the construction of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio based on feedback from interviewees which will be located on the digital archive home page. Alternate reality (AltR) describes a user experience that shifts deliberately between physical and virtual environments, drawing attention to the relationship between the two. Rather than

favouring one over the other, alternate reality (AltR) constructs a narrative that unfolds across both realms, allowing the user to move purposefully between digital and physical spaces. This interplay invites a comparative engagement, encouraging reflection on the connections and contrasts that emerge through this alternation (Hoang & Cox 2017:405).

In contrast, the digital archive will make use of alternate reality (AltR), which 'purposefully builds a narrative for the user in and out of the virtual world' (Hoang & Cox 2017:405). The user experience alternates between the virtual and reality, with the aim being for the user to compare and highlight visual elements within the digital archive. Because VR environments are inherently virtual, a significant feature is their ability to defy physical laws that govern our reality. This characteristic gives rise to several notable sub-attributes that virtual representations can transcend space and time, offering recreations of historical environments from the past or futuristic settings not yet realised. Therefore environments are freed from conventional natural laws. VR enables experiences like Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio, which no longer exists, and entire virtual environments can host entities and objects that lack physical counterparts, facilitating user exploration within the tattoo studio. Steffen et al (2019) notes that a) 'virtualization affords enhancing aspects of the physical world that improve outcomes compared to activities without virtual components' and b) 'many regularly performed activities are positive experiences, but virtualization affords recreating them more practically' (Steffen, Gaskin, Meservy, Jenkins and Wolman 2019:698).

Virtual reality will be utilized as a transformative tool in this study thus creating an immersive, interactive experience, exposing the user to a 360 degree immersive experience to explore Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio as if they were physically present back in the time when he was a practising tattoo artist. Virtual reality will increase user engagement through interactive elements like detailed close-ups of tattoo artefacts, furniture and the ability to move through the space utilizing the control panel. One can argue the importance of the preservation of cultural and artistic heritage through preserving the historical context and ambience of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio in virtual reality, relying on the feedback from the seventeen interviewees of this study – thus piecing together a virtual space that reflects the look and feel of the tattoo studio which maintains the integrity and atmosphere of the studio, providing a more holistic understanding of tattoo studio environment and work processes.

From the point of view of educational value, the Virtual reality component of this study contributes to the following broad observations:

Enhanced Engagement and Space Immersion

Augmented reality brings static images to life, allowing users to interact with 3D models of furniture that was present, tattoo designs, tracings, and equipment used by Harry Ramesar. This interactive experience enhances engagement by providing a more immersive learning environment compared to traditional archives.

Visual and Spatial Understanding

Augmented reality aids in understanding the spatial context of the tattoo studio and relates to the aesthetic appeal of the tattoo studio during the time Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist. Users can view the space from different angles, see how the tattoo studio was laid out, and gain insights into the artistic process behind the creation of tattoos during that period.

Historical Context and Cultural Significance

Augmented reality overlays can provide contextual information about the tattoo process as relayed by the interviewees, explaining historical significance, cultural context, and the artistic influences related to the tattoo industry during the period. This adds depth to the archive by offering educational content that goes beyond mere visual documentation and text.

Personalized and Accessible Learning Experiences

Users can explore different aspects of the artist's work and premises, focusing on areas of particular interest or relevance to them and thus making learning about tattoo artistry of pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramsar more accessible to a broader audience, including students, researchers, and enthusiasts who benefit from interactive learning methods.

Preservation of Artistic Legacy

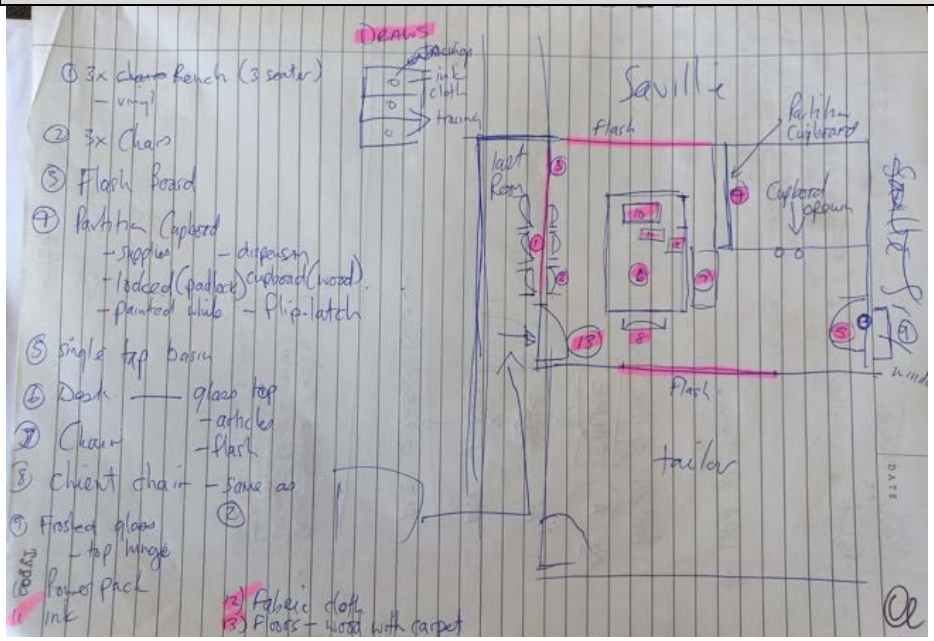
By integrating augmented reality into the digital archive, the artistic legacy of the pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar can be preserved and shared in a dynamic and sustainable

manner. Future generations can explore the tattoo studio of a tattoo pioneer of the past and appreciate their contributions to tattoo artistry of the present and future through innovative digital means.

3.6.1 The process of the AR creation

Creating a virtual reality (VR) environment involves several critical steps, combining technical, artistic, and design expertise to produce an immersive experience that is representative of the tattoo studio of Harry Ramesar. The process is categorized into the following stages represented by table 3.4 below:

Table 3.4 Augmented Reality Design Process

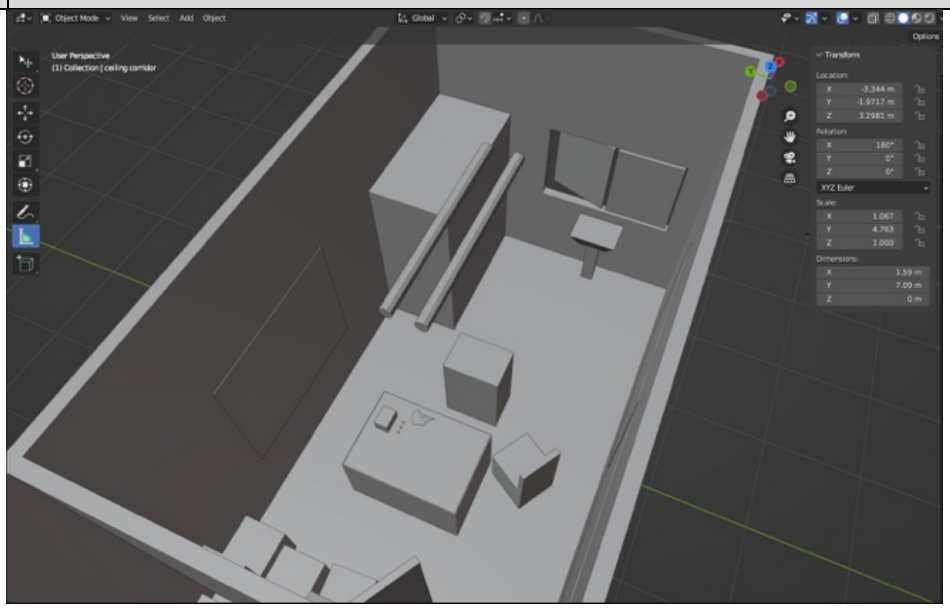
Augmented Reality Design Process	
STEP 1	**Concept Development**
 Initial concept sketch of the floorplan of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio.	
Ideation and Research **Idea Generation**	

Brainstorming and conceptualizing the VR experience. Define the goals, target audience, and the type of experience based on the look and feel of the digital archive.

Research

Conduct thorough research on the subject matter, existing VR environments, and user needs. Understand the hardware and software limitations for integration into the digital archive.

STEP 2	**Design and Planning**



Block out development of the studio space.

Storyboarding and prototyping

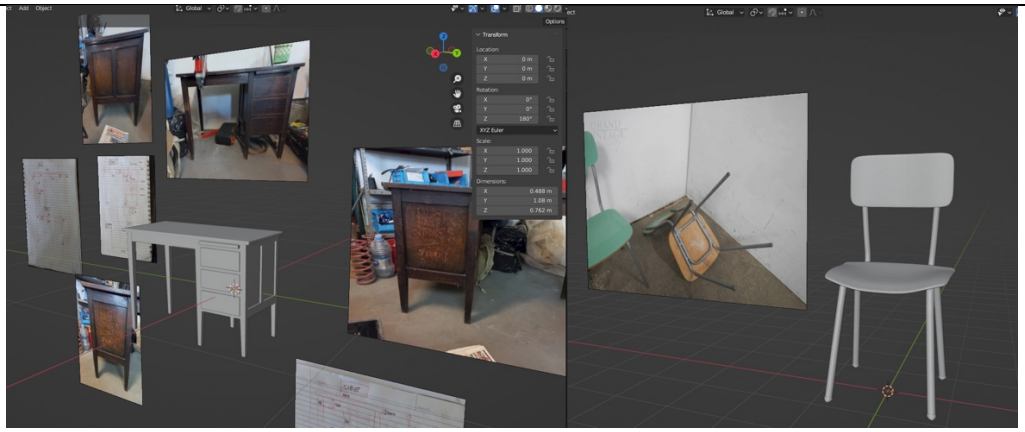
Storyboarding

Create detailed storyboards to visualise the user journey, interactions, and key scenes. This aids in planning the flow and narrative of the VR environment and how the visual element contained in the digital archive integrate into the VR environment.

Prototyping

Develop basic prototypes to test initial ideas and concepts, utilising simple 3D models and basic interactions to gauge feasibility and user experience.

STEP 3	**3D Modelling and Asset Creation**



Examples of asset creation of Harry Ramesar's actual desk and a chair sample utilised in the studio space.

Environment and Object Design

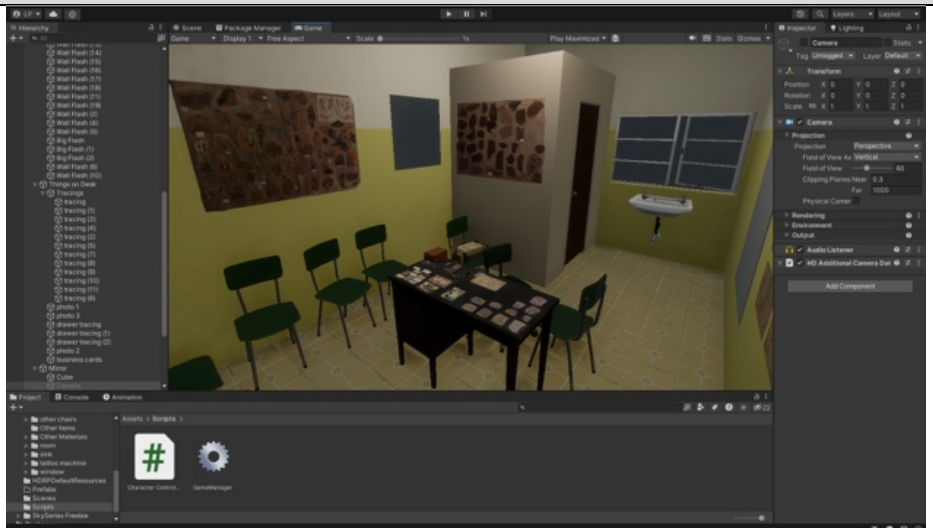
3D Modelling

Use 3D modelling software to create detailed models of the environment, objects, and characters. Ensuring that models are optimised for performance in a VR setting.

Texturing and Lighting

Apply textures and materials to models to enhance realism as expressed by the interviewees. Design and implement lighting to set the mood and ensure visibility within the VR environment.

STEP 4	**Development and Integration**



A screenshot of the unity interface and script list used in the environment creation.

Programming and Interaction Design

Engine Selection

Select the platform that supports VR development and is compatible with the digital archive template.

Scripting and Programming

Write scripts to handle interactions and navigation.

Integration

Integrate 3D assets and scripts into the game engine. Ensure that all elements work seamlessly together and that interactions are intuitive and responsive.

STEP 5	Testing and Optimization



Testing and optimization of the studio space.

Performance and User Testing

Performance Optimization

Optimize the VR environment to ensure smooth performance. This includes reducing polygon counts, optimizing textures, and efficient use of resources to prevent lag.

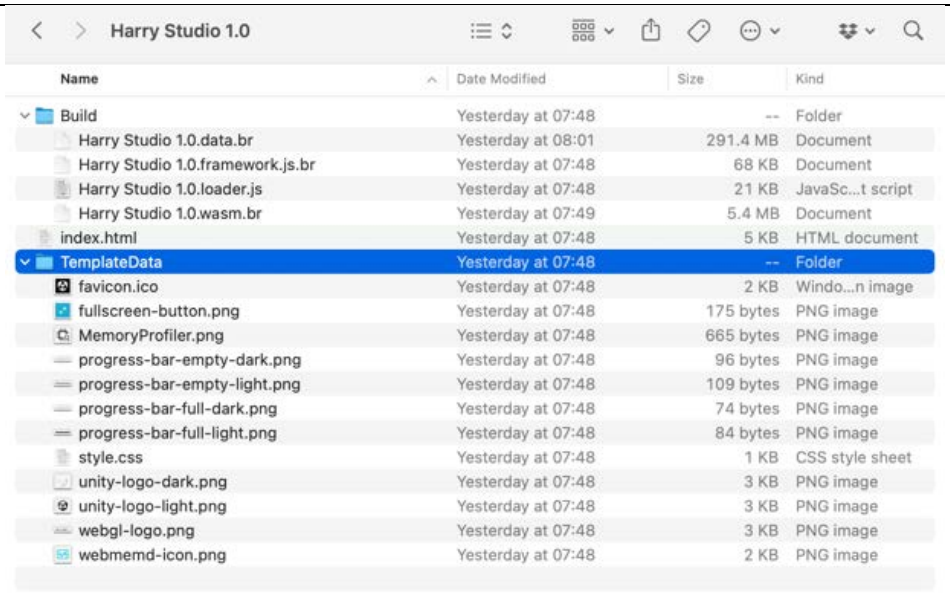
User Testing

Conduct user testing sessions to gather feedback on the VR experience. Observe users to identify any issues with usability, comfort, or immersion.

Iteration

Based on user feedback, make necessary adjustments to improve the overall experience. This may involve tweaking interactions, refining models.

STEP 6	Deployment and Maintenance



The output files for deployment onto the digital archive.

Distribution and Updates

Deployment

Prepare the VR environment for deployment on the digital archive.

User Support and Updates

Provide ongoing support and updates to address any issues, or improve performance based on user feedback and technological advancements.

Creating a virtual reality environment is a multifaceted process that requires collaboration between the research received form interviewees, existing visual materials, the researcher, designer, programmer, and testers. Each stage, from concept development to deployment, plays a crucial role in ensuring the final product is immersive, engaging, and effective in delivering the intended experience. By following a structured approach and continuously iterating based on feedback, the creation of a compelling virtual reality environment can be created that aids in the user experience of the digital archive. The virtual reality environment developed for this study was created using Unity, a real-time development platform widely recognised in immersive media design. Unity was selected due to its flexibility, compatibility with web-based deployment, and capacity to integrate custom scripts, interactive functions, and a variety of digital assets which can be seamlessly integrated into the WordPress platform. The 3D models used in the environment, included accurate recreations of

Ramesar’s studio, original desk, and other studio elements, were developed in Blender. These models were informed by photographic documentation, interview-based descriptions and physical measuring of the exact room in the building which was once his studio and were carefully optimised to ensure performance across devices, with attention to polygon count, texture compression, and efficient lighting. Industry-standard conventions in VR interaction design were followed throughout the development process, including spatial navigation, gaze-based interaction, and user-centred scene progression. The project applied a consistent internal metadata structure that aligned each artefact within the VR environment to its corresponding entry in the digital archive. Documentation was maintained throughout the process in the form of a design journal, which included asset records, modelling iterations, programming notes, and integration logs. This comprehensive documentation not only ensured consistency across platforms but also supports the ongoing maintenance and scalability of the archive, allowing for future updates or re-deployment as VR technologies continue to evolve.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the meticulous process involved in creating a digital archive to preserve Harry Ramesar's visual tattoo legacy, by incorporating rare tattoo artifacts and the creation of a 3D virtual reality environment, which offers an immersive experience that deepens user engagement and educational value. The use of WordPress ensures a user-friendly platform, with careful planning and testing guaranteeing optimal performance. The chapter highlights the collaborative approach, inviting community participation to enrich the archive and through these efforts, the digital archive not only preserves Harry Ramesar's legacy but also serves as a valuable resource for future research, education, and community engagement. As technology advances, AI poses a significant threat to visual images due to its ability to create highly realistic visuals that blur the line between reality and fiction. The study underscores the challenges AI-generated images pose for digital archives, particularly in preserving the integrity and provenance of visual content.

CHAPTER FOUR

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TATTOO WORKS IN THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the analytical frameworks and visual methodologies used to examine Harry Ramesar's tattoo works. It explores how visual methodologies, particularly those developed by Rose (2023), are applied to decode the meanings, cultural significance, and artistic techniques embedded in Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts. This chapter highlights the importance of understanding the historical contexts and cultural influences that shaped tattoo traditions, as well as the symbolic and stylistic elements within individual designs. By employing these methodologies, this chapter aims to offer insights into the broader cultural and social dynamics of Harry Ramesar's work, contributing to the discourse on visual culture and digital humanities.

4.2 Critical Analysis of the Tattoo Works in the Digital Archive

This chapter critically engages with the tattoo designs of Harry Ramesar through the lens of Gillian Rose's (2023) visual methodology. The analytical framework outlined by Rose provides a comprehensive structure for interpreting visual materials by dissecting them through four interconnected sites as discussed in 2.7 of this study: the site of production, the image itself, its circulation, and audiencing. These components work in tandem to expose the social, technological, and cultural undercurrents of visual artifacts and are especially useful when analysing archival material such as Ramesar's tattoos artifacts.

4.2.1 The Site of Production

The context in which Ramesar's tattoo images were created plays a fundamental role in decoding their meaning. As Rose (2023:49) notes, while the identities of the image creators are often central in participant-generated visual research, in cases involving found images, such as Ramesar's tattoos, the emphasis shifts to technological, compositional, and social modalities of production. Technologically, the tools and techniques employed in tattoo creation influence the stylistic boundaries and aesthetics of the images. The technological mediation not only determines what is visually possible but also what is culturally legible.

Compositionality, on the other hand, refers to the genre-specific conventions that guide the visual language of the tattoos. Rose (2023:50) defines genre as a 'classification system that imbues images with shared traits' and Ramesar's tattoo work is situated within a genre that includes specific motifs, stylistic norms, and symbolisms, shaped by the socio-historical context of his practice during the time he was a practicing tattoo artist. The social modality further enriches this analysis by situating the tattoos within the broader frameworks of capitalist and cultural production. Citing Harvey (1989), Rose (2023:52) explains how postmodern visual culture, including fashion and urban life, operates under the flexible conditions of contemporary capitalism. Tattoos, as visual artefacts, function within this system, thus embodying personal identity whist simultaneously being subject to commodification. Importantly, Rose (2023:55) critiques the notion of auteur theory, highlighting that meaning does not reside solely with the artist's intent but Instead, the pivotal interplay between the creator, image, and viewer. This is particularly relevant to Ramesar's diverse clientele, who contributed their own interpretative frameworks to the designs, thus decentralising authorial control and emphasising the co-constructive nature of visual meaning.

4.2.2 The Site of Production

According to Rose (2023:55), the image itself, its formal / traditional qualities and internal logic serves as a key site for analysis. The intrinsic compositionality of the tattoos influences their reception, independent of production and viewing contexts. The visual elements such

as line, colour, motif arrangement, and iconography convey layered visual meanings that resonate with and exceed the limitations of their original context. This suggests that the tattoos operate as semiotic repositories, encapsulating multiple and sometimes conflicting narratives.

4.2.3 The Site of Circulation

Rose (2023:57-59) underscores that images rarely remain static. Images traverse spaces and audiences, accruing new meanings as they move. In the case of Ramesar's archive, his tattoos are circulated through visual imagery, word-of-mouth, and, digital preservation, with each movement recontextualises the image, embedding it within new cultural discourses and power structures. As Rose points out, this mobility is shaped by political, social, and economic forces. Tattoos that once adorned private skin now enter the public digital domain, where their meanings can be re-inscribed by past clients of Ramesar, tattoo collectors, archivists, scholars, and viewers alike.

4.2.4 The Site of Audiencing

The final site, audiencing, considers the role of the viewer in constructing the image's meaning. Drawing on John Fiske (1994), Rose (2023:60-61) describes the audience not only as passive receivers but as active interpreters who engage with images based on personal, cultural, and technological contexts. In the era of Ramesar's practice, tattoos were viewed based on the location on the body either in intimate, one-to-one encounters or open to public view. Today, digitised versions are consumed in a multi-sensory, distracted context that alters their affective resonance. Rose (2023:68) further argues that social practices and identities mediate how images are interpreted. Different spaces, such as galleries, public spaces, or digital archives create distinct viewing experiences. In the scope of tattoos, this includes both the act of receiving and the act of viewing. In Ramesar's time, tattoos were both private inscriptions of identity and public displays of cultural belonging or resistance. Today, these same designs may signal heritage, subversion, or aesthetic appreciation, depending on the viewer's positionality.

4.3 Artefact Themes of the Study

Whilst going through the artefacts received from Anil Ramesar, it was important to separate these artefacts into a) manageable categories that could form the foundation of a digital archive and b) formulate themes that would assist in the accurate search capabilities of the digital archive. Themes contained within tattoo designs play a significant role in shaping the meaning, symbolism, and personal expression of the tattoo on the potential wearer. Tattoo themes allow individuals to express their interests, beliefs, values, and experiences through visual art permanently inked on their bodies. Each tattoo can be categorized by a theme they carry visually, which could be rich in symbolism and meaning, often deeply rooted in cultural, religious, or personal significance.

In this study, the tattoo artefacts identified 134 distinct tattoo related themes, which were subsequently categorized for analysis. These themes can be seen in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Digital Archive Artefact Themes.

Artefact Themes			
alcohol	dragon	navy	sailor
American	dragonfly	nude	sinking ship
American Indian	dolphin	nurse	skull
anchor	dagger	owl	tribal
angel	eagle	oriental	tattoo
animal	female	ornamental	typography
arrow	feather	parachute	tiger
axe	fish	peacock	wings
baby	flames	patriotic	wreath
baby devil	flag	playing cards	whale

banner	gangster	pin up	wording
barbed wire	god	predator	wolf
bible	grim reaper	pigeon	women
bird	guitar	praying hands	wild animal
biker gang	hands	pirate	wild cat
bulldog	heart	rifle	
boots	horse shoe	reptile	
boxing	horse racing	rock of ages	
bow	hot stuff	rope	
butterfly	hands	sailor	
banner	lighthouse	sacred heart	
cannon	lion	ship	
candle	lotus	shark	
cartoon	love	spider	
Christ	leg	spider web	
cross	man	scorpion	
Celtic	memorial	skull	
chain	mermaid	skeleton	
child	X-rated	snake	
crest	money	sword	
dagger	moon	sun	
death	music	springbok	
demon	man's ruin	sea horse	
devil	mythical animal	statue of liberty	
dove	nautical	Sagittarius	

When examining tattoo designs, some designs may readily evoke a specific theme. However, upon closer inspection of more intricate tattoo designs, it becomes apparent that multiple themes can be associated with a single design. Describing the various themes within a single

tattoo design involves the careful analysis of the visual elements present and identifying the overarching themes they represent. Trent (2016) notes that:

> The world of tattoo design and the symbolism used within it are incredibly complex, dating back thousands of years and encompassing a huge number of groups, cultures, and even civilizations (Aitken-Smith 2016).

Tattoo designs encapsulate symbolism and meaning that often transcend their visual appearance, whether intentionally inspired or not which serve as outward manifestations of internal beliefs and convictions. In categorizing the tattoo artefacts for this study, the symbolism inherent in each individual artefact had to be assessed based on the subject matter it depicted visually. Five broad approaches to assign themes to each artefact were used and unpacked below:

Identify the main elements

Begin by identifying the main elements or focal points of the tattoo artefact. These could for example include objects, symbols, figures, or scenes depicted in the design.

Theme Association

For each main element, consider the themes it represents. Themes could range from cultural and religious symbols to military groups and personal motifs.

Composition Analysis

Examine how the elements are arranged within the tattoo design. Consider the visual hierarchy and any symbolic connections between elements.

Symbolism and Meaning

Explore the symbolism and meaning associated with each visual element.

Interpretation

Provide an interpretation of how the various themes interact within the tattoo design to convey a cohesive theme.

Applying these five criteria facilitated the grouping of diverse tattoo artefacts into distinct themes. This approach not only enhanced the viewer's navigation experience through the digital archive but also contributed to the overall manageability of the digital archive. Table 4.2 gives an example of a simple theme categorization and a more complex theme categorization.

Table 4.2 Theme Categorization Examples.

Theme Categorization Example	
 Source: Loose Flash Two41 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/	

	Source: Loose Flash Two65 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/
Theme/s	**Theme/s**
Cat, animal	ship, eagle, banner, wreath, cross, flag, patriotic, memorial, nautical

Creating the functionality of the themes on the digital archive needed to follow the designed aesthetic of the archive whilst still being effective to their purpose. Themes tabs in a digital archive offer multiple benefits whilst enhancing functionality and user experience. These tabs aid in the organization of artefacts, making navigation easier for users by providing clear pathways to explore content, these tabs improve accessibility and prevent users from feeling overwhelmed. In addition, theme tabs facilitate contextualization by grouping artefacts based on shared themes or topics, enriching users' understanding of the visual and group connections. Overall, the use of the themes tabs play a vital role in organizing, accessing, contextualizing, analysing, and customizing content within the digital archive, making it a valuable resource for research, education, and cultural preservation. Figure 4.2 depicts the location of the tabs associated with an example of the flash sheets section of the digital archive. If a tab is selected, all the corresponding artefacts related to that tab will appear, thus allowing the viewer of the digital archive the ability to refine their search.

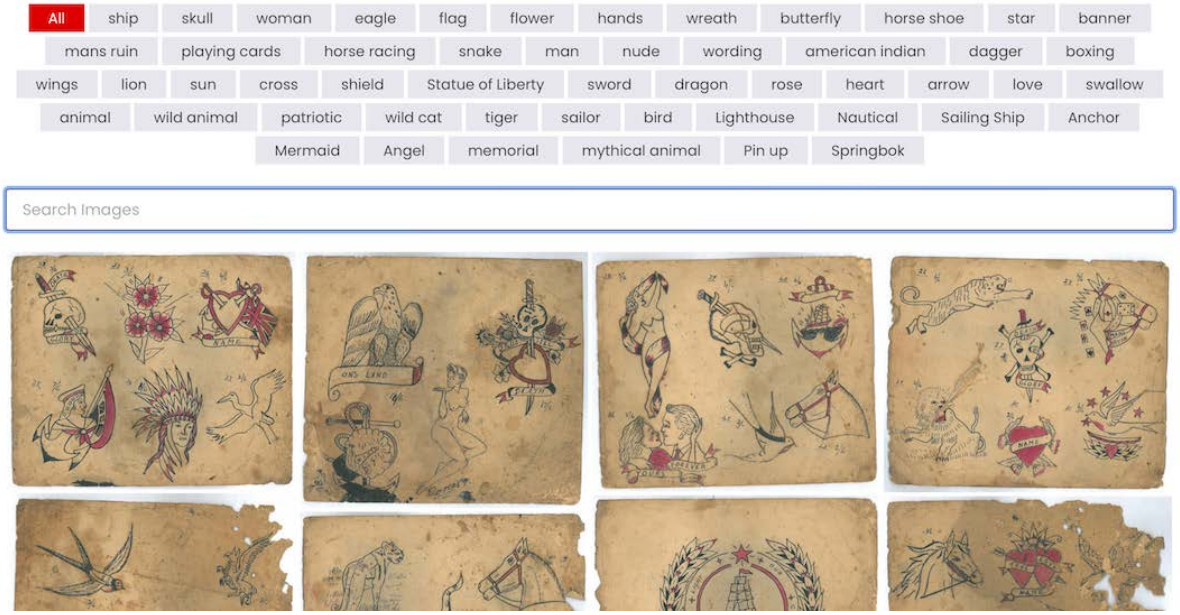


Figure 4.1 Screenshot of tabs Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

4.3.1 Comparative Context: South African and global tattoo practices

While this study focuses on the unique contributions of Harry Ramesar, situating his work within broader South African and global tattooing practices provides important contextual depth. In South Africa, tattooing traditions have historically reflected diverse cultural influences, from indigenous scarification and symbolic marking practices to colonial-era maritime tattooing introduced through port cities such as Cape Town and Durban. Harry Ramesar's designs, often rooted in mid-20th-century Western and European flash aesthetics, drawing parallels internationally with the classic American Traditional style, particularly in the use of limited colour palettes, heavy outlines, and symbolic imagery, as well as with Japanese irezumi (the Japanese word for tattoo) in the emphasis on storytelling through body placement. However, Ramesar's work diverges from these traditions in its hybridisation, adapting imported flash motifs to the local South African social context and clientele, therefore blending global visual vocabulary with distinctly local narratives underscores his role as both a cultural mediator and innovator in South African tattoo history.

4.4 Tattoo Flash Designs

As briefly noted in the 'Explore the Archive' section of this study, this is where we begin to discuss the tattoo related artefacts of this study as they relate to Harry Ramesar. This section of the study will deal specifically with tattoo flash, which Sizer (2020) refers to as 'tattoo designs that have been predesigned, and can be used over and over again' (Sizer 2020:420). Tattoo flash designs have deep roots in the historical and cultural heritage of tattooing. These designs were initially crafted or collected by tattoo artists to display their Expertise and provide clients with a range of pre-drawn options. As a visual medium for artistic expression, tattoo flash designs offered the tattoo artist a platform to showcase their skill as a tattoo artists and showed the broad range of subject matter that could be tattooed which was especially helpful to the clients that did not have a specific tattoo design in mind.

Despite being pre-drawn, traditional flash designs often serve as a foundation for customized tattoos. Clients could for example select a design and collaborate with the tattoo artist to personalize it, resulting in a tattoo that holds personal significance and meaning. Tattoo flash designs played a pivotal role in making tattooing accessible to a broad audience that visited the tattoo studio. These predesigned artworks offered clients a visual reference to explore and select from. Additionally, traditional tattoo flash designs upheld and honoured traditional tattooing techniques and styles which were inspired by classic tattoo imagery and motifs, which were relevant to both the past and current times. Whilst analyzing the artefacts received from Anil Ramesar, three tattoo design categories were present. Table 4.3 below gives a description of these three categories, their page location on the archive and a link to view.

Table 4.3 Tattoo Flash Categories.

Tattoo Flash Categories

Category	Description	Archive location page	Number of artefacts	Link
Flash Sheets	Hand drawn tattoo flash on a A4 piece of paper.	Flash Sheets	148	https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/
Individual Hand Drawn	Hand drawn tattoo flash.	Individual Flash	148	https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/
Individual Printed	Printed or commercially produced tattoo flash.	Individual Flash	148	https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/

A visual example of each category can be seen in table 4.3. The primary contributing factor for identifying the three flash categories are their physical composition and the materials used to produce them. Distinguishing between a tattoo flash design and a tattoo tracing, which will be discussed in 4.4 of this study, involves understanding their respective characteristics and purposes. Tattoo flash involves the original creation of the tattoo design, which is typically an a) original design creation crafted by a tattoo artist, b) an original design that has been crafted by another tattoo artist or tattoo equipment supplier or c) non-tattoo related designs or visual representations that could be used for the purpose of a tattoo design, for example a magazine or newspaper clipping. The digital archive has representation of all three of these elements as Harry Ramesar made use of various artistic techniques and mediums to create intricate and visually appealing designs, ranging from hand-drawn designs to repurposed visual elements that could be utilized as tattoo flash designs.

The tattoo flash is the creative procedure, which involves the creative process of conceptualizing and developing unique designs tailored to the clientele preferences. During

the time that Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist, the majority of the tattoo flash artefacts fell within the category of 'Traditional' tattoo designs, which originated from Western and European tattoo designs. Guerra (2023) unpacks this term by noting that:

> Traditional tattoos are known for their bold lines, bright colours, and simple designs. The motifs used in traditional tattoos are often inspired by nature, folklore, and religion. These tattoos are timeless and have a charm that attracts people from all walks of life (Guerra 2023).

Traditional tattoo flash can carry profound meaning for their potential wearers, symbolizing personal identity, beliefs, and cultural heritage. Traditional tattoo designs typically refer to a style of tattooing that has its roots in early American and Western tattoo culture. This tattoo style is also known as 'old school' or 'classic' tattoos with traditional tattoos characterized by bold, black outlines, vibrant colours, and simple, iconic imagery. These designs often include motifs such as anchors, roses, hearts, skulls, daggers, birds, and nautical symbols like ships and compasses. Traditional tattoo designs often draw inspiration from sailors, soldiers, and other groups with a strong connection to maritime and military traditions as they serve as enduring reminders of the life's journey, encompassing past, present, and future experiences. Moreover, traditional tattoo flash can bear significant cultural importance, often symbolizing heritage and paying homage to ancestors or groups. Traditional tattoos, deeply entrenched in culture, boast a rich history that has persisted through time. Bold, colourful, and steeped in personal or cultural meaning, they remain a prominent fixture, even in today's modern society. Table 4.4 gives visual examples for each category contained in the digital archive.

Table 4.4 Flash category examples.

1. **Flash Sheet example**



Source: Flash Card23

https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

2. Individual Hand Drawn example



Source: Loose Flash Two46

https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/

3. Individual Printed example



Source: Loose Flash-70

https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/

In the twenty-first century, despite the enduring negative stigma surrounding tattooing, the practice persisted from the 1900s to the 1960s. The transition from a subculture to mainstream acceptance is believed to have begun around the 1970s (McDade 2019:263). With the advent of the twenty-first century, advancements in tattooing technology have expanded aesthetic possibilities, attracting a diverse range of clientele**,** which allowed tattooing to transition into the realm of popular culture.

4.5 Visual Methodology of Tattoo Flash

As discussed earlier in this study, the exploration of tattoo flash designs through a methodological lens necessitates a critical visual approach that delves into the societal implications of the visual content under scrutiny. The societal impacts of a tattoo related image or a series of images are realized across four distinct realms: the production site, the image's inherent characteristics, its circulation platform, and its audience reception. Within each of these spheres, three key modalities come into play: technological, compositional, and social factors. Theoretical discussions surrounding image interpretation can be construed as discussions revolving around the significance of these sites and modalities in deciphering an image's meaning. Table 4.5 provides a comprehensive examination of the critical visual methodology applied to the tattoo flash on the digital archive, based on Rose's *sites of modalities for interpreting visual materials* (Figure 4.1).

Table 4.5 The sites of modalities for tattoo flash.

THE SITES OF MODALITIES FOR TATTOO FLASH
THE SITE OF PRODUCTION
With the three categories of tattoo flash discovered in the artefacts of this study, two potential sites of production can be identified. Firstly, tattoo flash that is produced by hand and secondly tattoo flash that is manufactured by machine (commercial procedures).
The Technical Modality While designs produced by hand may not involve advanced production technologies, they still rely on various tools and techniques that shape their form, meaning, and impact. For example, the choice of drawing materials such as ink, pencils, or markers, as well as the texture and quality of the paper, can significantly influence the appearance and durability of a hand-drawn tattoo flash. An important factor is the skill level of the tattoo artist, whose artistic styles play a crucial role in shaping the final outcome of the tattoo design. It is essential to examine the influences of these traditional tools and techniques on the visual image production of hand-drawn tattoo designs. Understanding the materials and methods used in creating specific designs can provide valuable insights into their aesthetic qualities and their tattoo's cultural significance. Harry Ramesar developed specific techniques and approaches based on his understanding of traditional tattoo drawing tools and methods, leading to the creation of his flash designs.
The Compositional Modality In the context of hand-drawn tattoo flash, compositionality refers to how the elements within the tattoo are arranged and interact with each other. This includes considerations such as the placement of symbols, visual representations, and the overall balance of the tattoo design. The genre classification is relevant to traditional hand-drawn tattoo designs as there are numerous subgenres or styles within the realm of tattooing that were popular during the time. Each of these styles has its own set of conventions, themes, and aesthetic characteristics. Traditional tattoo designs often incorporate symbolic imagery that holds personal or cultural significance and the composition of these symbols within the tattoo design enhances their meaning and can convey specific messages.

The Social Modality

Social factors play a significant role in shaping visual images, including tattoo flash. Harry Ramesar's tattoo artist career was established in Durban in 1930 and spanned three of South Africa's controversial social periods. Namely Colonisation by Great Britain (1806–1961) 'although South Africa became a Union with its own white people government in 1910, the country was still regarded as a colony of Britain till 1961' (Oliver & Oliver 2017). Then apartheid in 1961: An internal colonisation of the country by the white Afrikaners, which ended in 1994 when the country became a Democracy. 'The year 1994 was a ground-breaking year for South Africa when this country became a Democracy with the ANC's Dr Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected president' (Oliver & Oliver 2017). These social factors such as the cultural context and prevailing social norms influenced the themes, symbols, and motifs depicted in the tattoo flash. These designs reflected the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions of the time period in which they were created. For example, tattoos from the early to mid-21st century featured patriotic imagery, military insignia, or symbols reflecting the societal attitudes and values of that era. Harry would have tailored his designs to meet the demands of his clientele or capitalize on popular trends of the time.

Who? When? Who for? Why?

Harry Ramesar would create tattoo flash designs based on the exchange of visual influences within the tattoo community, which impacted the visual imagery of his hand-drawn tattoo flash. He would take influence from other tattoo artists abroad and tattoo enthusiasts from different regions and cultural backgrounds which exchanged ideas, symbols, and motifs from various cultural traditions, reflecting the interconnectedness of global tattoo culture. For example, Durban was an important sea port for the allies during World War II, which resulted in sailors docking and getting tattoos and exchanging tattoo design ideas. Commercially produced tattoo flash would be sourced from tattoo suppliers abroad and the collection of visual elements from various sources, for example: magazines and books.

Genre?

The predominant genre of artefacts primarily consists of Western and European traditional tattoo designs, reflecting the subject matter encapsulated within the digital archive.

How Made?



Flash Sheets: Pen and ink on a A4 (297x210mm) paper stock.

Source: Flash Card28 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/



Individual Hand Drawn: Pen and ink, pencil on paper, tracing paper or card.

Source: Loose Flash-107 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/



Individual Printed: Produced using a machine or samples collected form printed sources.

Source: (Left) Loose Flash-71 (Right) Loose Flash-112

https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/

The Site of the Image

The tattoo flash were housed at Ramesar's tattoo studio, located in Lakhani Chambers on Saville Street in Durban—the location where Harry Ramesar spent his entire tattoo artist career. https://maps.app.goo.gl/SQ1K36aK5NbN9VPUA

Visual Meaning?

Traditional tattoo designs which were tattooed during the time Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist carry a rich visual meaning which intersects tradition, personal expression, and the contemporary culture of the time. While rooted in historical styles and motifs, these designs underwent reinterpretation and evolution, reflecting shifting societal values and individual perspectives. At their core, the traditional tattoo flash of Harry Ramesar often drew inspiration from iconic imagery such as nautical symbols, animals, flowers, and mythological figures. These elements permeate with symbolism that may vary across cultures but frequently convey themes of strength, protection, love, and spirituality. Additionally, with the incorporation of bold outlines, vibrant colours, based on a limited colour palate, and intricate patterns, contribute to their visually striking appearance.

Composition?

The composition of the tattoo flash largely encompasses a blend of classic elements with modern influences (the improvement of tattooing machines and inks), resulting in visually compelling and dynamic artworks, which are characterized by their simple bold outlines, vibrant colours, and strong contrasts. One of the common key compositional features of the tattoo flash is the use of strong, defined lines to outline the subject matter. These bold outlines not only serve to characterize the various elements of the design but also to create a sense of clarity and visual impact. Additionally, thick black lines are often used to emphasize the contours and shapes of the imagery, adding depth and dimension to the tattoo. In terms of imagery of the tattoo flash artefacts, a large percentage feature a collection of iconic motifs such as anchors, roses, swallows, daggers, and pin-up girls, amongst others. These motifs are arranged in a balanced and symmetrical manner within the composition, often framed by decorative elements such as banners, scrolls, or filigree. The colour utilized plays a crucial role in the tattoo flash, as tattoo artists during the time of the study only had a limited palette of bold, primary colours such as red, blue, yellow,

and green. These colours were applied in solid blocks or gradients, creating vibrant and eye-catching contrasts within the tattoo design.

Visual Effects

One of the primary visual effects used in tattooing during the time Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist was shading. The shading of tattoos was achieved through techniques such as cross-hatching or stippling, which involved creating subtle variations in tone and texture using a series of closely spaced dots or lines. Colour saturation was another common visual effect used in tattooing during the time. Traditional tattoos are known for their vibrant and limited bold colour palette, usually comprising primary colours such as red, blue, yellow, and green to create eye-catching contrasts and dynamic compositions. Tattoo flash designs would represent these colours on the design to give the a) clientele a visual representation of the design and b) allow the tattoo artists to see what colours would be required for the tattoo.

THE SITE OF CIRCULATION

The tattoo flash was circulated in Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio. This demonstrates the dynamic nature of tattoo flash within a tattoo studio setting, emphasizing that these tattoo designs can be confined to their production site but extend beyond their origins to reach diverse audiences who visit the tattoo studio. While the creation and or collection of the tattoo flash occurs within the studio, its display and viewing would also take place within the tattoo studio.

Organized by who or what? Why?

The tattoo flash would have been organized by Harry Ramesar as he was the only employee and tattoo artist based at his tattoo studio.

How changed?

Tattoo flash created within the tattoo studio also extend beyond their origins. Once completed, tattoo designs transitioned to another location, this being the skin of the client for display and viewing by diverse audiences. This highlights the fluidity and mobility of visual tattoo images within the broader visual economy. This suggests that the tattoo flash designs are not static artefacts but dynamic visual objects that engage with various social, cultural, and personal contexts once they leave the studio. Factors that could change the

circulation encompass trends within tattoo culture, cultural significances tied to particular tattoo designs, the socio-economic statuses of clients, and dominant aesthetic preferences. As a result, the tattoo flash in the tattoo studio may experience alterations or reinterpretations as they extend various social and cultural environments.

How circulated?

In the tattoo studio, Harry Ramesar showcases flash sheets, historical tattoo designs, or their own artistic interpretations. These designs undergo refinement if needed before they are transferred onto the client's skin.

THE SITE OF AUDIENCING

In the context of early traditional tattoo studios such as Harry Ramesar's, clients visiting his tattoo studio would view the tattoo flash sheets, individual tattoo flash or historical tattoo designs in the tattoo studio and actively engage with these images, constructing their own meanings based on personal preferences, cultural backgrounds, individual experiences and the meanings associated to the tattoo designs themselves. In the context of tattoo studios during the time, flash sheets and historical tattoo designs served as the primary visual representations of available tattoo designs. Clients viewed these images in the tattoo studio setting, forming a shared understanding of tattoo aesthetics and design conventions within the tattoo community.

Compositionality

The arrangement of tattoo designs on display would be crucial in shaping how they are perceived by clients and visitors. The composition of these elements influences the overall aesthetic appeal and accessibility of the tattoo designs to the audience. Clients and visitors to the tattoo studio would ultimately express their own interpretations of the tattoo flash presented in the studio. While the composition of the designs may guide viewers' initial impressions, individual preferences, cultural backgrounds, and personal experiences also play a significant role in how they perceive and connect with the images. Clients may gravitate towards certain designs based on their unique interpretations and emotional resonance, or even having seen the same design tattooed on someone else.

Technological

Viewing tattoo flash in early tattooing studios varies from other settings. In a tattoo studio, clients may be surrounded by the buzzing of a tattoo machine, conversations with the tattoo artist, and other sensory stimuli, creating a unique environment for experiencing and interpreting tattoo designs. In terms of technology, Harry Ramesar's tattoo machine stands out as the sole notable representation. All other procedures would be performed manually.

Social

The social identities of clients visiting the tattoo studio play a significant role in their engagement with tattoo designs. Clients may belong to diverse social, cultural, and demographic groups, each with its own set of preferences, values, and aesthetic sensibilities. Specific types of individuals engage with images in distinctive manners, highlighting the influence of social identities on audience engagement in the tattoo studio environment.

How interpreted? By whom? Why?

Clients visiting the tattoo studio interpret tattoo designs based on their individual perspectives, preferences, and meanings. They may associate specific symbols, motifs, or styles with personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, or emotional significance. They may interpret tattoo designs as expressions of identity, memory, belief, or aesthetic appeal, choosing designs that resonate with their unique life narratives and values. Clients might opt for a particular design they've observed on another individual. Tattoo flash can also be interpreted within the sociocultural context of the tattoo studio environment. The studio serves as a space where social interactions, aesthetic preferences, and artistic practices intersect. Interpretations of tattoo designs may be influenced by the tattoo studio's atmosphere, clientele demographics, and prevailing trends within the tattoo community. The studio environment itself could shape the meanings attributed to tattoo designs, reflecting broader cultural values, norms, and identities.

Viewing positions offered?

Harry Ramesar’s tattoo studio viewing positions offered were more limited compared to modern studios of today. These studios often operated in simpler settings with basic

furnishings. The display areas consisted of the walls of the tattoo studio adorned with flash designs. There would be two main viewing positions within the tattoo studio. Harry Ramesar would need access to the area being tattooed and whilst clients would be primarily seated during the tattooing process, they may have had the option to stand or move around within the studio space, to for example, choose a tattoo design.

How displayed? Where?



Source: (Left) (van As 2018:101). (Middle) (van As 2018:102) (Right) (van As 2018:107) https://tattooharry.co.za/about-harry/

The Tattoo flash was predominantly viewed on the walls of the tattoo studio. The mechanism utilized would be flash designs on A4 paper stock or individual tattoo flash fixed to a cardboard sheet as seen marked by a red arrow on the three images above.

4.6 The tattooist as a craftsperson

Craft is depicted as a multifaceted combination of principles that complement a final creative result, which involves the interaction with the characteristics of a particular material that requires a certain level of *skill*. Although Adamson also introduces the ideas of craft as pastoral and amateur, these concepts are omitted here as they are not directly pertinent to the proposals concerning tattooing (McDade 2019:269). Figure 4.3 depicts the multifaceted contingent role a tattooist plays which emphasizes that portraying the tattooist as a craftsperson does not imply a lesser role compared to being a designer or visual artist but

instead, it aims to portray the various roles without hierarchical distinctions. The flash sheet example in figure 4.2, illustrates an example of when the tattooist, as in Harry Ramesar, operates as a designer and as a visual artist. McDade (2019) elaborates that 'when discussing the tattooist as a craftsperson, it is not to suggest that the tattooist is performing a role that is lesser than that of the tattooist as a designer or a visual artist. What is intended is to outline the distinctions between roles that are employed on a non-hierarchical Basis' (McDade 2019:269). Once a client has chosen a design, the next process involved is transferring that design onto a separate thin sheet of tracing paper, which is then transferred onto the skin, serving as a guideline for the tattooist to follow. The craft involved in this task requires skill which McDade (2019) relates as:

> When skill is discussed as present within tattooing, it can be considered in relation to the notion that it is 'control within a productive operation, the ability to reduce error' and is 'purposefully constrained physical action'. Although stated as somewhat reductive, this definition of skill suffices for the expression of skill being a component of tattooing, due to its accessibility (McDade 2019:272) .

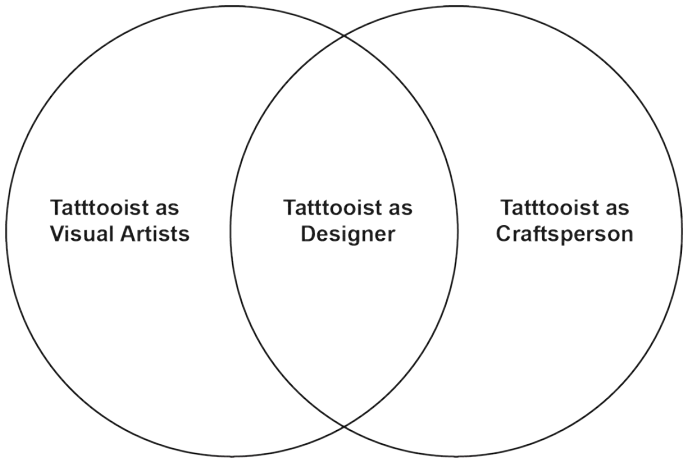


Figure 4.2 A diagrammatic depicting the multifaceted and contingent role of a contemporary western tattooist. Source (McDade 2019:268)

Therefore the concept of craft in tattooing is depicted as a multifaceted and skilful interaction with materials, emphasizing the nuanced roles of a tattooist. The roles of a tattooist encompass being a craftsperson, designer, and visual artist, without implying a hierarchical distinction among these roles which is illustrated by Harry Ramesar's flash sheet example. The tattooist operates seamlessly as both a designer and visual artist, embodying the principles of craft in each role, allowing for the process of transferring a design onto tracing paper and then onto the skin underscoring the skill involved in tattooing. This non-hierarchical view of the tattooist's roles highlights the complexity and artistry involved in the craft of tattooing, reinforcing that skill is an essential component of the tattooing process.

4.7 Tattoo Tracings

The second artefact category (https://tattooharry.co.za/stencils/) and the largest volume of artefacts contained on the digital archive of this study are the original tattoo tracings created by Harry Ramesar. Tattoo tracings are outlines or stencils of tattoo designs that tattoo artists use as a guide when applying tattoos to clients' skin. These tracings are typically created by transferring the original design onto a separate thin substrate such as a sheet of paper or transfer paper which can be seen on figure 4.4.



Figure 4.3 Tattoo flash design and tattoo flash design tracing. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za

The tracing provides a clear and precise outline of the design, including its shape, lines, and design details which help ensure accuracy and precision in the tattooing process by providing a clear guideline for the artist to follow. The use of tracings helps minimize errors and ensures that the final tattoo closely matches the original design. Tracings can be modified and customized to meet the specific preferences and considerations of the client, who might request, for example, some detail changes that do or do not appear on the original flash design. Tracings of popular tattoo designs from the era when Harry Ramesar was active as a tattoo artist were preserved and reused multiple times. This practice streamlined the tattooing process, ensuring consistency in the replication of these popular designs.

The same process of assigning themes for tattoo flash designs was utilized for the tattoo tracing artefacts. Due to the extensive number of tattoo tracings that needed to be identified, I opted to categorize the tattoo tracings based on the predominant theme depicted in each tracing. Table 4.6 represents the 36 tracing categories that appear on the digital archive with the number of artefacts contained within each category.

Table 4.6 Tattoo Tracing Categories. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/stencils/

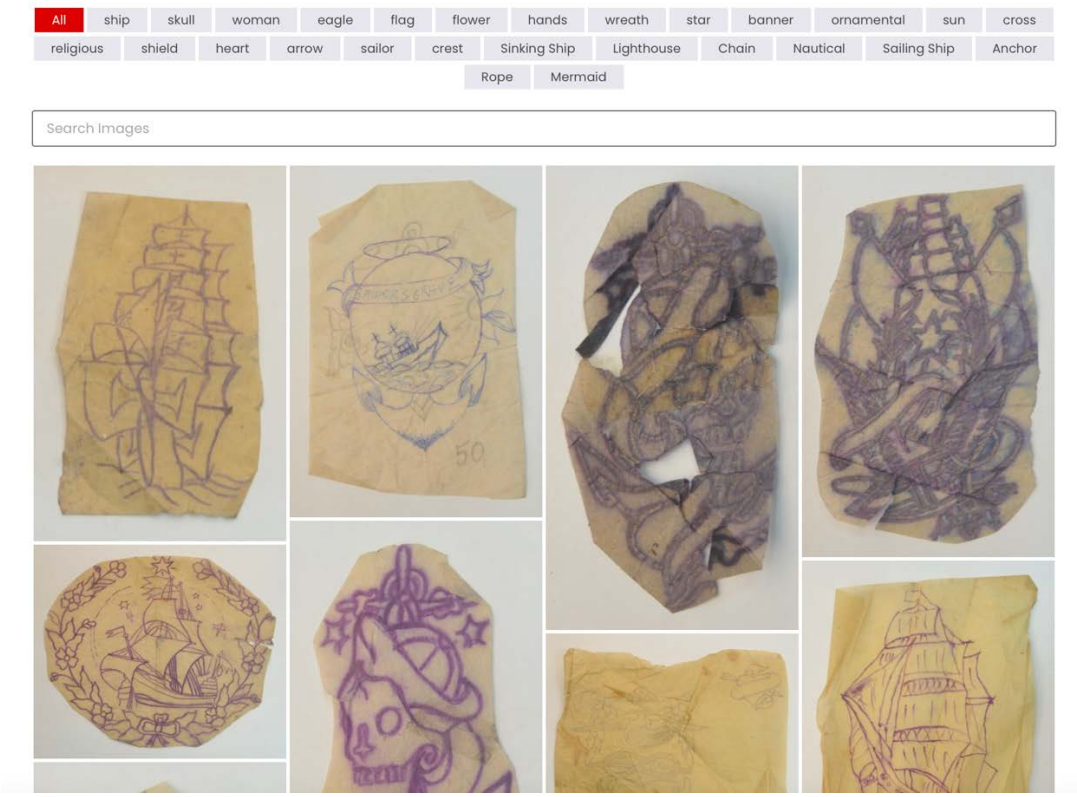
TATTOO TRACING CATEGORIES					
Category	**No of Artefacts**	**Category**	**No of Artefacts**	**Category**	**No of Artefacts**
African	4				
American	7	Flowers	68	Patriotic	57
American Indian	13	Hearts	18	Religious	167
Animals	46	Gangs	1	Scorpion	22
Banners	135	Luck	2	Skulls	74
Birds	122	Males	15	Snakes	43
Butterfly	35	Man's Ruin	7	Spiders	14
Cartoons	47	Music	2	Sport	6
Daggers	79	Money and Alcohol	6	Star Sign	2

Death	10	Nautical	118	Tribal	63
Dragons	47	Ocean Animals	23	Typography	21
Eagles	108	Oriental	15	Wild Cats	166
Females	174	Ornamental	5	X-Rated	12
TOTAL NUMBER OF TRACING ARTIFACTS		**1754**			

Organizing the tattoo tracings into various categories based on the dominant theme serves two important purposes. Firstly, it enhances the ease of navigation by grouping tattoos into distinct categories, where users can easily browse through the archive and locate specific types of tattoos which may fall within that category. This streamlined navigation, improves the overall experience of the digital archive. Secondly, the categorization of the tracings improves the searchability of the archive. Users can search for tattoos tracings based on themes or styles they are interested in. This enhances the user's ability to find relevant content quickly and efficiently, thus enhancing the user interaction with the digital archive. Therefore, categorizing the tattoo tracings enhances the usability, accessibility, and usefulness of the digital archive to a wide range of users interested in South African tattoo history and culture. An example of a category can be seen in table 30, which depicts the *Nautical* category (https://tattooharry.co.za/nautical/) with the themes tabs that assist a viewer customize the search of tracing artefacts within the category. Images of the tattoo tracing will appear in the gallery below the theme tabs.

Table 4.7 Nautical Tattoo Tracing Category. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/stencils/

Nautical Tattoo Tracing Category



Category
Nautical
Themes within the category
ship, skull, women, eagle, flag, flower, hands, wreath, star, banner, ornamental, sun, cross, religious, shield, heart, arrow, sailor, crest, sinking ship, lighthouse, chain, nautical, sailing ship, anchor, rope, mermaid

In characterizing the tattoo tracings contained in this study, I based the categorization decisions on four principles: 1) my personal knowledge as a tattoo collector, 2) my academic background, having dedicated my postgraduate studies to the genre of tattooing, 3) my professional experience as a visual communicator, and 4) referencing from related tattoo source books. As a tattoo collector, I have first-hand experience with various tattoo styles, such as traditional, neo-traditional, realism, Japanese, and many others. Categorizsing tattoo tracings allows for the recognition and appreciation of the distinct characteristics and nuances of each style. This personal insight into artistic techniques and aesthetics within different

tattoo genres enables an effective breakdown of fundamental elements of visual communication, reflecting the time when Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist.

As an academic, one develops the research skills and critical thinking abilities that enable you to analyze the tattoo tracing from a scholarly perspective. Categorizing tattoo designs based on elements such as symbolism, cultural significance, and historical context allows you to conduct in-depth research and contribute to the academic discourse surrounding tattoo culture and create a digital archive of a pioneer tattoo artist in South Africa. The dual perspective as a tattoo collector and academic positions one to be able to recognize and educate others about the diverse range of tattoo styles and their cultural significance.

As a visual communicator, I understand the importance of clear and effective communication through visual means. Categorizing tattoo tracing allows for the organization and classification of designs in a way that could have facilitated the communication between the client and tattoo artist during the time of the study. The understanding of visual language, composition, and tattoo design principles helps decode the various visual element or elements contained in a tattoo tracing composition. And lastly, the use of tattoo related source books have rich visual representations of the cultural heritage and historical significance of tattoo related visuals of the period. Green (2018) notes that:

> it is important to note that the nature of tattoo symbols is sometimes so personal that the only definitive interpretation can come from the bearer of the tattoo. No matter the established meaning in one culture, the obvious meaning derived from a historical fact, or the original source of a particular image, people will *and* do ascribe their own meaning to their designs (Green 2009).

By using traditional tattoo design source books, one can access authentic and time-honoured designs which help with the categorizing of tattoo tracings based on iconic features, symbols, imagery, and motifs that hold specific meanings and symbolism within various cultures. There are no less valid or meaningful tattoo associations rooted in widely accepted tattoo design knowledge. Similarly, many symbols hold multiple meanings, particularly across various cultures and historical periods. Therefore, it is essential to note that the tattoo flash design

categories on the digital archive serve as guidelines rather than strict rules regarding the utilisation of symbols as tattoo imagery. The categories do not prescribe how tracings should be borrowed, modified, drawn, coloured, placed, or ultimately interpreted, but give the viewer a) a platform to view a collection of tattoo artefacts and b) give the viewer the ability to search for tattoo tracings that might fall within the broad categories.

4.8 Visual Methodology of Tattoo Flash Tracings

As outlined earlier in this study, the analyzing of tattoo flash tracings also requires a methodological perspective based on a critical visual approach that explores the societal implications of the visual content under examination. The societal impacts of a tattoo-related image or series of images manifest across four distinct realms namely: the production site, the inherent characteristics of the image, its circulation platform, and its reception by the audience. Table 4.8 offers a comprehensive overview of the critical visual methodology applied to the tattoo design tracings in the digital archive, again utilizing the site of modalities principles from Rose (2023).

Table 4.8 The sites of modalities for tattoo flash.

THE SITES OF MODALITIES FOR TATTOO FLASH TRACINGS
THE SITE OF PRODUCTION
Tattoo flash tracing would have been produced based on the three categories of tattoo flash available at the tattoo studio. These tracings would have been traced by hand.
The Technical Modality From the perspective of tattoo design tracings, although the majority of the tattoo flash was crafted by hand, the production of the tracings required a certain degree of technical skill to produce. A critical aspect is the proficiency of the tattoo artist, whose tracing style plays a pivotal role in creating an accurate traced copy of the tattoo flash design that the client has chosen.
The Compositional Modality

The composition of the tattoo tracing requires that the elements contained within the tattoo flash design be accurately traced. The copy of an existing tattoo flash design, created by laying a translucent or transparent material, such as tracing paper, over the original flash design and carefully outlining its contours, lines, and shapes. This process allows the tattoo artist to replicate the underlying structure and composition of the original tattoo flash with precision and accuracy.

The Social Modality

The context in which the tracing is created and interpreted plays a significant role in the context of the tattoo artist. The social modality will follow the lead of the social representation of the tattoo flash design.

Who? When? Who for? Why?

The primary purpose of the tattoo tracing is to help the tattoo artist apply a to-scale representation of the tattoo flash design chosen by the client. Given the large number of tattoo tracings found among the tattoo artefacts, it is evident that Harry Ramesar preserved his tracings, particularly his most popular designs. This practice of preserving tattoo tracings offers the significant advantage of avoiding the need to repeatedly trace the same design, thereby saving time and ensuring consistency.

Genre?

The tattoo tracings reflect the designs that Harry Ramesar tattooed during his career.

How Made?



Pen on tracing paper.

Source: Religious-121 https://tattooharry.co.za/religious/



Pencil on tracing paper.

Source: Eagle-93 https://tattooharry.co.za/eagles/



Coloured pencil on tracing paper.

Source: Patriotic-55 https://tattooharry.co.za/patriotic/

The tattoo tracings were created using either pen, pencil or coloured pencil on tracing paper substrate.

The Site of the Image

The tattoo flash tracings were housed at Ramesar's tattoo studio in Lakhani Chambers on Saville Street in Durban, where he dedicated his entire career as a tattoo artist.

Visual Meaning?

The visual significance of the tattoo tracings will resonate more with the tattoo artist than with the client. This stands in contrast with the tattoo flash design, which is selected by the client. While the client may approve the tracing once it's applied to the skin, the meaning of the design is then transferred to a technical tracing for the tattoo artist to adhere to during the tattooing process.

Composition?

The tattoo flash tracing encompasses the tracing of the actual tattoo flash design itself.

Visual Effects

Tattoo tracings will be void of any visual effects as they are a simplified direct copy of the actual tattoo flash design. Visual effects could create confusion of elements contained within the tracing, which could result in mistakes that could be permanent.



Visual Effect Example. Source: Flash Card23 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

For instance, an additional tracing line might be included to signify a colour visual effect in the tattoo flash design, which should not be depicted in the tracing. The red arrows in the example above indicate areas where visual effects are shown using red ink. These areas would not be outlined in the tattoo stencil; instead, the tattoo artist would incorporate them using red ink while referring to the tattoo flash for guidance.

THE SITE OF CIRCULATION

The tattoo flash tracings were circulated in Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio. Similarly to the creation and or collection of the tattoo flash, the tattoo tracings were circulated within the studio, primarily for the use of the tattoo artist.

Organized by who or what? Why?

The tattoo flash would have been organized by Harry Ramesar as he was the only employee and tattoo artist based at his tattoo studio. He may have enlisted the help of a family member to trace tattoo flash or find the relevant existing tattoo needed for a tattoo.

How changed?

Tattoo flash tracings can be amended and or refined as per the client's request. The tracing stage in the tattooing process is a versatile step that enables the tattoo artist to make adjustments or incorporate additional elements into the client's tattoo design without having to modify the original printed tattoo flash design.

How circulated?

The tattoo tracings were circulated within the tattoo studio between the tattoo artist or any assistant he may have had at the time. The tattoo client would only engage with the tattoo tracing once the tracing has been transferred to the skin and the final approval given before the commencement of the tattoo.

THE SITE OF AUDIENCING

Tattoo flash tracing is a procedure undertaken once a client has chosen their tattoo design with this step not typically displayed publicly. After selecting a design, the tracing process involves either a) tracing the design from the printed tattoo flash or b) retrieving an existing tracing from the designated storage area, if one already exists.

Compositionality

Clients ultimately convey their own interpretations, if any, or stick to the original tattoo flash presented in the studio, and these interpretations and compositions are then transferred onto the tattoo tracing.

Technological

All tattoo tracing procedures would be performed manually on a transparent-like substrate.

Social

The social identities would be based on the interaction between Harry Ramesar and his client. The tattoo tracing phase is an opportunity for the artist to build trust and rapport with the client, through open communication, active listening, and mutual respect, where the artist creates a comfortable and collaborative atmosphere.

How interpreted? By whom? Why?

There are two perspectives that pertain to the topic of interpretation, between the tattoo artist and the client. From the perspective of the tattoo artist, the tattoo tracing is the blueprint of the design which is transferred permanently to the skin via the use of needles and ink and the client will view the tattoo tracing as an approval mechanism to proceed with the tattoo.
Viewing positions offered? Viewing positions in this context would be reserved for a) the client who would view the tracing on the skin as a pre-approval for the tattoo and b) the tattoo artist who would view the tattoo design on the skin as a blueprint for the tattoo design to be permanently tattooed.
How displayed? Where? The Tattoo flash tracings were predominantly kept in a location reserved by the tattoo artist to have easy access too. For example, the desk drawer that Harry Ramesar used in his tattoo studio.

4.9 Popular Tattoos Contained on the Digital Archive

After acquiring, categorizing, documenting, and publishing the tattoo artefacts onto the digital archive, a clearer understanding of the popular tattoos showcased by Harry Ramesar emerges. Despite the archive containing thousands of artefacts, identifiable tattoo themes can be discerned, which are discussed below.

4.9.1 Popular Tattoo Flash Designs

During Harry Ramesar's career as a tattoo artist, popular tattoo designs were shaped by a multitude of cultural, social, and artistic movements, as evidenced by the artefacts catalogued in the digital archive of this study. When examining the assortment of tattoo flash artefacts, three overarching visual communication tattoo themes emerge. Firstly, traditional American and European tattoo flash designs are prominently featured, characterized by bold outlines, vibrant but limited colours, and iconic imagery such as anchors, swallows, roses, hearts, and

pin-up girls. These designs often conveyed themes of patriotism, love, loyalty, and adventure. Table 4.9 provides examples of each design found within the archive.

Table 4.9 Traditional Flash Examples. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/



Anchor (Loose Flash-20)



Swallow (Loose Flash-68)



Rose (Loose Flash Two93)



Heart (Loose Flash-70)



Pinup (Loose Flash Two82)

Secondly, influences of the Second World War, during which tattoos surged in popularity among military personnel, serving as symbols of honour, camaraderie, and identity. Soldiers adorned themselves with patriotic symbols, military insignia, and commemorative tattoos to express their loyalty and commemorate their service. Common motifs from this era included eagles, flags, military emblems, and banners containing phrases such as ‘love’ which can be seen in examples displayed in Table 4.10. Based on statements from the interviewees in this study, sailors were regular patrons of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio, a trend that this study will delve deeper into in chapter six. Durban’s harbour, was a vital port for the Allies during the war, and Ramesar's studio attracted sailors while their ships were docked. This patronage

persisted even after the war's conclusion, with sailors maintaining their visits to Ramesar's studio for tattoos.

Table 4.10 World War II Flash Examples. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/



Eagle (Loose Flash-71)



Flags (Loose Flash-104)





Military Symbols (Loose Flash Two81) Love Banner (Loose Flash-105)

The third theme is characterized as ‘new age ‘ tattoo flash, which would be represented by tattoo designs that are more developed representations of traditional tattoo designs characterized by a blend of classic imagery with contemporary elements. Green (2009) notes

> the symbols and design motifs from the cultures and time periods that have come before are mixed and matched in many new ways. As our world becomes more tightly connected and cultural boundaries become more permeable, symbolic and artistic elements cross over to a much greater extent (Green 2009).

These tattoos retained the bold outlines and vibrant colours of traditional American and European tattoo flash designs but incorporated influences from movements such as pop culture, fantasy, and modern art. Examples that could represent this theme are modern influenced dragons, cartoon characters, and a tribal inspired lion, as depicted in the examples showcased in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 New Age Flash Examples. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/



Dragon (Loose Flash-122). Cartoon (Loose Flash-119). Tribal Lion (Loose Flash Two90)

4.9.2 Tattoo Flash Tracing Designs

The identification of original tattoo tracings within the artefacts elicited considerable excitement, not only as a researcher but as a tattoo enthusiast. This sentiment arises not only from their fragile condition and remarkable preservation despite being inadequately stored over time, but also from their sheer quantity, which surpassed the number of tattoo flash designs present. Unlike contemporary tattoo practices, where most tattoo artists dispose of their tracings upon completion of a tattoo, the preservation of a substantial portion of Harry

Ramesar's tattoo tracings is particularly remarkable. These tracings serve as valuable tools for discerning both the tattoos created by Harry Ramesar and those that were popular among his clientele. The latter aspect is significant in confirming the popularity of specific tattoo designs, which can be gauged through the following three visual observation indicators.

1. Is there a tattoo tracing?
2. Has the tattoo tracing been used multiple times?
3. Are there duplicates of the exact tattoo tracing?

Figure 4.5 below gives an example of a popular flash tracing that appears on the digital archive multiple times depicting the three observations mentioned above.

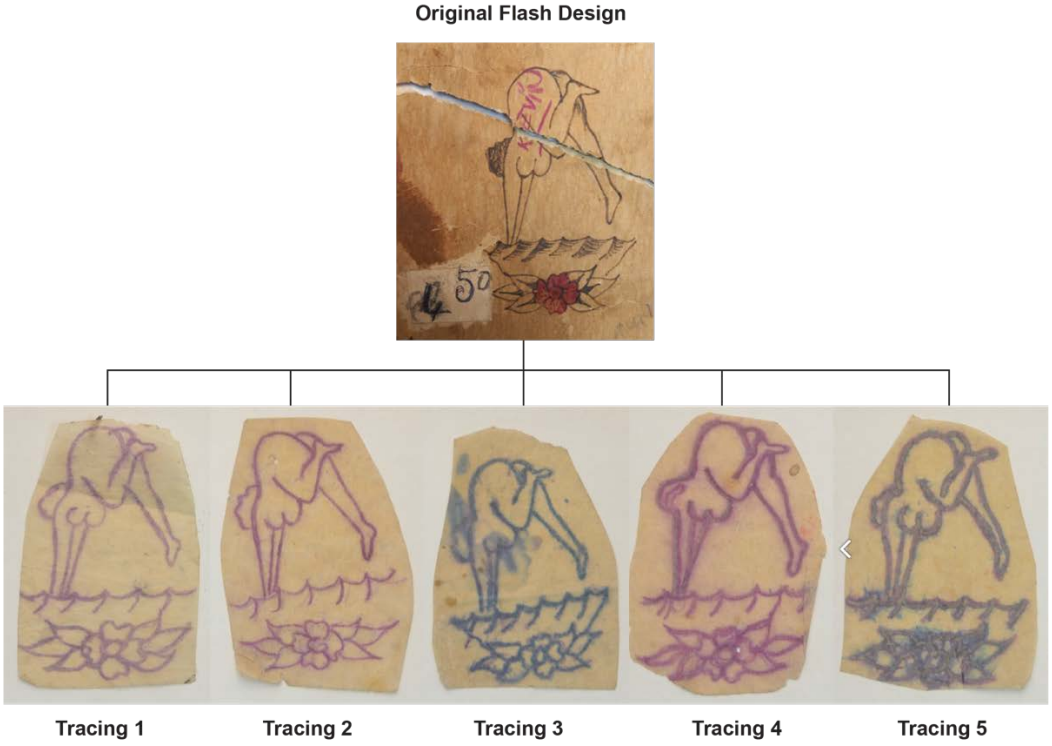


Figure 4.4 Popular flash tracing. Source: https://tattooharry.co.za/females/ and https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/

To unpack the popular flash tracing seen in figure 46, one can see at the top, the original tattoo flash design where the tracings were traced from. The appearance of both the original

flash design and a tattoo tracing alone gives an indication that this tattoo was popular, just by the fact that Harry Ramesar kept the tracing. This example takes an additional step as the artefacts encompass five distinct tracings of the identical original tattoo flash design. Tracings three, four, and five exhibit multiple tracing iterations, as evidenced by the thickness of the trace lines. Furthermore, the presence of 'smudging' or 'colour bleeding' along the lines suggests that the tracing was positioned and subsequently transferred onto dampened skin. The conventional method of transfer typically involved tracing the design over a graphite transfer paper which transferred the design onto the reverse side of tracing paper. Subsequently, the tracing paper, bearing the design, was then positioned on the designated area of the clients body, which had been dampened to facilitate the transfer onto the skin.

There are multiple examples in the digital archive of tattoo tracing that display the 'wear and tear' of multiple tracings. Some are extremely fragile with popular tattoo design tracing holding significance for the following reasons:

Historical Documentation of Tattoo Artefacts

Each use of the tattoo tracing on different clients or instances provides a visual historical record of the tattoo design's popularity and prevalence over time. This documentation offers insights into tattoo trends, preferences, and cultural shifts within the community whilst Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist.

Artistic Evolution of Tattoo Representations

As a tracing is reused, it may undergo subtle modifications or adaptations by the tattoo artist, reflecting evolving artistic styles, techniques, and personal preferences. Analysing these variations can reveal patterns of artistic evolution and innovation within the tattooing community both locally or internationally.

Authentication and Attribution

In the context of studying historical tattoo artifacts from pioneer tattoo artists like Harry Ramesar, multiple uses of a tracing can help authenticate the artist's work and attribute specific designs to them. By comparing tracings with known examples of the artist's work, researchers can establish a more comprehensive understanding of his artistic output for

further research outputs. For example, the cultural and sociological insights gathered from examining the tattoo tracings in the digital archive offer valuable insights into the cultural and sociological significance of tattooing practices during the time Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist. The tattoo archive provides evidence of shared cultural symbols associated with specific tattoo designs within the community.

Altogether, the digital archive comprises 1754 distinct tattoo tracings. These tracings represent a wealth of information for researchers, tattoo enthusiasts, and tattoo artists, thus providing valuable insights into the historical, artistic, cultural, and technical dimensions of tattooing during Harry Ramesar's tenure as a tattoo artist.

4.10 Conclusion

The identification and preservation of over 2,000 tattoo artefacts from Harry Ramesar's career as an tattoo artist offer invaluable insights into the tattooing trends and cultural significances of his time. The chapter emphasizes the importance of these artefacts, particularly the preserved tattoo tracings, which provide a visual history of popular designs and societal impacts. Guided by Gillian Rose's visual methodologies, the analysis reveals the intricate relationship between individual expression and broader cultural motifs. Therefore illustrating how Harry Ramesar’s tattoo archive operates as a multidimensional site of cultural production. Each tattoo serves not only as a personal artifact but as a visual text embedded in a matrix of technological, social, and cultural processes. The application of this framework allows us to move beyond simplistic interpretations and instead appreciate the complexity and richness of Ramesar’s visual legacy in both historical and contemporary contexts. This chapter underscores the significance of these artefacts as critical resources for researchers, tattoo enthusiasts, and historians, offering a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social dynamics of Harry Ramesar's work.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD WORK DESIGN AND METHODS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the qualitative research methods used to gather insights into Harry Ramesar's career as a pioneering tattoo artist, which emphasizes the role of in-depth interviews as a vital tool for capturing the personal dimensions of Harry Ramesar's contributions to both visual culture and the tattoo industry in KwaZulu Natal. The chapter discusses how interviews with individuals familiar with Ramesar's work provide context and depth that complement the visual analysis of the tattoo artefacts. By means of documenting these perspectives, the chapter aims to enrich the digital archive and enhance our understanding of the cultural, social, and personal dimensions of Harry Ramesar's work.

5.2 Methods and Procedures

To enhance clarity and facilitate reader engagement, the following overview condenses the interview procedures and coding strategies applied in this study. Seventeen in-depth, open-ended interviews were conducted, either in-person or online, following ethical approval and participant consent. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised. Data coding was conducted in NVivo using a two-stage process: 1) initial open coding to capture emerging ideas directly from the data, and 2) focused coding to refine and consolidate codes into broader thematic categories. These themes informed the structure of Chapter 6, where findings are organised to correspond with the core research questions. While detailed methodological descriptions remain within the relevant sections, this overview serves as a concise reference point for the reader.

The semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 participants aimed to explore the participants' connection to tattoo artist Harry Ramesar, through the exploration of storytelling, which contributes and facilitates the creation of an online archive through the telling of authentic narratives. The interviews were conducted in an semi-structured and

open-ended format to encourage a more spontaneous and unrestricted dialogue, resembling a conversation rather than a formal interview. Nordin, Almeida and Wiberg (2023) note that storytelling serves as a commonly employed method in design, with narratives exerting a profound and enduring influence on society, shaping our perceptions of the world around us (Nordin, Almeida & Wiberg 2023:91). They explain their comments by elaborating that:

> On the one hand, modes of knowing that construct knowledge legitimize and advance what counts as knowledge, one which is likely aligned with a rather conventional yet dominant narrative. On the other hand, historical accounts and knowledge that have been appropriated or devalued, i.e., rendered silent or invisible, have long contributed to a legacy that embraces a colonialist construction of knowledge. This means that the stories that are heard are the stories that are privileged, i.e., as told from the perspective of a dominant culture, and, either truthful or imaginary, will have an impact on people's perceived reality. Moreover, this means that stories that are being silenced (and therefore not listened to) carry less power as they do not have an impact on people's lives to the same extent as favourable stories. To counter this, the writing of (hi)stories that include the voices of marginalized groups is crucial to provide not only justice but, as importantly, to empower and give agency to these communities at the margins (Nordin, Almeida and Wiberg 2023:91).

Within the scope of this study, interview participants encompass individuals with tattoos (the tattoo community), a demographic largely perceived as deviant during the era in which Harry Ramesar practiced as a tattoo artist. Stories and narratives serve the purpose of sense-making, offering a potent and efficient tool in education and the dissemination of knowledge which aids in the formation of the digital archive. With today's popularity of digital, Nordin, Almeida and Wiberg (2023) note that: 'Due to the increase of digital devices, contemporary stories and story-telling commonly take place through digital platforms. These digital platforms are non-neutral, in that they impose a technological structure on the story that makes it different from its original, organic form' (Nordin, Almeida and Wiberg 2023:92). Similarly as in my Masters study (van As 2018), the interviews conducted for this study

comprised three primary elements. Firstly, participants were engaged in a location of their choosing, fostering a relaxed atmosphere conducive to open dialogue. Whilst the interviews were based on a series of provisional questions to establish a foundation, the interviews were adaptable to include additional queries to facilitate the conversational flow. This approach aimed to encourage participant comfort and unreserved expression. The subsequent in-depth interviews adhered to the recommendations outlined in the tip sheet by (Healy-Etten and Sharp 2010:162), advocating for semi-structured interviews predominantly featuring open-ended questions. This methodology was chosen to enable participants to articulate profound sentiments and provide intricate details about specific experiences.

Secondly, central to the visual artefact representations of this study was the exploration of the 'graphic imagery' of tattoo artefacts created by Harry Ramesar. Drawing from the insights of Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar (2012), who suggest that visual representations prompt a reflective process enhancing participant narrative, the study recognized the power of images in qualitative research (Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar 2012). Particularly, marginalized individuals or communities can construct visual representations of their personal experiences, fostering a dialogical process around the visual elements. This concept amplifies the significance of tattoos within the tattoo community, as interpreted further by Schmid (2013) in 'Tattoos – An historical essay' (Schmidt 2013).

Thirdly, the documentation of any tattoos possessed by the interviewees was integral to the data collection of the study and the digital archive. Given the deceased status of Harry Ramesar, the key individual in the study, credible documentation of visual artefacts was of paramount importance. This documentation, primarily sourced from the field, necessitated accuracy to ensure the credibility of its utilisation as emphasized by Meddings (2002):

> Data collection is an exercise that requires a substantial investment in infrastructure and human personal resources. There is a requirement incumbent upon people who enlist others to collect data that they provide backup for those individuals who are collecting and furnishing data and competent analyses of the data that have been provided, with appropriate follow-up in terms of programs or interventions (Meddings 2002:380).

5.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria in this Study

Inclusion Criteria

Participants have to:

(a) Be 18 years or older.

(b) Be able to participate in an interview conducted in English. Only a low level of English proficiency will be required.

(c) Have personal knowledge of Harry Ramesar and his practice as a tattoo artist.

(d) Accept that these are research interviews.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants that:

a) Are under the age of 18 years.

b) Are not able to participate in an interview conducted in English.

c) Have no knowledge of Harry Ramesar and his practice as a tattoo artist.

d) Do not accept that these are research interviews.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental to maintaining the dignity, rights, and welfare of research participants who participate in the study by ensuring the credibility and integrity of the research process and its findings. Ethical practices in interview-based research not only protect participants but also enhance the quality and reliability of the data collected, which ultimately contributes to the advancement of knowledge in a responsible and respectful manner. Hattingh (2005) observes that 'in addition to technical and scientific considerations, research projects utilizing interviews as a data collection tool are likely to be affected by ethical considerations' (Hattingh 2005:128). Informed consent is crucial to ensuring that participants are fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. This process ensures that participants voluntarily agree to participate, fully understanding what their involvement in the study entails. The safeguarding of personal information and responses of participants is vital for protecting their identity and ensuring their data is not misused. Given the significance of in-depth interviews in this study, ethical issues may emerge

from interactions with participants (Hattingh 2005). Participants were informed about the researcher's objectives and those who voluntarily agreed to participate were provided with informed consent and model release forms (see Appendix A). Consent from a guardian was not required as the study was limited to participants aged 18 and older. A decision was made that all participants' interviews were designated an interview code, which was used for referencing within the study to avoid any cultural sensitivity that participants might experience. Cultural sensitivity involves being aware of and respecting the cultural backgrounds and values of participants, who may for example have tattoo regrets which helps avoid cultural insensitivity or offense due to the 'deviant' association to tattoos during the time Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist . Adapting interview methods and questions to be culturally appropriate and respectful is key to conducting research that is inclusive and considerate of diverse perspectives. The ethical inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants were as discussed in section 5.3 of this study and in addition to the Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria, the following ethical considerations were observed:

a) The participant has the right to privacy, including the right to refuse to participate in the research.

b) The participant has the right to anonymity and confidentiality.
c) The participant has the right for their well-being or reputation not to be harmed in any manner.
d) The participant has the right to full disclosure about the research.

If a lower level of English proficiency was encountered during the research interviews, the questions would be rephrased in simpler terms to ensure participant understanding. Provisional interview questions were approved by the ethics committee before documenting and analysing the in-depth interview data.

5.5 Research Methods

The study of an online archive dedicated to the work of a pioneering tattoo artist necessitates a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to research methods. This section of the study

outlines the methodological framework, which includes a diverse range of qualitative techniques. The primary goal is to gain a deep understanding of the archive's content, design, user interaction, and the cultural significance of Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts. The study, will explore various data collection and analysis methods to ensure a robust examination of the online archive. These methods include in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, content analysis of the archive's artefacts, and thematic analysis of the collected data.

5.5.1 In-person interview research framework

Knowledge is gained by the communication of people by means of language. Brinkmann (2008) writes: 'We can presuppose that humans have interviewed each other in some form or another for as long as they have mastered the use of language' (Brinkmann 2008: 471). This gives the indication that qualitative research interviews make use of the ancient human habit of asking and answering questions. Depending on the approach of the interviewer and how the questions are conducted, the answers received could be affected. For example, if one simply invites a participant to talk about a particular topic compared to guiding the participant with a list of specific questions regarding the topic. While the latter may be important for us to gather information about the topic, this information may not help us find out what the participant actually thought of the topic.

The Problem-centred interview can be defined as a 'qualitative, discursive-dialogic method of reconstructing knowledge about relevant problems' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 4). Witzel and Reiter (2012) note a few 'peculiarities' in this definition by explaining that:

> The discursive-dialogue character is outlined above in the idea of well-informed travelling and the involvement of interviewers and their knowledge in a *dialogue* with respondents and their perspectives. Suggesting a particular way of reconstructing the meaningfulness of this knowledge through interviews, defines the PCI as a *method*: it is a 'stylised way of conducting research that comprise(s) routine and accepted procedures for doing the rigorous side of science'. Like other methods of *qualitative* research, the PCI involves an 'exchange between the people' in their own 'social, cultural, and physical context'. If focuses on meanings

and behaviour, which the researcher tries to understand 'through the eyes and lived experience of the people' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 4).

The word 'problem' in PCI does not necessarily deal with issues or interview topics that are 'problematic' which could create a misunderstanding. Witzel and Reiter (2012) notes that: 'the French notion of *problématique* or the German term *problemstellung* refers to a *specific research question* – this would be a more appropriate meaning for the 'problem' in problem-centred interviews (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 4). The motivation for the development of the PCI occurred during the second half of the 1970s as:

a) recognized alternative within the range of social research methods which would firmly establish qualitative interviewing.
b) The design and development of a interviewing method that was more reflective and appropriate for the collection of 'qualitative' knowledge about the social world.

In table 5.1, Witzel and Reiter (2012) introduce two metaphors for describing and contrasting the two ways of obtaining knowledge by using a miner and a traveller.

Table 5.1 Two ways of obtaining knowledge (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 2).

Miner (Interviewer)	**Traveller (interviewer)**
Has a targeted and well-defined interest in specific information he/she considers valuable: he/she knows what to look for and turns (re)search into a collection of pure 'nuggets of knowledge'. Afterwards he/she will decide what it is actually worth.	Is openly curious and 'wanders through the landscape' of the area under investigation, involves herself in conversations, and encourages people to tell the researcher about their experiences. With each conversation he/she may discover new aspects, and develop and modify their opinion. Together with the respondents encountered, he/she interactively co-

	constructs the knowledge that she will take home.

Witzel and Reiter note that:

> Both approaches produce useful knowledge but also involve certain disadvantages. On the one hand, chances are low that the miner, who corresponds to a systematic collector of scientific knowledge according to pre-defined standards, will be open to changing her assessment criteria and reflect upon the concept of what (using the mining metaphor) 'precious metal' is. On the other hand, it may be difficult for the traveller to come to the end of her journey; she may be overwhelmed by the many new impressions and perspectives she has encountered, and may even forget about her original interest (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 2).

The use of metaphors aid in the imagining of interview research. The Problem-centred interview method introduces a third metaphor which is used for knowledge collecting. This third method of knowledge collecting presents the interviewer in the role of the *well-informed traveller*, who has 'certain priorities and expectations and starts the journey on the basis of background information obtained beforehand' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 2). Witzel and Reiter (2012) elaborate that:

> Yet the trip they (*well-informed traveller*) will finally make, and the story they will tell about it afterwards, depend on the people they meet on the road and on their insider knowledge. By talking to them they are able to refine their assessment of the major sights mentioned in the travel guide. The guidebook only helped them to outline a preliminary roadmap and frame of reference that remains open to modifications and revision on the basis of conversations with the locals. It is through these conversations that they get a better idea about what is relevant and worth seeing (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 2).

When research takes the role of the well-informed traveller, an increased amount of preparation in terms of both substance and behaviour is required, whilst less emphasis is placed on roaming through the social space of knowledge and meaning. Both the substance and behaviour of the interview require heightened preparation. The methodical construct of the PCI advocates for an interactive process between the interviewer and the respondent. Designed from the researcher's '*prior knowledge* defining and structuring the research interest in a preliminary way enters into a discursive dialogue with the respondent's practical *everyday knowledge* about a relevant issue' (Witzel & Reiter 2012: 15). This creates a complementary partnership of the inductive and deductive moments in the research by considering subjective perspectives (*inductive*) and by building upon available prior knowledge from research in a way that allows novel data to question and revise previous knowledge.

5.5.1.1 The epistemological challenge of the Problem-centred Interview

To achieve optimal results in the PCI process, it is crucial that the interviewer involves oneself with the respondent's perspective, which is crucial for producing and consolidating knowledge in the interaction between the researcher and the respondent. Witzel and Reiter (2012) explain that:

> The epistemological challenge for social science – i.e. the challenge of obtaining knowledge about an issue – consists in getting access to the interactivity constituted meanings and therefore in collecting and consolidating social scientific knowledge about the issue. The social scientific knowledge is always characterized by remoteness. Unlike first-hand, everyday knowledge (*common-sense constructs*), research knowledge of the social world consists of categories that are scientific constructs of '*constructs of the second-degree'* – social science operates on the basis of '*constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene'*(Witzel and Reiter 2012: 17).

Researchers can only approximate what the respondents/individuals think about certain issues, meaning that the knowledge and experience of these respondents/individuals is never fully accessible. The prior knowledge in conceptual terms of the researcher on the interview topic, helps ask questions and understand what the respondent emphasizes as relevant in his or her perspective of practical knowledge. Witzel and Reiter (2012) indicate that 'the treatment of prior knowledge in qualitative research is a contested issue because it is crucial for the question of whether and how we discover something 'new' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 18). On both ends of the spectrum, positions range in favour of openness with the complete suspension of prior knowledge on one end to the position of full disclosure, even if the hypothesis is based on forecasts, rather than actual results. Witzel and Reiter (2012) therefore notes that:

> Prior knowledge is a valuable and indispensable resource that needs to be used in a way which ensures that the principles of qualitative research are not undermined. The particular design of the PCI is an attempt of offer a methodical approach that should help to enhance our interpretive knowledge of the social world by reducing the distance between the researcher's prior knowledge, on the one hand and the relevance and the practical everyday knowledge of the research objects on the other (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 18).

Figure 5.1 below, demonstrates the epistemological challenge of the PCI and how respondents are invited to co-construct and reconstruct problems together with interviewers. This creates an interactive and interpretive process of data collection.

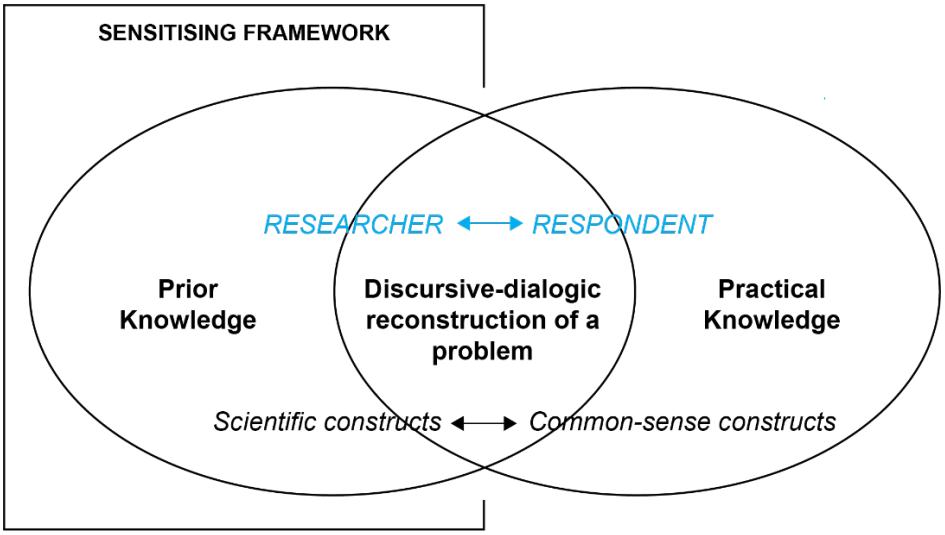


Figure 5.1 The epistemological challenge of the PCI. Source: (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 18).

In the interview, the researcher's *prior knowledge* and the respondents' *practical knowledge* meet to create a *discursive dialogue*. Witzel and Reiter (2012) note that this: 'exchange provides the chance to develop and refine the researchers' *social scientific constructs* (of the second degree) in a dialogue with the respondents' *common-sense constructs* (of the first degree). The researchers' 'prior knowledge is organized within the *sensitising framework* in order not to jeopardise the requirement of openness in qualitative research' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 19). The researcher, who takes the role of the well informed traveller, is essentially operating between two worlds, utilizing the practice of understanding the 'background of certain issues and appropriates and unfolds relevant knowledge in the perspective' on the topics interests. This results in PCI interviewers being reasonably well prepared with a solid base of prior knowledge of the interview topic, which in the case of this study, is my past academic research on Harry Ramesar and insights in the tattoo industry. The priorities and the interests of the interview topic are established, whilst one 'keeps in mind when they conduct a nevertheless open dialogue with respondents'. Witzel and Reiter (2012) note that 'their preliminary roadmap and frame of reference is open to modification and revision on the basis of conversations with the locals about what they consider relevant and worth seeing/noticing' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 18).

5.5.1.2 The sensitizing framework

Witzel and Reiter (2012) refer to a modern myth that 'Native Americans were unable to 'see' Columbus's ships because floating objects of that size and shape were outside their experience. While this is likely little more than a legend, it points to an important problem in research: the way we perceive things, and whether we consider them as relevant at all, tend to depend on what we already know about them' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 39). Therefore prior knowledge often aids and determines the quality of the knowledge-building journey. Both qualitative and quantitative research face the same fundamental problem:

> We have to accept the fundamental restriction that every observation only takes meaning in respect to one's own meaning schemata, and so prior knowledge inevitably gives structure to our observations and must therefore be seen as the foundation of all research (Meinefeld 2004).

In order for PCI to 'work' as a framework of data collection and prior knowledge is stratified, the four types of knowledge: *everyday, contextual, research* and *sensitizing* need to be discussed as they are all critical. Witzel and Reiter (2012) warn that 'prior knowledge is always ambivalent; it can also easily turn into preconception and constrain the research experience when it is imposed. Each of these types of prior knowledge entails a particular risk in this respect, and the right balance needs to be found' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 40).

Everyday knowledge

Knowledge that is based on social research builds on the knowledge that the researcher already knows about the topic. Witzel and Reiter (2012) note that 'everyday knowledge can and should be explicated and disclosed in as much as it motivates the general research interest and constitutes the research puzzle' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 40). Researcher with 'genuine' everyday knowledge, like anybody else have their own values, convictions and aversions, which can influence the research and create bias within the pre-interpretations during the interview. The mere interest in the research topic can often be considered a virtue in the competitive academic world. Witzel and Reiter (2012) give an example of a social

worker with a personal history of poverty. In this case their (valuable!) everyday knowledge and experience can be a source of bias that needs to be reflected (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 41).

In preparation for conducting interviews, three forms of 'synthetic' knowledge need to be discussed, in addition to the *genuine* knowledge discussed above. The text below discusses these three knowledge forms or levels, namely *contextual, research* and *sensitising* Knowledge. The purpose of 'genuine' and 'synthetic' knowledge in an interview environment needs to strike a balance between the knowledge gap of the researcher and the respondent, which results from the gathering of the synthetic knowledge, this is the main challenge in the PCI interview.

Contextual knowledge

The design of the interview starts with the research mechanisms, purpose and circumstances, which follows no standard solution. Witzel and Reiter (2012) notes, 'yet whatever the concrete research issue or units of analysis may be – individuals, interpretive patterns, policies etc. – the establishment of familiarity with the subject matter needs to be based on basic *information about objective context* of the problem. The availability of this most general form of prior knowledge constitutes the *minimum requirement of problem-centred research'* (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 41). Preliminary exploration of the facts and circumstances surrounding the interview topic enhances the understanding of the interview statements. This preliminary exploration helps by a) giving the interviewers the perceived notion of interview competency by the respondents and b) helps discover and clarify stereotypical or contradictory accounts during the interview (Witzel and Reiter, 2012). Witzel and Reiter (2012) explain the advantage of doing one's homework and being prepared by noting:

> Sometimes, contextual knowledge may be the precondition for being able to make sense of what is said. But even in interviews where this kind of basic expertise does not appear to be necessary it helps to link statements directly to relevant background information already in the course of the interview. Only in this way can the context tentatively be drawn into the conversation and its relevance examined (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 42).

The extent of the collection of prior knowledge depends on a concrete research question as contextual knowledge is at risk of being taken advantage of in the research process.

Research knowledge

The preparation of interviews using PCIs is usually collected through the review of the foremost literature of the discipline regarding the topic. Witzel and Reiter (2012) explain that:

> Research knowledge provides the researcher/interviewer with a kind of specialized knowledge that both facilitates and biases his or her perception and interest; it strongly influences the preparation of the interview guide as well as the establishment of pre-interpretations of the problem. In this sense, research prior knowledge is *closer* to the phenomenon under investigation (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 43).

The result is usually, though not always, a form of concrete, empirical content, that for example, 'serves specific knowledge interests and is typically based on findings from research in relevant sub-fields of the researcher's discipline' (Witzel and Reiter 2012). When dealing with research knowledge there is a possible danger of the dependence of collecting data utilizing theoretical approaches. An approach to avoid this dependence, is the researcher working independently of these theoretical approaches, following the principle of openness or investigating completely new research into the topic being investigated. Witzel and Reiter (2012) explain that 'research knowledge for the preparation of studies using PCIs is usually collected through the review of the foremost literature of the discipline regarding the topic. At least in academic research, this step of reviewing the relevant literature is indispensable' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 43).

Sensitizing knowledge

Researchers exploring new perspectives on a research problem can get stuck by established research knowledge of a particular subject, even though it can facilitate the perception of

relevant aspects of that subject. Witzel and Reiter (2012) note that the exploration of new perspectives:

> Runs counter to the idea of qualitative research as it bears the risk of undermining the principle of openness. In order not to corrupt the basic ideas of qualitative research, the crucial question for the specific technique of PCI is *how* prior knowledge becomes relevant and is played out, especially in the course of the interview and during the analysis (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 44).

For this reason, the PCI includes this fourth category of prior knowledge, which does not compete with the everyday knowledge of the respondent. Herbert Blumer describes sensitizing concepts, which applies to the notion of sensitising knowledge by noting that:

> A sensitizing concept… gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. Hundreds of our concepts – like culture, institutions, structure, mores, and personality – are not definitive concepts but are sensitizing in nature. They lack social precise reference and have no benchmarks, which allow a clean-cut identification of a specific instance and of its content. Instead, they rest on a general sense of what is relevant (Blumer 1954:7).

There are two distinguishing qualities when sensitizing prior knowledge. Table 5.2 explains these to quantities in more detail.

Table 5.2 Distinguishing qualities when sensitizing prior knowledge. Source: (Witzel & Reiter 2012: 45).

Distinguishing qualities when sensitizing prior knowledge	
Sensitising Quality	Of prior knowledge depends first of all on how it is *used*. In a heuristic way, sensitizing knowledge suggests directions of

	research and encourages the progressive refinement and/or revision of our understanding and pre-interpretations on the basis of problem-centred dialogues with respondents and the possibilities for discovery are maintained.
General relevance to the problem.	Can thus include more abstract concepts available in the theoretical and conceptual toolbox of particular disciplines. Compared to definitive concepts associated with the kind of research knowledge discussed above, sensitizing prior knowledge is characterized by a higher *distance* to the problem. In other words, it is more abstract and *empirically less contentful.*

The use of sensitizing concepts aids in refining the initial boundaries of the research problem without determining its contents. The concepts for sensitizing frameworks within the boundaries of certain disciplines are usually present when the research interests are well-defined. Witzel and Reiter (2012) notes that: 'the overall aim is to arrive at an attitude of impartial expertise that is maintained by the interviewer throughout the process of data collection in order to keep it open' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 46). Witzel and Reiter (2012) further explain that 'in the context of PCIs, all prior knowledge – and also every day, contextual and research knowledge – should be used in such a sensitizing way. The main goal of preparing for problem-centred interviewing is indeed to convert all prior knowledge, i.e. all research capital available in advance, into sensitizing knowledge' (Witzel and Reiter 2012: 46).

5.6 E-Interview Research Framework

We, as individuals, experience life and the world we live in, in unique ways. Driving these life experiences are our memory, culture and experiences we have already lived and witnessed. The interview is the perfect platform to explore and understand the complexities of human drama, which can unlock one's inner reflections and thoughts, actions, feelings and responses to the external world. The interview allows one to collect data from direct interaction between the researcher and the participant thus achieving successful, qualitative research

that relies on researchers' research of the best human qualities when conducting interviews. Salmons (2015) notes that these successful qualitative researchers demonstrate 'empathy and respect, and they inspire trust. Interview researchers use thoughtful questioning, sensitive probing, and reflective listening' (Salmons 2015:1).

Online interviews take a hybrid approach to traditional interview research, creating a viable alternative that allows for varied communication options anytime and anywhere. Scholarly online interviews are defined by Salmons (2015) as:

> Any dialogue or observation carried out for the purpose of data collection. An online interview may be a verbal or written, carefully planned or casual interchange. In other words, even a short text message exchange or quick chat via a social media site is treated as an interview with a participant if data is collected. Importantly, if the communication is recorded, noted, or saved for research purposes, it must be conducted in accordance with ethical research guidelines (Salmons 2015:2).

Online data collection is less precise than traditional interview research as your interview, observations, and documents may be utilized as single or multimethod data types. With online interviews, one may be unable to fully separate these data types when collection occurs over the internet. Elements such as written chat or comments, recorded video (both recorded or live), photographs, images, and links are not easily differentiated. Below is table 5.3, where Salmons (2015) breaks down these various data collection elements.

Table 5.3 Qualitative data collecting online. Source: (Salmons 2015:3).

Online interviews	Interviews carried out with computer-mediated communication (CMC) to collect data. CMC may occur using computers, cell phones, or mobile devices. Locative technologies, such as global positioning systems (GPS) or geographic information systems (GIS), can complement such

	interviews when mapping to a place is relevant. Online interviews may entail communication with one or more participants using text chat or messaging, multichannel web conferencing spaces, video conferencing, or interactions in virtual worlds or games.
Online observations	External or participant observation of online dialogues, behaviours, interactions, events, or activities conducted for the purpose of data collection.
Online document analysis	Posts, digital records, and or artefacts from websites, blogs, social media sites, and/or email lists gathered for the purpose of data collection. Online documents can take the form of drawings, graphics or other images, photographs or media, or written or audio data.

5.6.1 A Conceptual Framework for E-Interview Research

Widely accepted design specifications regarding e-interview frameworks and criteria have not been established; thus, a conceptual framework representing key questions about interrelated facets of online interview research can be explored. Salmons (2015) notes that when first introduced in '*Cases in Online Interview Research*' in 2012, 'the central focus was on data collection with online interviews; however, the updated E-Interview Research Framework encompasses related primary (i.e. questionnaires, observations) and secondary (i.e., posts, sites, documents, images, or media) online data collection' (Salmons 2015:4). Figure 5.2 below displays this updated E-Interview research framework.

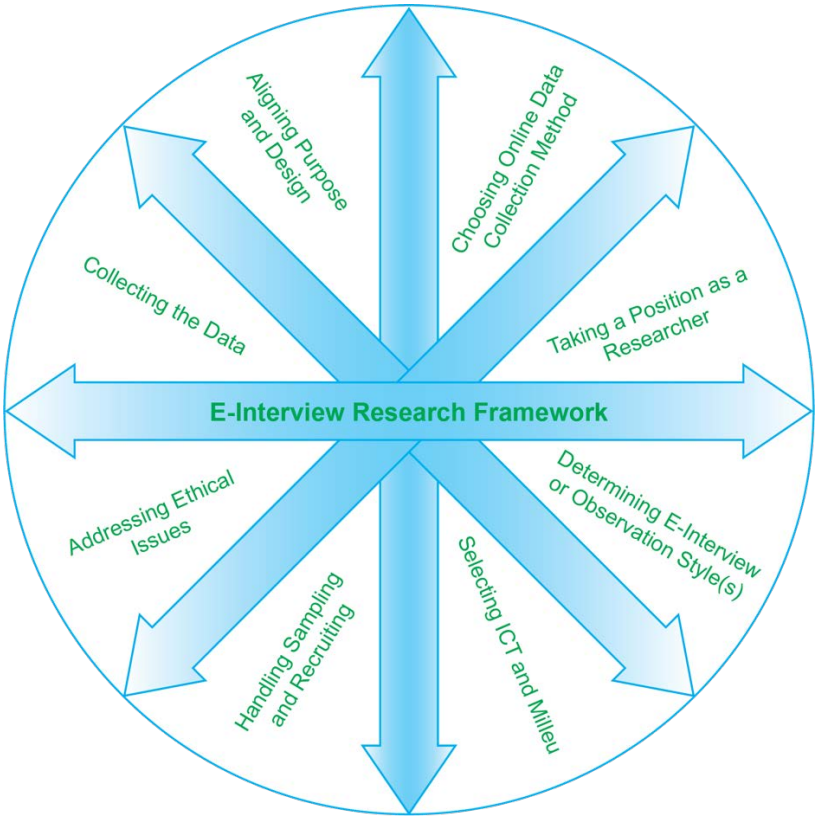


Figure 5.2 The E-Interview Framework. Source: (Salmons 2015:4).

Salmons (2015) explains that the 'E-Interview Research Framework comprises eight interrelated categories, each with a set of questions and models. This framework can be used whether one is designing original research, analysing a study proposed or conducted by another researcher, or reviewing a published study' (Salmons 2015:4). One begins with the category *aligning purpose and design*, once all the categories have been examined, Salmons (2015) suggests that it may be necessary to circle back to ensure all the pieces of the design fit. Research design gives the researcher an understanding of the intended purpose of the online data and how the collection methods align with the study's overall purpose and theoretical framework. Salmons (2015) notes that 'any study is strengthened by coherent discussion of research purpose, theories, methodologies, and method (Salmons 2015:4). Table 5.4 below gives a breakdown of the four components of research design.

Table 5.4 Components of Research Design (Salmons 2015:5).

Components of Research Design Four interrelated elements of research design are defined for our purposes as follows	
Epistemology	Refers to the study of the nature of knowledge or the study of how knowledge is justified.
Theory	Refers to an explanation that is internally consistent, supportive of other theories, and gives new insights. An important characteristic of theory is that it is predictive.
Methodology	Refers to the study of, and justification for, the methods used to conduct the research. Methodologies emerge from academic disciplines in the social and physical sciences, and though considerable cross-disciplinary exchange occurs, choices generally place the study in a disciplinary context.
Method	Refers to the practical steps used to conduct the study, including sampling, collecting, and analysing data.

Designing studies to generate new knowledge allows the researcher to generate new knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the topic of study. The four interrelated facets defined in Table 38 above outline and organize design thinking and the researcher must decide how each of these interrelated facets applies to the study. The four components of research and how each component influences one another are explored below.

The *aligning purpose and design* of this study rely partly on Qualitative data collecting by utilising E-Interviews, which take the form of an online questionnaire and document analysis. The online archive was able to conduct E-interviews, allowing for a larger pool of potential research interviews. The E-Interviews were designed to be semi-structured, with open-ended questions asked in the same sequence as the in-person interviews. This allowed for the balance of preplanned questions with the flexibility of an unstructured interview.

The next step in the E-Interview Research Framework is *Choosing Online Data Collection Method*. Salmons (2015) breaks these methods into three distinct data collection options.

1. **Medium:** Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are chosen as a medium for communication with participants. In such studies, researchers and participants use text, audio, or multimedia communication tools. The focus of the inquiry could be any aspect of the lived experience–online or in person.

2. **Setting:** In addition to functioning as the communication medium, the ICT serves as the electronic research milieu. Data collection occurs in an online community, social media site, web conferencing space, virtual world, or game. Again, the focus of the inquiry could be any aspect of the lived experience online or in person.

3. **Phenomenon:** the purpose of these studies is to analyse activities, experiences, and behaviours on or with ICTs

This study takes elements from two of the three data collection options mentioned above, namely *medium* and *settings*. *Medium* relies on the computer-mediated communications (E-Interview) between the researcher and the participant, were used to investigate the lived experience between the participant and Harry Ramesar. The second data collection method is *setting*, where the information and communications technologies (ICTs) are the electronic milieus for the study's research, which investigates the lived experience between the participant and Harry Ramesar. This option gives an alternative to in-person interviews, which allows the participant to be a) comfortable in his or her own space, b) allow the participant to complete the interview at a time that is more convenient to them, c) allows the participant to be more forthcoming in response to questions and d) allows participants to contribute to the study from anywhere in the world.

Taking a Position as a Researcher

Taking a Position as a Researcher gauges the level of closeness a qualitative researcher wants to get to his/her participant. Salmons (2015) explains that the E-Interview Framework 'offers two ways to consider the researcher's position. The first is with an etic/emic continuum, and the second is by use of metaphors to examine relationships between researchers and participants' (Salmons 2015:42).

Salmons (2015) deals with the outsider (etic) or insider (emic) position by stating that:

> In online research, some degree of balance between insider and outsider perspectives may be needed because a least a minimal degree of knowledge of the situation, culture, and type of experience being studied may help the researcher develop rapport and trust with the virtual research participant. At the same time, the outsider can bring broader, objective understandings of the research problem into the study and devise thought-provoking or challenging interview questions (Salmons 2015:42).

Figure 5.3 below visually represents a continuum of etic or emic research positions. This study balances both insider and outsider perspectives, as represented by the two red blocks below. This is evident by the fact that I, the researcher, am

a) **A tattoo collector**: I am familiar with the tattoo process; even though the tattoo profession has evolved since Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist, I can connect from a tattoo perspective.
b) **Familiarity**: I have researched Harry Ramesar in two previous academic studies, which adds characteristics and research phenomena to the study.
c) **Interest:** Having tattoos myself will create an 'insider' status which could make the interviewee more comfortable before and during the interview.

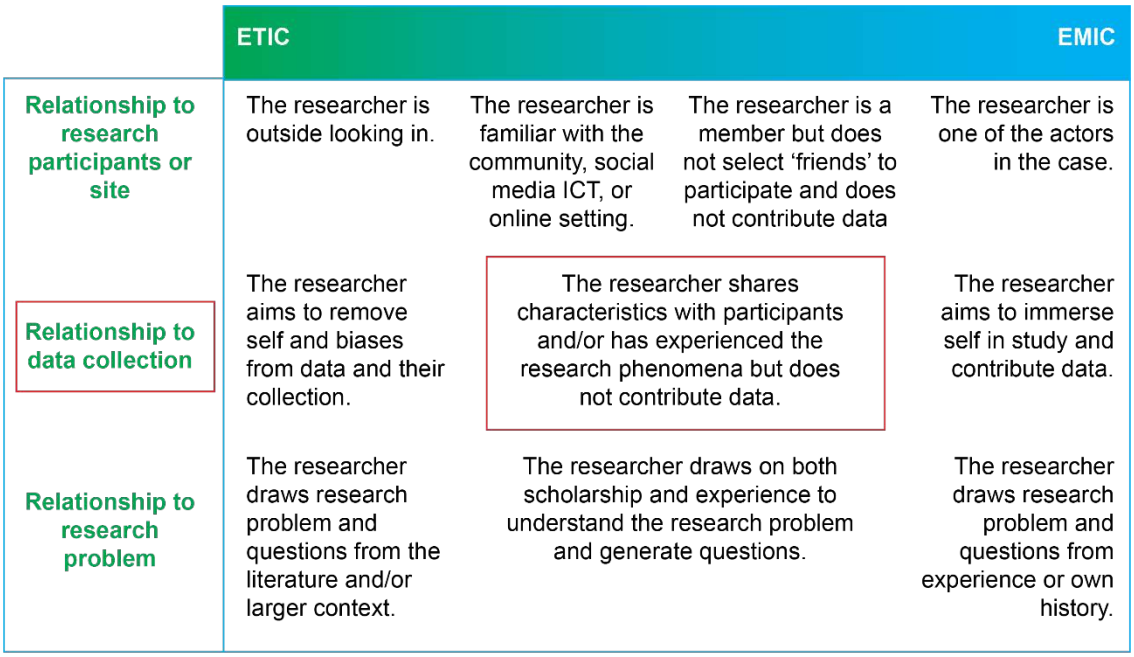


Figure 5.3 Visual Representation of a Continuum of Etic or Emic Research Positions. Source: (Salmons 2015:44).

Salmons (2015) refines the etic or emic with a metaphorical framework which can be used as the researcher's relationship with the participants in the study. This metaphorical framework describes the researcher's intended and real relationship with the study participants (Salmons 2015:45). Table 5.5 visually depicts this metaphorical framework.

Table 5.5 Metaphors for the Researcher's Position. Source: (Salmons 2015:45).

Metaphor: **Travel with…** The researcher as a *traveller* who journeys with the	**Metaphor:** **Garden with…** The researcher as a *gardener* who plants the seed of the interaction with a question and cultivates a	**Metaphor:** **Excavate from…** The researcher as a *miner* who digs up facts and feelings from research participants

participant to discover insights.	response with follow-ups, prompts, and encouragement.	

Similar to the etic and emic research positions discussed above, this study takes the central metaphor, nestled between the two extremes. The semi-structured nature of the interview questions allows for a starting point for the interviewee to expand on the answer in their own words, which in turn can reveal rich empirical data that is unscripted and real. Salmons (2015) comments that the metaphor of the gardener:

> Realizes the harvest is not possible without planting the seed. At the same time, many seeds can be sown without results if contextual conditions of weather, soil, and care are not in balance. The researcher-gardener realises that the question seeds the participant's thought process. With it, the researcher's and the participant's understanding will grow (Salmons 2015:59).

Determining E-Interview or Observation Style(s)

In a nutshell, using the interview is a method to collect data. Selecting the nature of the interview dictates the critical differences in interview methods from relating to the planning and spontaneity of the interview to the roles and expectations of the interviewer. The structure of the interview can be broken up into three spectrums. Namely *structured*, *semi-structured* and *unstructured*. Figure 5.4 gives the typology of interview structures with brief spectrum descriptions for each.

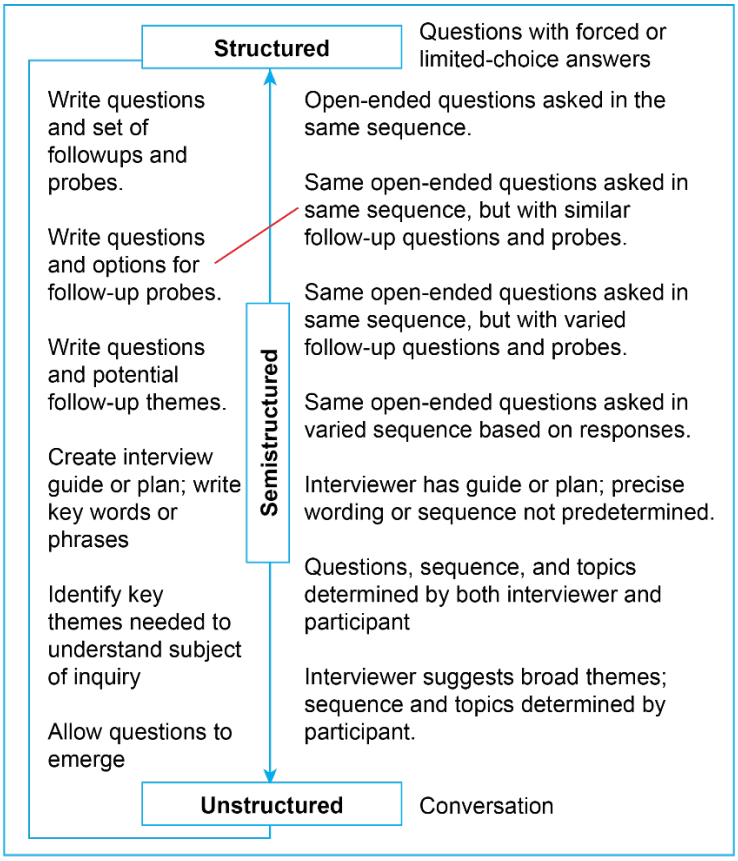


Figure 5.4 Typology of Interview Structures. Source: (Salmons 2015:57).

This study takes a semi-structured approach with a basic structure with a degree of flexibility in the planning and exchange. Salmons (2015) explains that semi-structured interviews:

> Endeavour to balance the organization and framework of the structured approach with the spontaneity and flexibility of the unstructured interview. The researcher prepares questions and/or discussion topics in advance and generates follow-up questions during the interview (Salmons 2015:59).

The red line represented in figure 5.4 gives an indication of the interview structure that is followed in this study. Questions are designed with a broad nature in mind to give the interviewee the confidence to answer how they see fit. Due to the 'deviant association' of the tattoo industry, when Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist, it was imperative that the interviewee felt comfortable with their question responses. This will result in rich empirical

data. Open-ended questions will be asked in the similar sequence to provide consistency throughout the interview participants. This is key as the tattoo industry is a niche profession which will rely on a consistent and directed flow of interview data.

Handling Sampling and Recruiting

Qualitative research requires the researcher to consider both conceptual and practical mechanisms of how he or she wants to conduct the study. Each decision influences the study's approach to data collection and analysis with the risks and opportunities balanced to determine what will be gained and lost in the study.

Sampling in qualitative design is the location of 'individuals who can and will provide honest, robust information about themselves and/or the phenomenon of interest and fully participate in an interview and related communication about the study' (Salmons 2015:117). Sampling criteria for this study follow two essential facets:

1. You have to have a tattoo by Harry Ramesar.
2. You must have known or met Harry Ramesar personally.

Table 5.6 below lists the qualitative sampling approaches utilized in this study, with the four sampling approaches which allow for optimal interview participant recruitment and ensure credible empirical data is collected for the study.

Table 5.6 Qualitative Approaches to Sampling. Source: (Salmons 2015:121).

Type	**Description of Approach**	**Advantages**
Criterion	Participants are chosen because they meet a predetermined set of criteria.	Useful for quality assurance; enables the researcher to explore and understand central themes of study.
Homogeneous	Participants are chosen to give a detailed picture of a particular phenomenon or	Focus the study on common characteristics, reduces variation, and simplifies analysis.

	experience they have in common.	
Nominated	Potential participants are recommended by other participants or by experts.	Researchers' choices can be confirmed by input or recommendations from a third party.
Opportunistic	The researcher takes advantage of opportunities that arise to find participants.	

Each sampling type has its advantages; the *Criterion* approach focuses on the two essential sampling criteria, which play an important role in selecting the initial potential interviewees. Having been tattooed by Harry Ramesar, thus knowing him eliminates hearsay and allows the interviewee to recount first-hand empirical data. The *Homogeneous* approach encapsulates the two essential criteria by giving accounts of Harry as a tattoo artist, not only by a person who was tattooed by him but in addition, allows the participation of someone who knew him in a personal capacity as a tattoo artist. This allows the interview to focus in on specific tattoo-related data, which is the core foundation of the study. The *nominated* approach is helpful when interviewees nominate potential interview participants who fit the study criteria. This helps with interview recruitment, which in turn aids in the study's publication through personal social networking, which was the primary advertising tool utilized by Harry Ramesar.

The *opportunistic* approach links closely to the nominated approach as the researcher will take advantage of the proposed participants and create the opportunity for more empirical data to be collected for the study. Salmons (2015) notes that the importance of recruiting the right people is a challenge for any researcher. 'Central to the challenge for online researchers is the avoidance of sending or receiving unwanted messages, commonly known as spam' (Salmons 2015:140).

Recruitment efforts were strategized to capture attention in targeted brick-and-mortar [16]establishments and print and electronic platforms. Recruitment for the study E-Interview component was achieved by conducting:

a) Targeted advertisements which are placed in newspaper publications where the reader catchment is in the sampling criteria of the study.
b) Targeted advertisements on public noticeboards at a mall where the reader catchment is in the sampling criteria of the study.
c) Targeted social media advertisements on public community forums in the areas where the sampling criteria suits the study.
d) Targeted advertisement at a tattoo studio in Durban, KwaZulu Natal.

Samples of these various targeted advertisements can be viewed in Appendix B.

Addressing Ethical Issues

Ethical research design fundamentals are essential in empirical data collection. Salmons (2015) reiterates that:

> A study that relies on interviews for data collection depends on the willing participation of interviewees. A qualitative multimethod study may also include observations of participants or the use of content they post online. Any time human subjects are involved, the researcher has a moral and ethical responsibility toward them. Ethical practice is the researcher's central responsibility from the design stage through to the final report (Salmons 2015:148).

Therefore, informed consent for online research is essential to conducting credible academic research. This is achieved by providing comprehensive information about the study and the parameters and expectations for participants to be aware of before participation is approved.

[16] Brick and Mortar is defined as: '1. existing as a physical building, especially a shop, rather than doing business only on the internet' ("Brick-and-mortar" n.d.).

Any potential interviewee who wants to participate in the study will be guided through the approved ethical checklists before being able to commence with the interview. Salmons (2015) notes that: 'traditional ethical concepts offer today's researchers varied ways to think about their studies. Ethical frameworks afford a means of thinking about ethical dilemmas by providing criteria researchers can use to determine whether an action is right or wrong' (Salmons 2015:163). This study follows the *Deontological* ethics approach, built on Immanuel Kant's philosophies (1785/2008). This approach has the most straightforward morality regarding duties and ethical principles. The primary tenant of the Deontological approach, according to Salmons (2015), is the 'respect for the individual; individuals are not seen merely as a means to an end. Informed consent becomes a way of operationalizing the tenet through acknowledging the individual's values and freely making choices' (Salmons 2015:163). Following ethical rules, codes, or formally specified guidelines is essential for Deontological researchers. Table 5.7 addresses this study's ethical issues by applying the E-Interview framework questions.

Table 5.7 Addressing the Studies Ethical Issues by Applying the E-Interview Framework. Source: (Salmons 2015:169-170).

	Addressing Ethical Issues	Addressing Ethical Issues in this Study
Aligning purpose and design	What known risks or ethical issues exist with the research design?	The Durban University has approved no ethical risks as the study of Technology's ethics committee before the commandment of any data collection.

	What benefit to the individual or public goodwill does this study generate?	This study documents the artefacts of a pioneer tattoo artist, which has benefit to both individuals who had an interest in tattoos when Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist and individuals who have an interest in tattoos currently.
Choosing an online data collection method	What is the ethical rationale for selecting online interviews (and, as relevant, observations)?	To support the conducting of in-person interviews, the digital archive has the capability of conducting E-Interviews. This allows any person who meets the criteria to participate in the study.
Handling sampling and recruiting	Is the study investigating online behaviour? If so, does the site or community allow researchers to recruit participants?	The study utilizes an online platform to allow potential interviewees from all over the world to participate or give the interviewee a choice to interview in person or online.
	Does the desired population have access to and comfort using the selected ICT?	Yes, the online archive platform is easy to navigate and available to any participant with an internet connection.

Taking a position as a researcher	Is the researcher a known insider or outsider in the selected research setting?	Yes, an insider in terms of knowing the son and nephew of Harry Ramesar but an outsider in the research setting of the study.
	If an insider, will status or prior knowledge add risk for research bias?	No, the researcher's knowledge is limited to the knowledge of Harry Ramesar, provided by the family.
	How will the researcher avoid deception in interactions with the participants?	The interviewee criteria provide a foundation for empirical data collection.
Determining e-interview or observation styles	What questions are appropriate to ask?	Questions are approved by the University of Technology Ethics committee before the commencement of the study.
	How will trust and rapport be developed through honest dialogue with the researcher?	The semi-structured question structure allows for open and honest dialogue about tattoo-related topics that the interviewee has experienced.
	How will privacy be maintained?	An informed consent document will be signed, and the interviewee has the option to stay anonymous.

Selecting ICT and milieu	What specific ethical issues (e.g., privacy, protected areas, use of avatars, need for community agreement) are present in the selected milieu?	A signed informed consent form.
	What aspects of the selected ICT (e.g., use of video or images, avatars, profile info) should be discussed and mentioned in an agreement?	The interviewee can submit video, images and voice notes with their interview question submissions.
	Can you be confident that the company adequately protects data from unauthorised access?	Online access is owned and administered by the researcher; therefore, unauthorised access is denied.
	Do you have the ability to download and delete the files from the company's servers once the interview is completed? Does the site's user policy state that anything posted becomes the intellectual property of the company that runs the site or platform?	The online archive platform is owned and administered by the researcher.
Collecting the data	How will participants and their digital identities be protected?	Each interview participant will be issued with an interview number.
	Will data be collected using open or covert observations?	Data will be gathered through open observations during the interviews.
	How will data be protected?	All data and digital archives' back-end is password protected.

One needs to consider the ethics issues specific to visual methodologies, especially when dealing with visual information. Pauwels (2008) deals with this topic in a paper entitled: Taking and Using: Ethical Issues of Photographs for Research Purposes (Pauwels 2008). The journal emphasizes the challenges of maintaining anonymity when using visual data, such as photographs and videos, due to the iconic and indexical nature of images. Unlike written surveys, where anonymity can often be preserved, visual data frequently makes subjects identifiable, posing significant ethical dilemmas (Pauwels 2008:244). The discussion highlights that ensuring complete anonymity may be impossible and explores methods to protect subjects' privacy. Obtaining informed consent is another significant concern when capturing visual data, particularly when subjects may not fully understand the implications of being recorded. Pauwels article addresses the complexities involved in gaining consent, especially in public spaces or in situations where covert recordings are necessary to avoid altering the subjects' behaviour (Pauwels 2008:247-248).

The journal discusses the need to balance the potential scientific value of visual data with the ethical obligations to protect subjects, whilst assessing whether the potential harm to subjects outweighs the benefits of the research and ensuring that ethical considerations do not unduly hinder the pursuit of the visual research (Pauwels 2008:244). Ethical behaviour cannot be dictated by strict rules, with Pauwels noting that: ‘it is rather the result of an attitude whereby a particular conduct is suggested in concrete cases. What this requires first and foremost is knowledge and experience in relation to expected or possible consequences of a research decision on the lives of the persons involved’ (Pauwels 2008:254). Researchers must also rely on their own perception as members of society when assessing a situation. At this stage, it becomes evident that social scientists, in particular, are not only studying social norms and values from a distance but are also directly confronted with them in their scientific endeavours. Various interests and objectives are at play when dealing with the ethics of visual information, which will never completely align and therefore must be balanced through compromise. These include: a) safeguarding the privacy and dignity of the research subjects, b) the scientific striving for representative data, c) the requirement of public disclosure of scientific material, d) the ethical conscience of the researcher and changing ethical norms in

society, and e) the striving for personal success (fame, promotion) on the part of the researcher (Pauwels 2008:254).

Collecting the Data

Salmons (2015) indicates that the 'four main types of online interviews are text based, video conferencing, online meeting spaces, and immersive virtual environments for communications' (Salmons 2015:218).

> These tools can be combined in some online environments, or different tools can be used for the interview and for preparation and/or follow-up communications. Each has advantages and disadvantages, depending on the research purpose, context, and characteristics of the sample population (Salmons 2015:169-170).

This study combines some of the online environments mentioned above, namely a) text based and b) video conferencing. The latter allows the interviewee to participate by answering questions posed by the researcher.

Two electronic platforms namely Zoom and Microsoft Teams were able to be utilized to conduct e-interviews for this study based on the preferred platform of the interviewee. Using Zoom and Microsoft Teams for interviews is highly effective due to several key reasons. Both these platforms offer exceptional accessibility and convenience where participants can join from any location with an internet connection, thus effectively eliminating geographical barriers and significantly reducing travel time and costs. The absence of the need for physical travel allows for more flexible scheduling, making it easier to find suitable times for both the interviewer and interviewee. Enhanced communication tools available on these two platforms further improve the interview process, with features such as screen sharing facilitating the real-time sharing of documents, sharing of the interviewer's screen, which enhances the quality of the discussion. The capability to record interviews for review purposes ensures that no important detail is missed and allows for accurate transcription and data analysis. Zoom and Microsoft Teams enable for a wider reach, allowing for the inclusion of interview participants who might otherwise be unable to attend due to distance, physical limitations, or scheduling conflicts, which allows for the inclusion of a more diverse range of

participants from different cultural and geographical backgrounds, enriching the data collected.

The comfort and familiarity of these platforms contribute to more effective interviews as participants may feel more at ease speaking from their own homes, leading to more natural and candid responses to interview questions. These two interview methods allow the interviewee to decide which environment they are more comfortable with, which in turn could result in preferable empirical data. Table 5.8 displays data collection within the E-Interview research framework, with a column dedicated to this study.

Table 5.8 Applying the E-Interview Research Framework: Collecting the Data. Source: (Salmons 2015:216).

	Collecting the Data	Collecting the Data in this study.
Aligning purpose and design	How does the researcher plan to work within methodological traditions and paradigms when conducting the interview and other related observations or document retrieval?	The researcher will follow the data collection steps identified in the approved study's proposal document and approved ethics clearance.
	How does the researcher plan to maintain a focus on the research problem during the e-interview?	The researcher will have a list of interview questions approved by the DUT ethics committee.
Choosing online data collection method	Does the researcher explain the rationale for design choices to participants, as appropriate?	All relevant information will be explained in the study's letter of information which will need to be read to participate in the interview. The letter of information will be sent to proposed participants before the

		interview if requested by the participant.
Handling sampling and recruiting	Does the researcher state what will be discussed with participants during recruiting and screening processes?	Yes, participants are aware through the verbal, print and electronic methods that the study is about pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar.
Taking a position as a researcher	Does the researcher need to explain any positional issues to participants?	No, this study is entirely focused on the experiences of the interviewees' relationship with Harry Ramesar. The researcher is purely the facilitator of the data.
Determining e-Interview or observation styles	Does the researcher need to explain any aspects of the data collection style to participants?	As this study follows a semi-structural interview style, more focus will be placed on ensuring the participants feel comfortable.
Selecting ICT and milieu	Does the researcher have the skill needed to manage the ICT during the interview?	Yes, the interview platform (online archive) is custom built for this study therefore the relevant skill is achieved.
	Does the researcher have a contingency plan in case there are technical difficulties?	Yes, due to the nature of this study's E-Interview options, the study allows the participant to select a time that suits them. In the case that technical difficulties arise during the interview.
Collecting the data	Does the researcher have a plan for conducting the e-interview with either prepared questions or an interview guide?	The interview question are approved by the DUT Ethics Committee.

	Does the researcher have a plan for the four interview stages: opening, questioning and guiding, closing, and follow up?	Yes, due to the semi-structured nature of the interview, the researcher will gauge the progress of the interview in real time and adjust accordingly.

Aligning Purpose and Design

When discussing the importance of purpose and design, Salmons (2015) notes that:

> Every qualitative study begins with a research topic, problem, or question. The researcher must clearly define the underlying basis of the research and show that the topic is relevant and significant to the scholarly discipline and/or to the practitioners who work in the field. The researcher wants to build potential readers' interest by showing that this study will look at the phenomenon in a new way, or somehow offer a fresh perspective (Salmons 2015:222).

The foundation of any study is achieved with these basic steps, but they are more critical for online studies. Salmons (2015) explains that 'a clearly defined research problem, question, and purpose' is critical for the direction of the study and 'if the researcher is unsure of the precise direction for the study, it will be difficult to gain support or to engage potential participants' (Salmons 2015:223).

5.7 Transcripts

As equity consciousness becomes increasingly integral to research, there's a growing expectation for researchers to prioritize ethical and equitable inclusion in qualitative studies (Whitney, Evered, Patrick & Lee 2024:1). This has led to numerous publications highlighting efforts towards inclusive research and while the effectiveness of these efforts varies, they have spurred methodological innovations that enhance the participation of previously

underrepresented populations. These strategies have improved research comprehensiveness, transferability, and decolonization of knowledge. Transcription, the process of converting audio-recorded data into text, is a critical yet underacknowledged aspect of qualitative research. Despite its importance, there's limited guidance on how to navigate the complexities of transcription to promote inclusion. Few conceptual frameworks exist to help researchers understand how transcription can encourage inclusivity in qualitative research. Therefore, Whitney et. al. (2024) propose that researchers leverage transcription to extend inclusion beyond participant selection and data collection into the entire research process.

The importance of 'thick transcription' is thus emphasized, a method that ensures comprehensive and inclusive representation of interview data, a method which addresses common transcription pitfalls, such as missing, mistaking, tidying, and overlooking data (Whitney et al. 2024). By the use of *a priori(ish)* transcription design, researchers can plan their approach to avoid these pitfalls through critical reflexivity and standardized decisions (Whitney, Evered, Patrick & Lee 2024:4). This approach is particularly relevant for the digital archive study as it captures not only verbal data but also paralinguistic and contextual information, ensuring the preservation of the participant's narratives' authenticity and richness. Transcript alignment is highlighted as a key strategy in this study as it enhances the inclusive representation throughout the research process, with Whitney et. al. (2024) noting that:

> transcript alignment can be adopted as an approach for the entire transcription process or to augment outsourced transcription activities and products in order to generate 'thick transcription'. Thus, using this approach, investigators can align or realign transcripts with the acoustic realization of participant narratives and relevant ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations for their distinct research project (Whitney, Evered, Patrick and Lee 2024:3).

This involves making deliberate choices about representing cues and contextual sounds that might be significant, when the interview was conducted – this is evident as the majority of the interviewees had various distinct English accents that required careful audio playback to

ensure the written transcripts were accurate to maintain the data's integrity and context. The detailed methodology outlined in the study ensures that the semi-structured, in-depth interview transcripts accurately and comprehensively capture the essence of the interview, thereby contributing valuable insights to the field of qualitative research and Harry Ramesar.

5.8 Theoretical reflexivity on framework integration

This study's methodological approach was intentionally layered, drawing from qualitative, visual, and digital frameworks to address the complex research questions. Reflexively, the integration of these frameworks was not a linear process but a dynamic synthesis as critical visual methodologies (Rose, 2023) shaped the interpretive stance towards visual artefacts, ensuring attention to production, image content, and audience reception. Qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews, grounded the analysis in lived experience, enabling the inclusion of participant narratives that challenged or enriched visual interpretations. Digital humanities and archival design principles structured the development of the digital platform, guiding decisions on metadata, accessibility, and preservation.

Theoretical reflexivity was crucial in managing the tensions between these frameworks. For example, the open-ended nature of qualitative coding sometimes resisted the categorical precision of metadata standards, requiring deliberate negotiation between depth of interpretation and digital structure. Similarly, the iterative dialogue between visual analysis and participant testimony highlighted interpretive gaps that might not have emerged through a single framework alone. Therefore, by actively engaging with the strengths and limitations of each framework, the research design moved beyond mere methodological combination toward a more coherent, critically informed synthesis. This reflexive process ensured that the study's analytical outcomes were both theoretically grounded and methodologically transparent.

5.9 Epistemological considerations

The methodological foundation of this study integrates a practice-led approach with a social constructivist epistemology, each contributing distinct but complementary perspectives on

knowledge creation. The practice-led dimension situates knowledge as emergent from the act of creative production, which in this case, the conceptualisation and realisation of the Harry Ramesar digital archive. Here, the archive itself is not only an artefact of preservation but also a site of inquiry, where design decisions, curatorial strategies, and technical implementation generate new insights into visual culture. The social constructivist orientation frames knowledge as co-constructed through interaction, dialogue, and shared meaning-making, which was particularly evident in the qualitative interview process, where participant narratives actively shaped the interpretive lens applied to visual artefacts. Rather than positioning the researcher as a detached observer, the constructivist stance acknowledges the mutual influence between researcher and participants, and between human interpretation and digital mediation.

The epistemological blending of these approaches allows for a dual perspective: practice-led methods foreground the implied, embodied knowledge embedded in creative and curatorial processes, while social constructivism anchors these processes within a socially situated context. This integration ensures that the archive is understood not only as a technological and artistic construct but also as a socially negotiated cultural resource. By making these epistemological underpinnings explicit, the study affirms that its outcomes are shaped by both the situated, reflective practice of the researcher and the co-constructed understandings developed in dialogue with participants.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the effectiveness of both in-person and e-interview methodologies in qualitative research. Through the use of employing a semi-structured approach, the study balances replanned questions with the flexibility to explore participants' experiences in depth. The integration of ethical considerations, such as informed consent and privacy protection, ensures the reliability and validity of the data collected. The chapter highlights how the combination of in-person and e-interviews provides a robust framework for gathering qualitative data, offering both flexibility and depth resulting in this approach strengthening the study's overall findings and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and synthesizes the rich empirical data gathered from in-depth interviews with those connected to Harry Ramesar's tattoo work. It offers a nuanced understanding of Harry Ramesar's contributions through personal narratives and first-hand accounts, thus revealing the lived experiences, motivations, and cultural contexts that influenced his practice. The chapter integrates these personal stories with critical analysis, providing a multi-dimensional portrait of Harry Ramesar as a pioneer in the tattoo industry in South Africa and by doing so, enriches the digital archive and contributes to the broader discourse on visual culture and the digital humanities, therefore ensuring that Harry Ramesar's legacy is preserved and understood in its full cultural, social, and artistic significance. The findings presented in this chapter are drawn from the interview data and thematic codes described in Chapter 5, following the two-stage coding process of initial open coding and subsequent focused coding to develop the key themes.

6.2 Interview recruitment

Recruitment stands as a cornerstone in research methodology, playing a pivotal role in shaping the research outcomes of the study. While recruiting participants for research endeavours can pose challenges, it remains a critical determinant of the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Negrin et al (2022) notes that 'Laying the groundwork for recruitment is essential. Planning for recruitment acknowledges its complexity and facilitates enrolment' (Negrin, Slaughter, Dahlke & Olson (2022:6). In building the foundation for recruitment for this study, four targeted areas were identified that could positively influence the participation of volunteers for the study. These four areas are displayed in table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1 Study recruitment areas.

STUDY RECRUITMENT AREAS		
MECHANISM	PLATFORM	LOCATION
1. Online	Social Media	Facebook Community Groups
	Email	Retirement Home Administration
2. Print	Newspapers	Local community newspapers
3. Brick and Mortar	Tattoo Studio	Sin on Skin Tattoo studio
4. In-person	In-person recruitment	Recruit potential participants

The recruitment plan for this study intended to cast a wide net into areas where potential interview participants would be reached. The potential interviewee age pool spanned five generations which in turn required different recruitment mechanisms. The generations include (Brunjes 2019):

- Post War (1928 – 1945), Current ages 79-96
- Boomers I (1946 – 1954), Current ages 70-78
- Boomers II (1955 – 1964), Current ages 60-69
- Gen X (1965 – 1980), Current ages 44 – 59
- Millennials (1981 – 1996), Current ages 28 – 43

It is important to recruit interview participants in areas that they might frequent as this increases the likelihood of reaching the desired audience. By utilizing familiar platforms, potential participants are more likely to notice and engage with the study's recruitment efforts, leading to a higher response rate. Additionally, recruiting through their preferred

platforms demonstrates an understanding of participants' preferences and enhances the overall user experience, which can positively influence their willingness to participate. This approach also aligns with targeted recruitment strategies, allowing the researcher to tailor the study's messaging and outreach efforts to specific demographics or communities. Ultimately, recruiting through familiar platforms enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment process, leading to a more representative and engaged participant pool. Each recruitment area is discussed below, with more context given per area.

Online – Social Media

Due to the age range of potential interview participants, the online strategy was broken down into two mechanism platforms – Facebook and email. Due to the area where Harry Ramesar had his tattoo studio, Facebook community groups were targeted that a) were close to the location of the tattoo studio where potential participants may still be residing and b) popular areas where potential participants may have relocated to. Table 6.2 shows the Facebook community groups that were targeted.

Table 6.2 Facebook Community Groups.

FACEBOOK COMMUNITY GROUPS	
The Durban Overport Community	Amanzimtoti Classifieds
Bluff/Durban South /Chatsworth/ Isipingo Community News and Trade Zone	Sydenham Overport Community News
Umbilo/ Glenwood/ Berea, Westridge Community News and Trade Zone	Chatsworth Buy and Sell
Queensburgh/ Northdene/ Shallcross/ Bellair Community News and Trade Zone	Made in Shallcross
Sydenham/ Overport/Sherwood/ Springfield Community News and Trade Zone	Durban/ Chatsworth/ Pinetown, Umhlanga/ KwaMashu, KZN

Hillcrest/ Waterfall/ Kloof Community News and Trade Zone	Overport/ Sydenham/ Sherwood – Buy, sell, swop and free
Musgrave/ Morningside/ Windemere/ Essenwood Community News and trade Zone	Phoenix Classifieds
Pinetown/ Westville/ Reservoir Hills/ New Germany Community News and Trade Zone	Durban Classifieds
The Umhlanga Community Group	South Coast and Durban KZN online ads
Umhlanga/ Mount Edgecombe/ Durban North Community News and Trade Zone	Durban, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
Newlands/ Avoca/ KwaMashu/ Phoenix/ Verulam Community News and Trade Zone	Durban Buy and Sell
Simply the Bluff	

Potential recruitment via Facebook community groups offers several advantages for recruiting interview participants for this study. Firstly, the groups selected cater to specific interests, demographics, and or geographic locations, which allows for a targeted recruitment effort. This targeted approach increases the potential of finding qualified participants who could be genuinely interested in participating in the study. Secondly, members of Facebook community groups can be actively engaged with the content and discussions within the group, which can result in the study recruitment ads placed within these groups to more likely be seen and noticed by potential participants, thus leading to higher visibility and engagement.

In addition, people tend to trust recommendations and information shared within their online communities as the majority of community groups require you to register and accept their group rules and spam policies. By recruiting through Facebook community groups, the study can leverage the trust and credibility associated with the group to enhance the legitimacy of the studies recruitment efforts. Facebook provides convenient communication channels, such as comments, private messages allowing for easy engagement with interested individuals, the answering of questions, and providing of additional information about the study. An extra advantage is that community members often share

interesting or relevant posts with their networks, leading to the potential of a rapid spread of the study's recruitment advertising through word-of-mouth. This viral effect significantly increases the reach and impact of the recruitment campaign. Finally, placing recruitment advertisements on the identified Facebook community groups is a cost-effective recruitment platform compared to traditional advertising methods, resulting in the potential reach of a large and targeted audience with relatively low to zero advertising costs. A copy of the Facebook recruitment advertisement can be seen in figure 6.1.

Online – Email

Given that three generations relevant to this study, namely Post War, Boomers I, and Boomers II, are at retirement age, a strategic approach was undertaken which involved the identification of retirement homes within the same area targeted in the Facebook ads and then emailing the administration (table 6.3) to identify any potential interview candidates. Retirement facilities house a concentrated population of individuals where this demographic aligns with the target audience for the research of the study.

Table 6.3 Retirement Facilities.

RETIREMENT FACILITIES	
Tafta	Villa Sunfield
Oceanview	Mothwa Haven
Caister Lodge	Garden Grove
The Village	Le Domaine
Nazareth Care	Robroy
Trafalgar	Teamcare
Bill Buchanan	Milldene
Resthome	Graceland
Elija Home	Heart of Passion
Ridgewood Care	Sandown Village

APN Retire	Alvestone Manor
Eden Rock	The Camphors
Kloof Retirement Village	VLM Frail Care
Doone Village	Arcadia

An important decision for contacting the administration of the retirement facilities ensures that potential participants are approached in an ethical and respectful manner. Facility administrators can help ensure that residents are provided with clear information about the study and have the opportunity to freely consent to participation. A copy of the recruitment advertisement can be seen in figure 6.1 below:



Figure 6.1 Electronic and Sin on Skin tattoo studio recruitment advertisement.

Print – Local Newspapers

Local community newspapers were identified as seen in Table 6.4, targeting residents within a specific geographic area, ensuring that recruitment efforts could reach the relevant target audience and potentially recruit interview participants. This targeted approach increases the likelihood of attracting individuals who are genuinely interested in participating in the

research of the study. Community newspapers often have a loyal readership base, with residents regularly relying on these publications for local news, events, and information. By placing a recruitment advertisement in these newspapers, this study could tap into this established readership, increasing the visibility of the advertisement and the likelihood that potential participants will consider participating in the study. For readers in the targeted generations, community newspapers are perceived as credible sources of information within local neighbourhoods, with readers tending to trust the content and advertisements published in these newspapers, which enhances the trust and legitimacy of the study and encourages participation among residents.

While community newspapers target a specific geographic area, they often have a broad readership that encompasses individuals from diverse backgrounds and demographics, which suits the broad customer base that Harry Ramesar tattooed. This broad reach allows the potential engagement with a wide range of participants within the community, ensuring inclusivity and diversity in the recruitment process. Advertisements in community newspapers are tangible and visible to readers as they peruse the pages, unlike online advertisements that can easily be overlooked or ignored. This physical presence increases the likelihood that individuals will notice the advertisements and consider participating in the study. An important observation is that community newspapers offer accessibility to a diverse audience, including individuals who may lack regular internet or social media access. By placing recruitment advertisements in print, researchers can engage with individuals who are interested in participating in research studies but may not be active online, thus ensuring broader accessibility and inclusivity in the recruitment process. A copy of the recruitment advertisement identified by the red arrow, can be seen in figure 6.2.

Table 6.4 Community Newspapers

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS		
PUBLICATION	INSERT DAY	INSERT DATE
Overport Rising Sun	Thursday	6 July 2023
Chatsworth Rising Sun	Tuesday	11 July 2023

Merebank Rising Sun	Tuesday	11 July 2023
South Coast Rising Sun	Tuesday	11 July 2023
North Coast Rising Sun	Wednesday	12 July 2023



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Hannah Chetty was described as an adventurous happy child who loved playing with her friends and watching television.

Paramedics and security personnel at the scene

Beach outing turns deadly as girl (7) drowns

What was supposed to be a quiet and fun family day out to the beach turned into any parents' worst nightmare after a seven-year-old girl had washed out to sea and her limp body recovered hours later by an unknown beach goer in Umhlanga on Sunday. Hannah Chetty celebrated her seventh birthday on Tuesday last week, and wanted to spend the weekend with her Parlock family out and about. Family spokesperson, cousin Josephine Nathaniel, said that Chetty's death had left the family traumatised. She described the events which unfolded prior to the incident that occurred on Sunday afternoon. "I went along with Hannah, her two siblings and their mum to the beach while her dad met us there. The children and their mum, Wendy, decided to dip their toes into the water at the shores edge," explained Nathaniel. It is believed that the tide took a turn for the worse which pulled the four family members into the water. "All of them were pulled into the water. Hannah's dad rushed to their aid in an attempt to pull them back safely and managed to pull his wife first. A wave pushed their son to the shore while he held onto to his daughters for them not to go any further into the ocean," Nathaniel said. However, in the gushing water, it is alleged that the dad, Reuben Chetty, had let go of his youngest child's hand. Nathaniel explains, "Following this, he pulled his elder daughter towards him, but Hannah had already quickly drifted away from him into deeper waters. A good Samaritan who had a floater, volunteered to go into the water and save her. We tried getting hold of any lifeguards, but there wasn't any around us." After Hannah had exited the water, paramedics tried for around an hour, using CPR and oxygen, trying to revive her. "They tried for so long. We had hope because when we saw her come out of the water, she was conscious. This has really broken our family and our hearts," explained Nathaniel. KZN VIP spokesperson, Gareth Naidoo, said, "We were alerted to a drowning incident by onlookers who watched helplessly as they couldn't get to a child who was swept away by a wave at Umhlanga Beach. Lifeguards were alerted together with Netcare911 emergency teams, and managed to recover the child, commencing resuscitation for more than 30 minutes on scene. After all attempts made to save the child, she was sadly declared dead. Moments leading up to the incident is unconfirmed and pending police investigation. Our heartfelt condolences to the family and also those who were traumatised whilst trying to assist. Thank you to all emergency services who responded." Funeral arrangements are underway and are planned for this week. According to Nathaniel, the family is humbly requesting for any assistance in their time of need. She can be contacted on 071-354-5144.

SCAN ME

HAVE YOU BEEN TATTOOED BY HARRY?
FROM SAVILLE STREET
OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO HAS?
Are you interested in participating in a Durban University of Technology PhD study about this tattoo pioneer?
Contact Rory:
082 200 9600
archive@tattooharry.co.za
www.tattooharry.co.za

Simjees
134 BERTHA MKHIZE (VICTORIA STREET) DURBAN
FILO MENS JERSEY SIZE XS - XL
R570
UNDERCOVER PARKING AVAILABLE AT VICTORIA STREET MARKET
WE DELIVER COUNTRYWIDE BY COURIER CALL OR WHATSAPP 071 045 2263
Follow us on & Tel : 031 306 3890

BLUFF MEAT SUPPLY
OFFERS VALID 5 JULY - 9 JULY 2023
AVAILABLE AT:
337 KING DINUZULU ROAD (S), BEREA | 031 350 3400
111 INTERSITE AVE, UMGENI BUSINESS PARK, 031 263 1674
R74.99 KG FRESH BEEF CURRY FQ
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R59.99 KG BMS PORK DANGER
SCAN HERE TO VIEW ALL OUR IN-STORE SPECIALS
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10KM RADIUS
Visit our website for more info
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www. bluffmeatsupply.co.za

Figure 6.2 Copy of advertisement in the community newspaper.

Brick and Mortar – Sin on Skin Tattoo studio

The placement of a recruitment advertisement in a local tattoo studio which is within the recruitment target area can be highly effective for several reasons. Firstly, this establishment naturally attracts individuals who have a strong interest in tattoos and tattoo culture. By targeting a tattoo studio, the study can directly reach a specific audience that is likely to be interested in participating in a tattoo-related study, which ensures that the recruitment efforts are directed towards individuals who possess valuable insights and knowledge about tattoos and potentially Harry Ramesar, thereby enhancing the quality of data collected. People who frequent tattoo studios are often deeply passionate about tattoos and may be enthusiastic about participating in research related to the subject. The trust and credibility that is placed on a tattoo artist may encourage individuals to consider participating in the study, knowing that it is endorsed by a respected establishment within their community.

A tattoo studio offers a convenient and accessible location for potential participants to learn about the study and express their interest in participating. Individuals who visit the studio for their tattoo appointments or consultations can easily access the recruitment information and inquire about participation, which streamlines the recruitment process and removes barriers. The use of a tattoo studio as a recruitment platform has the potential to cater to all the generations targeted by this study, as tattoo studios not only create new tattoos but also offer services for covering up or altering existing tattoos. As someone passionate about tattoos who regularly visits the Sin on Skin tattoo studio, I have observed customers with tattoos from Harry Ramesar inquire about either covering them up with new tattoo designs or altering the original tattoo. The recruitment poster, as depicted in figure 6.1, was prominently displayed on the reception counter of the tattoo studio. It was strategically placed to be in direct view of customers who were seated in the reception area, either waiting for their tattoo appointments or inquiring about tattoo services.

In-person Recruitment

Direct engagement by means of face-to-face interactions means a researcher can directly engage with potential participants, providing personalized information about the study and addressing any questions or concerns they may have. This direct engagement fosters rapport and trust, increasing the likelihood that individuals will consider participating in the study.

This personal connection can enhance the likelihood of recruitment success, as individuals may feel more comfortable and inclined to participate when approached in person. In-person recruitment additionally provides the opportunity to clarify any doubts or misconceptions that potential participants may have about the study. This may result in a tailored approach, where the researcher can tailor their recruitment approach based on the individual's response and demeanour during in-person interactions. This allows for a more personalized approach, where the researcher can adapt the communication style to better resonate with potential participants, thus increasing the likelihood of successful recruitment.

Conducting in-person recruitment for this study enables immediate action, as the researcher can present information about the study and enrol participants on the spot. This immediacy streamlines the recruitment process, eliminating delays and enhancing the likelihood of securing participant commitment. An important facet of face-to-face interactions provides the opportunity to observe non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions as these cues can offer valuable insights into potential participants' level of interest and receptiveness, allowing the researcher to adjust their approach accordingly and maximize recruitment effectiveness. For the purpose of recruiting interview participants in this study utilizing this method, business cards were created that could be given to potential interviewees. The key method to identify individuals who may have a tattoo by Harry Ramesar before directly asking them is by examining the tattoo if visible and noting two fundamental characteristics. Firstly, assessing whether the tattoo appears to be of an age consistent with Harry Ramesar's work, and secondly, determining if the tattoo was created using a commercial tattoo machine. Harry Ramesar was the only commercial tattoo artist in Durban. He started tattooing in Durban in 1930 and retained his position as the sole professional commercial tattoo artist in Durban until the 1990s.

6.3 Themes and codes

Bradley, Curry, and Devers (2007) define themes as ‘Recurrent unifying concepts or statements about the subject of inquiry’ (Bradley, Curry and Devers 2007:1761) which summarizes an individual participants' experiences by drawing overarching insights from the entirety of the dataset. Themes are ‘overarching propositions that arise from the diverse and

rich experiences of participants, offering recurrent and unifying concepts pertaining to the subject under investigation' (Bradley, Curry and Devers 2007:1766). Utilizing themes aids in the organization of large volumes of qualitative data into meaningful categories or topics by identifying common patterns, ideas, or concepts across the dataset, to provide a structured framework for understanding the data collected in this study. Themes provide a systematic approach to organizing and analyzing data, leading to a deeper understanding of the research topic and generating valuable insights for theory development and practice. Table 6.5 displays the themes and codes which emerged from the data gathered through in-depth interviews, effectively interconnecting various concepts.

Table 6.5 Study themes and codes.

THEMES		**CODES**	
PHASE 1 – Deductive Analysis (Priori)			
A	Digital archives preservation of historical artefacts.	A1.	Introductions to Harry Ramesar.
		A2.	Is the interview participant's tattoo on the digital archive?
		A3.	Memory of interview participants
		A4.	Personal interactions with Harry Ramesar.
		A5.	Tattoo Studio Premises.
B	Digital Archive Relevance.	B1.	Conventional Archive Methods.
		B2.	Current Tattoo Industry.
		B3.	Foreign Tattoo Customers.

		B4.	International Viewership.
		B5.	Should there be a digital archive of Harry Ramesar?
		B6.	Tattoo Artist Competition.
PHASE 2 – Inductive Analysis			
C	Participant Related.	C1.	Are participants happy with their tattoo?
		C2.	Digital Archive Attitude.
		C3.	Participant's digital literacy.
		C4.	Participant's reaction to viewing their tattoo design on the digital archive.
D	Tattoo Related	D1.	Hand poking
		D2.	Popular tattoos
		D3.	Tattoo popularity
		D4	Tattoos as deviance
		D5.	Occupation influences
E	Harry Ramesar Related	E1.	Harry Ramesar's personality.
		E2.	Harry Ramesar's popularity.

6.4 Interview participants

This study included seventeen in-depth interviews, all labelled as 'INT', which I personally conducted. These interviews were conducted both in-person and online, at times and

locations selected by the participants, prioritizing the creation of a comfortable interview environment. Table 6.6 below displays the list of the seventeen interviewees in alphabetical order.

Table 6.6 In-depth interview participants in alphabetical order.

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS		
PARTICIPANT NAME	**INTERVIEW DATE**	**INTERVIEW METHOD**
Bala	10 June 2023	Online
Cyril	31 July 2023	In-person
Domenic	11 July 2023	In-person
Ernest	18 May 2023	In-person
Garry	18 May 2023	Online
Harry	29 June 2023	Online
Jayson	17 August 2023	In-person
Joe	20 July 2023	In-person
Krish	31 July 2023	In-person
Kissoon	21 August 2023	In-person
Mike	11 July 2023	In-person
Robin	17 June 2023	In-person
Sanitha	2 August 2023	In-person
Sashyn	17 January 2024	In-person
Shane	16 May 2023	In-person
Thomas	20 July 2023	In-person
Wallace	21 August 2023	In-person

6.5 Analysis of textual data

This section places selected quotes from the coded information into groups within the following themes as seen in table 47:

A. Digital archives preservation of historical artefacts.
B. Digital Archive Relevance.
C. Participant Related
D. Tattoo Related
E. Harry Ramesar Related

A. DIGITAL ARCHIVES PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS

A1. Introductions to Harry Ramesar

A1.1 Findings

The first introduction to a tattoo artist sets the foundation of trust that one needs to be satisfied with due to the permanent nature of tattoos. Many interviewees mentioned that they were influenced by family members or friends who had tattoos. For instance, **(INT2)** mentioned that seeing tattoos on their father made them want to get one themselves – "My dad took tattoos from him". "Seeing the tattoos on my dad growing up always wanted to have one". Other interviewees talked about family and friends who also had tattoos done by Harry Ramesar, which influenced their decision to get tattooed with **(INT1)** stating "in 1962 on my future brother-in-law. At the time I was seven years old. And and that's when I saw his work. I didn't know Harry before that". **(INT8)** "My older brothers, right and there was a lot of people that I know, went to Harry". There is a prevalent theme of information spreading through word of mouth as people heard about Harry Ramesar from friends, colleagues, or acquaintances who had already been tattooed by him. This suggests a strong network effect and reputation within the community. **(INT10)** comments that "friends that I knew, they also had tattoos done by him. But most of them are late now" and **(INT5)** noted that "also a couple of Indian guys at work said No, Harry, he's in. Lakhani".

An interesting observation is the location of Harry's tattoo studio which seems to be significant. It was mentioned multiple times that Harry's tattoo studio was in Saville Street, indicating that this was a well-known and central location for tattooing with **(INT8)** saying "and we already knew Harry was in Saville Street". The proximity to other establishments, such as the popular "Western Bar", contributed to its visibility and popularity with **(INT7)** noting **"**It used to be a pub called the Western bar"*.* Many interviewees expressed curiosity and intrigue about tattoos, often stemming from early exposure to them by seeing tattoos on people they know. For example, **(INT1)** mentioned seeing tattoos on their brother-in-law at the young age of seven, which sparked his interest in tattoos – "so when I saw that on my brother-in-law's, arms and chest, so it was intriguing. So I like it from that age". Several interviewees mentioned getting tattoos when they reached a certain age or milestone, for example turning 18 or completing military service. This suggests that getting a tattoo was often seen as a rite of passage or a symbol of adulthood within the interviewees social circles. **(INT4)** recollects that tattoos "has been going on in my family, these tattoos, my elder brothers, they've they've got this. So when you come of age" and **(INT12)** remarks, "20th birthday, I said no, I have to get a tattoo"*.*

Not all the interview participants met Harry Ramesar once they decided to get a tattoo, some interviewees had personal connections with Harry Ramesar through the establishment of friendships, or even casual encounters. As a tattoo collector myself it is exceedingly important to have a personal connection with your tattoo artist, which plays a role in building trust and comfort with the tattoo artist. **(INT13)** describes watching Harry Ramesar tattoo a client: "so I came across this chappie. You know, he's bending down, he's tattooing someone's hand and I stood on the door and looked at him and I looked at the guy that had been receiving the tattoo". Based on the remarks from the interviewees, there is a mix of perceptions regarding tattoos. While some interviewees expressed admiration for tattoos and a desire to have them as per **(INT2)** remarks: **"**seeing the tattoos on my dad growing up always wanted to have one" and **(INT10) "**you thought it looked good on him then you wanted to do that too". Others for example **(INT11)** initially hesitated or were apprehensive about getting tattooed, "I heard the sound of the machine and all I said, no, no. And I saw like he was tattooing. And I thought the way it was going about", I said no. This suggests that attitudes towards tattoos varied among individuals which might have evolved

over time as all the interview participants had tattoos by Harry Ramesar. As an overall observation, these findings highlight the social, cultural, and personal factors that influenced individuals' decisions to get tattooed by Harry Ramesar and the role of community and personal networks in shaping tattoo culture in the area.

A1.2 Discussion

The importance of trust and personal connections in the tattooing process is evident. Many interviewees mentioned being influenced by family members or friends who had tattoos done by Harry Ramesar, indicating the significance of word-of-mouth recommendations and personal endorsements. These personal connections not only fostered trust but also served as a form of social validation for individuals considering getting tattooed. The location of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio in Saville Street emerges as a significant factor contributing to its visibility and popularity. Its proximity to other establishments, such as the "Western Bar", likely increased foot traffic and exposure, further enhancing Harry Ramesar's reputation as a go-to tattoo artist in the area.

Observations further highlight the role of tattoos as a cultural symbol and rite of passage within the tattoo community. Interviewees mentioned getting tattoos at significant milestones in their lives, such as turning 18 or completing military service, thus indicating that tattoos were often seen as markers of adulthood and identity within their social circles. In addition, the mix of perceptions regarding tattoos among interviewees reflects the evolving attitudes towards body art. While some expressed admiration and desire for tattoos, others initially hesitated or were apprehensive, suggesting a diversity of perspectives within the community. However, despite initial reservations, all interview participants ultimately chose to get tattoos by Harry Ramesar, indicating a shift in attitudes or an increased acceptance of tattoos over time. The findings underscore the multifaceted influences shaping tattoo culture, from personal connections and word-of-mouth recommendations to cultural norms and milestone events. Harry Ramesar's role as a respected and trusted tattoo artist within the community is evident, highlighting the importance of reputation and personal rapport in the tattooing process.

A2. Is the Interview Participant's Tattoo in the Digital Archive?

A2.1 Findings

This code gives value to the study and gives context on the validity of the digital archive of Harry Ramesar. Thirteen interview participants found either the tattoo flash design, the tattoo tracing or both on the digital archive whilst the interview was being conducted live. This represents a 76,5% success rate, with the potential for a higher percentage if the interviewees' tattoo images are analysed and searched post interview. A total of forty-five tattoos were documented from the interview participants with twenty-five tattoo designs discovered during the interview. This represents a 55% success rate. Verifying and authenticating the existence and details of the tattoo design whilst conducting the interview serves to validate the interviewee's interview, offering tangible evidence of their interaction with the Harry Ramesar. This process enhances the credibility of the interview and bolsters the accuracy of the overall research findings. In addition, viewing the actual tattoo design provides a visual representation of the interviewee's experience, enriching their narrative with depth and context. The tattoo design enables researchers and viewers of the digital archive alike to gain insight into the aesthetic preferences, cultural influences, and personal significance associated with the tattoo.

Throughout multiple interviews, there is consistency in the identification and recognition of tattoo designs. Interviewees often confirm designs with phrases like **(INT1)** "Yeah, that's the one" or **(INT16)** "Yeah, yeah yeah, exactly that one", indicating a high level of familiarity with the chosen designs. **(INT7)** references to the age of the tattoo design, with "that must be more than 50 years old", which a) indicates a longstanding tradition or practice of certain tattoo styles or motifs and b) the amount of time the tattoo artefact has survived and is still in existence. The reference to specific artefacts by the interviewee are related to the name tags that appear on each artefact in the digital archive.

A2.2 Discussion

The analysis highlights the significance of incorporating the digital archive of Harry Ramesar into the research process and underscores its value in enhancing the validity and credibility of the study. By referencing the digital archive during live interviews, researchers were able to verify the existence and details of tattoo designs, thereby validating the interviewees'

experiences and interactions with Harry Ramesar. This process not only bolsters the accuracy of the research findings but also enhances the credibility of the interview narratives. The high success rate of 76.5% in identifying the interviewees' tattoo designs during live interviews suggests the effectiveness of this method in capturing and authenticating the interviewees' accounts. In addition, the potential for a higher percentage in a post-interview analysis, further reinforces the reliability of the data obtained from the digital archive. The consistency in identification and recognition of tattoo designs across multiple interviews further attests to the reliability and accuracy of the digital archive.

The visual representation of the tattoo designs provides depth and context to the interview narratives, enriching our understanding of the aesthetic preferences, cultural influences, and personal significance associated with each tattoo design. The reference to the age of the tattoo design flash and tracings also sheds light on the longstanding tradition or practice of certain tattoo styles or motifs, as well as the resilience of these artifacts over time. The integration of the digital archive into the research process serves as a valuable tool for validating interview data and enhancing the richness of the study. By providing tangible evidence of the interviewees' interactions with Harry Ramesar and their chosen tattoo designs, the archive contributes to the authenticity and credibility of the research findings and offers insight into the cultural and historical significance of tattooing practices, further enriching our understanding of this art form.

A3. Memory of Interview Participants

A3.1 Findings

The memory of interview participants plays an important role in documenting the career of a tattoo artist that has already passed and provides the validation of his tattoo artefacts for current and future generations. Interviewees reflect on their initial encounters with tattooing, shedding light on a period characterised by youthfulness and inexperience, for example **(INT10)** recalls the rudimentary method of tattooing using a matchstick and needle, "It started off with his hand ones the guys that I used to move around, you know, they do it by hand with a matchstick and needle". This indicated a youthful fascination with tattoos and a lack of sophistication in the tattoo process, if the tattoo was not professionally performed by Harry Ramesar. Insights regarding the atmosphere, environment, ambiance and setting surrounding

the tattooing process are revealed with **(INT11)** noting "so when you have a small place, very small sit behind there. You talk, talk, talk and then he gets a customer. Then you just go down somewhere and come back later". Memory and nostalgia play a key role in these findings with some interviewees struggling to recall specific details or memories associated with their tattoo experiences, which underscores the subjective and transitory nature of memory, particularly concerning events from the distant past. **(INT11)** recalls that "I actually cannot remember what led up to the events of that day when we decided we're gonna have tattoos" and **(INT5)** "I couldn't remember it. We were all just talking and someone just down at the beach and someone had said, hey, listen, there's a guy in just off Gray St. Harry, he does tattooing".

References to social interactions, such as gathering at a bar before or after getting tattoos, underscore the communal significance of tattooing within the community. In **(INT5)**, there is mention that "the guys would have a drink and go to him" and **(INT9)** "and after the tattoo we should head back to the pub across the road". **(INT10)** even recalls how he used to have a drink whilst he waited for his turn to get tattooed by saying, "you know, the guys that used to come there, they used to carry the alcohol in on the inside. While you waiting your turn? You sit and have a drink and I really can't say whether he is also, but I'm sure he is to have a bit of whoever offered something". An interesting observation about INT10's comments is that he could not recall if Harry Ramesar also partook in the consumption of alcohol whilst tattooing, a practice which is frowned upon in current tattoo studio environments. The topic of pain remains an ongoing discussion within the context of tattoos, even till this day, with several interviewees commenting that the procedure was painful with **(INT6)** recalling, **"**I can remember it was quite painful. That's what I do remember", **(INT7)** recalling that "there's a youngster before me that fainted and he fell so hard" *and* "while we were doing the tattoos, there wasn't much time I can think of this, there's more the pain".

An important insight revealed by **(INT15)** is the fact that Harry Ramesar tattooed customers from different racial groups. At first glance, this may seem surprising given the racial segregation of apartheid in South Africa during that period with the comment "locally, if you had different race groups. When the ship comes they all white, how is it mainly mainly that I saw". When commenting on the memory of the interviewees, participants exhibited varying degrees of certainty regarding the timing of their tattoo experiences. References to

decades such as the 70s and early 60s demonstrate a general timeframe that the tattoos were created, but exact years are often uncertain. For example, **(INT2)**, remarks “that in the 70s, I can’t remember which year. I know it’s between the 70 to 75. Yeah, that’s not working 71, I think” and “was definitely 1985. It was, yeah”, thus suggesting a blurred recollection of events. Memories of tattoo experiences were often associated with significant life events of the interviewee, for example the finishing of military service or approaching a milestone birthday. **(INT5)**, highlights how the completion of military service and the upcoming 20th birthday framed the memory of getting a tattoo, “I finished the army in July and it was January. I was there was just before my 20th birthday” indicating the intertwining of personal milestones with tattoo memories. The role of social influences such as word of mouth played a crucial role in shaping memories of tattoo experiences with **(INT3)**, “so I found out from one of my friends then they told me that because he was in Saville Street” and **(INT3)**, “word of mouth on someone I couldn’t even remember who it was. Wasn’t one of my friends. I think it was someone that we were interacting with” thus underscoring the influence of social networks in spreading awareness of Harry Ramesar and his location.

Despite memory challenges, interviewees exhibit persistent reflection on their tattoo experiences, with **(INT5)** commenting that “since you contacted me, my mind has been going back to that tattoo” and **(INT9)** “yeah, had a very nice time thinking backwards now that we talking about this interviewing, yeah”. This illustrates how the engagement with interviewees triggered introspection, leading to the participants actively revisiting and ruminating on their tattoo design and experience. This suggests that tattoo memories remain important and can resurface in response to external cues.

A3.2 Discussion

The multifaceted role of memory in shaping the recollection and perception of tattoo experiences among interview participants provides valuable insights into the socio-cultural dynamics surrounding tattooing practices and the legacy of tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. The interviews underscore the significance of memory as interviewees reflect on their initial encounters with tattooing, revealing a period characterized by youthful fascination and experimentation. Memories of rudimentary tattooing methods using basic tools like matchsticks and needles evoke a sense of nostalgia, highlighting the evolution of tattooing

practices over time. Additionally, the references to the atmosphere and social interactions surrounding tattoo sessions emphasize the communal significance of tattooing within the community, with gatherings at bars before or after tattoo appointments reflecting the social rituals associated with the practice. The discussion around pain and the consumption of alcohol during tattoo sessions provides insights into the enduring perceptions and practices surrounding tattooing, with interviewees' varied recollections of pain and discomfort during tattooing, highlighting the subjective nature of the tattoo experience, while references to alcohol consumption underscore the cultural context in which tattooing occurred, with potential ethical implications.

The interviews reveal Harry Ramesar's inclusive approach to tattooing, transcending racial boundaries during a period marked by apartheid-era segregation. This challenges conventional narratives of racial division, highlighting the role of tattooing as a form of cultural expression and social cohesion. Despite challenges in memory recall and the passage of time, interviewees exhibit persistent reflection on their tattoo experiences, underscoring the enduring significance of tattoos as markings of personal identity and milestones. The influence of social networks and word-of-mouth in shaping memories further emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within the community and the role of interpersonal relationships in disseminating information and cultural practices. Ultimately, the analysis highlights the complex interplay between memory, social dynamics, and cultural influences in shaping tattoo experiences and perceptions. By illuminating the rich tapestry of memories surrounding tattooing practices, the interviews offer valuable insights into the legacy of Harry Ramesar and the enduring significance of tattoos within the community.

A4. Personal Interactions with Harry Ramesar

A4.1 Findings

The exploration of personal interactions with Harry Ramesar from the point of view of customers he tattooed often involves anecdotes, memories, and stories shared between Harry Ramesar and his clients. These narratives contribute to the richness of the study and eventually the digital archive, preserving unique experiences and moments that may otherwise be lost over time. The in-person accounts of interviewees offer valuable perspectives from the client's point of view, highlighting their feelings, impressions, and

perceptions of Harry Ramesar as a tattoo artist. This provides a well-rounded view of the artist's impact on his clients and the community. These oral histories embedded in personal interactions provide a unique perspective on the Harry Ramesar's tattoo legacy. These first-hand accounts offer invaluable insights into the artist's impact on individuals' lives, creating a lasting record for future generations.

In the early stages of interactions with Harry Ramesar, interviewees describe a transactional relationship characterized by minimal conversation and a focus on the tattooing process. **(INT1) "**Actually, Harry don't speak much with because you go there" and **(INT16)** "I said I'd like a tattoo. And he sad yes, sit down. What do you want? So I pick this one up" which illustrates the straightforward nature of getting a tattoo without much interaction. Over time, numerous interviewees developed a friendlier rapport with Harry, which is characterized by elements such as casual conversations and shared experiences. Interactions with Harry Ramesar evolved into opportunities for chatting about various topics, suggesting a deeper connection beyond the tattooing sessions with **(INT11)** mentioning "you can sit and chat when you talk. Like, you know, just talk generally about the town itself and how long he's around in town" and **(INT13)** "Harry and I would have you know we shouldn't sit with no clients, etcetera. We should sit, and, you know, discuss yesteryear and you know things were done and how things are now". **(INT14)** recollected how **"**after one he's he's close shop about half past twelve, one. Then I used to go sit with him". As interviewees became more familiar with Harry Ramesar, they expressed feelings of comfort and trust in his presence as described by **(INT11) "**I got used to him when I got more comfortable knowing really normal, it'll be it'll be OK". **(INT3)** recalls how "he always like, gave you advice what to do and you know, being an elderly person like you'll give you advise about, you know, not joining wrong companies and things like there's very good customer customer service". This illustrates how the interviewees' comfort level increased over time, making the tattooing experience more enjoyable and less intimidating. In addition to this, there is a cultural and linguistic connection interviewees shared with Harry Ramesar, which contributed to a sense of mutual understanding and wanting the client to feel comfortable. **(INT12)** highlights how Harry would switch to Hindi when conversing with Hindi-speaking customers, "so when I met him, he he talks a little bit of English if he knows. If he when he knew I was Hindi, then he should say in

Hindi word for girl or a daughter" which demonstrates his efforts to connect with individuals on a personal level.

Interviewees recall engaging in conversations with Harry during tattooing sessions and or their spare time, reminiscing about the topics they discussed and the insights Harry shared. **(INT14)** recalls how "when I had nothing to do is to buy my drink and go sit on my leave working. I should sit in his shop and I would have my drink and we used to talk" and **(INT15)** notes that "we should normally converse in jokes". Throughout the interviews, one gets a feel of the positive personality traits of Harry Ramesar, with interviewees consistently describing Harry as a friendly, humble, and gentle individual. **(INT17)** emphasizes Harry's pleasant demeanour and respectful communication style, with "he never used any vulgarity. He never used the harsh word he was always humble" and "he was just such a gentle soul" which highlights his positive impact on those around him. **(INT3)** remarked that "he always like gave you advice what to do" and **(INT15)** noting that "he's very likely to help you". **(INT12)** recalls "ohh, when I met him he was a very down to earth man, you know". the interviews paint a picture of Harry Ramesar as not only a skilled tattoo artist but also a kind-hearted individual who forged meaningful connections with his clients, fostering an environment of trust and comfort within his tattoo studio.

An interesting narrative relayed by **(INT2)** recalls how he wanted to get a tattoo at the age of fourteen and Harry requested a consent letter from his parents. **(INT2)** recalls that "get there and he doesn't want to do a tattoo a 14 year old, so he says you must get a consent letter. So we go right down West Street. Buy a pad, write a consent letter. So he didn't actually double check if it was your father, he just just wanted a signature". This suggests that Harry prioritized ethical considerations when tattooing young individuals, recognizing the importance of safeguarding minors from lifelong tattoo commitments. Despite this, some customers have attempted to bypass the consent process. **(INT2)** notes this when recalling "giving you permission to have a tattoo put on your body because it's a lifelong thing and it, you know, your argument that he's not going to do it". Examples of permission letters from clients can be seen in the digital archive at https://tattooharry.co.za/letters-and-documents/.

A4.2 Discussion

The interviewees provide a comprehensive exploration of the personal interactions between tattoo artist Harry Ramesar and his clients, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of their relationships and the impact of these interactions on the tattooing experience. Through anecdotes, memories, and stories shared by interviewees, a nuanced picture emerges of Harry Ramesar as not just a tattoo artist, but as a trusted confidant and friend to many within the community. One significant aspect highlighted in the analysis is the evolution of the client-artist relationship over time. Initially characterized by transactional interactions focused solely on the tattooing process, these relationships gradually developed into more meaningful connections marked by camaraderie and shared experiences. As the interviewees became more familiar with Harry Ramesar, the conversations expanded beyond tattooing, encompassing topics ranging from personal anecdotes to discussions about Durban and yesteryear. This transformation underscores the role of tattoo studios as communal spaces where individuals come together to bond and exchange stories, with Harry Ramesar serving as a central figure in facilitating these interactions.

The analysis emphasizes the cultural and linguistic connections that contributed to the rapport between Harry Ramesar and his clients. Harry Ramesar’s efforts to converse in Hindi with Hindi-speaking customers exemplify his commitment to fostering a sense of inclusion and comfort, further strengthening the bond between artist and client. The narratives also shed light on Harry Ramesar's ethical considerations, particularly concerning tattooing minors. The requirement for parental consent underscores his commitment to responsible tattooing practices and the importance of ensuring informed decision-making, even in cases where clients attempt to bypass the consent process. This aspect highlights Harry's professionalism and dedication to upholding ethical standards within his profession. The portrayal of Harry Ramesar as a friendly, humble, and gentle individual resonates throughout the narratives, with interviewees consistently praising his positive personality traits and respectful demeanour. This depiction not only speaks to Harry Ramesar’s skill as a tattoo artist but also to his ability to create a welcoming and inclusive environment within his tattoo studio, where clients felt valued and understood. The analysis illuminates the significance of personal interactions in shaping the client-artist relationship and enriching the tattooing experience through the narratives shared by interviewees. Harry Ramesar emerges not only

as a talented tattoo artist but also as a cherished member of the community, leaving behind a legacy defined by trust, camaraderie, and ethical professionalism.

A5. Tattoo Studio Premises

A5.1 Findings

Obtaining information from interviewees about the interior of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio is important to build an empirical picture of what Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio looked like during the time he was a tattoo artist, and is crucial for creating an accurate representation of the studio in three dimensions (3D), which is an important facet of this study which can be viewed on the homepage of the digital archive (https://tattooharry.co.za/). Interviewees can provide first hand descriptions of the studio's layout, decor, and atmosphere, ensuring that the 3D environment recreation closely reflects the original environment. This helps preserve the historical accuracy and authenticity of the studio that can be viewed by any interested party, by incorporating details provided by interviewees, the 3D environment's simulation can offer a more immersive experience for users of the digital archive by accurately recreating the studio's interior which allows users to feel like they are stepping back in time and experiencing the space as it once existed. Multiple interviewees describe Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio as small, simple, and unassuming with the studio being characterized by limited space, with only a few essential furnishings such as chairs, tables, and benches. **(INT12)** mentions a "very small place", while **(INT14)** describes it as "a small shop with a couch". **(INT2)** described the tattoo studio as "private and small like you wouldn't know that it was a tattoo shop if you walked past" and **(INT5)** echoes this with "very small little place. Very small little room". This would suggest that Harry Ramesar's focus was on functionality rather than an extravagant tattoo studio interior decor. Several interviewees mentioned that the studio had dim lighting, contributing to its personal and slightly mysterious ambiance with references to dimly lit surroundings made by **(INT12)** as "it was very dimly lit" and **(INT4)** mentioning that "it was like a gloomy passage" and that the tattoo studio was a "very, very eery place. Looked like, you know. What you call that a dodgy looking, dodgy looking place". The word 'dodgy' in the context of INT4's explanation refers to the interior of the tattoo studio location and not Harry Ramesar as a tattoo artist. **(INT7)** recalls that "the room was darkish, dark. Yeah. Wasn't brightly lit up. There was like your normal old globe and things. But he had good eyesight"

which may have resulted in the subdued lighting enhancing the focus on the tattooing process and added to the tattoo studio's character.

Numerous interviewees recall that Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio featured displays of tattoo flash designs on the walls allowing customers to choose their desired designs and tattoo tracings of the designs in his desk drawers. **(INT16)** recalls how "all I saw really is tattoos on the wall, the pictures of tattoos", while **(INT2)** mentions "yeah, there were pictures of these designs on the walls". **(INT8)** recalls how "it's got big pictures everywhere. I mean, big posters, you picked you're your, your tattoo from" and **(INT17)** references the locations of both the tattoo flash designs and tracing by noting that "it had patterns on the walls" and "so, he used to keep his tracings in his drawer. So, when a customer to walk in and they ask for a specific design, it would be on the wall". The tattoo process is described by **(INT11)** "He got his table, the wooden table around the table there. He sit there on the table, he got a white cloth cloth in there. And then on the wall you got these tattoos and you know, you need to see which one you want. You show it to him and then he he got like a drawer. They pull out all his tracing paper" This indicates that Harry Ramesar provided a diverse range of tattoo options for his clients, which were displayed in his tattoo studio and had the tracings of the tattoo design flash ready to perform the tattoo. This is evident by the extensive collection of flash artefacts on the digital archive. The layout of the tattoo studio was designed for efficiency and practicality, with specific areas designated for different stages of the tattooing process. **(INT12)** recalls how "where you should sit and put your hands there on his table. Or if you can come a bit near to him and carry on with your conversation with him" and "he had a couple of chairs there where people should sit and watch, or some who came". **(INT2)** notes that "So when you get in the door is here. Harry is sitting here, so you're going to get a tattoo from Harry, but you only got one place to sit, is there. So, you sit in front of him. Now, over his table and your hand is there, or your shoulder and he gets himself comfortable to that one position. So, you can't move around the room or, you know, lay on your back or something". **(INT3)** comments on the efficiency of the tattoo studio layout by noting that the studio was "small and you just had a one stool to sit on to wait your turn to get tattooed and he had his table there where you walk. And it was like very organised", thus facilitating a smooth workflow and client interaction. The necessity for a seamless workflow and well-structured interior layout might stem from the high demand for Harry Ramesar's tattooing services, as

(INT1) notes “well, whenever I went there, there were the people in in the queue. Before me, so you have to wait till 10. So, he was always busy’.

A5.2 Discussion

A detailed exploration of the interior layout and ambiance of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio is described by interviewees, shedding light on the physical environment where tattooing took place. Understanding the studio's layout and decor is crucial for accurately recreating it in a 3D environment and preserving its historical accuracy for future generations. The interviews reveal that Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio was characterized by simplicity and functionality rather than extravagance. Descriptions of the studio as small and unassuming, with limited space and essential furnishings, suggest that Harry prioritized practicality in his workspace. The dim lighting, described by multiple interviewees, contributed to the studio's personal and slightly mysterious ambiance, enhancing the focus on the tattooing process and adding to its character. One notable aspect highlighted in the analysis is the presence of tattoo flash designs displayed on the walls of the studio. These designs served as options for clients to choose from, emphasising Harry's commitment to providing a diverse range of tattoo options. The inclusion of design tracings in desk drawers further facilitated the tattoo selection process, indicating a well-organised approach to client interaction and workflow management.

The layout of the tattoo studio was designed for efficiency and practicality, with specific areas designated for different stages of the tattooing process. Interviewees describe how clients would sit in front of Harry Ramesar's table, allowing for a focused and comfortable tattooing experience. The streamlined workflow and organised layout likely contributed to Harry's ability to manage a high volume of clients efficiently. The analysis underscores the importance of incorporating details provided by interviewees into the 3D environment recreation of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio. By accurately representing the studio's interior layout, decor, and ambiance, the 3D environment simulation offers users a more immersive experience, allowing them to step back in time and experience the space as it once existed. This approach not only preserves the historical accuracy and authenticity of the studio but also honours Harry Ramesar's legacy as a talented tattoo artist within the community.

B. DIGITAL ARCHIVES RELEVANCE

B1. Conventional Archive Methods

B1.1 Findings

One would conventionally find an archive related to this study topic in a traditional archive setting, for example a museum or a tattoo collector's collection utilizing traditional production methods such as print and photographs. The interviewee pool covers five generations as mentioned earlier in the study (birth range 1928-1981), therefore one could expect references to traditional archiving methods. **(INT17)** highlights a significant shift from conventional archival methods to digital ones, emphasizing the prevalence of technology in today's society "with the current technology, with today's technology, more people would rather open up a laptop or a phone". The quotation suggests that with current technology, such as laptops and smartphones, people are more inclined to access information digitally rather than through traditional means like books and museum installations, with **(INT17)** noting that "one out of 1000, maybe, or even a million people hardly even just open up a book anymore". This sentiment reflects a broader trend where fewer individuals engage with physical archives, with the interviewee estimating that only a small fraction of people still use books regularly.

(INT17) emphasizes the widespread use of online platforms, indicating that virtually everyone, regardless of age, relies on digital resources with the comment "at things online, 100%, it's everybody now. Even even the the the general, even the older people, my, my father-in-law is 79 and he's with his phone more than anything. So, it's it's it's everyone. It's not just specific age group". The population is increasingly accustomed to using smartphones and other digital devices. This insight underscores the widespread adoption of digital technologies across generations.

B1.2 Discussion

In the context of Harry Ramesar's tattoo archive, these findings suggest the importance of prioritizing digital preservation methods. As society continues to embrace digital platforms for accessing information, a digital archive would ensure broader accessibility and reach. By digitizing Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts, photographs, and other relevant materials, his legacy can be preserved and made available to a wider audience, catering to the preferences

of contemporary users who favour online resources over traditional archival formats. The transition from traditional archival methods to digital platforms represents a significant shift in how historical and cultural information is preserved and accessed. Traditionally, archives related to topics such as tattoo artistry would be housed in museums or private collections, utilizing methods like print and photographs to document and display artefacts. These physical archives, while valuable, have limitations in terms of accessibility and interactivity and embracing digital archival methods aligns with broader societal trends and technological advancements. This transition not only enhances the preservation and accessibility of historical artifacts but also enriches the user experience, making cultural heritage more engaging and accessible to a global audience. The study highlights the importance of adapting archival practices to meet the evolving needs of society, ensuring the continued relevance and preservation of our shared history.

B2. Current Tattoo Industry

B2.1 Findings

(INT17) makes mention of the dwindling number of people who may still remember Harry Ramesar by noting "now, how many people are still alive, will remember him" which suggests that he was a noteworthy figure in the tattoo industry during his time. This highlights the passage of time and the fading of memories associated with pioneer tattoo artists like Ramesar. From **(INT3)** there is recognition of the transformation of tattooing into a mainstream industry with the interviewee acknowledging that tattooing has evolved from a niche practice to a recognized form of body art with the comment that "tattoo is becoming a big industry now, right and 'now it's body art and it's big business now and and people recognise it and I thank and I'm grateful that you're acknowledging". The second part of the previous sentence referring to the gratitude of the interviewee with the study.

(INT3) narrates a conversation that he had with a tattoo artist Jake De Gaye in his Durban tattoo studio about the prospect of altering the tattoo he got from Harry Ramesar with "so, I said, Jake, can you touch it up a bit? He says he will never touch it because that is done by the legend, he will not touch it. He says you just leave it like that. You do not touch that". The refusal of another artist to alter a tattoo done by Harry Ramesar underscores his status as a legend in the tattoo industry in South Africa, with his work being revered and

respected even in contemporary times. **(INT3)** contrasts the ambiance of modern tattoo shops with the environment of Harry Ramesar's studio, describing it as “like like like now we went to these tattoo shops in sort of bright. And this was like a gloomy dingy dungeon, you know? I mean, it wasn’t. yeah, I can’t remember the windows anything but it was”. This highlights the shift in aesthetic preferences and the standardization of brighter, more inviting tattoo studios in today's industry. This contrast between past and present is further emphasized in **(INT6)**, where the interviewee remarks on the normalisation of tattoos in society today, “and it’s a big contrast now because I mean nowadays it’s a common thing, my granddaughter’s got, my daughter-in-laws have got”, indicating a shift from the relatively niche status tattoos once held not so long ago. **(INT7)** reflects on a disconnect between the younger generation of tattooists and the historical significance of tattooing but noting that “a lot of youngsters, when they showed them the tattoos and they laugh, the ones that do tattoos now. They don’t understand what went into this”. Thus suggesting that many in this younger generation of tattooists may not fully grasp the history and effort behind older tattoos, indicating a potential gap in understanding between generations of tattoo artists thus potentially creating a niche for this study and its digital archive.

B2.2 Discussion

The interviews reflect a deep appreciation for Harry Ramesar's contributions to the tattoo industry and underscore the evolution of tattooing from a niche practice to a mainstream form of body art. The interviews highlight the significant evolution of the tattoo industry and the enduring legacy of pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. The interviewees underscore the importance of documenting Harry Ramesar’s contributions, given the fading memories of those who knew him personally and the transformation of tattooing from a niche practice to a widely accepted form of body art is evident, with today’s modern tattoo shops now embracing brighter, more inviting aesthetics compared to the darker, more secluded ambiance of Ramesar's studio. The respect for Ramesar’s work, as illustrated by the refusal of a present day tattoo artist to alter one of his tattoos, underscores his legendary status in the South African tattoo community. This respect contrasts with the normalisation of tattoos in today’s society, where they are commonly accepted across generations.

However, a disconnect between younger tattoo artists and the historical significance of the craft is noted, suggesting a need for greater education and appreciation of South African tattoo history. This study and its digital archive aim to bridge this gap, preserving the legacy of tattoo artist Harry Ramesar and fostering a deeper understanding of the rich history of tattooing among new generations of tattoo enthusiasts and artists.

B3. Foreign Tattoo Customers

B3.1 Findings

The findings overall suggest that Harry Ramesar had a significant international clientele, particularly among sailors, who valued his tattooing skills and were willing to wait for extended periods to receive a tattoo during their brief visits to Durban, South Africa. **(INT15)** gives insight into the foreign customers of Harry Ramesar, noting that “by four, he’s finished, unless when the ship comes” referring to his regular tattoo studio closing time, except when he serves foreign customers, for whom he would extend his working hours. **(INT15)** refers to the clientele as sailors, “the people come to come there. I say sailors, sailors’ suggesting that they were likely individuals from foreign ships docking in the area. This gives the indication that Harry Ramesar's clientele extended beyond local residents to include transient visitors from abroad. The foreign customers had knowledge about Ramesar for his reputation as a tattoo artist and were willing to wait for extended periods of time, sometimes the entire day, to receive a tattoo from him as **(INT15)** noted “they only knew him, that’s all. Yes, and they came. They came in, they came there and sit till sometime the whole day because they had to take que” and with confirmation that “they’re not here for a long time. They come for a week or so”, emphasizing the transient nature of these foreign customers' visits, as not long-term residents but rather frequenting Harry Ramesar's studio intermittently, likely whenever their ships docked in the area.

(INT15) underscores the significance of tattooing for these foreign customers by commenting that “the first thing they will do. They’ll come and have a tattoo. Everything can be secondary”, asserting that for them, getting a tattoo from Harry Ramesar was a priority, indicating the esteem with which they held his craftsmanship as a tattoo artist with intense demand when ships arrived in the area as described “at that time he was very busy when the ship comes. Yeah, no time to play. So, they don’t even have lunch, yeah, you’d go straight

through”. Thus submitting that he was so busy during these times that he and his customers had little time for breaks, demonstrating the rapid pace at which he worked to accommodate the influx of foreign clients.

B3.2 Discussion

Harry Ramesar's international clientele, particularly among sailors, underscores his reputation and skill as a tattoo artist. This international demand provides insight into the broader appeal and recognition of Harry Ramesar's work beyond local residents, with his willingness to extend his working hours to accommodate these foreign customers indicating his dedication and the high regard in which he was held by his clients. His ability to attract and accommodate a diverse clientele from abroad highlights his exceptional skill and the high regard in which he was held as a tattoo artist. The willingness of sailors to wait extended periods and prioritize getting a tattoo from him during their brief visits to Durban underscores the esteem and demand for his work.

Harry Ramesar's studio served as a cultural hub where international sailors brought and shared tattoo traditions, enhancing the richness and diversity of the tattoo culture in Durban. The demand for his services during ship arrivals and his dedication to accommodating these foreign clients reflect his commitment and the rapid pace at which he worked to meet the needs of his clientele. Harry Ramesar's legacy is characterized by his significant impact on both local and international tattoo communities, with his ability to draw an international clientele and solidify his status as a legendary figure in the tattoo industry. This study underscores the importance of preserving and documenting his contributions to ensure that his influence and legacy continue to be recognized and appreciated across generations.

B4. International Viewership

B4.1 Findings

Findings suggest that Harry Ramesar was not only renowned locally but also gained recognition and clientele from international sources, highlighting the widespread impact of his work in the tattoo industry with **(INT9)** highlighting the advanced nature of Harry Ramesar's work “yeah, just, just very advanced, you know, advanced advanced. Thing and to know, I assume people known overseas also got this. Some of the tattoos”. Thus suggesting

that people overseas are also aware of his talent and the quality of his tattoos. This indicates that Harry Ramesar's reputation extended beyond local borders and garnered recognition on an international scale. Similarly, **(INT17)**, emphasizes Harry Ramesar's significance not only in Durban but also internationally with “he was a pioneer in Durban, but also because we’re we’re the one of the busy ports in Africa. There are a lot of guys, a lot of ships coming in naval officers, uh from even different countries they came to Harry and had the tattoos done by him, so it is an international I mean”, indicating that his clientele included people from various parts of the world. This suggests that Harry Ramesar's influence transcended geographical boundaries and reached a global audience. An interesting comment by **(INT17)**, notes “I think he’s he’s made a difference. Not just here but world”, which implies that Harry Ramesar's contributions to the tattoo industry and his artistic influence have had a profound effect not only within his immediate surroundings of Durban but also on a broader, international scale.

B4.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that Harry Ramesar was a highly respected and internationally recognised tattoo artist whose influence extended far beyond the local community of Durban. His reputation for advanced and high-quality tattoo work attracted a diverse clientele, including many international customers such as sailors and naval officers from different parts of the world. This international recognition underscores the skill and artistry that Harry Ramesar brought to the tattoo industry in South Africa. The interviews reveal that Harry Ramesar's impact on the tattoo industry was both profound and far-reaching. His advanced tattoo techniques and high-quality work attracted an international clientele, including sailors and naval officers from around the world, thus highlighting the recognition of skill and artistry that Ramesar contributed to the tattoo community. Harry Ramesar’s pioneering role in Durban's tattoo scene and his wider influence on the international tattoo industry highlight the significant contributions he made to the art form, with his ability to draw clients from various parts of the world, reflects the widespread appeal and respect for his work, solidifying his legacy as a legendary tattoo artist whose influence transcended geographical boundaries. Overall, Harry Ramesar's legacy is characterized by his exceptional talent, international recognition, and lasting impact on the tattoo industry and his contributions continue to be

celebrated and remembered, both locally and globally, ensuring that his influence remains a significant part of tattoo history.

B5. Should there be a Digital Archive of Harry Ramesar?

B5.1 Findings

The interviews presented a strong consensus among participants regarding the necessity and importance of establishing a digital archive for tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. Interviewees widely acknowledge Harry Ramesar as a pioneer and a significant figure in the tattoo industry, particularly in Durban, by emphasizing his role in shaping the local tattoo culture and recognition that he was a legendary figure in the tattoo community whose contributions deserve preservation. **(INT1)** and **(INT8)**, submit that "yes, I think he was a pioneer" and "the thing is, pioneer, he was a pioneer. Definitely, definitely, definitely" respectively. **(INT13)** notes "I think so, it's true because he was a famous guy" with **(INT2)** saying "everyone knew him as at Saville Street was Harry" and **(INT3)** recommending the digital archive "I would recommend that for this stuff to be like in archive, because I mean, they were he was like one of the you can say like legend that started the the the tattoo industry in Durban". **(INT4)** explains that "yeah, they should. The man has tattooed a lot of people. It's such a lot of people like, he's like a legend, which when you talk about tattoos become very, very, very, very ,very famous. Now everybody is like every other person's has tattoos now' and 'I mean, he's a legend. Yeah, like a legend".

Many interviewees express concern that without a digital archive, Harry Ramesar's legacy and the history of tattooing in Durban would be lost or forgotten. They highlight the digital archive's role in preserving memories, stories, and historical context for future generations. **(INT4)** comments that "I think the excellent idea, I mean this thing would have been lost. You, you you'll never see it" with **(INT11)** thinking that all the tattoo artefacts would have been destroyed "I would have thought that maybe the guy passed on, everything was just destroyed?", thus giving justification for the digital archive of this study as "if this never happened. This would just be like a memory to me. Yeah, but now I'm seeing this, like bringing back everything". **(INT11)** remarks further that with the creation of the digital archive, there is now a platform for his family to view the legacy of Harry Ramesar and the tattoos he chose with the comment "all this they don't know, but we got it. We got this thing in archive now

and I never got my family, you know? And I said, you know, that's going to watch something, I had that put, I had that put, yeah". Interviewees reference the recollection of their younger days with **(INT12)** noting "yes, if they only know that you put this thing they want to reminisce about the old days. Yeah, about the younger days" and **(INT6)** explains that "it's really very interesting because I can relate directly to it. I'm as you get older, you sort of become more history. You know, you've give my love a lot of things you've done in your life. I think it's fascinating actually". **(INT8)** gives insight from the point of view of a potential academic and aspiring traditional tattoo artist with "a guy who wants to become a teacher who can do this is interested. He can go up there and look at it. We can look up all this and give him ideas and you have anybody that's interested in and then when you go to start, you know exactly what you do just follow Harry's footsteps". **(INT13)** gives an interesting comparison with cave paintings by explaining "you see now when you compare the archive, right? When you walk into a cave. Now I don't see. Comparing you, you look at the pictures and drawings or the painting the cave, etcetera right? You know it captures your mind. These happen 100 years ago, 150 years ago, so etcetera. So the record now that will actually give you a picture if you are interested in this archive of this tattoos you know because it comes from yesterday show and something that you have to you know. Pay attention to and they think, hell, you know, those were the days where this was done and that was etcetera".

(INT17) note "yes, definitely, well personally, I I want my grandfather this history of the he is he is a legend an I I want it known". Participants stress the educational value of the digital archive, noting that it provides insights into the evolution of tattooing as an art form and industry. Interviewees believe that the archive can serve as a resource for artists, historians, and individuals interested in learning about the origins and development of tattoo culture in South Africa with **(INT17) "**You know, yeah, and also on the other hand, for people now to learn from where the tattoo industry actually started and it didn't start with him. He learned from people" and **(INT8)** notes that "so others could learn from him? Yeah, these artists. The ones that are doing now". The importance of making the digital archive accessible to a wide audience, including scholars, enthusiasts, and the general public is key as **(INT1)**

“there were only two people in the country and you was in the KZN[17]. And then there was a guy in the Cape. So, and the people came from far and wide to see him, so, there should be, there should be something”, which emphasizes the role of the digital archive in raising awareness about Harry Ramesar's contributions and promoting appreciation for tattoo artistry in South Africa. Interviewees expressed personal connections to Harry Ramesar and his work, viewing the archive as a way to reminisce about the past, honour his memory and express a desire to preserve and share their own memories and experiences with future generations. **(INT1)** explains that “there were guys that have met that just to Harry to to have a tattoo just to say that the they they got a tattoo from Harry. They were from other people, other people, they they got tattoos, but they just wanted one from Harry to say they got from Harry”. **(INT4)** notes that “everybody was connected with the tattoos in Durban in those days, not only in Durban and people came from far and wide. Just get tattoos in Durban” and **(INT7)** echo’s INT4’s comment by elaborating that “honestly, yes, yes, yes because if you have Harry’s tattoos to any person back in the day in Durban or come from Joburg[18] went past and wanted a tattoo, went to Harry. Yes, so, he’s tattooed lots of people”. Many interviewees were responded with short positive comments, with **(IN11)** ‘100%”, **(INT12)** “something amazing”, **(INT15)** “I think so, he deserve it”, **(INT7) “**there should hey” and **(INT9)** “yeah, yeah”, thus resulting in interviewees reflecting strong support for the establishment of a digital archive for Harry Ramesar, driven by a collective desire to recognize his legacy, preserve history, educate others, and foster a sense of connection and nostalgia within the community.

B5.2 Discussion

The interviews reflect a strong consensus on the necessity and significance of creating a digital archive dedicated to Harry Ramesar, a pioneer and prominent figure in the South African tattoo industry. Interviewees universally acknowledge Ramesar as a pioneer in Durban’s tattoo scene, underscoring his influential role in shaping local tattoo culture. This broad

[17] KZN refers to KwaZulu Natal, a province in South Africa.
[18] An informal term for Johannesburg.

recognition of Harry Ramesar's contributions highlights the importance of preserving his legacy and making it accessible to future generations. Participants express concerns that without such an archive, the rich history and cultural significance of Harry Ramesar's work could be lost, with many interviewees emphasizing that memories and artefacts related to Harry Ramesar and his pioneering efforts in tattooing need to be preserved. The establishment of a digital archive is seen as a crucial step in ensuring that Harry Ramesar's legacy is not forgotten and that his contributions to the tattoo industry are documented and celebrated. The interviewees reveal a strong personal connection to Harry Ramesar, with many interviewees having first-hand experiences and memories of Harry Ramesar's work, thus viewing the digital archive as a means to reminisce about the past and honour his memory.

This personal connection extends to a desire to share their own experiences and memories with future generations, thereby enriching the historical context of the digital archive. The educational value of the digital archive is highlighted by several interviewees, who believe that the digital archive can serve as a valuable resource for artists, historians, and anyone interested in the history and evolution of tattoo culture in South Africa by providing detailed insights into Ramesar's work and its impact in early South African tattoo history. The archive can help others learn about the origins and development of tattooing in South Africa as an art form and as an industry. The importance of accessibility is also a recurring theme, with interviewees stressing that the digital archive should be available to a wide audience, including scholars, enthusiasts, and the general public thus proving vital for raising awareness about Harry Ramesar's contributions and promoting a broader appreciation for tattoo artistry in South Africa.

B6. Tattoo Artist Competition

B6.1 Findings

The interviews provide insights into the competitive landscape of the tattoo industry during Harry Ramesar's time as a tattoo artist, highlighting his prominence as a leading figure in the tattoo field, with Interviewees indicating that during Harry Ramesar's era, there were few tattoo artists in South Africa, with **(INT1)** noting that "there were only two people in the

country and he was in the KZN and when and there was one guy in the Cape. So, and the people came from far and wide to see him". The scarcity of competitors suggests that Ramesar occupied a relatively exclusive position within the South African tattoo industry. Harry Ramesar's skill and reputation set him apart from other tattoo artists of his time as interviewees emphasise that he was the only known professional tattoo artist in the region **(INT16)** "he was the only one there at the time", with no significant competition in terms of Expertise or recognition with **(INT4)** noting "but then at that time, he was only known artist". Harry Ramesar's dominance in the tattoo scene extended beyond his immediate locality as people from various regions travelled far and wide to seek out his services, indicating his widespread recognition and influence within the broader tattoo community. **(INT4)** explains "yeah, but if you spoke tattoo in Durban if you spoke tattoo, I'm talking about 80's and below. If you spoke tattoo then Harry was your man. There's no, I mean to us there's no known and there are there to artists". **(INT2)** reference to "many I have these ones. With the matchstick" refer to tattoos created using non-commercial tattooing techniques such as a matchstick, needle and ink that were not performed by tattoo artists.

Harry Ramesar was a formidable force in the South African tattoo industry, whose talent, reputation, and regional dominance set him apart as a preeminent figure during his time as a tattoo artist in South Africa.

B6.2 Discussion

The interviews offer a perspective on the competitive landscape of the South African tattoo industry during Harry Ramesar's era. They reveal that Ramesar held a unique and prominent position due to the limited number of tattoo artists in the country at the time, thus cementing his status as one of the few professional tattooists who significantly contributed to his high demand and widespread recognition. Harry Ramesar's skill and established reputation distinguished him from other rudimentary tattoo practitioners, which is evidenced by the fact that he was the only known and reputable artist in his region. The scarcity of competitors meant that those seeking professional high-quality tattoos had few options, thereby consolidating Harry Ramesar's dominance in the industry. Interviewees consistently highlight that Harry Ramesar's influence extended far beyond his immediate locality, with people from various regions travelling significant distances to receive his services. This indicates that his

reputation was not confined to Durban or even KwaZulu Natal but was recognized across South Africa.

His ability to attract clientele from diverse geographical areas underscores his significant impact on the broader tattoo community. The mention of non-commercial tattooing techniques, such as those performed with rudimentary tools by non-professional tattooists, further underscores Ramesar's unique position, with these techniques, often employed by incarcerated individuals or those lacking access to professional artists, which contrasts sharply with Ramesar's professional and artistic approach. This juxtaposition highlights the professional quality and artistry that Ramesar brought to the industry, setting a standard that was unmatched by these informal methods. The interviewees collectively paint a picture of Harry Ramesar as a pivotal figure in the South African tattoo industry. During a time when professional tattoo artists were few and far between, Harry Ramesar's talent, unwavering reputation, and regional dominance positioned him as a leading force in the field, and his ability to attract clients from various parts of the country speaks volumes about his influence and the high regard in which his work was held.

Harry Ramesar's contributions went beyond mere technical skill as he helped to shape the professional standards and cultural acceptance of tattooing in South Africa. His legacy is marked by a combination of artistic excellence and a significant geographic reach, making him a central figure in the history of South African tattooing. This analysis underscores the importance of documenting and preserving his contributions to ensure that future generations recognize and appreciate the foundational role he played in the evolution of the tattoo industry in South Africa.

C. PARTICIPANT RELATED

C1. Are Participants Happy with their tattoo?

C1.1 Findings

Participants reflect on the longevity of their tattoos, noting that they were inked several decades ago with **(INT1)** noting “yes, the only thing. Yeah, as you say, they did deteriorate the the the first one I had like 50 years ago in ’73 and the second one is 44 years ago”. Despite the passage of time, **(INT5)** acknowledged that the tattoos may have deteriorated somewhat over the years, which is a natural consequence of ageing skin – “the skin is losing that type of

elasticity I watch a couple times. I wish. Hey, let me go for one more and I look at it, nothing and it's just, you know, I've had my time with it. I've enjoyed what I've got". However, this deterioration does not necessarily diminish their overall satisfaction with the tattoos and they express acceptance of their tattoos' current state. Interviewees recognize that their tattooed phase of life has come to a natural conclusion and express a sense of closure and fulfilment with the experiences and memories associated with their tattoos. Two interviewees express unequivocal satisfaction with their tattoos as they affirm that they have never regretted getting inked and emphasize their contentment with the outcome with **(INT11)** replying "yeah, definitely, definitely" and **(INT5)** "I was happy hey", which underscores the enduring positive impact that the tattoos have had on their lives, despite any physical changes or ageing effects. Participants reminisce about their tattoos with fondness, describing them as lovely, bright, and shiny. **(INT16)** conveys a sense of nostalgia and appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of their tattoos, noting "it was really lovely and bright, where you can see the red and the yeah, it was nice and shiny, yeah". **(INT6)** notes that tattoos hold personal significance and have contributed to their sense of identity and individuality, noting that "for what it's done to me, yeah, I would have, I said, I'm sure I would have. You know, it's it's sort of set me apart from from from other guys at one stage" and "a lot of comments about it from time to time. But yeah, I, I suppose I would have no regrets about having it". Despite potential societal perceptions or comments from others, they remain committed in their satisfaction with their tattoos, viewing them as integral parts of their personal narratives.

In general, the interviews reveal positive perspectives regarding participants' satisfaction with their tattoos. While some acknowledge physical changes over time, the majority express enduring contentment and appreciation for their inked artwork, underscoring the profound and lasting impact that tattoos can have on individuals' lives.

C1.2 Discussion

The interviews provide a nuanced view of how participants perceive the longevity and significance of their tattoos. Although many acknowledge the natural deterioration of their tattoos over time, such as fading colours and the effects of ageing skin, these physical changes do not diminish their overall satisfaction. Participants reflected on the ageing process of their tattoos with acceptance, recognizing it as a natural part of life. The tattoos, created several

decades ago, are remembered fondly despite any changes as participants express a sense of closure and fulfilment with their tattooed experiences by viewing them as meaningful and integral to their personal narratives. The physical changes in the tattoos are seen as a testament to the passage of time and the lived experiences that accompany them. Interviewees emphasize their enduring satisfaction and lack of regret regarding their decision to get tattooed. This is particularly significant, as it underscores the lasting positive impact that tattoos have had on their lives and the fond reminiscence of their tattoos highlights their aesthetic and personal value. Descriptions of the tattoos as once being lovely, bright, and shiny reflect a deep appreciation for the art and the memories associated with them.

For some participants, tattoos have contributed to their sense of identity and individuality as they recount how their tattoos set them apart from others and elicited comments over time. This indicates that tattoos served as a form of personal expression and a means of distinguishing themselves in social contexts, despite societal perceptions or potential negative comments, participants maintained a strong commitment to their tattoos, valuing them as integral parts of their personal stories.

C2. Digital Archive Attitude

C1.1 Findings

The interviewees reflected a positive attitude towards the creation of a digital archive for tattoo artist Harry Ramesar, participants expressing gratitude and appreciation for the initiative to create a digital archive with **(INT1)** noting “I feel grateful to do a thing like that for Harry. I feel, I feel good” and **(INT12)** mentions that “you know, this is like mind blowing. I didn’t know you put it on the internet”. As perceived as a thoughtful and meaningful tribute to Harry Ramesar’s legacy, indicating a sense of respect and admiration for his contributions to the tattoo industry. Some participants reflect on their personal memories of Harry Ramesar and express a desire to preserve and share those memories through the digital archive. **(INT11)** reflects “yeah, how I remember him” and **(INT12)** notes that “a lot of I’m talking about us, Indians, a lot of Indians are going to see this now”, which suggests a nostalgic attachment to Harry Ramesar and his work, thus highlighting the enduring impact he had on their lives.

Interviewees express enthusiasm for documenting and exposing Harry Ramesar's work to a wider audience. **(INT2)** comments “and yeah, even more welcome to document it,

do whatever you need to do to get. Let's expose, let's I mean, let's get it further with everybody. Have a look at the life of Harry in KZN", and **(INT3)** comments "like you know, he's remembered for his work that he's done" thus portraying the digital archive as an opportunity to showcase Harry's talent and legacy, particularly to those who may not be familiar with his contributions. Participants recognise the importance of remembering Harry Ramesar for his artistic achievements with **(INT6)** noting "that's good. That is good. It's kept record". which relates the digital archive as a means of honouring Harry Ramesar's legacy and ensuring that his work is preserved and appreciated for future generations. Some participants acknowledge the uniqueness of Harry Ramesar's story and the significance of documenting it through a digital archive and express curiosity and interest in exploring his work, as **(INT6)** notes "I tell you unique, it's a unique subject" indicating a belief that his story deserves to be told and shared. **(INT7)** conveys a sense of positivity and support for the creation of a digital archive for Harry Ramesar with "thank you so much for doing this". Participants value the opportunity to commemorate his legacy, share their memories, and celebrate his contributions to the tattoo industry.

C2.2 Discussion

The interviews reflect a widespread positive attitude among participants towards the creation of a digital archive dedicated to tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. This initiative is perceived as a thoughtful and meaningful tribute to Harry Ramesar's legacy, demonstrating respect and admiration for his significant contributions to the tattoo industry in South Africa. The participants' expressions of gratitude and appreciation for this initiative highlight the emotional and cultural value they place on preserving Harry Ramesar's work and memory as interviewees expressed a personal connection to Harry Ramesar, reflecting on their memories and experiences with him. This nostalgic attachment underscores the enduring impact he had on their lives and the broader community. The desire to preserve and share these memories through a digital archive indicates a strong communal bond and a collective interest in ensuring that Ramesar's legacy is accessible to future generations.

Enthusiasm for documenting and exposing Harry Ramesar's work to a wider audience is a recurring theme as participants see the digital archive as an opportunity to showcase his talent and legacy, especially to those who may not be familiar with his contributions. This

enthusiasm highlights the recognition of Ramesar's artistic achievements and the importance of making his work known beyond his immediate community. The interviewees also recognize the importance of the digital archive in preserving Ramesar's work for future generations, viewing this study as a means of honouring his legacy and ensuring that his artistic contributions are not forgotten. The digital archive is seen as a way to document the unique and significant aspects of Harry Ramesar's story, with participants expressing curiosity and interest in exploring his work further. Generally, participants convey a sense of positivity and support for the creation of a digital archive for Harry Ramesar as they value the opportunity to commemorate his legacy, share their memories, and celebrate his contributions to the tattoo industry. This collective endorsement underscores the cultural and historical significance of Harry Ramesar's work and the importance of preserving it in a digital format.

C3. Participant Digital Literacy

C3.1 Findings

Some participants demonstrated a limited digital literacy, as indicated by **(INT12)**, "I go to the library" as their primary source of information, suggesting that they may not be proficient in using digital resources or online platforms to access digital information. **(INT13)** references to "Medieval communication" suggest that some participants may prefer or rely on traditional methods of communication and information dissemination. This indicates a potential lack of familiarity or comfort with modern digital technologies for accessing information. On the other hand, some participants, for example **(INT6)**, show a degree of digital literacy by mentioning their engagement with social media platforms like Facebook, with the comment "when I first saw your post on Facebook about him, I reacted straight away to it. To me, it's really very interesting". Their immediate reaction to a Facebook post about Harry Ramesar suggests that they are active users of social media and are comfortable navigating online platforms for information. **(INT6)** further notes that "oh look my source on it now is I think people Google so much now they're bound to get onto this and and gain some knowledge out of it". The mention of not having internet access by **(INT8)** highlights a significant barrier to digital literacy and access to online information. This interviewee may rely on traditional offline methods of communication and information gathering due to the absence of internet connectivity. **(INT8)** mentions relying on newspapers and physical interactions for

information about Harry Ramesar, which underscores a preference for traditional media channels over digital platforms, with “I’ve been to Harry say 50 years ago. Right, if you didn’t show it to me, it was like or if you didn’t come off. I didn’t phone you. I’ve seen you had written the paper and things like that. I wouldn’t have thought anything about it. Yeah. Nothing, nothing, nothing”. This reliance on traditional media may stem from factors such as limited access to technology or a preference for tangible sources of information. The responses suggest a varied level of digital literacy among the participants, with some demonstrating proficiency in using online platforms while others rely on traditional communication methods for accessing information about Harry Ramesar.

C3.2 Discussion

The interviews reveal a diverse range of digital literacy among participants, highlighting differences in how individuals would access and interact with information about Harry Ramesar. This variance reflects broader societal trends where digital proficiency and access to technology are unevenly distributed. Some participants exhibit limited digital literacy, indicating a reliance on traditional methods of information gathering. For instance, going to the library as a primary source of information suggests that certain individuals may not be comfortable or familiar with using digital resources or online platforms. This preference for traditional media channels is further evidenced by references to methods like ‘Medieval communication,’ which implies a reliance on non-digital forms of information dissemination. Conversely, other participants demonstrate a higher degree of digital literacy. Their engagement with social media platforms, such as Facebook, and the use of search engines like Google to access information, indicate that they are comfortable navigating the digital landscape. This group actively uses online platforms to stay informed and participate in discussions, showcasing a proficiency in digital communication and information retrieval.

The absence of internet access for some participants highlights a significant barrier to digital literacy and online engagement. This digital divide underscores the challenges faced by individuals who lack connectivity, thereby relying on traditional media and face-to-face interactions for information. The reliance on newspapers and physical interactions, as noted by some interviewees, underscores a preference for tangible sources of information, possibly due to limited access to digital technology or a comfort with familiar methods of information

gathering. The responses collectively suggest a varied level of digital literacy among the participants. While some individuals demonstrate proficiency in using online platforms and social media, others remain dependent on traditional communication methods. This variation in digital literacy levels highlights the need for inclusive approaches to information dissemination that cater to both digitally proficient individuals and those who rely on more traditional forms of media. For initiatives like creating a digital archive of Harry Ramesar's work, it is important to consider these varying levels of digital literacy. Ensuring that information is accessible both online and through traditional channels will be key to reaching a broader audience. Providing support and resources to enhance digital literacy could also help bridge the gap, enabling more people to engage with and benefit from the digital archive. The future of digital archives is promising, with advancements in technology significantly enhancing their accessibility and usability as these innovations allow digital archives to reach a broader audience, both locally and internationally. As digital archives become more sophisticated, they offer greater advantages to the masses by providing easier access to information and resources across the globe.

C4. Participant's reaction to viewing their tattoo design on the digital archive

C3.1 Findings

Participants expressed pride and satisfaction in seeing their tattoos documented on the digital archive with **(INT1)** noting, "I feel proud" and "feels good", which reveals a sense of accomplishment and validation knowing that their tattoos designs have been preserved in the digital archive. Many participants mention that viewing their tattoos designs on the digital archive brings back memories and evokes nostalgia. **(INT10)** mentioned that "it brings back memories" and "that's quite exciting as you say, it takes you back down memory lane, yeah', whilst **(INT13)** remarked that "oh wonderful, I think you know, some people keeps you know, it's it's, it's a memory". **(INT16)** remarked "well, it brings back memories. Those days nobody could tell me anything. I wanted it and I got it. Yeah" and **(INT7)** noted that "this is fun, down memory lane", and **(INT17)** admitting that "I never expected to see the tracings again" which notes that the interviewees appreciated the opportunity to reminisce about past experiences associated with their tattoos.

Participants appreciated the documentation of their tattoo designs in the digital archive with **(INT15)** noting that "there's something there to see' and 'you can gain a lot from it". **(INT2)** commented that "it's documented. I love it' and 'I'm, like, super happy that I have seen that and it's documented Yoh![19]" and **(INT3)** replies "oh, I would love to see it. Because, I mean, it's on me, so I'll be proud of seeing it", thus recognizing the value of having their tattoo design recorded for posterity and are grateful for the opportunity to share their stories. Some participants expressed admiration for the artistic aspect of their tattoos and recognized the skill of Harry Ramesar with **(INT16)** noting that "they're, they're still on record" and **(INT3)** explaining that "it was good sharing. It was good sharing the info with you and I'm so it was good sharing and I'm grateful that people still recognize the industry, the tattoo industry because people like people don't recognize this as being an artistic thing". **(INT4)** remarks that "it's it's lovely. I'm looking here. I mean, you can see this man's work", which indicates an appreciation for being able to see the intricate details of the tattoo design and gain insight into Harry Ramesar's work. Participants express surprise and amazement at seeing their tattoos in the digital archive. They did not expect the tattoo design to be preserved in such a manner and were pleasantly surprised by the experience. **(INT16)** remarked that "yeah, I never thought that I never thought that", **(INT8)** remarked "I never thought I'll ever see anything like this again' and **(INT17)** notes "Nostalgic. It's, it's I'm actually impressed". One participant **(INT9)** mentions feeling empowered by seeing their tattoo design on the digital archive, with the remark "it brings a lot, It gives me a eagle power" which gives a sense of strength and identity associated with their tattoo. Some participants acknowledge the recognition of the legacy of the tattoo artist Harry Ramesar and express gratitude for being part of it. **(INT15)** notes that "Harry is gone but he is still alive!" and **(INT4)** describes that "yeah, this man started in somewhere in the 30's". **(INT4)** describes that "yeah and it gives you more insight into what he's done is like, like I said, like I said, this man was a legend and he's worked. He's worked across the the plane, so he might have some weird tattoos as well, yeah" thus recognising the significance of their tattoo design being included in the digital archive and the impact it has on preserving tattoo culture.

[19] The word 'yoh' is used in South Africa to express awe or surprise (2016)

The responses highlight the multifaceted nature of participants' reactions to seeing their tattoo design in the digital archive, ranging from pride and nostalgia to surprise and empowerment. The digital archive serves as a platform for preserving personal and cultural memories associated with tattoo artistry, fostering a sense of connection and appreciation among participants.

C4.2 Discussion

The participants' responses to the digital archive of Harry Ramesar reveal a range of positive emotions and sentiments, underscoring the significance of this preservation study. Many express a deep sense of pride and satisfaction in seeing their tattoo design documented, which validates their personal choices and experiences associated with their tattoo. This documentation serves not only as a recognition of their individual tattoo design but also as an acknowledgment of their contribution to a broader cultural and artistic legacy. A recurring theme in the interviews is nostalgia, where participants often mention that viewing their tattoo design in the digital archive evokes fond memories, taking them back to the time when they got their tattoos. This nostalgia is not merely a passive reminiscence but an active engagement with their past selves and experiences, highlighting the enduring emotional impact of their tattoos. In addition, participants appreciate the archival documentation, recognizing its value in preserving tattoo designs for posterity. This preservation effort is seen as an opportunity to share their stories and ensure that their tattoos are remembered and respected as part of the cultural history. The digital archive, therefore, becomes a repository of not only the personal histories and collective memories, offering insights into the lives and experiences of those who chose to express themselves through tattoos but in addition, there is also a strong appreciation for the artistic aspect of the tattoos and the skill of Harry Ramesar as a tattoo artist. Participants admire the intricate details and craftsmanship of their tattoos, which the digital archive allows them to view and appreciate. This recognition of the artistry involved elevates the perception of tattoos from mere body modifications to significant works of art while the element of surprise and amazement is another important reaction noted in the interviews as many participants did not expect their tattoo design to be preserved in such a manner and are pleasantly surprised by the initiative. This unexpected documentation

brings a sense of validation and recognition, enhancing their appreciation for the effort to archive their tattoo design.

Some participants describe feeling empowered by seeing their tattoo design in the digital archive. This empowerment stems from a renewed sense of identity and strength associated with their body art, reinforcing the personal significance of their tattoos. Lastly, the recognition of Harry Ramesar's legacy is a poignant aspect of the responses as participants express gratitude for being part of this legacy and acknowledge the impact of Ramesar's work in the tattoo industry and culture. The digital archive not only preserves the tattoo artefacts but also honours the memory and contributions of Harry Ramesar, ensuring that his influence and artistry are remembered and celebrated.

D1. Hand Poking

D1.1 Findings

Hand Poking, is alternative to commercial tattooing practices, involving a primitive method where tattoos were created on the skin using a matchstick, needle, and ink. **(INT14)** remarks “yeah, we had one guy that was good that we trusted”. In this case the skilled practitioner was **(INT14)** brother “my, my little brother, years ago, all the drawings and the tattoos”. The hand poking tradition seems to have been passed down from the observation of other people performing the practice with the comments “Just seeing it from other people’ and ‘see it from other people. Yeah, they could have saw it on TV or something”. This form of tattooing was normally reserved for smaller tattoo design with **(INT14)** noting “none of the men would take big tattoos. They all small’, with a common design being ‘that one mother, mother. Everybody’s putting the girlfriend and I said no mother. My mother cannot change, only girlfriends can change”. Hand poked tattoos were described as painful, likely due to the use of a single needle, with **(INT14)** referencing that “painful. Yeah, because it was one needle”.

D1.2 Discussion

The interviews provide a glimpse into the practice of hand-poked tattooing, an alternative to commercial tattoo methods that involves creating tattoos with a matchstick, needle, and ink as this primitive method is notably different from machine-based tattooing. The hand-poked tattoo artists are highlighted by the participants' trust in a single, reliable individual for their

tattoos. This reliance on one trusted artist underscores the difficulty and confident knowledge required to perform hand-poked tattoos successfully. Participants describe hand-poked tattoos as generally small in design, a practical consideration given the manual effort required and the associated pain. The choice of designs, such as the word 'mother', indicates that these tattoos held deep personal significance and this preference for smaller tattoos could be due to the higher pain levels experienced during the hand-poking process, as the single-needle method would likely result in more discomfort compared to modern tattoo machines.

The pain associated with hand-poked tattoos is a notable aspect mentioned by INT14 as the use of a single needle made the process particularly painful, which may have influenced the decision to keep the tattoos small and simple. Despite the pain, the willingness of individuals to undergo the procedure suggests a strong commitment to the personal and cultural significance of their tattoos.

D2. Popular Tattoos

D2.1 Findings

Based on the interviews, it is evident that certain tattoo designs were particularly popular among the clients of Harry Ramesar with references to specific designs such as the statue of liberty, panthers, eagles, saints, red Indian ladies, Fu Manchu, skulls, tribal arm bands, and naked women indicate recurring themes in the tattoos that Harry Ramesar created. **(INT1)** remarks that "the other famous one was that the lady with the bikini. Yeah, that was another famous one. The the guys used to put on the forearm on the inside of the forearm", **(INT2)** "remember the guys putting this, this one statue of liberty popular, 'there's other ones, like I said, the Panther", "wild cats will have all those tigers and panthers and all that" and "oh, the ladies. That one Yoh, many of the ballies[20] they got that". **(INT5)** noted that "I've seen so many people with this, the Red Indian Lady" and **(INT7)** comments that "back in the day in Fu Manchu was one of the most popular tattoos, was of the gang" and "this is a popular one as well with the skull and the bones". These designs likely reflected prevalent cultural motifs, personal preferences, or societal trends during the time period.

[20] A term in South Africa that refers to an old man or a father ("Africtionary - Ballie definition" 2021).

The mention of the lady with a bikini, both standing and sitting, as well as the inclusion of girlfriends' names or the likenesses, suggests a theme of sensuality or romantic attachment. **(INT8)** notes “what was a very common one was the lady and with the bikini with the legs folded front” *and explaining that* “other one was as well, also quite popular the guy just put a heart and cross the heart like a women going through and whatever they want to write in it, the the girlfriend’s name or the mother’s name or his love it is also quite popular” with **(INT9)** remarking that “this naked women. Yeah, and then I was wanting to have it, you know? I just liked it” *and* “most of the guys plus and minus, they got this”. On the other hand, designs featuring saints, eagles, skulls, and tribal arm bands may represent themes of spirituality, strength, mortality, and cultural identity with **(INT1)** remarking “lovely eagle picture” and **(INT12)** noting that “at that time, most boys were putting on saints”. **(INT17)** confirmed that “yes, the tribal arm bands were very, very popular”. The repetition of certain designs across different interviews underscores their popularity and prevalence within the community. This indicates that specific tattoo designs may have held significant cultural, personal, and popular significance for individuals seeking them. The variety of popular tattoo designs mentioned in the interviews provides insight into the diverse tastes and interests of Harry Ramesar's clientele, reflecting a blend of cultural, personal, and aesthetic influences, which can be seen first-hand in the diverse collection of artefacts on the digital archive.

D2.2 Discussion

The interviews reveal a rich tapestry of popular tattoo designs among Harry Ramesar's clients, highlighting recurring themes and motifs that resonated with the cultural, personal, and aesthetic sensibilities of the time. Specific designs such as the Statue of Liberty, panthers, eagles, saints, red Indian ladies, Fu Manchu, skulls, tribal arm bands, and naked women were frequently mentioned, indicating their widespread appeal. The prevalence of these designs suggests that they were not merely artistic choices but also reflections of broader cultural and societal trends. For example, the Statue of Liberty and patriotic symbols might have represented ideals of freedom and identity and the frequent appearance of eagles, panthers, and other wild animals in tattoos could symbolize strength, power, and a connection to nature. These motifs often carry a sense of personal empowerment and resilience, which may have been particularly appealing to individuals seeking to express these qualities through

their body art. The inclusion of sensual and romantic themes, such as women in bikinis or naked women, and the names or likenesses of girlfriends, points to a personal dimension in tattoo choices as these designs likely signified intimate relationships, personal milestones, or romantic ideals. The repeated references to these themes indicate their importance in personal expression during that era.

Spirituality and mortality are also significant themes among the popular tattoo designs as seen by the depiction of saints, skulls, and tribal arm bands, which speak to a deep engagement with spiritual beliefs, cultural identity, and the contemplation of life and death. Saints and religious symbols might reflect personal faith or cultural heritage, while skulls often symbolize the acceptance of mortality or the celebration of life despite its transient nature.
The mention of specific designs such as the Fu Manchu and Red Indian ladies also points to the influence of popular culture and specific cultural icons as these designs may have been inspired by visual trends, folklore, or prominent figures of the time, thus highlighting how external cultural influences were internalized and personalized through tattoo art. The diversity of these popular designs indicates a broad range of interests and influences among Harry Ramesar's clientele, which showcase a blend of personal significance, cultural identity, societal trends, and aesthetic preferences. The recurrence of these themes across different interviews underscores their collective resonance within the community and their enduring impact on the individuals who chose them.

D3. Tattoo Popularity

D3.1 Findings

Harry Ramesar's popularity stemmed from word of mouth referrals and his reputation as a skilled tattoo artist, with **(INT1)** remarking that “at that stage there were a lot of people putting tattoos even my late brother. My late brother-in-law. He put the tattoo by Harry” and **(INT7)** noting that “Harry never advertised, it was always word of mouth. Yeah, those days, there’s no social media. So, when you go back and you tell your friend. Hey, where did you get your tattoo from, aye I got it from Harry”. Clients sought him out based on recommendations from friends and acquaintances, highlighting the trust and admiration he garnered within the tattoo community based on the remarks of the interviewees, the clientele primarily consisted of men, with women visiting less frequently, with **(INT12)** noting that

“women shouldn’t come there very often. They’re mostly guys”. This reflects gender norms and perceptions surrounding tattoos during the time period, where it was more common for men to have tattoos than women. Social attitudes towards tattoos were mixed, with some individuals, such as family members and religious figures, expressing disapproval as described by **(INT16)** “well the church. I was a non-believer. I didn’t believe it and they don’t believe in tattoos. You mustn’t mark your skin but I thought you must have well, it’s only for one tattoo’ and “well, my immediate family, like my wife and my mother-in-law, they were defiantly against it. Yeah. You going to church? And you’ve got tattoos. You’re going to go to hell’. Tattoos were associated with stereotypes of rebellion, criminality, or ruggedness, represented by **(INT6)** “It was frowned upon in a lot of places and things if you go for a job interview or you cover it up because it was basically associated with because it had been to prison, I think’ and I put a few father’s off. When I went to visit their daughter’s, I would think” and **(INT9)** noted “so they assume now if you got a tattoo now you’re like rugged guy just there and then”. However, despite societal stigma, many individuals still sought out tattoos from Harry Ramesar, suggesting a willingness to defy social norms and express individuality.

Despite the stigma and social attitudes, Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio remained busy, with clients willing to wait in queues for his services as noted by **(INT2)** “He was busy, you got to be in the queue. Book an appointment and come back. No. the guys are sitting and waiting in the queue to get to him as soon as he’s done with that guy to take you up” and **(INT24)** “It was, yeah. He had a lot of people. He had a lot of people there. Yeah. Yeah, I think people sit there. I don’t know for some reason. I think they interact”. **(INT17)** recounts ‘he always have a queue of people waiting for him”, “there was never a day where you go to see Harry and there’s no people, no customers waiting. They’ll be waiting before he actually got there and opened the door and that goes every day”. This indicates a high demand for his work and suggests that clients valued his craftsmanship and Expertise enough to endure waiting times. Over time, attitudes towards tattoos shifted, with more people, including friends and acquaintances, getting tattoos. This is conveyed by **(INT5)** as he recounts his personal experience with tattoos “We came out of the army. You weren’t allowed in those days. Nowadays I don’t know, but in those days you had tattoos, they didn’t want to know your story. So no one in that I’d known and had tattoos was only when you were like I said, on the beach and that we were there all the time”, “many people, none of my friends, had

tattoos from Harry" *and* "the only tattoos with my friends started in the 2000's. That's when they started having, because by then I was having fairly regularly and the guys were seeing all the new ones, all the new stuff coming out". **(INT8)** notes that "I have to say I Know a lot of people that have tattoos', 'he was very good man and he's too good at that age". This suggests a gradual normalization and acceptance of tattoos within society, possibly influenced by changing societal, cultural perceptions and trends. The interviewees highlight Harry Ramesar's respected reputation as a tattoo artist, the evolving attitudes towards tattoos within society, and the enduring popularity of his services despite societal stigma.

D3.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interviews reveals several key factors contributing to Harry Ramesar's popularity and the evolving social attitudes towards tattoos during his time. Firstly, word-of-mouth referrals played a significant role in building and sustaining Harry Ramesar's reputation as a skilled tattoo artist as clients sought him out based on recommendations from friends and acquaintances, which indicates a high level of trust and admiration within the tattoo community. This organic method of client acquisition underscores the strength of personal endorsements in the absence of the participation in advertising methods of the time. This absence could be due to the segregation policies of apartheid during the time and the societal challenges of tattoos in general. Harry Ramesar's clientele primarily consisted of men, reflecting the gender norms and perceptions surrounding tattoos during that era, as it was more common for men to have tattoos, while women were less frequent visitors to his studio. This gender disparity highlights the societal views on tattoos as predominantly a masculine form of expression, associated with traits like ruggedness and rebellion.

Social attitudes towards tattoos were mixed, with some family members and religious figures expressing disapproval as tattoos were often linked to stereotypes of criminality and non-conformity, leading to societal stigma. Despite this, many individuals still sought out Harry Ramesar's tattoo services, suggesting a willingness to defy social norms and express their individuality through body art. This defiance of societal expectations points to the deep personal significance tattoos held for many of Harry Ramesar's clients and despite the stigma, Harry Ramesar's studio remained consistently busy, indicating a high demand for his work, with clients willing to endure long waiting times, which speaks volumes about his

craftsmanship and the value placed on his Expertise. This level of dedication from his clientele further underscores Harry Ramesar's respected status in the tattoo community and over time, as attitudes towards tattoos shifted, with more people, including friends and acquaintances, getting tattooed. This gradual normalization and acceptance of tattoos within society were likely influenced by changing cultural perceptions, trends and the shift of the political landscape in South Africa. The interviews suggest that tattoos transitioned from being a marker of rebellion to a more widely accepted form of personal expression, with the enduring popularity of Harry Ramesar's services, despite societal stigma, thus highlighting his significant impact on the tattoo industry in South Africa. His respected reputation and the evolving attitudes towards tattoos within society illustrate the dynamic nature of cultural acceptance and the role of a skilled tattoo practitioner in shaping public perceptions.

D4. Tattoos as Deviance

D4.1 Findings

Tattoos were seen as a symbol of masculinity and toughness, with individuals getting tattoos to portray themselves as 'Macho[21]' as **(INT10)** describes "you know you want to be like macho", which suggests that tattoos could be associated with a desire to project a tough or rebellious image. In the military, individuals with tattoos were sometimes sent home, indicating a stigma attached to tattoos within institutional settings. **(INT5)** relates this by "I remember in the army when we went there, couple of guys got sent home because they had tattoos, Cape Town guys" thus giving the impression that tattoos were viewed as deviant behaviour that did not align with military standards or regulations. Individuals with tattoos, especially those acquired in jail, were often stereotyped and judged as bad or deviant as reflected by **(INT7)** "the guys that came out of jail, who we used to hang around with. They used to come with their own tattoos from jail" and 'in those days, you look at the person and your judged him as a bad person, you know, back in the day, that guy with the tattoos, the mindset back in the day". This reflects societal attitudes towards tattoos as markers of

[21] having or characterised by qualities considered manly, especially when manifested in an assertive, self-conscious, or dominating way ("MACHO Definition & Meaning | Dictionary.com" n.d.).

criminality or social deviance, contributing to the stigmatization of tattooed individuals during the time.

(INT9) associated getting tattoos with rebellious or naughty behaviour in their youth by commenting "yeah, uh. Many, many moons ago because why? I was a naughty teenager. My younger, younger days'. This suggests that tattoos were perceived as a form of deviance from societal norms or expectations, particularly among younger individuals. The decision to get a tattoo was sometimes interpreted as a demonstration of pain tolerance, with **(INT14)** noting that some individuals avoiding tattoos due to fear of pain – "but some people maybe at that time taking to say they can take pain" *and* "some people were scared of pain yes, so they wouldn't take it". This indicates that the act of getting a tattoo was seen as a deliberate choice to endure pain, further reinforcing the perception of tattoos as deviant behaviour. The interviewee responses highlight the stigmatization of tattoos as symbols of deviance, rebellion, and toughness during the time period discussed. They also demonstrate how societal attitudes towards tattoos influenced perceptions of individuals who had them, contributing to stereotypes and judgments based on appearance.

D4.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interviews reveals that tattoos were often seen as a symbol of masculinity, toughness, and rebellion with individuals getting tattoos to project a 'macho' image, associating the body art with toughness and a rebellious persona. This cultural perception linked tattoos with a desire to be seen as tough or rebellious, especially among younger people and certain subcultures. In institutional settings like the military, tattoos were stigmatised, with some individuals with tattoos being sent home from the military, indicating that tattoos were viewed as inconsistent with military standards and regulations. This institutional disapproval reflects broader societal attitudes that associated tattoos with deviant behaviour.

Tattoos acquired in jail carried additional stigma, with individuals often judged as bad or deviant based on their tattoos. This reflects a broader societal tendency to associate tattoos with criminality, reinforcing negative stereotypes about tattooed individuals with the stigma extending beyond the prison context, affecting anyone with tattoos, who were often judged harshly based on their appearance.

The association of tattoos with rebellious or naughty behaviour in youth suggests that tattoos were seen as a form of defiance against societal norms. This perception was particularly strong among younger individuals, who viewed tattoos as a way to assert their independence or non-conformity. The decision to get a tattoo was sometimes seen as a demonstration of pain tolerance, with the act of enduring the pain of getting tattooed further reinforcing the image of toughness and deviance. This perception likely contributed to the stigma surrounding tattoos, as those who chose to get tattooed were seen as deliberately embracing a painful and rebellious act. The interview responses highlight the strong societal stigma attached to tattoos during the time period discussed in this study, with tattoos seen as markers of deviance, rebellion, and toughness, and individuals with tattoos were often judged and stereotyped based on their appearance. These perceptions contributed to the marginalisation of tattooed individuals and reinforced negative societal attitudes towards tattoos.

D5. Occupational Influences

D5.1 Findings

Based on the feedback of the interviewees, tattoos were commonly seen among individuals in the Navy, and many of them had tattoos done by Harry Ramesar as referenced by **(INT3)** "The guys in the Navy had tattoos, you know, the guys that worked in the Navy so and most of them were done by him". These tattoos often carried specific symbols or marks associated with the Navy, indicating a sense of identity and belonging within the naval community. **(INT3)** suggests that Ramesar's work played a significant role in tattooing within the Navy, with his designs becoming emblematic of naval culture, by noting that "and and if you look at most of the Navy guys, especially the Indian guys and whatever. They've all got these similar tattoos that Harry has done for them because they all carried like a certain mark on them" and "like certain ones was for the Navy, certain ones were certain people like that sort of thing and and and they did a fantastic job". Harry Ramesar tattooed many sailors, with **(INT4)** noting that "he tattooed a lot of sailors as well being on there near the harbour there". This indicates that sailors were a prominent clientele for Harry Ramesar, likely due to their exposure to different cultures and traditions during their travels, leading to a diverse range of tattoo designs and inspirations.

A second occupational group mentioned in the interviews was bus conductors and drivers, who were also frequent customers of Ramesar. **(INT8)** observed that “and most of these drivers at that at that time were bus conductors, right? All of them” and continues with “and almost everyone I know, drivers or conductors, they all had tattoos from Harry. Yeah, whole lot of them”. It suggests that tattoos were prevalent among individuals in transportation-related occupations, perhaps as a form of self-expression or identity within their profession. These findings indicate that occupation played a significant role in the tattoo culture of the time, with certain professions fostering a higher prevalence of tattoos, and specific designs becoming emblematic of occupational identity. Harry Ramesar's influence as a tattoo artist extended beyond individual clients to shape the tattoo culture within occupational communities, contributing to the broader societal perception and acceptance of tattoos.

D5.2 Discussion

The feedback from the interviewees highlights the significant role that Harry Ramesar played in the tattoo culture among individuals in the Navy and transportation-related occupations, particularly bus conductors and drivers. Tattoos among Navy personnel were not only common but often carried specific symbols or marks associated with the Navy, indicating a strong sense of identity and belonging within this community. Harry Ramesar’s work became emblematic of naval culture, with many sailors, especially Indian sailors, sporting similar designs that he created. This suggests that Harry Ramesar's tattoos were more than just body art; they were symbols of camaraderie and shared experiences within the naval community.

The prevalence of tattoos among sailors can be attributed to their exposure to various cultures and traditions during their travels, which likely influenced the diversity of tattoo designs and inspirations. Harry Ramesar's proximity to the harbour made him a convenient and popular choice for sailors looking to get tattooed, further cementing his influence within this group. Similarly, bus conductors and drivers formed another occupational group where tattoos were prevalent as the interviews suggest that tattoos among these individuals were a form of self-expression and identity within their profession. Many bus conductors and drivers had tattoos done by Harry Ramesar, indicating that his work was widely recognized

and valued within this community. This prevalence suggests that tattoos were an integral part of the cultural and social identity of individuals in these occupations.

In addition, the feedback also indicates that Harry Ramesar's influence as a tattoo artist extended beyond individual clients to shape the tattoo culture within these occupational communities. His designs became emblematic of certain professions, contributing to a broader societal acceptance and perception of tattoos. The shared experiences and identities within these groups were reinforced through the common practice of getting tattooed by Harry Ramesar, highlighting the social and cultural significance of his work.

E1. Harry Ramesar's personality.

E1.1 Findings

Interviewee responses provide insights into Harry Ramesar's personality, portraying him as friendly, pleasant, and cheeky individual with a kind demeanour. Participants described Harry as friendly and pleasant to interact with, creating a welcoming atmosphere for his clients, with **(INT1)** noting "he was just a friendly person' and 'yeah, you, you go, you go to him. No problem. It's a very pleasant person. He was a very pleasant person" and **(INT13)** commented that "very pleasant calm guy'. Whilst Harry was known for his pleasant demeanour, he also had a cheeky and naughty side, with **(INT11)** noting that "he was very cheeky. Yeah, he was cheeky, but for all the right reasons" and he "had a naughty side too" thus adding a sense of humour and playfulness to his interactions with his clients. **(INT13)** and **(INT15)** characterized Harry Ramesar as calm, gentle, and gentlemanly, contributing to a relaxed and comfortable environment for his clients, the "very pleasant calm guy" and "very, very good gentleman" respectively. **(INT16)** and **(INT9)**, viewed Harry as a good and kind person, emphasizing his generosity and genuine interest in others, with **(INT16)** noting "well, well, to me he was a good guy. He seemed to be alright. He didn't charge too much" and **(INT9)** remarked that "oh yeah, yeah he was very kind, kind, loving gentleman".

Despite his friendly nature, Harry was also described as quiet and respectful, focusing on his work and maintaining a professional demeanour while interacting with clients. **(INT8)** notes "was quiet himself, you know? Yeah, Harry wasn't the person that was, you know, while

he’s doing your tattoo and you know, talk way and things like that, no”. These remarks from interviewees suggest that Harry Ramesar possessed a multifaceted personality characterized by friendliness, humour, kindness, and professionalism with the ability to balance these traits, likely contributing to his success as a tattoo artist and fostered positive relationships with his clients.

E1.2 Discussion

The interviewees provide a comprehensive portrayal of Harry Ramesar's personality, highlighting several common key traits that contributed to his success and popularity as a tattoo artist. Harry is consistently described as a friendly and pleasant individual, creating a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for his clients. This friendly demeanour likely played a significant role in attracting and retaining clients, as they felt at ease in his presence. In addition, Harry’s Ramesar’s cheeky and playful side added an element of humour to his interactions, making the experience of getting a tattoo enjoyable and memorable for his clients. This playful nature, described as being ‘cheeky but for all the right reasons’, suggests that Harry Ramesar knew how to engage with his clients in a way that was light-hearted and entertaining, which likely contributed to his positive reputation. His calm, gentle, and gentlemanly manner further enhanced the client experience with his ability to maintain a calm and relaxed environment, which would have been particularly important in the context of tattooing, a process that can be intimidating or painful for some individuals. Descriptions of Harry as calm and gentle indicate that he had a soothing presence, which likely helped clients feel more at ease during their tattoo sessions.

The descriptions of Harry as kind and generous, with a genuine interest in others, paint a picture of a person who was not only skilled at his craft but also deeply cared about his clients. His kindness and generosity, as noted by several interviewees, suggest that he was approachable and willing to go the extra mile to ensure his clients were satisfied. This aspect of his personality would have fostered a strong sense of loyalty and trust among his clients. Despite his friendly and playful nature, Harry also maintained a quiet and respectful demeanour, focusing intently on his work. This professional attitude ensured that while he was approachable and friendly and remained dedicated to the quality of his tattooing. The

balance between his sociable traits and his professional focus is a testament to his ability to manage his business effectively while maintaining positive client relationships.

E2. Harry Ramesar's popularity.

E1.1 Findings

Interview responses provide insights into Harry Ramesar's popularity as a tattoo artist, indicating that he was widely known and respected within his community with emphasis that "everyone knew" Harry, highlighting his widespread recognition and popularity among the people. **(INT10)** comments that "everyone knew of Harry", **(INT6)** noted that even people who lived in other provinces outside of KwaZulu Natal would go see Harry Ramesar "tattoos for all the young guys that were on holiday down into Durban, that for the people, the tattoo, he was the only one I ever heard about" and **(INT7)** explained that "everybody knew Harry. No, no, everybody knew him. If you wanted a tattoo, you go chat to him". Harry Ramesar was perceived as a figure of authority and mastery in his craft, with participant **(INT11)** referring to him as "the master" and noting his authoritative presence, with the comments "no nonsense guy. He's when he's there. He's authority' and 'He was the master, Harry". Harry Ramesar was regarded as a legend and the go-to tattoo artist in town, indicating his iconic status and the high demand for his services. **(INT13)** simply put it as "he was a legend" and **(INT6)** noted that "he was the go to. I was working up on the gold mines at that stage and he was the go to".

The tattoo studio of Harry Ramesar was described by **(INT7)** as a central hub, where "everybody knew" to go for tattoos, underscoring his studio's reputation as a prominent establishment in the community – "so across the road was Harry's joint and everybody knew that". Many clients were referred to Harry by word of mouth, suggesting that his reputation for quality work and professionalism spread organically through positive recommendations from satisfied customers with **(INT11)** commenting *that* "you know how he he's well-known in town", **(INT14)** commented that "Not a funny guy, but he was a joking type of guy because he's meeting different kind of people" and **(INT8)** commenting that "my older brothers, right and there was a lot of people that I know, went to Harry". These findings indicate that Harry Ramesar enjoyed widespread popularity and respect as a tattoo artist, with his name becoming synonymous with Expertise, reliability, and excellence in the field.

E2.2 Discussion

The interview responses provide a compelling picture of Harry Ramesar's prominence and reputation as a tattoo artist. His widespread recognition and popularity are evident from the numerous mentions of his name being well-known across different communities. This broad recognition extended beyond his immediate location, with people from other provinces seeking his services, thus highlighting his far-reaching influence and the high regard in which he was held. Harry Ramesar was perceived not only as a skilled tattoo artist but also as an authoritative figure in his field. Descriptions of him as 'the master' and a 'no-nonsense guy' with authoritative presence suggest that he commanded respect and had a significant impact on the tattoo community. His reputation for mastery in tattooing likely contributed to his iconic status, making him the go-to artist for many individuals. The characterization of Harry as a 'legend' and the central figure in tattooing within his community underscores his lasting impact and the high demand for his services. His studio, described as a central hub where 'everybody knew' where to go, indicates that his establishment was a cornerstone in the local tattoo scene. This central role in the community further solidified his reputation and ensured a steady stream of clients.

Word-of-mouth referrals played a crucial role in spreading Harry's Ramesar's reputation, with satisfied customers recommending him to others, ensuring that his fame and recognition continued to grow organically. The positive experiences and endorsements from his clients, including comments about his approachable and joking nature, suggest that his personal interactions also contributed significantly to his popularity. Harry's Ramesar's ability to connect with a diverse range of people and maintain a professional yet friendly demeanour helped in building strong client relationships and his well-known presence in town and the repeated referrals from various sources indicate that he was trusted and admired by many, reinforcing the idea that his name became synonymous with Expertise, reliability, and excellence in tattooing.

6.6 Analysis structure of interviewee tattoos

Analysing the tattoos of interview participants is a crucial facet in research studies as it offers a multifaceted understanding of individual and collective identities, social contexts, personal narratives, and cultural expressions. This analysis not only enriches the data but also 'provides a more holistic view of the participants, their experiences, and their place within society'. Analysing the photographic images of an interview participant's tattoo using Rose's (2023) methodologies involves a critical and interpretative approach, considering the visual and symbolic elements, as well as the cultural and social contexts. Utilizing the principles of Rose (2023) to analyse the tattoos in this study is essential, as her comprehensive approach to visual culture provides a nuanced and in-depth framework for understanding images within their broader contexts. Even though the analytical approaches by Rose (2023) focus primarily on images, this study will propose and utilize a refined analytical framework specifically developed utilizing methodological principles from Rose (2023) for analysing tattoos which will be outlined and elaborated on later in this chapter.

Tattoos often serve as markers of personal and cultural identity as they can reflect an individual's beliefs, experiences, affiliations, and heritage. The analysing of tattoos allows researchers to gain deeper insights into how participants see themselves, how they want to be seen by others and in the context of this study, insights on the tattoo artist that created the tattoos. Tattoos can provide valuable information about the social and historical contexts in which they were created, by examining the designs, styles, and symbols used in tattoos, which allows researchers to uncover trends and influences from specific time periods and cultural movements. This helps in understanding the broader societal influences on individuals. Each tattoo carries a story or meaning for the person who has it and analyzing these tattoos help in exploring the personal narratives and significance attached to them. This analysis can reveal underlying themes, such as trauma, love, loss, or personal milestones, providing a richer understanding of the participants' lives.

As revealed in the analysis of the textual data of this study, tattoos have varying degrees of social acceptance and stigma attached to them depending on the culture and context. Analysing participants' tattoos can shed light on how they navigate these social perceptions and what it means for their sense of belonging and social identity. Tattoos are a

form of artistic expression and analysing them helps document the aesthetic choices and artistic trends within a particular community or demographic, which is important for preserving the cultural heritage and the understanding of the evolution of tattoo art. The inclusion of tattoo analysis in research adds another layer of methodological rigour as it allows for a multi-faceted approach to understanding participants, combining visual analysis with narrative and thematic analysis from interviews. This comprehensive approach enriches the data and strengthens the validity of the research findings.

Using the principles of Rose (2023) to analyse tattoos is essential, as her comprehensive approach to visual culture provides a nuanced and in-depth framework for understanding tattoos within their broader contexts. Applying a bespoke set of Rose's principles to tattoo analysis offers a robust framework for understanding tattoos beyond their aesthetic value. Rose's (2023) approach will allow for a comprehensive exploration of the cultural, social, and ideological dimensions of tattoos, ensuring a richer appreciation of their significance and impact within visual culture. Table 7.7 provides a breakdown of the five principles that will be used to analyse participant tattoos in this study, followed by descriptions of each principle.

Table 6.7 Interviewee Tattoo Analysis Structure.

Interviewee Tattoo Analysis Structure			
STEP	APPROACH		SCOPE
1	Analysis of the Tattoo		
	a	Context	• Understand the larger context in which the tattoo was created and is displayed. • Consider the individual's personal history, cultural background, and the broader cultural and societal context.

	b	Analysis	• Examine the formal elements of the tattoo. This includes its design, size, colour, style, and placement on the body. • Analyse the visual composition of the tattoo, considering the balance of elements and how they interact.
2	Semiotic Analysis		Utilize the Semiotic methodologies suggested by Rose to: • Investigate the symbols and motifs present in the tattoo. What do they represent? How are they combined, and what meanings can be derived from their arrangement? • Consider how the tattoo communicates a visual narrative or message.
3	Interpretation		• Formulate interpretations of the tattoo based on the formal and semiotic analysis. What is the tattoo's intended or perceived meaning, and how might it be influencing the viewer's perception?
	3a	Literature	• What is the tattoo's intended or perceived meaning based on existing academic literature.
	3b	Interviewee	• Reflect on the significance of the tattoo to the person who bears it, and how it may serve as a form of self-expression.
4	Audience Reception		• How might different audiences interpret the tattoo. How might its meaning vary depending on the viewer's personal experiences?

5	Contextualise the Analysis	• Relate the tattoo's meaning and significance to the individual's life, their identity, and the larger cultural or subcultural context in which the tattoo exists.

1. Analysis of the Tattoo

a) Context

Gauging the context of an image is an important phase in the foundation in the analysis of a tattoo. Rose (2023) notes that:

> ‘visual imagery is never innocent; it is always constructed through various practices, technologies and knowledges. A critical approach of visual images is therefore needed: one that thinks about the agency of the image, considers the social practices and effects of its circulation and viewing, and reflects on the specificity of that viewing by various audiences and users, including the academic critic’ (Rose 2023:44).

b) Analysis

Compositional interpretation focuses primarily on the composition of the image itself. While this breakdown serves as a schematic tool, in practice, these components are rarely entirely separate from one another, with the concept of composition encompassing all the elements in combination. Rose (2023) breaks down the compositional interpretation of images into four categories:

1. **Association:** Compositional interpretation can and should be applied to any type of image, but its origins are rooted in a specific tradition of art history, and it continues to be used independently within that context.
2. **Sites and modalities:** Compositional interpretation gives some consideration to the production of images, including the technologies involved, but primarily focuses on the image itself and its compositional aspects.
3. **Key terms:** In compositional analysis, key components of a still image include its content, colour, spatial organization, lighting, and expressive content.
4. **Strengths and weaknesses:** This method requires meticulous attention to the image, which is essential for any analysis of visual content. However, a notable drawback is its lack of focus on the social practices surrounding visual imagery.
   (Rose 2023:146).

2. Semiotic Analysis

Rose (2023) notes that the 'sign' is the most fundamental unit in semiology, based on Ferdinand de Saussure's work, particularly his 'Course on General Linguistics' (Rose 2023:177). Saussure aimed to systematically understand language by defining the sign, which comprises two inseparable parts: the *signified*, a concept or object, and the *signifier*, a sound or image representing the signified. Saussure emphasised that there is no intrinsic link between signifiers and signified, as 'different languages use different words for the same concept', and the same word can have various meanings. The relationship between signifiers and signified is conventional, not inherent, and depends on their differences from other signs. The actual object the sign refers to is the *referent*. This distinction allows for the questioning and exploration of how meanings and signifiers relate. Rose explains that in advertising, semiologists analyse how signified meanings are transferred between signifiers, using semiology's technical vocabulary to clarify these relationships. The same principle could be applied to the analysis of tattoos, as they could be viewed as advertising on the skin.

The three visual semiotic sign types (*icon*, *index* and symbol) discussed earlier in the study, differentiate the way in which the relationship between the signifier and signified is understood (Rose 2023:183).

3. Interpretation

a) Literature

Due to the academic nature of this study, it is critical to reference and consider the relevant scholarly sources on tattoo symbolism and mythology to support the analysis of interview participants tattoos. This study draws from four books which deal with the interpretation of tattoos.

1) The Tattoo Encyclopaedia: A Guide to Choosing your Tattoo (Green 2009).
2) The Tattoo Dictionary: An A-Z guide to the Secret Language of Tattoos (Aitken-Smith 2016).
3) The Language of Tattoos: 130 Symbols & what they mean (Munden & Schonberger 2022).
4) Vintage Tattoos: A Sourcebook for Old-School Designs and Tattoo Artists (Clerk 2008)

These source books provide a well-established historical tattoo meaning framework that aids in the understanding and interpreting of the historical meaning of specific tattoo design genres that were popular during the time Harry Ramesar was a tattoo artist. These frameworks offer structured approaches to analysing the meanings and implications of tattoos within various contexts. These books provide historical context, tracing the evolution of tattooing meaning and their significance over time. This historical perspective is crucial for understanding contemporary trends and meanings in tattoo culture during the time of this study.

b) Interviewees

Obtaining interviewee feedback on their reasons for getting their tattoos is essential for a thorough and accurate analysis. The feedback provides valuable personal insights, contextual understanding, and narrative depth, whilst also ensuring that the research honours the experiences and perspectives of the interviewee. Interviewees provide first-hand accounts of their personal motivations and reasons for getting their tattoos. This information is essential for understanding the individual significance and meaning of their tattoos, which can vary significantly from a) person to person and b) what is noted in the literature. Tattoos often carry deep personal and cultural significance and by obtaining feedback from interviewees, allows researchers to better understand the social, cultural, and historical contexts that influenced their tattoo choices. This contextual understanding is vital for an accurate and comprehensive analysis. Tattoos can be expressions of personal identity, experiences, emotions, and psychological states during the period that the tattoo was created thus providing feedback that provides insights into these emotional and psychological dimensions, and enriches the analysis with a deeper understanding of the personal impact of tattoo.

Understanding the reasons behind a tattoo can reveal broader sociocultural dynamics, such as tattoo trends of the time, peer influences, subcultural affiliations, and societal attitudes. The narrative and storytelling of tattoo decisions can be compelling and informative, allowing interviewee feedback all to be heard and included in the analysis, providing a narrative dimension that enhances the richness and depth of the research.

4. Audience Reception

When one looks at the audience, Rose (2023) explains that early audience research often assumed a linear process of communication where meaning was directly transmitted from the senders to the audience receivers, although it is acknowledged that social factors could influence the impact of the message . However, Stuart Hall's essay from the 1970s introduced a different perspective, which distinguished between encoding - the creation of visual messages using specific codes and decoding - the audience's interpretation of these visual messages. Hall explained that visual messages are encoded with a 'professional code' that dictates how information is presented,

supporting dominant societal values and norms, which is a concept derived from Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony[22] (Rose 2023:289). According to Gramsci, societal order is maintained not just through force but also through culturally dominant values. Hall extended this idea, by noting that visual messages often support these hegemonic values but also acknowledging the existence of counter-hegemony or resistance.

Audience studies, which was influenced by Marxist theory, therefore, explores both hegemonic values and the resistance to them. Rose (2023) notes that Hall's model suggests that audiences actively interpret visual messages rather than passively receiving them (Rose 2023:290). Hall identified three types of visual readings – *Preferred Reading,* where the audience accepts and affirms the dominant hegemonic message, *Oppositional Reading*, where the audience understands the message but interprets it in a way that challenges the dominant values and *Negotiated Reading*, a mix of preferred and oppositional reading (Rose 2023:290). This approach highlights audiences as active interpreters, bringing their own cultural knowledge and experiences to their understanding of visuals. While this tripartite model has faced criticism, it remains influential in portraying audiences as active participants who decode visuals in a variety of ways, based on their unique perspectives. Subsequent studies have further explored the complexities of both encoding and decoding processes (Rose 2023:290).

5. Contextualize the Analysis

To address questions of social difference and power relations within visual culture, Rose (2023) notes that it is crucial to consider who can 'see what, how, where, and with what effects', as W.J.T. Mitchell emphasizes that representation involves understanding 'who or what represents what to whom, with what, and where and why' (Rose 2023:41). John Berger's analysis of female nude paintings illustrates that an image's impact relies on

[22] The dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas (Rosamond 2024).

specific cultural practices, not just general ways of seeing, and this could be said for the sheer amount of female nude tattoo flash in the digital archive. Berger notes that these paintings (nude tattoos in the case of this study) achieved their effects through the specific ways they were commissioned, displayed, and interpreted by their audiences. The viewing of an image always occurs in a particular social context and location. Each location has its own rules and practices for spectators, which influence how images are perceived, thus understanding these contextual specificities is essential, especially as a visual tattoo on the skin allows the same image to appear in various locations, where it can be interpreted differently based on the surrounding context (Rose 2023:41).

A total of forty-five tattoos were photographed from the seventeen interviews conducted in this study. The tattoo analysis will be conducted on tattoo designs and flash that the interviewees confirmed live in the digital archive during the interviews. This results in twenty-five tattoos being analysed, with thirteen of the seventeen interviewees confirming either tattoo flash designs, tattoo tracings, or both on the digital archive. It is important to analyse only those tattoos of interview participants that have been confirmed in a digital archive as this ensures that the tattoos being analysed are indeed the interviewees and are accurately represented, which verifies the authenticity of the data, preventing any mix-ups or misrepresentations. The confirmation by the interviewees' guarantees that they have consented to the use of their tattoo images and information for the study thus respecting the participants' ethical practice of autonomy and privacy, whilst adhering to research ethics guidelines. Table 6.8 depicts a list of the interviewees and the tattoos that will be analysed.

Table 6.8 Interview Tattoo Analysis List

Interviewee Tattoo Analysis	
Interviewee	**Tattoo Description**
INT1	Cross and Heart Anchor
	Sailors Grave
INT2	Patriotic Eagle

INT3	Dagger through Rose
INT4	Springbok
INT7	Fu Man Choo
INT8	Eagle with Scroll
INT9	Eagle with Scroll
	Pinup Girl
INT10	Eagle
INT11	Pinup Girl
	Praying Hands
	Skull and Crossbones
INT13	Eagle with Scroll
	Pinup Girl
	Skull, Dagger and Snake
	Dragon
INT15	Dagger with Flower Scroll
INT16	Clasped Hand with Dagger
	Horseshoe with Bow and Flowers
	Springbok with Flags
	Cross on Stones with Banner
	Lioness with Name
INT17	Grim Reaper
	Hindu Om with Tribal Banner

Having interviewees confirm their tattoo design in a digital archive ensures that all data is collected consistently which is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the study, therefore allowing for standardized analysis across all participants. Confirmation by the interview participants reduces the risk of errors or inaccuracies in the data and is essential for drawing valid conclusions and ensuring that the research findings are based on precise and verified information, which can provide valuable insights into the personal significance of the tattoos, thus enriching the data with valuable context.

When the tattoo design flash and/or tracings are confirmed by the interviewees, it helps avoid potential misinterpretation or misidentification of the tattoo designs, allowing for crucial accuracy for a valid analysis, which ensures that the tattoos are understood within the correct personal and cultural context. This context can then be analysed and compared to the source book references. Interviewee confirmation supports the integrity of the data by providing a verifiable link between the participant and their tattoo design and this verifiability is important for the credibility of the research and for future researchers who may want to build on this study. This data analysis structure ensures reliable data collection, respects the participants' input, provides rich contextual information, and supports the overall integrity and credibility of the research.

6.7 Interviewee tattoo analysis

<table>
<tr><td>INT1</td><td colspan="2">Cross with Heart Anchor</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Interviewee Tattoo</td><td>Digital Archive Tracing</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>
Source: Nautical-89
https://tattooharry.co.za/nautical/</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Analysis of the Tattoo</td></tr>
</table>

Context		The tattoo design has a nautical theme which is represented by the anchor in the centre of the cross.
Analysis		The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo is large and covers most of the interviewees outer bicep. Although Harry Ramesar had limited ink colours, the tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time. The anchor placed at the center of the cross is used to establish visual hierarchy and create impact. The placement of the anchor at the centre of the cross establishes a clear visual hierarchy, emphasizing its nautical and symbolic significance.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo integrates three primary elements: a cross, an anchor, and a heart with a banner.
Signified		The design signifies a combination of Christian faith and nautical themes, representing Christ's sacrificial love, steadfastness, and possibly a seafaring background.
Icon		The tattoo consists of strong Christian visual representations which have been visually combined to create a crucifix where the anchor could represent Christ. The tattoo has a nautical theme, with the presence of the anchor, which historically has represented both seafarers and the Christian community. The tattoo integrates three primary elements: a cross, an anchor, and a heart with a banner. These elements combine to form a crucifix where the anchor plays a central role, possibly symbolising Christ. The nautical theme is underscored by the anchor, a symbol historically associated with both seafarers and the Christian faith. The tattoo is analysed through semiotic lenses, highlighting its Christian iconography, with the cross and heart together evoking deep religious connotations, symbolising Christ's sacrificial love.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	

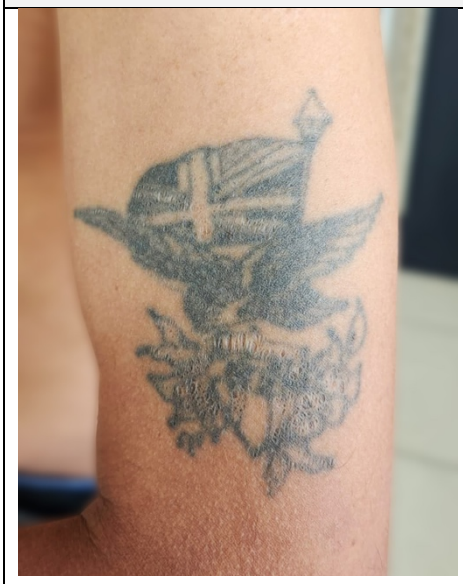
		The presence of the anchor traditionally denotes a seafaring background, likely military, recreational, and or commercial.
Interpretation		
Literature		Clerk (2008) notes that 'soldiers and sailors going to war derived reassurance from religious markings, which they also hoped would persuade their gods to look after them' (Clerk 2008:166). James (2009) explains that the 'anchor is one of a handful of symbols in the tattoo world that has remained both popular and true to its origins. The bearer of the anchor is likely a seafarer of some type – traditionally military but sometimes recreational or commercial' (Green 2009:5). The heart with a cross 'is a fundamentally Christian symbol while also being a variant of the simple heart symbol tattoo. The cross symbolises Christ and in this context is particularly reminiscent of the sacrificial nature of his death, as the two images together relate to the act of sacrifice and the love it requires, as well as the love engendered by sacrifice' (Green 2009:113).
Interviewee		"Actually, I saw that on on on the guy that I was working with at that time in 1973 when he went to put that side, it looks good. And I I wanted one like that also" (van As 2023a: 1).
Audience Reception		The placement of the tattoo on the bicep allows the interviewee to control its visibility. Whilst the bicep is typically an exposed area, it can be easily covered when necessary. It is a relatively large tattoo which would attract attention and the visual 'Christian' subject matter would be more acceptable to the conservative public of the time.
Contextualize the Analysis		This tattoo embodies a rich interplay of personal identity, religious symbolism, and social acceptance which the interviewee does not note when commenting on his interpretation of why he got the

	tattoo. One can argue that the visual elements that he liked 'it looks good' were the strong Christian visual representations.

INT1	**Sailors Grave**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Nautical-5 https://tattooharry.co.za/nautical/
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	The tattoo design has a nautical theme which is represented by the anchor and a skeleton sailor.
Analysis	The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time. The skeleton skull wearing a sailor hat placed at the center of the cross is used to establish visual hierarchy and create impact.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The tattoo integrates two primary elements: an anchor and a skull with a sailor's hat.

Signified		The design signifies themes of stability, hope, mortality, and remembrance, targeting the seafaring profession and paying homage to its traditions.
Icon		The tattoo consists of strong visual representations which target a specific profession within society. The tattoo has a strong nautical theme, with the presence of the anchor, which historically has represented both seafarers and the Christian community and a skull with a sailor's hat, which represents a fallen sailor. The skull with a sailor's hat, representing a fallen sailor, adds a memorial aspect to the tattoo. This combination targets a specific profession within society, paying homage to the seafaring community and its traditions. The anchor underscores the seafaring theme, while the skeleton sailor symbolises mortality and remembrance, a poignant reminder of those lost at sea.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2009) notes that the sailor's grave tattoo 'stems from a long tradition of sailor memorials and it commemorates the men and ships that have been lost at sea' (Green 2009:208). Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'this design serves as both a memorial, or commemorative, tattoo for fellow sailors and friends lost at sea, as well as a good-luck tattoo. Sailors believed that having what they most feared tattooed onto their body would prevent that event happening (Aitken-Smith 2016:190).
Interviewee		"I've got one. They reckon it's a sailor's grave where you got a skeleton, a skull". "No, no, no, I didn't do the Navy". "So, I just got that". *(van As 2023a: 1)*.
Audience Reception		The placement of the tattoo on the front of the forearm is on a visible area of the body which makes it more difficult to conceal.

	The tattoo subject matter may receive mixed reactions as the tattoo has historical meaning to a certain profession within the broader population.
Contextualize the Analysis	This tattoo encapsulates a rich nautical heritage, blending memorial and protective symbolism. Its anchor and skeleton sailor elements reflect a deep respect for the seafaring profession and those lost at sea. Despite its prominent placement and potential for mixed reactions, the tattoo stands as a powerful testament to maritime traditions. The interviewee does not have a connection to the nautical and or seafaring profession but the visual representations and symbolism of the tattoo design was a deciding factor.

INT2	**Patriotic Eagle**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Patriotic-10 and Patriotic-27 https://tattooharry.co.za/patriotic/
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	The tattoo design has a patriotic theme which is predominately represented by the eagle and a British flag.
Analysis	The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time. The

		eagle and British flag are the primary visual elements in the tattoo. There is scarring of the skin which indicated that there were issues with the tattoo's healing process.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		This patriotic-themed tattoo is located on the left bicep, incorporating two main elements: an eagle and a British flag.
Signified		The design signifies themes of national pride, strength, power, and allegiance to the nation.
Icon		This patriotic-themed tattoo is located on the left bicep, incorporating two main elements: an eagle and a British flag. The eagle, symbolizing power and strength, and the British flag, representing national pride, create a strong visual impact that targets specific societal professions, particularly those related to national service or patriotism. The eagle, a powerful symbol often associated with strength and freedom, complements the British flag's representation of national identity. Together, they underscore a strong sense of patriotism and allegiance to the nation.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2009) notes that the eagle was 'adopted as the national bird of the U.S in 1782, the American or bald eagle has also become one of the most popular of the patriotic tattoos done in this country' (Green 2009:76). Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that the eagle is a 'symbol of strength, freedom, wisdom, and power' (Aitken-Smith 2016:73). The flag represented in the tattoo 'is definitely a part of the repertoire of tattoo imagery, be they patriotic and nationalistic, maritime signals, or emblems of particular special groups. The historic use of flags was at first primarily strategic – visual aids made it easier to observe groups at a distance. Over time they became symbols with which people

	could identify, and this is the role that they play in tattoo art as well' (Green 2009:87).
Interviewee	"I was actually trying to find a sailor's grave because I knew I was going to join the Navy a few years later" "So, I was looking for a sailor's grave, but I couldn't find it at the time" "While I was there no' while I was in the Navy, I didn't get any tattoo"
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the left bicep gives the wearer the option to hide it if required. The strong patriotic symbolism will give the viewer an indication that the wearer is in the armed forces or navy.
Contextualize the Analysis	The tattoo's placement on the left bicep allows the wearer the discretion to conceal it if necessary, providing control over its visibility. The strong patriotic symbolism indicates the wearer's association with the navy, making it a potential marker of military /naval service or national pride. This visibility and its associated connotations might influence public perception, particularly in contexts valuing national service and patriotism. Despite the tattoos healing issues, the tattoo stands as a testament to the wearer's patriotism.

INT3	**Dagger through Rose**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">
Source: Daggers-45 and Daggers-39
https://tattooharry.co.za/daggers/</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Analysis of the Tattoo</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Context</td><td colspan="2">The tattoo design consists of a dagger piercing through a rose.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Analysis</td><td colspan="2">The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink but there appears to be faint tinges of red ink, which could indicate the original appearance of red ink that has disappeared over time. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Semiotic Analysis</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Signifier</td><td colspan="2">This tattoo, located on the right bicep, combines two primary elements: a dagger and a rose.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Signified</td><td colspan="2">The tattoo signifies a blend of contrasting themes: the dagger represents stealth, bravery, and potential treachery, while the rose symbolises beauty and romantic love. Together, they create a complex narrative of duality, combining elements of danger and tenderness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Icon</td><td>X</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">This tattoo, located on the right bicep, combines two primary elements: a dagger and a rose. The composition of these elements presents a vivid image that holds deep symbolic meanings. The dagger, a weapon that requires close physical contact, conveys</td></tr>
<tr><td>Index</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Symbol</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

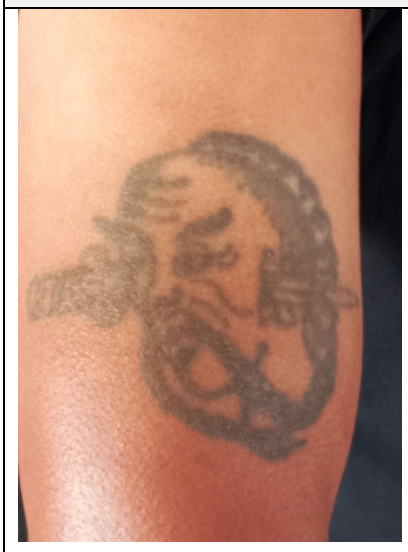
		themes of stealth, bravery, and potential treachery. The rose, traditionally a symbol of beauty and romantic love, contrasts sharply with the dagger, adding layers of complexity to the tattoo's interpretation.
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that the 'dagger holds a special significance in our psyche as, of all weapons, it is the most personal – the person wielding it has to be in near physical contact with his or her target'. As a symbol, the dagger is thus ambiguous, suggesting stealth, cunning, bravery, betrayal, treachery, and deception (Green 2009). Green (2009) notes that the symbolism of the rose 'vary widely with each use, though most uses are based on the beauty and romantic symbolism for which they are so well known' (Green 2009:205).
Interviewee		"I've got a I've got a dagger through a rose" Hey, when I went there, well, he had his tattoo, his designs placed on the wall, and I chose that one because I like that one over there" "I went then I had to look at everything and then I chose that one" (van As 2023a)
Audience Reception		The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep gives the wearer the option to hide it if required. The representation of a dagger may have negative connotations to a viewer but with the inclusion of a rose may persuade a more balanced reaction due to its beauty and romantic symbolism.
Contextualize the Analysis		The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep offers the wearer flexibility in controlling its visibility. The tattoo's prominent location allows it to be displayed or concealed based on the wearer's preference. The dagger's potential negative

	connotations may elicit varied reactions from viewers. However, the inclusion of the rose may balance these perceptions by introducing elements of beauty and romantic symbolism. The interviewee chose the tattoo design from the tattoo designs Harry Ramesar had in his tattoo studio, which indicates that there was no predetermination of a tattoo design before arriving at the tattoo studio.

INT4	**Springbok**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Animals-24 and Animals-19 https://tattooharry.co.za/animals/
	Digital Archive Flash
	 Source: Flash Card 7 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/
Analysis of the Tattoo	

Context		The tattoo design consists of a springbok.
Analysis		The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		This tattoo, positioned on the right bicep, depicts the head of a springbok.
Signified		The springbok signifies various aspects of South African identity, including national pride, heritage, and resilience. It is an emblematic figure that represents both the natural beauty and cultural significance of South Africa.
Icon		This tattoo, positioned on the right bicep, depicts the head of a springbok, a prominent symbol in South African culture. The design's simplicity does not detract from its powerful symbolism, which can convey multiple layers of meaning depending on the viewer's perspective and context.
Index	**X**	
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Due to the lack of literature specifically dealing with the Springbok tattoo, context was taken from the interviewee's interpretation which makes mention of the springboks physical attributes.
Interviewee		"Yeah, that's a springbok" "I think because the springbok is fast and agile. Yeah, but for no other reason" "Something that my brothers chose" "They were rugged, guys, you know, rugged. Big guys" "My brothers were rugged and bigger and. And yeah, they were sporty" *(van As 2023a)*
Audience Reception		The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep gives the wearer the option to hide it if required. The representation of the springbok could have mixed reception amongst viewers as the

	springbok represents two vastly different sentiments. One being the springbok being the national symbol under apartheid rule and two the springbok now as a positive sporting symbol.
Contextualize the Analysis	The springbok is an animal known for its speed and agility, traits that are often admired and sought after. However, the springbok also holds significant cultural and historical connotations in South Africa. On one hand, it is associated with national pride and the positive values of athleticism and resilience, especially in the context of sports where the springbok is a revered symbol of the national rugby team and on the other hand, the springbok was also a national symbol during the apartheid era, which can evoke mixed feelings due to its historical associations. This duality underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of this symbol as a tattoo, reflecting both personal significance and broader cultural narratives. The fact that the interviewee and his siblings got the same tattoo design and that they were Indian growing up during the apartheid era, points to the springbok as a representation of athleticism.

INT7	**Fu Manchu**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	

		Source: Oriental-2 https://tattooharry.co.za/oriental/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context		A tattoo design of the supervillain Fu Manchu.
Analysis		The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo, situated on the right bicep, portrays Fu Manchu with a sword through his head.
Signified		Fu Manchu signifies the embodiment of stereotypical and villainous traits associated with Eastern cultures, often representing themes of mystery, exoticism, and danger. The sword through his head adds a dramatic and violent element, signifying rebellion, aggression, or a rejection of these stereotypical portrayals.
Icon		The tattoo, situated on the right bicep, portrays Fu Manchu, a character known for embodying various stereotypical and villainous traits associated with Eastern cultures. The inclusion of a sword through his head adds a dramatic and violent element to the design, enhancing its menacing and rebellious connotations.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Clerk (2016) notes that far from feeling humiliated by their incarceration, many convicts were proud of it. And so they tattooed each other with symbols relating to their sentences, their misdeeds and their alliances with fellow prisoners (Clerk 2008:152). Sometimes the prison gangs had links to street gangs, or criminal or other organizations in the outside world (Clerk 2008:162).

Interviewee	"Every every second gangster had a Fu Manchu on their forearm. And that's was your passage of right" "The one guy had the the the one without the sword in the head And I said no, I want that one" "And I said no, I want the one. So that's me, you know you wanted to look tough, back in the day, you want to do when you were younger" "Everybody had it on this arm" "The on the wall. So, I said no, I want Fu Manchu" "Harry said it must go here. This is the place where he goes because I wanted to on top over here and he said no, no. This is the place for it'" "Also, so I could hide it" "This wasn't the first Fu Manchu he did. I must have been like the thousands" "It's tough, boys. You wanted to fit in. they were coming with this tattoo from there, so we were in awe, this is like a jail tattoo. But we didn't, we didn't realize it's not a jail tattoo. It's not actually just like they they it was 27 tattoos; you know you get the gang numbers" "We took it as our markings for our gang. We didn't have a specific tattoo for the gang" "And in those years, a lot of gang fights. Coloured gangs operating so we were, we were under version of this gang. This was related to our gang. Meantime everybody had this tattoo" "When you are young and stupid?" "And also, my mates got this tattoo same one" (van As 2023b)

Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep gives the wearer the option to hide it if required. The reviewing of his tattoo would represent the affiliation to a gang or the admiration of a gang.
Contextualise the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep allows for discretion, offering the wearer the ability to hide it when necessary. Within the context of gang culture, the tattoo signifies affiliation, toughness, and a shared identity, which represents both an individual's aspiration to fit in and the broader collective identity of the gang. The depiction of Fu Manchu, a figure steeped in negative stereotypes and connotations, underscores the rebellious and defiant nature of the wearer's social group. The interviewee notes his rebellious nature when he was younger and the awareness of the fact that the tattoo design had deviant associations but subscribing to the actual lifestyle depicted by many gang members who got his tattoo design.

INT8	**Eagle with scroll**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	

		Source: Banners 2-95, Banners 2-102, Banners 2-113, Banners 2-129 https://tattooharry.co.za/banners/
Digital Archive Flash		
 Source: Flash Card14 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/		
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context		A tattoo of an eagle carrying a scroll.
Analysis		The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		A tattoo on the right bicep depicting an eagle carrying a scroll in its claws.
Signified		The eagle symbolizes supremacy, freedom, independence, and longevity. The scroll represents knowledge, messages, or personal and symbolic text, adding depth to the meaning of the tattoo.
Icon	**X**	This tattoo includes two primary elements: an eagle and a scroll. The eagle, a powerful symbol of supremacy, freedom, independence, and long life, is depicted carrying a scroll, which traditionally can hold personal or symbolic text.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Clerk (2016) describes the eagle as 'soaring and swooping, king of the skies, this was the most magnificent of birds. It stood for supremacy, freedom, independence and long life, spreading wings

	that would sweep the country forward, into the future, with confidence' (Clerk 2008:184).
Interviewee	"It's a bird or an eagle, but it has love inside, I change it to change it to mom" "Because I thought after a while I took one on this side. After a while I will put one on this side and say dad" "Which never happen" "He was halfway through his tattoo or what couldn't handle it. It was painful" "you know, but every time Harry stopped to dip the ink and come back. Then you can feel it every time he stops to the thing can put and the painful part is this one" "On the bird like the feathers, that's the painful part" "No, I didn't have. I did not have any. We we did not have anything in mind" "I like it. I like it, I like it" "Basically, it was it didn't have any sentimental value to something that you look like the design of that" "Yeah, it was I was quite young Right. And I didn't want it to be shown. You know what I mean?" (van As 2023c)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep gives the wearer the option to hide it if required. The imagery of an eagle was a popular tattoo choice which would be recognized by the audience. The inclusion of 'mom' in the scroll could make the tattoo more relatable and accepted.

Contextualize the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the right bicep allows for both concealment and display, reflecting a personal choice to manage the tattoo's visibility based on context. This strategic placement suggests the wearer's desire to control who sees the tattoo and when, aligning with a broader cultural trend where tattoos can be both personal statements and public displays. The eagle as a popular tattoo motif resonates with widespread cultural symbolism, making it a recognizable and accepted design. The addition of 'mom' on the scroll adds a layer of personal significance, potentially making the tattoo more relatable and accepted within the wearer's social circles.

INT9	**Eagle with scroll**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Banners 2-95, Banners 2-102, Banners 2-113, Banners 2-129 https://tattooharry.co.za/banners/
Digital Archive Flash	



Source: Flash Card14

https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context		A tattoo of an eagle carrying a scroll.
Analysis		The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		A tattoo on the right bicep depicting an eagle carrying a scroll in its claws.
Signified		The eagle symbolizes power, freedom, independence, and supremacy. The scroll signifies messages, knowledge, or values, which may relate to the individual's personal or cultural beliefs.
Icon	**X**	The tattoo depicts an eagle carrying a scroll, symbolizing power, freedom, independence, and a connection to historical or personal narratives. The eagle, a majestic bird often associated with supremacy and soaring heights, conveys a sense of confidence and authority. The scroll it carries may imply messages or values, potentially relating to the interviewee's personal or cultural beliefs.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Clerk (2016) describes the eagle as 'soaring and swooping, king of the skies, this was the most magnificent of birds. It stood for supremacy, freedom, independence and long life, spreading wings

	that would sweep the country forward, into the future, with confidence. (Clerk 2008:184).
Interviewee	"Because my friend, you know, used to have these tattoos. Especially the eagle. The eagle I got the eagle" "Yeah, I remember seeing a film. John Wayne was actor John Wayne. John Wayne, where Eagles Dare" "The eagle and I know the story of the eagle. I got it documented, and I read the book also: the eagle generation" "About Christianity. Christianity" "This little thing is a big thing here because he is not only a bird. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's not only a bird. It's a that type of a bird. You don't. You don't fear another bird or whatever and you know, yeah, High high above the clouds. So that is one of the reasons" "This is visible. All the time you know" "I can't remember the word, maybe love. Maybe love could be, could be love in fact" "So just the association of of of the strength of the eagle based on the stuff you read" (van As 2023d)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the left hand which made it highly visible and difficult to hide. Although the imagery of an eagle was a popular tattoo choice which would be recognised by the audience, the location may have provoked a more negative response.
Contextualise the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the left hand ensures its constant visibility, which can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, the eagle's widespread recognition as a symbol of power and freedom

	might garner positive reactions from those who appreciate its symbolism but on the other hand, the visibility of hand tattoos can provoke negative responses, particularly in conservative or professional settings where tattoos may be stigmatised. The interviewee's decision to get this tattoo was influenced by personal connections and media representations, such as the influence of a friend and film like 'Where Eagles Dare'. The eagle's association with Christian narratives and personal strength highlights its deeper, more personal significance.

INT9	**Pinup Girl**	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
		
	Source: Females – 13 https://tattooharry.co.za/females/	Source: Flash Card17 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of a pinup girl.	

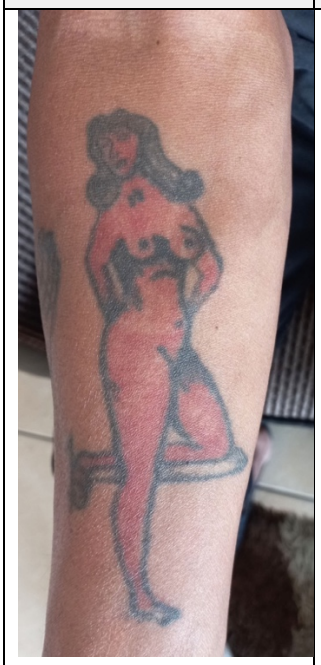
Analysis		The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		A tattoo on the right forearm depicting a pinup girl.
Signified		The tattoo represents idealized femininity and sexual allure, reflecting mid-20th century cultural standards of beauty and sensuality.
Icon	**X**	The tattoo depicts a pinup girl, a popular motif that emerged from the mid-20th century, which was characterized by its portrayal of idealized femininity and sexual allure. This particular tattoo on the right forearm exemplifies the classic pinup style, maintaining its cultural and historical significance.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'most of the earliest designs of pinups were based on the cinema beauties of the day and, in form, were usually simple and two dimensional, though even so they managed to convey all the sexual allure of the women they portrayed' (Aitken-Smith 2016:168).
Interviewee		"I was wanting to have it, you know? I just liked it" "See, like a like a naughty. A naughty thing like, you know" "So, she almost moves her moves her bum when you move when you pull your pull, you pull. I invited it myself. You know once sitting and doing nothing" "You know, but lately when I came into the, like the full gospel church thing like, you know. Then there was. Yeah, yeah, yeah, time. You know, like, I had this tattoo where it wasn't called for, not sort of recommended"

	"they're both visible and then they want to take it out then I talked to my reverend" "But when they came to know they said that what made you put this?" "You know you're naughty and this and that you do naughty things? Yeah. And I said, "You know what, Pastor? You don't know, I was a drug addict" "Because I've seen guys got it you know, yeah. Someone was a little different shape as well. Yeah. This one is the modern one" "You know, the modern one. The other one was was a little fat, fat, fatter buttocks and shorter" (van As 2023d)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes the tattoo visual but can be covered if needed. The subject matter is controversial but gauging by the sheer number of female tracing on the digital archive, one can see the female tattoo design was popular during the period.
Contextualize the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes it prominently visible, signifying a deliberate choice to showcase the design. However, the ability to cover it indicates a variation approach to its visibility, depending on social and cultural settings. The pinup girl tattoo, while controversial, reflects a broader trend in tattoo culture where female imagery is popular, as evident by the large number of similar designs in the digital archive. The interviewee's reflections reveal a personal journey from a rebellious youth to a more restrained and introspective adulthood, where the tattoo serves as a reminder of past behaviours and choices, while also highlighting the societal pressures and judgments encountered due to its provocative nature.

INT10	Eagle	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	
	 Source: Loose Flash Two1 https://tattooharry.co.za/ individual-flash/	
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of an eagle.	
Analysis	The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines and shading that have broadened over time.	
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier	A line drawing with shading of an eagle in flight, located on the chest.	
Signified	The tattoo signifies themes of supremacy, freedom, independence, and long life. The depiction of the eagle in flight underscores its association with power, confidence, and the ability to rise above challenges.	
Icon	**X**	The tattoo is a line drawing with shading of an eagle in flight, situated on the chest. The eagle, often regarded as the 'king of the skies', symbolizes supremacy, freedom, independence, and long life,
Index		
Symbol		

		with the depiction of it in flight enhancing its association with power and confidence.
Interpretation		
Literature		Clerk (2016) describes the eagle as 'soaring and swooping, king of the skies, this was the most magnificent of birds. It stood for supremacy, freedom, independence and long life, spreading wings that would sweep the country forward, into the future, with confidence. (Clerk 2008:184).
Interviewee		"No, he just showed me the first one and I said yeah, that's the one" "No specific reason. I just wanted it on my chest" "I've always kept it covered with the T-shirt and I don't flaunt it" "No, I don't want it to be seen" "Honestly, for no specific reason, I just Liked nature" "There wasn't anyone that I saw with any other thing on the chest beside an eagle" "That is the only thing people have on the chest in those days in the 70s. Now and then, I've thought of adding stuff onto it" "Yeah, he he was so good at it. He knew exactly" *(van As 2023e)*
Audience Reception		The placement of the tattoo on the chest does not make it easily visible to the general public thus allowing the tattoo to be concealed easily and shown

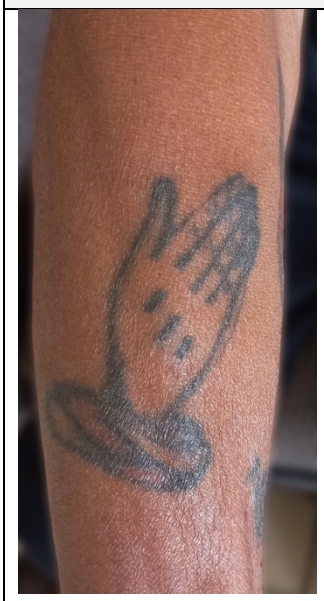
	to a specific audience. The large size of the tattoo may have intrigued viewers.
Contextualize the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the chest allows for discretion, as it can be easily covered by clothing. This strategic placement indicates that the tattoo is meant for a specific audience rather than public display, which reflects a personal and private connection to the symbol. The chest placement also aligns with the cultural trends of the 1970s, where the eagle was a common choice for chest tattoos, suggesting a cultural conformity or influence. The interviewee's choice to keep the tattoo covered and not flaunt it suggests a subtle relationship with the tattoo, valuing it personally while being mindful of societal perceptions. This decision underscores the flexibility of the tattoo's visibility, allowing the interviewee to control its exposure.

INT11	Naked Pinup Girl	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Females – 73 and Females – 113 and https://tattooharry.co.za/females/	 Source: Loose Flash Two61 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/

Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context		A tattoo of a naked pinup girl.
Analysis		The tattoo was originally created utilizing a single colour black ink and the interviewee returned to add the red. The tattoo consists of single lines and some shading that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo depicts a naked pinup girl, situated on the right forearm.
Signified		The tattoo symbolizes ideals of beauty, femininity, and allure. The naked pinup girl imagery evokes cultural connotations of sexuality and glamour, reflecting mid-20th century popular culture's fascination with idealized feminine figures.
Icon	**X**	

Index		The tattoo, located on the right forearm, portrays a naked pinup girl, a classic symbol of beauty and allure. This imagery is deeply rooted in mid-20th century popular culture, where pinup girls were idealized representations of femininity and sexuality.
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'most of the earliest designs of pinups were based on the cinema beauties of the day and, in form, were usually simple and two dimensional, though even so they managed to convey all the sexual allure of the women they portrayed' (Aitken-Smith 2016:168). Munden and Schonberger (2022) note that 'other designs capture a range of kin and push the pin-up idea to more nuanced territories' which could be said for this tattoo design (Munden and Schonberger 2022:157).
Interviewee		"My father had one. Something like this" 'Knowing I wanted that as well, I I thought of my dad" "Let me put something daring like, you know. So that's why I went and put this" "But it still didn't have the colouring inside. I had to go back" "That's on the wall. He had a tracing" "I just chose Red, I didn't think" "little bit of a pain like just relax for a while and when he first thing he ask you. Are you under the influence? No alcohol. You don't allow you to have alcohol at all in your body" "And then, but once that that buzzing sound and it's getting numb, then you continue then it was all good. It was all good after" "100%, I was too excited"

	"Which brings me to something like that I need to cover this thing. In some way on. The time covered because I'm sitting in Church, I feel odd" "on a hot day. You know, sitting on my because children could be sitting next to me anyway. So going forward I need to. But when I come home, the family, were not happy" "Not happy to put a tattoo, not angry about, angry about that. But what I chose to put, I say, I follow my father. Like father, like son" "I was like a tiger like, you know. You know, I was like, what I say goes, being the oldest son like that. Now they they just let it be" (van As 2023f)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes the tattoo visible but can be covered if needed. The subject matter is controversial but gauging by the sheer number of female tracing on the digital archive, one can see the female tattoo design was popular. The fact that the pinup is naked, could be a point of contention with more conservative audiences.
Contextualize the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes it visible but can be covered if needed. The pinup girl design was a popular choice, especially among men in the mid-20th century, often symbolizing an appreciation for female beauty and a touch of rebelliousness. However, as cultural norms and personal circumstances change, such tattoos can become sources of internal conflict, especially in more conservative or religious environments. The interviewee's narrative underscores this tension, reflecting on how the tattoo, initially a symbol of personal taste and perhaps youthful rebellion, later became a point of contention within a more conservative, religious context. This shift highlights the dynamic nature of tattoo meanings and their reception in different social and cultural settings.

INT11	Praying Hands	
Interviewee Tattoo		**Digital Archive Tracing**
		 Source: Religious – 82 https://tattooharry.co.za/religious/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of praying hands.	
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines and some red shading seems evident in the sleeve that have broadened over time.	
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier	The tattoo features two hands in a praying position, situated on the right forearm.	
Signified	The image symbolizes prayer and communication with God within Christian iconography. It represents a spiritual act of supplication, reflection, and reverence, encompassing various forms of personal and communal prayer practices.	
Icon	**X**	The tattoo, located on the right forearm, portrays two hands in a praying position. This image is a well-known symbol in Christian iconography, representing communication with God, encompassing everything from automatic recitations to specialized requests. The
Index		
Symbol		

		design's placement ensures it is visible for expression but can be concealed as needed, highlighting the balance between personal faith and social adaptability.
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2009) notes that 'the image of two hands in a position of prayer is part of Christian tattoo iconography. The hands represent communication with God, ranging from rote recitations to more specialized requests' (Green 2009:193). Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'this tattoo is also often used as a memorial tattoo to commemorate the passing of a family member or loved one. The popularity of this tattoo is not only down to its simple, striking iconography, but also because it is easily adapted to make it more personal, while still keeping the central theme easily identifiable' (Aitken-Smith 2016:172).
Interviewee		"because of Christianity. Umm, I put this and this. Also saw on the wall and then another. My my cousin brother who was in the ship in Cape Town was here. So, I saw he had on his chest. That's how I got the idea from there to put" "That's how I got the idea from there to put" "He had the tracing for this" "Put it here because it's visible" "You know, so you would tell people like you know" "Yeah, I wanted to do this hand? Yeah, right here" "Yes, I'm really happy. Very happy that I showed them then I said yeah. OK, something like this is fine" "They want to know now is there going to be anymore? I said no. I decided that two is enough for now. Yeah, now. But within weeks I was back by Harry again"

	(van As 2023f)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right arm makes the tattoo visible but can be covered if needed. The subject matter is religious and the iconic subject matter of the tattoo design gives the indication that the interviewee is religious or that the tattoo is a tribute to someone who has passed.
Contextualize the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes it visible but allows for easy concealment if necessary. The praying hands symbolize a strong connection to the Christian faith, suggesting the interviewee is religious or that the tattoo serves as a memorial for someone who has passed away. The visibility of the tattoo indicates a desire to express faith openly, but the ability to cover it suggests an awareness of varying social contexts where such expressions might need to be subdued. The influence of a family member and the inspiration drawn from his tattoo highlights the role of familial relationships in the decision-making process for tattoo designs.

INT11	**Skull and Crossbones**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Skulls- 38 https://tattooharry.co.za/skulls/

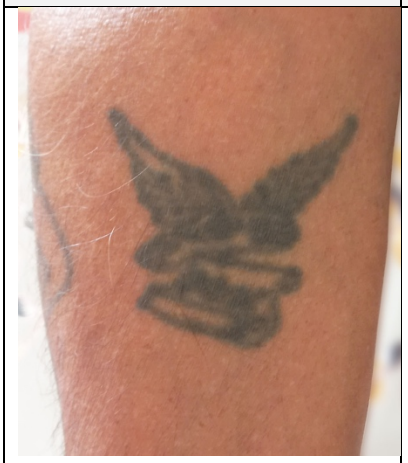
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context		A tattoo of a skull and crossbones.
Analysis		The tattoo was originally created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo depicts a skull and crossbones, positioned on the left bicep.
Signified		The tattoo serves a dual purpose: it symbolizes the wearer's allegiance to the local football team, the Orlando Pirates, and signifies a personal connection to his son, Brandon-Lee. The skull and crossbones historically signify piracy and death, adding layers of meaning related to adventure, risk-taking, and mortality. In this context, it represents not only fandom but also familial love and identity.
Icon	**X**	The skull and crossbones tattoo on the left bicep serves two purposes: it represents the interviewee's support for the local football team, the Orlando Pirates, and symbolizes a personal connection to his son – Brandon-Lee. The tattoo's historical connotations of piracy and death add depth to its modern, personalized meanings. Its placement ensures that it can be easily shown or concealed, making it a versatile element of the wearer's identity and personal narrative.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2009) notes that 'unlike the more general symbols of death such as the skull and the skeleton, the skull coupled with a pair of crossed, long bones has had specific meanings. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was used as the Jolly Roger among pirate seamen. And, as it underlies all death and symbolism, there is the notion of rebirth, on which the Knights Templar likely capitalized when they adopted the skull and crossbones as their symbol' (Green 2009:219).

Interviewee	"So, this one only reason I put this was because of my local football support. Pirates. Pirates. Yeah, that's the reason for this mighty Buccaneers" "Lee, I put here is because I named my son Brandon Lee" "I knew what I wanted before I went there" "because I've taken the one here already, so I'll put them on this to balance it now" (van As 2023f)
Audience Reception	The visibility of the tattoo on the left bicep allows it to be a form of self-expression that can be shown or hidden as per the interviewee's preference. The skull and crossbones may evoke different reactions based on the viewer's perception - some might see it as a symbol of rebellion or toughness, while others might recognize the cultural reference to the local football team.
Contextualize the Analysis	The placement of the tattoo on the left bicep allows for visibility while also providing the option to cover it when needed. The skull and crossbones is a potent symbol, historically associated with piracy, death, and rebirth. However, in this context, it also signifies local football allegiance to the 'Pirates', indicating support for the football team the Orlando Pirates, known as the 'mighty Buccaneers'. This personal connection to local culture and sports adds a layer of individuality to the otherwise universally recognized symbol of the skull and crossbones. The interviewee's choice to balance the tattoo with another on the opposite arm reflects a consideration of aesthetic symmetry and personal significance. Naming his son 'Brandon Lee' and including this name in the tattoo highlights a familial bond and personal tribute.

INT11	Springbok
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Animals-10 https://tattooharry.co.za/animals/
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	The tattoo design consists of a springbok with a name above, located on the right breast.
Analysis	The tattoo was created utilising a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines and shading that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The tattoo prominently features the head of a springbok, a native antelope species and an iconic symbol in South African culture.
Signified	The springbok head in the tattoo signifies various themes deeply rooted in South African culture. As a national symbol, the springbok represents resilience, agility, and the natural beauty of the South African landscape. Historically, it has been associated with the country's sporting achievements, particularly in rugby, where the national team is known as the 'Springboks'.
Icon	

Index	**X**	The tattoo depicts the head of a springbok, an iconic symbol in South African culture. The simplicity of the design does not detract from its powerful symbolism, which varies based on cultural and historical contexts.
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Due to the lack of literature specifically dealing with the Springbok tattoo, context was taken from the interviewees interpretation which makes mention of the springboks physical attributes.
Interviewee		"this is my name" "Our Springbok supporter" "This was a mistake. You put your. This was supposed to be on this side" "So, then I decide, the heart is on this side so let me put my wife name on this side" (van As 2023f)
Audience Reception		The tattoo's placement on the chest suggests that it is meant to be personal, perhaps shown selectively. The springbok's dual symbolism can lead to varied audience reactions. Supporters of South African rugby or those who view the springbok as a symbol of national pride may see it positively. Alternatively, those who associate the symbol with the apartheid era might have a more negative response.
Contextualize the Analysis		The springbok tattoo on the right chest symbolizes a complex interplay of personal identity, cultural pride, and historical context. The inclusion of a name above the springbok adds a layer of personal significance, indicating dedication or support. The tattoo's placement allows for discretion, highlighting its intimate nature while also serving as a potent emblem of South African heritage and personal affiliation. The varied reception of the

	springbok symbol underscores the intricate and sometimes conflicting layers of meaning that tattoos can convey. The interviewee placed the tattoo on the wrong side of the chest as the left side is where the heart is located but subsequently tattooed his wife's name on his left breast.

INT13	**Eagle with Scroll**	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Banners 2-95, Banners 2-102, Banners 2-113, Banners 2-129 https://tattooharry.co.za/banners/	 Source: Flash Card14 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/

Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	A tattoo of an eagle carrying a scroll with mum on the right forearm.
Analysis	The tattoo was created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The tattoo prominently displayed on the right forearm depicts an eagle carrying a scroll in its claws. Positioned on a visible part of the body, it can also be concealed if necessary.

Signified		The eagle and scroll in the tattoo carry multiple layers of meaning. The eagle symbolizes supremacy, freedom, independence, and long life, embodying strength and a lofty perspective. It signifies overcoming challenges with grace and soaring to new heights. The scroll traditionally holds symbolic or personal text, in this case, bearing the inscription 'mum'. This transforms the tattoo into a poignant tribute to the wearer's mother, symbolizing love, respect, and a lasting connection.
Icon	**X**	The tattoo, prominently located on the right forearm, is highly visible yet can be covered if needed. It depicts an eagle carrying a scroll in its claws, combining two primary elements: the eagle, symbolizing supremacy, freedom, independence, and long life, and the scroll, traditionally holding personal or symbolic text, in this case, 'mum'. The eagle and scroll serve as iconic representations, with the eagle often seen as a powerful and majestic bird, embodying a range of positive attributes. The combination of these elements is rich in cultural and personal significance; the eagle represents soaring above challenges and viewing the world from a higher perspective, while the scroll signifies a message of importance. The inscription 'mum' adds a deeply personal element, transforming the tattoo into a tribute to the wearer's mother.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Clerk (2016) describes the eagle as 'soaring and swooping, king of the skies, this was the most magnificent of birds. It stood for supremacy, freedom, independence and long life, spreading wings that would sweep the country forward, into the future, with confidence' (Clerk 2008:184).
Interviewee		"took it for my mum and had this eagle" "And it's written on that banner that the Eagles carrying is written mum"

	"So, this was for her" "Wanted my mom to know that whatever I'm doing in front of her in the presence of her or something other like, you know, is always visible. Reminds me of her" "Because she knows that she's got a bond with me. A very strong bond. Yeah, So, therefore I can put that. So that was on the forearm so people could see it. So, you wanted people to see it and you want to remind of" "I told him. Yeah, I told him on that eagle. You know, it was the some of them were already displayed" "Knowledge. A profound knowledge that eagles fly high above the view of men" "they will always look down upon what's happening below them" "And also, the fact is that now. I said when my mom passes on when she's gone to heaven is a type of flight that is taken by the eagle. Like you know, yeah" (van As 2023g)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes it visible to others, potentially invoking curiosity and admiration. The imagery of an eagle is a popular tattoo choice, likely recognized and appreciated by the audience for its majestic connotations. The inclusion of 'mum' in the scroll adds a relatable and touching element, making the tattoo more accepted and understood as a personal tribute.
Contextualize the Analysis	This tattoo is a powerful combination of personal and cultural symbols, representing the wearer's love and respect for their mother through the iconic and majestic imagery of an eagle and the intimate message carried on the scroll. The interviewee explains that the tattoo was created in honour of his mother. The eagle carrying a

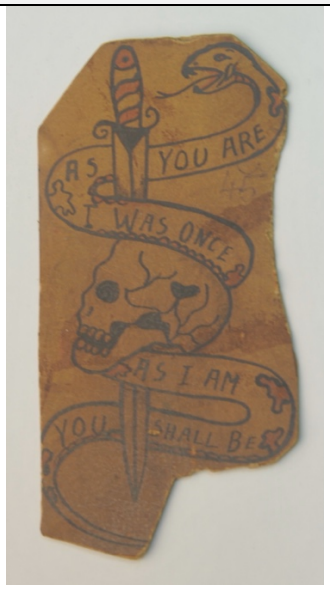
	scroll with ‘mum’ serves as a constant reminder of the bond and respect the wearer has for their mother. It symbolizes that no matter what the wearer does, their actions are always in remembrance of her. The eagle's high flight is likened to the journey to heaven, representing the wearer's belief in their mother's eternal watch over them.

INT13	**Pinup Girl**	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Females – 109 and Females – 13 https://tattooharry.co.za/females/	 Source: Loose Flash Two98 and Flash Card 18 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of a pinup girl on the right forearm.	
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing a single black ink outlines with red ink on the bikini top and bottom. The tattoo consists of single lines and some shading that have broadened over time.	

Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo prominently displayed on the right forearm depicts a line drawing of a pinup girl in a bikini, outlined in black ink with red shading on the bikini itself.
Signified		This tattoo symbolizes themes of beauty, sexuality, and allure, encapsulating the idealized femininity popularized in mid-20th century pinup culture. The pinup girl represents an icon of seduction and aesthetic appeal, suggesting a celebration of these qualities.
Icon	**X**	The tattoo is prominently located on the right forearm, ensuring high visibility while also allowing it to be covered if necessary. It features a line drawing of a pinup girl in a bikini, rendered with black outlines and red shading on the bikini, evoking the classic pinup imagery popularized in the mid-20th century. As an iconic figure, the pinup girl embodies themes of beauty, sexuality, and allure, with the tattoo symbolizing more than just aesthetic appeal.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'most of the earliest designs of pinups were based on the cinema beauties of the day and, in form, were usually simple and two dimensional, though even so they managed to convey all the sexual allure of the women they portrayed' (Aitken-Smith 2016:168). Munden & Schonberger (2022) note that 'other designs capture a range of kin and push the pin-up idea to more nuanced territories' which could be said for this tattoo design (Munden & Schonberger 2022:157).
Interviewee		"The thought behind that like you know, as you growing up you etc etc. Like you know you you find time to get mature when you fancy someone etc etc. That you know what I. I like this lady here. I like this person here. It's just and you basically like you fall in love in a way"

	"And now at that point in time, we were not experienced. You couldn't approach them until. The you know what? I love you and it's not, etcetera. You know the other thing but in our culture, it was a taboo. Hey, like, you know, to just approach anyway and tell whatever you want to say" "So, this one here was in significance, significance of the person that I fancied very much" "I like you so much and I'm going to put your memory here on my hand. Yeah. So, so that was that. But then again, it never made life simply because you know, with, with our culture, you would get arrange marriages. So, their parents said they had someone who want to marry her. That's. But the remembrance is still here. Yeah" "This is also also saw also at Harry's, Like I said I used to browse around, whatever kept in mind in mind and that will be the next one also" (van As 2023f)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm ensures it is visible to others but can be discreetly covered when necessary. The subject matter, while potentially controversial, is part of a broader trend as evidenced by the popularity of female designs in the digital archive. This indicates that despite its provocative nature, pinup tattoos were widely accepted and admired within certain contexts and communities.
Contextualize the Analysis	The tattoo's visibility on the right forearm allows it to be easily seen or hidden, depending on the situation. The pinup girl, a culturally loaded image, can evoke mixed reactions due to its sexual and aesthetic nature. However, its popularity indicates that many viewers

	might appreciate it as a piece of classic tattoo art, while others might interpret it through the personal narrative shared by the wearer. The interviewee's remarks reveal that the tattoo represents a significant person from their past, whom they fancied but couldn't openly express feelings for due to cultural taboos and arranged marriage practices. The tattoo serves as a memorial to this unfulfilled affection.

INT13	**Skull, dagger and snake**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Loose Flash 24 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	A tattoo of a skull, dagger and snake
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines. The tattoo consists of single lines and some shading that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The tattoo prominently displays a skull, dagger, and snake, intricately woven into a cohesive design on the left forearm.

Signified		The line drawing composition blends these three elements, each with its own distinct connotations. The skull symbolizes death, the dagger represents danger and violence, and the snake signifies stealth and deadly force. Together, these symbols convey a message of lethal capability and a readiness to face conflict.
Icon		The tattoo prominently displays a skull, dagger, and snake, intricately woven into a cohesive design on the left forearm. This composition blends three elements, each with distinct connotations: the skull symbolizes death, the dagger represents danger and violence, and the snake signifies stealth and deadly force. Together, these symbols convey a message of a dangerous capability and a readiness to face conflict. The tattoo represents themes of mortality, combat readiness, and stealth, with each element being a well-recognized symbol with deep cultural and historical roots.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		The composition of this tattoo has three main facets, with two facets focusing on two visual elements in relation to each other and the third being the script contained in the tattoo. Green (2009) notes that 'the dagger and skull both have their own symbolic properties when occurring alone, and a tattoo that combines the two images essentially depicts the meaning of both. The dagger was a favourite weapon among assassins and the skull symbolizes death' . The second visual combination is the snake coiled around the dagger, which Green (2009) explains that they are 'almost a direct translation of the two individual symbols combined. Although the snake is an incredibly complex symbol into which much can be read, here it is predominately of fighting ability, both stealthy (also suggested by the dagger) and deadly' (Green 2009:221). The third component is the script written in the body of the snake, which is old epitaph verse, with the Wainsgate Graveyard Project (2023) noting that this verse

	was 'One of the most common epitaphs – most British churchyards have at least one example of this verse or one of the many variations of it. Examples are found dating from the Middle Ages to the late 19th century' ("EPITAPHS" 2023).
Interviewee	"Right now, the story being is here now you know, like I said, Clairwood were very rough like, you know, like I said, we take no nonsense from nobody, a lot of fights and things were involved from people come from outside the city. So, we were not slack" "All this like when it came to fighting and even that like, you know, I just rushed it in all like, you know, so yeah. So no, now the guy must realize that I don't come from a skaapie[23] places something like you know so I put that thing on just to warn them beforehand, don't start" "I just walk in there sometime if I'm in town, I just walk in there. I just pick it up so" (van As 2023f)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the left forearm makes it highly visible, ensuring that the intended message is clearly communicated to others. The combination of a skull, dagger, and snake may evoke a sense of fear or respect from viewers, reinforcing the wearer's desired image of strength and readiness for conflict. This powerful imagery can be polarizing, with some viewing it as a symbol of toughness and resilience, while others might perceive it as aggressive or intimidating.
Contextualize the Analysis	The tattoo's design reflects both personal and cultural elements. It is rooted in the wearer's personal experiences and the environment of Clairwood, where physical confrontations were common. The

[23] S*outh Africa slang, derogatory* softie; weakling; pussy ("Skaapie — definition, examples, related words and more at Wordnik" n.d.).

	elements of the tattoo containing the skull, dagger, and snake are steeped in historical and cultural symbolism, representing themes of mortality, danger, and stealth. The inclusion of epitaph verse connects the tattoo to broader historical contexts of remembrance and mortality. Thus, the tattoo not only serves as a personal emblem of the wearer's toughness and readiness for conflict but also engages with long-standing cultural symbols and narratives about life, death, and combat.

INT13	**Dragon**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Dragon-34 https://tattooharry.co.za/dragons/
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	A tattoo of a dragon
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing a single black ink outlines. The tattoo consists of single lines and some shading that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The tattoo is a line drawing of a dragon, prominently placed on the left bicep, making it visible but also easy to cover if necessary.

Signified		The design represents a dragon, a creature often loaded with various cultural and symbolic meanings.
Icon	**X**	The tattoo is a line drawing of a dragon, prominently placed on the left bicep, making it visible but also easy to cover if necessary. This design represents a dragon, a creature loaded with various cultural and symbolic meanings. The dragon tattoo represents traditional imagery associated with dragons. Unlike Western depictions of dragons as fire-breathing monsters, this dragon aligns more with Asian cultural depictions. The exact meaning of the dragon can vary depending on the specific variety and colours used, though in this case, it is rendered in black ink.
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'the Japanese dragon (*ryu*) is not the fire-breathing terror of the European or Western imagination. For the Japanese, the dragon symbolizes wisdom and strength, as well as being the protector and guardian of humans beings on the earthly plane' (Aitken-Smith 2016:67). Munden and Schonberger (2022) notes that 'stylistically Ryu finds commonality with the Chinese dragon, as a serpentine water deity without wings. As a tattoo, Ryu takes on different meanings depending on which variety is depicted and the colours used' (Munden and Schonberger 2022:124).
Interviewee		"He's here thing where I can see all these Bruce Lee films and all" "This is to depict like the his this style, like your dragon, entered the dragon and whatnot. Have you all those you know, all those films, yeah" 'Martial arts' (van As 2023f)

Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the left bicep ensures it is visible but can be covered if needed. The dragon's imagery, familiar from popular culture and martial arts films, might resonate well with audiences familiar with these themes. However, interpretations may vary; those aware of the dragon's Asian cultural symbolism might appreciate the tattoo's deeper meanings of wisdom and protection, while others might simply see it as a symbol of martial arts or strength.
Contextualize the Analysis	This tattoo, with its single black ink outline and dragon imagery, blends personal and cultural symbolism. Inspired by martial arts films, particularly those of Bruce Lee, the tattoo connects the wearer to themes of martial prowess and Eastern philosophy. Culturally, the dragon represents wisdom, strength, and protection, as highlighted in the literature. The tattoo's visibility on the left bicep adds to its significance, making it a potent symbol of personal identity and cultural homage.

INT15	**Dagger with Flower Scroll**	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Daggers-78, Daggers-48 and Banners-74 https://tattooharry.co.za/daggers/ https://tattooharry.co.za/banners/	 Source: Loose Flash-63 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/
Analysis of the Tattoo		

Context		A tattoo of a dagger piercing a scroll with flowers.
Analysis		The tattoo was originally created utilizing a single colour black ink. The tattoo consists of single lines and some shading that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		A tattoo of a dagger, scroll and flowers on the right forearm.
Signified		A composition line drawing of a dagger, scroll and flowers.
Icon		The tattoo depicts a dagger piercing a scroll with flowers, prominently located on the right forearm. This position ensures high visibility, allowing the tattoo to be a noticeable part of the wearer's identity while also offering the option to cover it if desired. Each element carries its own distinct connotations, contributing to a layered and multifaceted symbol. The dagger suggests themes of betrayal or conflict, the scroll implies the presence of a significant or personal message, and the flowers introduce notions of beauty and growth. The combination of these elements is rich in cultural and contextual meanings. The dagger, often associated with danger and betrayal, contrasts with the scroll, which symbolizes important messages or declarations. The flowers add a layer of aesthetic appeal and symbolize beauty and life. Together, these symbols create a tattoo that is both visually arresting and deeply symbolic, inviting various interpretations based on the viewer's perspective and understanding of these elements.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2016) notes that a tattoo containing a scroll symbolizes the presence of an important message (Green 2009:213). Clerk (2008) notes that ' the use of a dagger is doubly disturbing, since this is a weapon used up close and personal, therefore implying a shattering betrayal by a loved one' (Clerk 2008:139). The flower elements in the

	tattoo form combinations 'that are more generally representative of a pleasing aesthetic effect, drawing on their common characteristics of beauty and growth (Green 2009:87). 2025/08/09 14:42:00
Interviewee	"I was having lunch" "So, you finish your lunch. Come over, I want to see you" 'What's up? He said, come on sit down and he put this tattoo on me" "I asked him how much, he said don't worry, but I can see the price because in his room three walls from ceiling to down halfway three quarter down" "I have this in 1963 I think 64 somewhere there" "Love, yeah" "So, he chose the tattoo. He chose the position" "On the wall" "He just got me off hand. I couldn't say no, he was older than me, I couldn't say no" "He didn't tell me anything, to be honest. He just called me and said, come on, I'll see you when you got this, he said. And then giving me a tattoo" (van As 2023h)
Audience Reception	The placement of the tattoo on the right forearm makes it highly visible, yet it can be covered if necessary. The visibility of the tattoo ensures that it frequently interacts with the public gaze, inviting interpretations and reactions from viewers.
Contextualize the Analysis	The combination of the dagger, scroll, and flowers creates a multifaceted symbol that can evoke various interpretations. The scroll element in the tattoo often leads viewers to perceive it as containing

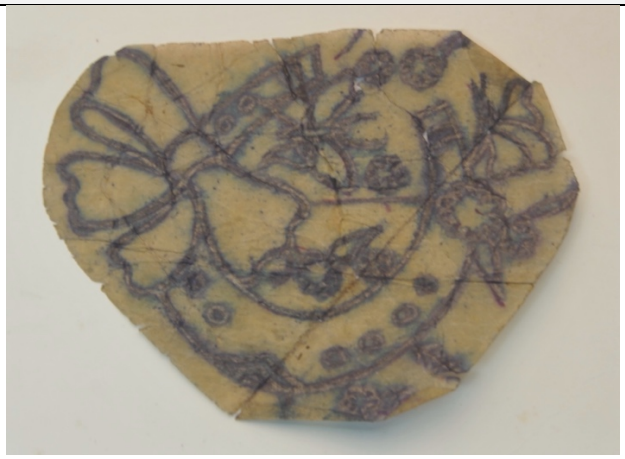
	a significant or personal message. Scrolls in tattoos are traditionally seen as carriers of important declarations or sentiments, which can intrigue viewers and invite them to speculate about the personal story or meaning behind the design. The inclusion of the dagger introduces an element of drama and intensity. Viewers may interpret the dagger as a symbol of betrayal or conflict, given its historical associations with close combat and personal confrontation. The flowers in the tattoo serve to soften the overall interpretation, suggesting themes of beauty, growth, or a pleasing aesthetic. Flowers often symbolize positive qualities such as beauty, life, and renewal, which can counterbalance the harsher implications of the dagger. This combination of elements can create a complex and layered narrative within the tattoo, making it a subject of fascination and varied interpretations for those who see it. The impulsive nature of its creation and the interviewee's limited participation in its design and placement add layers of personal and historical context.

INT16	**Clasped hands with dagger**	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Daggers-67 https://tattooharry.co.za/daggers/	 Source: Loose Flash 81 https://tattooharry.co.za/individual-flash/
Analysis of the Tattoo		

Context		A tattoo of clasped hands with a dagger on the lower part of the left forearm.
Analysis		The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines with red in the dagger's tang and shirt sleeve on the left. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time and the colour has disappeared.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo shows clasped hands with a dagger piercing through them.
Signified		This design represents a combination of trust and betrayal. The clasped hands symbolize partnership or unity, while the dagger introduces an element of treachery or conflict.
Icon		The tattoo features clasped hands pierced by a dagger, combining symbols of trust and betrayal. The clasped hands signify partnership or unity, while the dagger introduces an element of treachery or conflict. It draws on traditional Western tattoo imagery where clasped hands represent friendship or marriage, and the dagger denotes personal betrayal or danger.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Munden and Schonberger (2022) note that 'the communicative power of hands clasped together defines several tattoos. By the early 20th century most Western tattoo flash books contained a range of intersected hands with distinct details. Those extending to the cuffs flanking the hands give each a clear gender designation – denoting engagement or marriage' (Munden & Schonberger 2022:19). The inclusion of a dagger into the composition represents 'the most personal – the person wielding it has to be in near physical contact with his or her target'. This intimacy would suggest that the two players involved in the conflict know each other, and so it can also become a weapon of betrayal (Aitken-Smith 2016:60).

Interviewee	“Then you know going to town and so forth. We making friends. I saw a guy with this tattoo came along” “Hands, with a knife going through it. Yeah, yeah” ‘Got that is just because I saw it on another guy” “Yeah, yeah. And this was all red too, but it’s all gone now” (van As 2023)
Audience Reception	The audience reception of this tattoo can vary widely. On one hand, the image of clasped hands can evoke positive feelings of unity and partnership, while the dagger can invoke curiosity or discomfort due to its connotation of betrayal. The placement on the lower left forearm makes the tattoo visible and invites interpretation, often leading to questions about its meaning and origin.
Contextualize the Analysis	Historically, clasped hands tattoos were prevalent in the early 20th-century Western tattoo flash books, symbolizing engagements or marriages through detailed depictions of intersecting hands. The inclusion of a dagger introduces a darker, more personal element, suggesting close-quarters conflict or betrayal. The interviewee's narrative reveals that this tattoo was inspired by seeing it on another person, underscoring the influence of social interactions on tattoo choices. Over time, the tattoo's lines have broadened, and the colours have faded, reflecting its age and the natural evolution of tattoos on the skin.

INT16	Horse shoe with bow and flowers

Interviewee Tattoo	Digital Archive Tracing
	 Source: Luck-2 https://tattooharry.co.za/luck/

Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context		A tattoo of a horse shoe, bow and flowers the right forearm.
Analysis		The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier		The tattoo displays a horseshoe, bow, and flowers prominently on the right forearm.
Signified		These elements together signify themes of luck, beauty, and perhaps a personal or decorative choice.
Icon		The tattoo prominently displays a horseshoe, bow, and flowers on the right forearm. Together, these elements signify themes of luck, beauty, and personal or decorative choice. The horseshoe is an iconic symbol of good luck across various cultures, while the bow and flowers add decorative elements symbolizing beauty and nature.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'the horseshoe has long been associated with good luck, and in many cultures it is hung on doors or

	in doorways, to bring luck to those who live within the house. In the past, horseshoes were considered lucky because they were made by blacksmiths, whose profession was considered to have 'special' or even magical powers' (Aitken-Smith 2016:102). Munden and Schonbergerer (2022) note that ' elements such as banners and flowers can be added to augment it. Any choice speaks to belief in luck and an optimistic outlook' (Munden and Schonberger 2022:100).
Interviewee	"a navy guy, I met him as a friend" "I wanted another tattoo I got addicted to tattoos. I wanted more. So, I went there to his chambers again and I got this also on the wall" "On the wall and I got that one, a horseshoe, the horseshoe and the ribbon and the butterflies and flowers" "it's a bow. Would be tied with a with a ribbon" "I just went in there and got it done" "It was just something I wanted to do' (van As 2023)
Audience Reception	The placement on the forearm makes the tattoo highly visible to others, indicating that the wearer is open to sharing these symbols of luck and personal aesthetics with the public. The common cultural understanding of the horseshoe as a symbol of good luck might make the tattoo more relatable and positively received by a broad audience. The additional elements of the bow and flowers add a touch of personalization and decorative appeal, potentially enhancing its reception as both a meaningful and aesthetically pleasing tattoo.
Contextualize the Analysis	Historically, the horseshoe has been a potent symbol of good luck, tied to the mystical powers of blacksmiths who crafted them. The inclusion of flowers and a bow adds layers of meaning related to beauty, nature, and personal expression. The interviewee's decision to get this tattoo was influenced by a social connection with a navy

	friend and a growing enthusiasm for tattoos, underscoring the role of personal experiences and relationships in the choice of tattoo designs. This context enriches the understanding of the tattoo as not just an isolated symbol but a part of the wearer's life narrative and social interactions.

INT16	**Springbok with flags**	
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**	**Digital Archive Flash**
	 Source: Patriotic-12 https://tattooharry.co.za/patriotic/	 Source: Flash Card-25 https://tattooharry.co.za/flash-sheets/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of a springbok with a South African and British flag on the right bicep.	
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines and red areas in both flags. The tattoo consists of single lines and shading that has broadened over time.	
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier	The tattoo features a springbok with the South African and British flags on the right bicep.	
Signified	The combination signifies themes of national pride, heritage, and possibly a personal or historical connection to South Africa and Britain.	

Icon		The tattoo features a springbok with the South African and British flags on the right bicep, symbolizing national pride, heritage, and possibly a personal or historical connection to both South Africa and Britain. The springbok is an iconic emblem of South African identity, while the flags represent national affiliations, creating a visual narrative of dual heritage or symbolic unity.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Due to the lack of literature specifically dealing with the Springbok tattoos, context was taken from the interviewees interpretation. When discussing the flag element, Aitken-Smith (2016) notes that 'in modern tattooing, flags feature predominantly as symbols of patriotism and pride. Flags have the ability to sum up a person's history, heritage, and beliefs in one simple but powerful image, instantly informing the viewer about who they are and where they come from, their past, and their present' (Aitken-Smith 2016:86).
Interviewee		"Now this one I do know it was 1950, so that is the Springbok with the British flag" "That we had the British trade union with, and all the flags were down West Street all down West Street. So, I went in there and I said I want a tattoo. I want to springbok. You are South African flag and the British flag" "Because I saw that the trade union, they build the flags down the street. One British, one South African and one British one South African right down the street" (Patriotic meaning?) "I don't know, could be" (van As 2023)
Audience Reception		The tattoo's placement on the right bicep makes it visible, yet easily concealed, allowing the wearer to showcase the dual heritage or the

	historical context of their identity. The inclusion of the Springbok, a symbol of South African identity, alongside the British flag, suggests a blend of cultural or national pride.
Contextualize the Analysis	The combination of the Springbok and the flags reflects the historical context of the wearer's experience. The Springbok is emblematic of South African identity, while the British flag suggests a connection to Britain. The interviewee recounts the origin of the tattoo, explaining that it dates back to 1950. The interviewee describes seeing British trade union flags lining West Street, alternating between British and South African flags, thus inspired by this display, he decided to get a tattoo featuring a springbok, the South African flag, and the British flag. The interviewee notes that his choice was influenced by the visual impact of the flags and their arrangement, though he is unsure if there was any patriotic meaning behind his decision.

INT16	Cross on stones with banner	
Interviewee Tattoo		**Digital Archive Tracing**
		 Source: Religious-105 https://tattooharry.co.za/religious/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of a cross on stones with a banner on the right forearm.	
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.	
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier	The tattoo's primary elements include a cross on stones with a banner with the word ‘love’ written in it.	
Signified	The design signifies themes of loss, mourning, and remembrance. The cross, commonly associated with memorials and graves, combined with the stones and banner, reinforces these themes.	
Icon		The tattoo's primary elements include a cross on stones with a banner. This design signifies themes of loss, mourning, and remembrance. The cross, commonly associated with memorials and graves, combined with the stones and banner, reinforces these themes. The cross is an iconic symbol of Christianity, representing faith, sacrifice, and memorial. The stones suggest a tombstone,
Index		
Symbol	**X**	

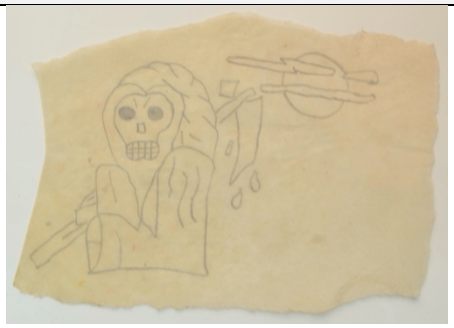
		further symbolizing a grave or place of remembrance. The broadened lines index the tattoo's age, indicating it has been part of the wearer's body for a significant period.
Interpretation		
Literature		Munden and Schonberger (2022) note that 'the visual antonym of a heart with banner, the memorial cross is one of the most prevalent symbols of loss in contemporary tattooing. With origins in mourning imagery of the 19th century, the standalone cross with banner follows from the tombstone depictions (in memory of mother/father)' (Munden and Schonberger 2022:205). Evident by the stone-line representations in the tattoo's composition, the tombstone association can be made, with Munden and Schonberger (2022) noting that 'a tombstone shifted easily from print to tattoo culture. Tattoo flash books of the 20th century regularly included a few articulations of the idea, and as the western traditional style – with its characteristic heavy line and strong shading – matured, standalone tombstones took on a new design integrity' (Munden and Schonberger 2022:206).
Interviewee		"Well, I had this one done, which I also saw another friend of mine" "It's a cross. On them. Probably a grave or something, and I'd love written across there" "Of course, this was red as well. Yeah. Yeah. The red faded very quickly" "(reason?) It's hard to remember" "Just, just just because I saw on somebody else" (van As 2023)
Audience Reception		The tattoo's symbolism of mourning and remembrance resonates widely, making it a common and recognisable design in tattoo culture. Audience reception likely aligns with understanding of the tattoo as a

	personal tribute or memorial, reflecting common themes of loss and memory.
Contextualize the Analysis	The interviewee's narrative highlights the role of social influence in tattoo choices, showing how peer designs can inspire personal tattoos. This tattoo serves as a testament to the enduring nature of memorial tattoos in expressing personal connections to loss and remembrance. The cross on stones with a banner, often seen in traditional Western tattoo styles, connects to broader cultural practices of honouring and remembering the deceased, originating from 19th-century mourning imagery and evolving within tattoo culture.

INT16	**Lioness with name**
Interviewee Tattoo	**Digital Archive Tracing**
	 Source: Wild Cats-110 https://tattooharry.co.za/wild-cats/
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	A tattoo of a lioness and name underneath on the right bicep.
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The tattoo consists of a lioness with the name ‘Gladys’ written underneath, located on the right bicep.

Signified		The design signifies themes of strength, courage, and a personal connection to an individual named Gladys. The lioness symbolizes these qualities, while the name personalizes the tattoo, indicating a significant relationship.
Icon	**X**	The tattoo, featuring a lioness with the name 'Gladys' underneath, serves as a powerful semiotic symbol. These qualities are traditionally associated with the lioness, an emblem of fierce maternal strength and leadership in the animal kingdom. The name 'Gladys' personalizes the tattoo, suggesting a deep emotional connection, perhaps honouring or memorializing someone who embodies or inspired these traits. Located on the right bicep, a place often chosen for its visibility not only conveys the wearer's admiration for these qualities but also embeds them within a personal narrative linked to 'Gladys'
Index		
Symbol		
Interpretation		
Literature		Aitken-Smith (2022) notes that 'the king of the beasts, the lion has always been a popular motif in folklore, art, and tattoo design. Whether rendered realistically or stylised, the lion represents strength, courage, fearlessness and wisdom. Lions are also associated with inner strength – symbolizing how we can reign over our emotions and actions' (Aitken-Smith 2016:129). 2025/08/09 14:42:00
Interviewee		"Lioness with Gladys written underneath there, my late wife" "We had a huge argument. She really accused me of other women aren't she was insanely jealous" "And she was shouting and shouting and screaming at me and all sorts of things at me. You know when getting them. So, I went to the tattoo artist, and I got that one put on Lioness" "design where what I wanted, and I told him I want the lioness, and he did it himself. If he had it on the wall, I didn't see it"

	"I actually wanted a jumping lioness, but I got a flat one haha. I was very happy with it" "She nearly killed me when I got home" "She never let me forget it" (van As 2023)
Audience Reception	The audience likely interprets this tattoo as a deeply personal tribute, recognizing the lioness as a symbol of strength and courage, and the name 'Gladys' as a significant person in the wearer's life. The emotional context provided by the interviewee's story adds depth to the audience's understanding, highlighting the tattoo as a representation of a tumultuous yet profound relationship.
Contextualize the Analysis	The interviewee's narrative provides crucial context, revealing that the tattoo was a reaction to a heated argument with his late wife, Gladys. Her accusations and jealousy led him to get the tattoo as a symbol of their intense relationship. Despite initially wanting a different design, the lioness still resonated with him, symbolizing Gladys's strong and fierce nature. The tattoo, now aged and faded, represents not only a memorial to Gladys but also a testament to the complex emotions and memories tied to their relationship. This context underscores the personal and emotional motivations behind the tattoo, reflecting how life events and personal connections influence tattoo choices and their meanings.

INT17	Grim reaper with full moon	
Interviewee Tattoo		**Digital Archive Tracing**
		 Source: Death-9 https://tattooharry.co.za/death/
Analysis of the Tattoo		
Context	A tattoo of a grim reaper on the left bicep.	
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines, with some limited shading and red ink in the 'full moon' and scythe. The tattoo consists of single lines that have broadened over time.	
Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier	The tattoo features a grim reaper, characterized by single black ink outlines, with limited shading and red ink in the full moon and scythe.	
Signified	The grim reaper signifies death and the inevitability of mortality. It represents the personification of death, capturing visual themes of life's end and the inescapable nature of death.	
Icon	**X**	The tattoo features a grim reaper, characterized by single black ink outlines, with limited shading and red ink in the full moon and scythe. This design signifies death and the inevitability of mortality, capturing themes of life's end and the inescapable nature of death. As an iconic symbol universally recognized as a representation of death, the grim reaper is typically depicted as a hooded skeleton wielding a scythe, serving as a powerful visual reminder of human mortality. The
Index		
Symbol		

		broadened lines and fading colours indicate the tattoo's age and long-term presence on the wearer's body, while the condition of the tattoo, including damaged lines from scratching, suggests a personal story of youthful rebellion and sentimentality.
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2009) notes: 'the grim reaper is, quite simply, a symbol of death itself. Generally depicted as a hooded and caped skeleton wielding a giant scythe, he comes to 'harvest' human souls with his tool. He is the personification of death as it approaches and a reminder that no one escapes him in the end' (Green 2009:104). Munden and Schonberger (2022) notes 'the hooded skeleton with the scythe makes a powerful, agnostic tattoo articulating the inevitability of life's end' (Munden and Schonberger 2022:208).
Interviewee		"My second one, so in the tradition as well, we were allowed the second one, when we turn 18, right? When you finish school, you're allowed to get a second tattoo" "So, the second one was this one. I went to his studio the one day and I chose this. The Grim Reaper. And when I chose that, he said no" "He refused to do it, he said. I I said you can choose a tattoo, but I will not put that for you" "So, I I said, OK, I want it and I got home. I complained to my grandmother. I said, oh, Dada[24] says that I I can choose the tattoo. But when I chose the tattoo, he complained and he still he he was adamant he did not want to put it"

[24] Dada means(paternal) grandfather in Hindi and Urdu (Hanks, Lenarčič & McClure 2022).

	"So, my grandmother told him, you know what? If he wants to put it" "So, he told me. OK, I'll do it for you under the condition that the next tattoo is chosen by him" "It took him about about hour" "The first few weeks, when it started healing, it was itching and I couldn't handle it, so I scratched it" "And as for the karma, because he said don't do it and I did it, I scratched it, and I damaged the lines" "But I left it as is. I was going to cover it up, so I'll leave it memory. Leave it" "He didn't like the pattern. It wasn't his, his design, his authentic design" "I saw him doing it for someone, so I want" "because that guy brought the pattern" "It was more of as a kid you want to be badass. You were just starting college. I just started training. So, I started building my arms, so that's why I wanted the tattoo, and I wanted the Grim Reaper to look like, you know, like one of those gangster types" "So, I put it here because if I use a shirt, I can actually just cover it up because it was. I was still in college and before I started work and stuff" "Initially I was over the moon because I got a big tattoo and when it started itching and I started scratching, I wasn't too happy. Yeah, it

	didn't get infected because I didn't listen to it and but that was, I think, after a few months it got infected" "It was painful" "because I was still young at the time" "It wasn't the best, but it's because it's the first. It's the first and we had. I had an argument with him, and so it's actually, I'd say it's it's very sentimental" "If I wanted to do it, I did it. So why cover it up?" "I had no idea what the Grim Reaper even meant. I didn't know tattoos had means, but because I was in college after I got the tattoo, I had friends who who were were they were thugs, they were gangsters" "And they asked me, do you know what that means? I said no. They said, well, if you don't ever go to jail with that tattoo because and if you don't understand what it means if you don't know what it means, then you shouldn't put it. Yeah. And I didn't know at that at that time. I didn't know" "I'm never going to go to jail, so it's fine" "So, the other reason why I chose that Grim Reaper is because I didn't want something that was too common. I wanted something unique" van As, R. 2024.
Audience Reception	The audience likely perceives the grim reaper tattoo as a bold statement, symbolizing the wearer's confrontation with the concept of death or a desire to appear fearless and strong. The initial

	perception of the tattoo might align with stereotypical views of rebellious youth or a fascination with darker themes. Over time, as the tattoo fades and shows signs of wear, it may evoke curiosity about the personal story behind it. The interviewee's account reveals how peer influence and a desire to project a certain image shaped the choice, which might resonate with others who have experienced similar motivations for getting their tattoos.
Contextualize the Analysis	The interviewee's narrative provides critical context for understanding the tattoo's significance. The tattoo marked as a rite of passage and a form of rebellion, influenced by peer designs and a desire to look 'badass'. The initial choice was met with resistance from Harry Ramesar, that was only overcome with the support of the interviewee's grandmother. This resistance and subsequent compromise imbued the tattoo with additional layers of meaning. The grim reaper, chosen for its uniqueness and its appeal to the interviewee's evolving identity during college, later revealed its deeper connotations through interactions with peers who highlighted its association with death and cautionary advice about its implications in a criminal context. Despite not fully understanding its symbolism at the time, the tattoo remains a significant and sentimental part of the interviewee's life, representing a moment of defiance and personal growth. This story underscores the complex interplay of personal, social, and cultural factors in the selection and reception of tattoos.

INT17	Hindu Om with tribal arm band
Interviewee Tattoo	
	
Digital Archive Tracing	
 Source: Tribal-57 https://tattooharry.co.za/tribal/	
Analysis of the Tattoo	
Context	A tattoo of a Hindu Om and tribal band on the right bicep.
Analysis	The tattoo was originally created utilizing single black ink outlines and coloured in with black ink. The tattoo lines have broadened over time.
Semiotic Analysis	
Signifier	The primary elements of the tattoo are the Hindu Om symbol and a tribal band.
Signified	The Om symbol signifies the Hindu primeval sound of creation and the four states of consciousness: sleeping without dreams, dreaming, awake, and transcendental enlightenment. The tribal band signifies a more modern, aesthetic choice often associated with strength and cultural identity.

Icon		The tattoo features a Hindu Om symbol and a tribal band, created with single black ink outlines and filled in with black ink. The design has broadened over time, indicating its age and long-term presence on the wearer's body with the primary element of the tattoo being the Hindu Om symbol with a tribal band. The Om symbol signifies the Hindu primeval sound of creation and the four states of consciousness: sleeping without dreams, dreaming, awake, and transcendental enlightenment. The tribal band signifies a more modern, aesthetic choice often associated with strength and cultural identity. The Om symbol is an iconic representation of spiritual and traditional knowledge in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The tribal band, while less specific in its cultural references, is often used to signify strength and unity.
Index		
Symbol	**X**	
Interpretation		
Literature		Green (2009) notes 'that the Om is the Hindu primeval and inaudible sound of creation, inexhaustible and the very centre of traditional knowledge. The symbol represents the four states of consciousness: sleeping without dreams, dreaming, awake, and satori (the transcendental state of enlightenment). Today, it is a very popular symbol in tattoo artwork' (Green 2009:175). Aitken-Smith notes that 'one of the most popular is Om, or Aum, a sacred utterance and spiritual icon in the Dharmic religions – Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism' (Aitken-Smith 2016:157).
Interviewee		"So, you may not find a tracing with this one" "So, this one was done the same year in 1998. It was probably around, it was July, it was three months later" 'So, it was his his condition on getting the Grim Reaper to do his own tattoo. I said OK, fine, I'll come. You do whatever you want. And he

	created this design for me. So, he may have kept the stencil. I'm not sure, but he created this for me specifically. He had this armband" "So, he liked the armband and the ohm sign because we're we're Hindu, so he and he, he liked this" "He liked this design. It was his own design and he wanted me to have this" "Surprisingly enough, this one did not get infected. It healed very nicely and even though up till now the lines are still quite nice. Yeah, as opposed to the thick lines on that one, which he refused to put" "Also, so I can I can cover it with my sleeve if need be" "Because every time when you're applying for jobs and they see tattoos in your forearms, it was it didn't look very well" van As, R. 2024.
Audience Reception	The audience likely perceives this tattoo as a blend of spiritual and cultural elements. The Om symbol is widely recognized as a sacred Hindu symbol, conveys a message of spiritual depth and cultural identity. The tribal band, commonly seen in modern tattoo art, adds an element of strength and aesthetic appeal. Viewers familiar with Hinduism may appreciate the spiritual significance, while others may see the tattoo as a unique and meaningful piece of body art.
Contextualize the Analysis	This tattoo was created in 1998, three months after the interviewee's Grim Reaper tattoo. The design was chosen by Harry Ramesar, who incorporated elements reflecting the interviewee's Hindu

	background. This context highlights the role of cultural and spiritual identity in tattoo choices. The ability to cover the tattoo with a sleeve reflects practical considerations related to social and professional settings, where visible tattoos might be perceived negatively. The well-maintained condition of the tattoo indicates careful aftercare, lasting significance for the wearer and a feeling of 'karma' due to the tension of acquiring the interviewee's Grim Reaper tattoo . This tattoo serves as a testament to the integration of spiritual and cultural symbols into modern tattoo art, reflecting both personal identity and broader cultural influences.

6.8 Conclusion

The analysis of tattoos and interview responses reveals the complex interplay between personal identity, cultural symbolism, and social influences in tattoo literature. The chapter highlights how specific designs, like the dragon or the eagle with a scroll, resonate with individuals across different cultural contexts, underscoring the shared meanings and values these symbols represent. The presence of the same tattoo design among interviewees, despite their lack of connection, illustrates the influence of popular motifs and the role of the tattoo artist in shaping cultural trends. The high rate of interviewees finding their tattoo designs in the digital archive whilst the interview is being conducted, validates the archive's effectiveness, demonstrating its value as a cultural, educational, and community resource.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Research Contributions

This study explored the intersection of digital humanities and visual methodologies through the creation of a digital archive dedicated to the tattoo artefacts of South African tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. In doing so, it addressed key research questions concerning visual analysis, digital preservation, authorship, and the application of theoretical frameworks to visual cultural heritage. The primary contribution of this study is the practical application of Gillian Rose's (2023) visual methodology to an under-documented and culturally specific body of work. The analysis of Ramesar's artefacts through the four interrelated sites, production, image, circulation, and audiencing demonstrate how visual research methods can be embedded within digital humanities practice. This contributes to broader conversations in visual digital humanities by demonstrating how pictorial data, rather than being secondary to text, can serve as a primary mode of scholarly inquiry (Terras & Münster 2020). In addition, the thesis contributes to digital archival theory by conceptualising a archive not merely as a storage platform, but as a participatory and interpretive space. Drawing on the work of Rushmeier et al. (2015) and Giaccardi (2006), the project positioned the digital archive as a space where users are invited to actively explore and reinterpret artefacts, which supports current shifts in digital heritage practice that emphasise engagement, reflexivity, and co-curation. The study acknowledges the challenges posed by artificial intelligence in relation to authorship and authenticity of visual content. In light of Gülaçti and Kahraman's (2021) concerns, the digital archive's reliance on two living relatives as the sole authenticators underscores the importance of ethical curation in a time when AI-generated content may complicate verification processes. This has particular relevance for digital humanities projects dealing with rare or contested materials.

Importantly, the archive contributes to the preservation and critical recognition of South African tattoo history, particularly the work of an pioneer Indian tattoo artist working both during and after apartheid. In doing so, the study responds to wider calls within the humanities to recover marginalised narratives and support decolonial approaches to cultural

heritage. The archive serves not only as a repository but as a platform for scholarly engagement, cultural preservation, and community memory. Together, these contributions demonstrate the capacity of visual digital humanities to preserve cultural memory while actively inviting scholarly reflection and reinterpretation.

7.2 Summary of preceding chapters

This study explores the creation and analysis of a digital archive dedicated to preserving the visual tattoo-related artefacts of Harry Ramesar, a pioneering tattoo artist from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The research is structured into multiple chapters, each building upon the previous one to offer an holistic understanding of the digital archiving process, its challenges, and its contributions to the preservation of the digital humanities and visual culture. Chapter Two conducts a literature review that underscores the significance of the digital humanities and visual methodologies in the preservation of visual culture (Rose 2023). This chapter highlights the critical role of digitization in creating a digital archive, emphasizing how converting physical artefacts into digital formats a) protects them from degradation and b) makes them accessible to a global audience (Drucker, Kim, Salehian and Bushong 2014). In addition, the chapter discusses the importance of digital curation in maintaining the authenticity of these tattoo artefacts, with the inclusion of personal stories and interviews, which add depth and transform the archive into a living document that captures the social and cultural dynamics within the early South African tattooing community. The dual function of the archive as both a repository and a database is established, ensuring that it facilitates efficient retrieval and analysis for scholarly research. The visual representation of tattoo artefacts is recognized as crucial for engaging contemporary audiences and preserving Harry Ramesar's artistic legacy within the realm of South African tattoo history. This chapter also positions the study within a broader scholarly context by drawing together key contributions from the fields of visual digital humanities, archival studies, and cultural heritage. By integrating the visual methodological framework of Rose (2023) with practical approaches to digital curation, the thesis contributes to the growing body of literature that argues for visual material as central and not secondary to humanities research (Terras & Münster 2020). The study engages with ongoing debates concerning the ethics of digitisation, authorship, and

authenticity, particularly in relation to emerging technologies such as AI (Gülaçti & Kahraman 2021). In addressing these issues, the chapter not only synthesises existing theoretical perspectives but also identifies the unique position of this research in preserving marginalised histories through context-sensitive, co-curated digital practice.

Chapter Three detailed the practical steps involved in creating the digital archive, focusing on preserving Harry Ramesar's rare tattoo artefacts. The chapter explored how the incorporation of a 3D Environment of Harry Ramsar's tattoo studio in the digital archive, utilizing the principles of virtual reality (VR) technology enhances user engagement by providing an immersive experience of Harry Ramesar's tattoo studio (Hoang & Cox 2017). This interactive approach deepens the users' connection with the content, offering educational insights into historical tattoo practices and cultural representations within the South African tattoo community. The use of WordPress as the platform for the digital archive was discussed, emphasizing the importance of a user-friendly interface and robust performance, with the chapter concluding by highlighting the collaborative nature of the project, which encouraged participation from the tattoo community, thereby enriching the archive with diverse artefacts and perspectives (Pickett 2014).

Chapter Four provides an in-depth analysis of the tattoo artefacts preserved in the archive. The digital archive documents over 2,000 tattoo-related artefacts, which include most importantly Harry Ramesar's tattoo flash designs and tattoo tracings, with various other visual elements, which offer valuable insights into the popular designs and cultural significances during his career as a tattoo artist. The preservation of these flash designs and tracings is particularly noted as they serve as a visual history of the most recurrent designs, reflecting the societal impact of tattoo artistry over time. The chapter utilizes Gillian Rose's visual methodologies framework to guide the analysis, focusing on the technological, compositional, and social modalities of the visual materials to explore the personal and cultural significance of the tattoo symbols in Harry Ramesar's collection. These theoretical frameworks enriched the analysis, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social contexts represented by the artefacts.

Chapter Five examines the methodologies used for collecting qualitative data through in-depth, in-person and electronic interviews (Witzel & Reiter 2012; Salmons 2015), where both interview formats share methodological similarities, particularly in their semi-structured

nature, which allowed for a thorough exploration of participants' experiences. E-interviews were noted for their convenience and ability to reach a geographically diverse range of participants, while both formats required careful ethical considerations, such as informed consent and privacy protection with the emphasis that regardless of the interview format, the core principles of qualitative research remained consistent, thereby strengthening the study's overall validity (Salmons 2015).

Chapter Six focused on the analysis of the tattoos and the interviewees' responses, revealing significant insights into the interplay between personal identity, cultural symbolism, and social influences within current tattoo literature (Negrin, Slaughter, Dahlke and Olson 2022). The chapter highlights how specific tattoo designs, for example dragons and daggers, carry deep cultural meanings that vary across different contexts and that the interviewees' choices of tattoos were influenced by personal experiences, cultural references, and social interactions, thus illustrating the multifaceted nature of tattoos as symbols of both personal identity and cultural homage. In addition. the chapter notes an interesting observation where three interview participants had the same tattoo design, created by Harry Ramesar, despite not knowing each other. This circumstance points to the broader social and cultural trends that make certain tattoo designs resonate across diverse groups. The chapter concludes by discussing the success of the digital archive, with a significant percentage (76.5%) of interviewees finding at least one tattoo design or tracing and in some cases both in the digital archive during the interview. This finding validates the archive's effectiveness in capturing and representing Harry Ramesar's work as a tattoo artist, making it a valuable resource for future research, education, and community engagement.

7.3 Study outcome

The outcomes of this study illustrate the contributions made through the preservation and analysis of cultural heritage, specifically within the realm of visual culture by creating a digital archive of Harry Ramesar’s tattoo artefacts. The study emphasizes the dual role of digital archives as both a means of safeguarding artefacts and as a resource for ongoing scholarly inquiry as the process of digitisation not only enhances accessibility but also ensures the protection of Harry Ramesar's contributions from physical deterioration (Rushmeier, Pintus,

Yang, Wong and Li 2015; Ciula, Eide, Marras and Sahle 2023). Additionally, the inclusion of personal narratives and community engagement from interviewees enriches the study and digital archive, thus transforming it into a living document that reflects both the artistry and social impact of tattooing in KwaZulu Natal.

It is evident that the connection between the data collected from interviews and its presentation in the digital archive could be significantly enhanced. It is important to recognize that the digital archive is a work in progress and may evolve, as the primary focus of this study's assessment remains on the dissertation itself, supported by the evolving digital archive. Research elements and findings contained in this study can be added once the study has been examined. Future research should explore strategies to continually strengthen this linkage over the coming years.

7.3.1 Review of research questions

Addressing the research questions is essential for demonstrating how the study has fulfilled its objectives. By doing so, the research ties together the theoretical framework, methodology, and results, showcasing the research's relevance and impact. The process not only highlights key discoveries but also underscores the significance of the study within its academic or practical context, offering a final reflection. Addressing the research questions are essential for demonstrating how the study has fulfilled its objectives. In doing so, the research connects the theoretical framework, methodology, and findings, thereby affirming the study's academic contribution. The following discussion reflects on each of the five central research questions, offering a synthesis of the insights gained.

Research Question 1: What are the main features of the intersection of the digital humanities and visual methodologies?

The intersection of digital humanities and visual methodologies, often referred to as 'visual digital humanities', focuses on research approaches that prioritize pictorial data over textual data to explore humanities questions. As noted by Terras and Münster (2020), visual digital humanities involve both the consumption and production of visual information as a core method of inquiry (Terras & Münster 2020). Key features include the use of digital tools to

collect and analyse visual data, such as through digitisation and the reconstruction of historical objects. This approach allows researchers to work with images and spatial objects, expanding traditional, text-based research by enabling knowledge creation through visual means. Visual methodologies are particularly important in fields like cultural heritage, where digital visualisation and visual analysis are essential.

Research Question 2: What main theoretical perspectives inform the intersection of the digital humanities and visual methodologies, especially with regard to the digitisation of heritage?

The theoretical perspectives informing the intersection of digital humanities and visual methodologies, particularly regarding the digitisation of heritage, focus on how cultural and historical artefacts are preserved, interpreted, and made accessible. Rose (2023) emphasizes that analysing visual materials requires understanding their production, circulation, and reception, which helps decode the meanings embedded in these artefacts. This approach highlights the critical role of digitization in preserving cultural heritage by enabling visual representations to reach broader audiences and extend beyond physical limitations (Rushmeier et al. 2015). These theories contribute not only to the safeguarding of heritage but aid in providing new contexts and interpretations of visual artefacts in the digital space.

Research Question 3: To what extent do the methodological theories of Rose apply to the artefacts of Harry Ramesar?

Applying Gillian Rose's visual methodological theories to the tattoo artefacts of Harry Ramesar involves analysing four key sites: production, the image itself, circulation, and audiencing. The site of production considers the cultural and social contexts in which Ramesar's tattoos were created, reflecting local traditions, global tattoo trends, and the historical impact of colonialism and apartheid in 20th-century South Africa. Rose (2023) emphasizes how technological and social factors influence this process, including Harry Ramesar's use of both hand- drawn designs and commercial tattoo flash. The site of the image focuses on the visual elements of Harry Ramesar's tattoos, which often include symbols of personal identity, cultural heritage, and historical significance, such as for example the popular patriotic, religious, and nautical themes. Rose's (2023) theories encourage a close

examination of these compositions to uncover deeper meanings. The site of circulation explores how Harry Ramesar's tattoo designs transitioned from his studio to the skin of his clients, and later into the digital archive, with each stage adding new layers of meaning. And finally, the site of audiencing addresses how different viewers interpret these tattoos based on their cultural backgrounds and experiences. With this digitization of Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts, broader audiences are now able to reinterpret his tattoos within the frameworks of historical research and cultural preservation.

Research Question 4: What are the main ways in which digital archives preserve historical artefacts?

Digital archives play a crucial role in preserving historical artefacts by ensuring their accessibility, longevity, and security. One primary way is through the use of metadata management, which helps organize and retrieve digital content efficiently by assigning categories, tags, and keywords to each artefact. This management aids in search engine optimisation, improving the visibility and accessibility of archived materials (Clobridge 2016). In addition, content preservation and longevity are emphasized through strategies such as regular updates and security measures, therefore ensuring that the digital archive remains intact over time (Williams, Damstra & Stern 2015). In addition, digital archives have the capability to incorporate platform scalability, thus allowing digital archives to expand as needed without performance issues, especially when one utilizes cost-effective and open-source solutions, such as WordPress, to ensure efficient content management. The use of virtual environments can enhance user engagement by creating immersive experiences that offer new ways to interact with historical artefacts.

Research Question 5: What is the broader relevance of the digital archive produced in the course of this study?

The digital archive produced in this study plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting South African tattoo history, particularly the work of pioneer tattoo artist Harry Ramesar. Its broader relevance lies in its multifaceted function of safeguarding cultural heritage, fostering scholarly engagement, and enhancing accessibility to rare artefacts. As highlighted in the study's introduction, this archive serves as more than just a repository, but as a platform for

critical engagement and scholarly inquiry. And ventures beyond merely organizing and preserving visual and textual materials. The digital archive invites users to actively explore, interact with, and critically engage with these artefacts, thus contributing to both cultural preservation and academic discourse.

7.3.2 Main points to emerge from the study

The study reveals several key points, with a starting point being the critical role of digital archives in preserving cultural heritage, especially within the realm of visual culture as described by (Rose 2023). The digital archive created for Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts illustrates how such platforms can safeguard the legacy of artists who have made significant cultural contributions and justify their legacy as pioneers to be secured for generations to come. The digital archive not only preserves the original tattoo artefacts of Harry Ramesar but also assists in providing a dynamic space for ongoing analysis, critique, and public engagement. Another important finding is the value of the critical visual methodologies of Rose (2023), when used as an analytical tool. This study highlights how these methodologies enable researchers to uncover the deeper cultural, social, and political meanings embedded in visual materials like tattoos. By applying these approaches to Harry Ramesar's works, the research demonstrates how visual methodologies can offer nuanced insights into the significance of artistic practices within their broader cultural contexts, thus emphasizing the integration of qualitative research methods, particularly in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews provide valuable personal and contextual insights that complement the visual analysis as these interviews reveal the motivations, experiences, and cultural dynamics surrounding Harry Ramesar's work as a tattoo artist, adding a rich, multi-dimensional perspective to the study. The use of qualitative methods discussed by (Terras and Münster 2020; Rose 2023; Witzel & Reiter 2012) underscores the importance of capturing the personal narratives behind visual artefacts to enrich the understanding of their cultural significance and the effectiveness of an interdisciplinary approach is also underscored, by the combination of the digital humanities, visual culture studies, and qualitative research methodologies. This approach enables a more comprehensive exploration of the subject matter, allowing for a deeper and more holistic understanding of the cultural and social dynamics at play in Harry

Ramesar's work. The interdisciplinary nature of the study serves as a model for future research in visual culture and digital preservation.

The research also brings to light the challenges and ethical considerations (Salmons 2015) involved in the digital preservation of visual materials, which include issues related to the representation of cultural artefacts, the potential for misinterpretation, and the responsibilities of researchers to the communities and cultures they study. This study emphasizes the need for careful, ethical approaches to digital preservation that respect the cultural significance and context of the materials being archived. Finally, the study highlights the transformative potential of digital humanities in reshaping how cultural heritage is preserved, analysed, and engaged. The creation and analysis of the digital archive for Harry Ramesar's tattoo artefacts demonstrates how digital tools can extend beyond mere preservation to facilitate new forms of scholarly inquiry and public access. The study advocates for the continued integration of digital humanities in cultural research, emphasizing its role in expanding the reach and impact of cultural preservation efforts. These findings underscore the significance of digital archives, and the application of critical visual methodologies, and the value of an interdisciplinary approach in research, while also addressing the challenges and ethical considerations involved in digital preservation.

7.3.3 Sustainability and long-term digital preservation

The continued value of the archive of Harry Ramesar depends on its long-term sustainability and preservation. While the current implementation ensures immediate accessibility, critical consideration has been given to its ongoing viability. The archive is hosted on a scalable cloud-based platform with regular off-site backups to mitigate data loss. A maintenance protocol, including periodic software updates, metadata reviews, and security monitoring, is essential to ensure integrity and usability over time. Financial sustainability could be achieved through a hybrid model combining institutional support, targeted grant funding, and community sponsorship. Formalising partnerships with cultural heritage institutions or universities would further embed the archive within a stable organisational framework, enhancing its resilience against technological obsolescence or funding fluctuations. This approach ensures that the

archive remains a living resource for both scholarly and public engagement, securing the legacy of Harry Ramesar for future generations.

7.4 Suggestions for future research

The study of digital archives for pioneering tattoo artists represents a unique opportunity to contribute to the ongoing evolution of the digital humanities, particularly in the preservation of visual cultural heritage (Terras and Münster 2020). This research advances the field by proposing strategies that ensure its growth and adaptability, specifically when expanding definitions of key terms such as 'pioneer' and 'artist', thus allowing for a more inclusive and flexible framework that acknowledges a broader range of cultural contributions and artistic expressions. Additionally, the promotion of inter and transdisciplinary collaborations is essential to future research (levesque 2019). By integrating insights from anthropology, sociology, media studies, and other disciplines, scholars can develop more comprehensive and nuanced analyses of visual culture and its preservation in the digital era (Poole 2017). This collaboration encourages innovative methodologies, pushing the boundaries of what digital archives can achieve in terms of both content curation and user engagement.

Comparative studies, as well as investigations into new technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and augmented reality, could further enrich this field by enhancing the functionality and accessibility of digital archives. These technologies offer exciting potential but also demand critical exploration of their ethical implications, particularly in the context of preserving cultural heritage (Steffen et al., 2019). Through these strategies, this research not only contributes to the digital humanities but also shapes the future trajectory of visual culture studies by adapting to technological advances and the evolving needs of diverse audiences both in South Africa and abroad. Building on the current functionality of the Harry Ramesar digital archive, future iterations could explore the integration of advanced interactive technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and immersive media. AI-driven image recognition could assist in automated artefact tagging, pattern detection, and stylistic analysis, enhancing both scholarly research and public discovery. VR or immersive platforms could allow users to experience Ramesar’s work in simulated studio environments or as three-dimensional projections on virtual bodies,

offering an embodied sense of scale, placement, and cultural context. These technologies could deepen user engagement, extend the archive's educational potential, and contribute to broader conversations about digital heritage innovation in South Africa and beyond.

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APPENDIX A

PROVISIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

List of Provisional Questions

PARTICIPANT NAME:

DATE:

1.PERSONAL STORYTELLING & INTERACTIONS WITH HARRY RAMESAR

1. How do you know Harry Ramesar?
2. Tell us in your words about your interaction/s with Harry Ramesar.

2.TATTOOS

1. Do you have a tattoo by Harry Ramesar?
2. Describe your tattoo and when did you get it?
3. How did you come up with the tattoo design?
4. Why did you choose that location for your tattoo?
5. Tell us in your own words about your tattoo experience.
6. Is your tattoo's flash design or tracing on the archive?
7. Tell me your thoughts about this?
8. Do you think there should be online archive about Harry Ramesar?

LIST OF TATTOOS FOUND ON ARCHIVE (Include reference name)

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: Critical Visual Methodologies in the Digital Humanities: A Digital Archive of a Pioneer Tattoo Artist in KwaZulu-Natal

Names of Researcher: Rory van As

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Rory van As, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number : **IREC 236/22**
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant	**Date**	**Time**	**Signature / Right Thumbprint**

I, Rory van As herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Researcher	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	**Date**	**Signature**

27 October 2022

APPENDIX C

MODEL RELEASE FORM

Date:

Details of addressee:

Request for permission to use artifacts

Dear:

My name is Rory van As, a PhD in Visual and Performing Arts student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves the **Critical Visual Methodologies in the Digital Humanities: A Digital Archive of a Pioneer Tattoo Artist in KwaZulu-Natal**

I am hereby seeking your consent to use any artifacts collected or photographed.

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent and/ or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me 082 200 9600, roryv@dut.ac.za

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rory van As
Durban University of Technology

Participants Signature:

APPENDIX D

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics

www.dut.ac.za

10 November 2022

Mr R Van As
[redacted]

Dear Mr Van As

Critical Visual Methodologies in the Digital Humanities: A Digital Archive of a Pioneer Tattoo Artist in KwaZulu-Natal

I am pleased to inform you that Full Approval has been granted to your proposal.

The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 236/22**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

Approval has been granted for a period of **ONE YEAR**, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the DUT-IREC. This form must be submitted to the DUT-IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

APPENDIX E

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS

Below are the verbatim selected quotes as discussed in the 'Analysis of textual data' section of this study.

A. DIGITAL ARCHIVES PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS

A1 Introductions to Harry Ramesar Selected Quotes

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

tattoo in 1962 on my future brother-in-law. At that time, I was seven years old.

Reference 2

And and that's when I saw is is work. I didn't know Harry before that.

Reference 3

And I didn't see a tattoos before that.

Reference 4

So, when I saw that on my brother in laws, arms, and chest, so it was it was intriguing.

Reference 5

So, I like it from that age.

Reference 6

The the the people at at work actually told me that he's in Saville St.

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

friend that I knew, they also had tattoos them by him. But most of them are late now.

Reference 2

I must been about 18.

Reference 3

you know you wanted to be like Macho.

Reference 4

also, the company that you had; you know the guys that you knew people that you saw. You thought it looked good on him then you wanted to do that too.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

I used to go, I used to be in town quite often, but that that was my lifestyle before, you know, going into town and hanging around with guys to Grey Street all these places.

Reference 2

I was young too, and then I said, well, let me go check. So, they introduced me to went up. There was quite stern like, you know, like a no-nonsense person.

Reference 3

I heard the sound of the machine and all I said, no, no. And I saw like he was tattooing. And I thought the way it was going about, I said no,

Reference 4

Then at that time, yeah, everyone have been about 17.

Reference 5

But not long after that, I was back there that he got the better of me and I said no, let my first one by him.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

I was working in Durban. In the old fish market, I was selling cosmetics. So, there were a lot of Indians in that market. So, I've seen tattoos of all of the people that work there.

Reference 2

20th birthday, I said no, I have to get a tattoo.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

one day I was browsing around into town, and I used to go into all the arcades. You had this the the one in Saville St. the little arcade there.

Reference 2

We used to explore.

Reference 3

walk up the stairs and check, hey, what this guy is doing or what person is being there, you know, all those people that are occupying in that area.

Reference 4

So, I came across this chappie. You know, he's bending down his tattooing someone's hand and I stood on the door and looked at him and I looked at the guy that had been receiving the tattoo.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

somebody told me about Harry.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

First of all, I went to work in Lakhani Chambers in 1959. And there, after a week or so I was introduced to him.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

We were on the having lunch on the railway, you know, I worked the railway at that time. I was an apprentice.

Reference 2

And that guy said to me, if you have a tattoo, you'll never get arthritis. So, I said to him, where do you get this and he said Harry, Lakhani Chambers

Reference 3

The next day I was there, and I had that tattoo done.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

My dad took took tattoos from him.

Reference 2

Seeing the tattoos on my dad growing up always wanted to have one.

Reference 3

So, then we heard of Harry being in Saville St. But at about 14 years old, I decided that I'm going to go there.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

I don't know him personally. This thing has been going on in my family, these tattoos, my elder brothers, they've they've Got this. So, when you come of age.

Reference 2

When you come of age, when you get much older, they would, yeah, we would want to put it on because I've had five brothers before me.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

I decided to go that day I've just finished Army.

Reference 2

And one or two of the guys had tattoos. I said, you know what? Where's the tattoo? Hey, also a couple of Indian guys at work said No, Harry, he's in. Lakhani.

Reference 3

You know, we just got, I've got word of mouth.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

So, across the road from Saville Street was the Westend Hotel those on the corner Pine St. and and and and grey Street. So, cross the road was Harry's joint and everybody knew that.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

My older brothers, right and there was a lot of people that I know, went to Harry.

Reference 2

And we already knew Harry was in Saville St.

Reference 3

when I was about 18,19, a friend of mine. Right. Yeah. Would you call me Kimmy? My my correct name is Kamaraj. Because this is the only guy who you call me Kimmy, right? He was on leave on holiday, right? And let's go to town and put a tattoo.

Reference 4

I remember this very clearly opposite Saville Street. It used to be a pub called the Western Bar.

Reference 5

And we went to the western first, OK. We had a drink, and we had a little something to eat.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, uh. Many, many, many moons ago because why? I was a naughty teenager. My younger, younger days.

Reference 2

Now I'm heading to 73 heading 73. Because my friend, you know, used to have these tattoos.

Reference 3

then what we should do, we should go and have a couple of drinks across the road.

Reference 4

go and have a couple of drinks across the road.

Reference 5

The pub, the pub there. Then we go, then we, then we togged top up. You know, for for the pain. For the pain. Yeah. And then you have to come back and he give you the appointment that time with certain guys certain time.

A2. Is the Interview Participants Tattoo on the Digital Archive

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, that's the one.

Reference 2

Yeah, that's the one.

Reference 3

Yeah, this one. Yeah. This is a one.

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

Cash card 4.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

So that's flash cards 25.

Reference 2

flash card 11.

Reference 3

It was one of the bottom there. Oh, that's the same.

Reference 4

That's, that's that one.

Reference 5

religious 82.

Reference 6

animals 24.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

And that's it. That's it. It is it? Yeah. Yeah, that's exactly. I'm tracing.

Reference 2

New flash 24

Reference 3

It's one of those.

Reference 4

Banners 2,

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah. Yeah, that's it. Yeah.

Reference 2

Loose 63

Reference 3

dagger 74.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

That's right. Yes, yes, yes.

Reference 2

Hey, yeah, that is it. Yeah.

Reference 3

Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly that one.

Reference 4

Yes, that's the same. Same with the head turned that way. Yeah.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, exact same one.

Reference 2

So obviously that's the what we call. The stencil

Reference 3

That's like the exact same one.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

Dagger 45 Yeah, that's the one.

Reference 2

It it's the same.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

So, it's on flash card 7.

Reference 2

Yeah. And we've established that it's animals 24.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

That’s the one.

Reference 2

That must be more than 50 years old.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

So that’s banners 129.

Reference 2

So, I think it’s mostly Banners 113, I think.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

So that is banners 2 - 129.

INT 17 Transcript

Reference 1

yes, that’s it. That’s it, correct.

Reference 2

That’s it. Wow.

Reference 3

Tribal 57.

A3. Memory of Interview Participants

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

It started off with his hand ones the guys that I used to move around, you know, they do it by hand with a matchstick and needle. Yes. Dip in the ink and do this and this bit. I was very young and immature that time.

Reference 2

You know, the guys that used to come there, they used to carry the alcohol in on the inside. While you waiting your turn? You sit and have a drink and I really can't say whether he is also, but I'm sure he is to have a bit of whoever offered something.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

So, when you have a small place, very small sit behind there. You talk, talk, talk and then he gets a customer. Then you just go down somewhere and come back later.

Reference 2

But when he was doing something, you remain silent, yeah.

Reference 3

he don't like anybody to be there when he is tattooing. Is it all depends which part of the body.

Reference 4

You know what I wanted. Let's pull out the Tracing. Check it out. Water. Put it.

Reference 5

Your normal like normal lunch wrap

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

across was a bar called western liquors. The guys would have a drink and go to him. And I should see all that.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

some of them were wincing very badly and some of them were actually, you know, one guy that I took there after meeting Harry. I took him with he saw my tattoos and he said, look, yeah, he would also like to have. I said would you manage? He said yes.

Reference 2

So anyway, it took him a long way and told Harry, right. I got another client here for you. He needs some tattoos. So, as you carry on, I can check him now. You know, he got a little bit off off drowsy and suddenly went off. What's happening? I'll take it easy on him like you know, so he had his done then.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

In the 70s, I can't remember which year. I know it's between the 70 to 75. Yeah, that's not working 71, I think.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

Well, dressed, most time is collar and tie with suits on.

Reference 2

Yeah, he he normally should come in the morning about Half 9,10. That that time is customers only do come in and when he comes, he works.

Reference 3

locally, if you had different race groups. when the ship comes, they all whites, how is it mainly mainly that I saw

Reference 4

Defiantly, without any doubt. So not only for as a tattoo or as a tattoo, as a personal man.

Reference 5

He knew a-lot about horses. He used to teach us.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

I'm 49 Now let's see. I was born in 1971, so see this were around in 1980. Something. OK, cool. Let's just work it out, you know.

Reference 2

85 was definitely 1985. It was, yeah.

Reference 3

In 1985, and I remember it clearly caused the same year we went to an Expo in Durban, it was called the Expo 85. I don't know if you remember from there.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

And I was like young, and I wanted to do a tattoo, so I found out in town some people who had tattoos because mostly at that time.

Reference 2

So, when I found out from one of my friends then they told me that because he was in Saville Street.

Reference 3

And those days was like you didn't have to make an appointment or anything. You just got there, and you sat, and you waited.

Reference 4

That's how good he was.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

I finished the army in July, and it was January. I was there was just before my 20th birthday.

Reference 2

my girlfriend had said, hey, I don't want you having tattoos.

Reference 3

If you have one, or you're going to do something that I can remember it with, I said look, I'll have it something. I'll have your name put in it.

Reference 4

But you don't forget the first one. You don't. Harry was and and it was the way he did it. It was nice. But the one thing I remember those for sure for sure.

Reference 5

I couldn't remember it. We were all just talking and someone just down at the beach and someone had said, hey, listen, there's a guy in just off Gray St. Harry he does tattooing.

Reference 6

Word of mouth on the someone I couldn't even remember who it was. Wasn't one of my friends. I think it was someone that we were interacting with.

Reference 7

you know, I should ask my mom in those days. We had it done when she said Oh. Just like your dad.

Reference 8

I can’t even remember the price of it, but it wasn’t very expensive and that was the thing in those days.

Reference 9

It wasn’t something that I’d researched or looked for or any, you know, I mean, it wasn’t something that, that, that I’d been thinking. It was almost a spur of the moment that it was.

Reference 10

Know since since you contacted me, my mind has been going back to that tattoo trying to remember that with the scroll almost at the bottom and it was it was a flower design.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

I’m talking about in the early 60s, about 64.

Reference 2

I was visiting Johannesburg out in Western Transvaal area on the goldmine, see, so I was doing an apprenticeship there.

Reference 3

I actually cannot remember what led up to the events of that day when we decided we’re gonna have tattoos.

Reference 4

my memory fails me with quite a few things lately, but I seem to remember there were drawings all over on the walls.

Reference 5

It’s too long ago. I can’t. I cannot even. I can’t visualise it that far back.

Reference 6

I cannot remember it. I cannot even remember him actually doing it on my arm.

Reference 7

I can remember it was quite painful. That's what I do remember.

Reference 8

No, I just remember his name. I don't remember his face or anything.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

And there's a youngster before me that fainted and he fell so hard.

Reference 2

Harry said no... you much stronger.

Reference 3

While we were doing the tattoos, there wasn't much I can think of this. There's more the pain.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

Sunday and before us, there was a white guy. Huge Big guy. The he was putting on a beautiful eagle Right, huge, huge eagle.

Reference 2

we went in there for the tattoos. We got our tattoos done.

Reference 3

I knew so many people who tattoos.

Reference 4

most of them passed on.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

Now I'm heading to 73 heading 73. Because my friend, you know, used to have these tattoos.

Reference 2

And after the tattoo we should head back to the pub across the road.

Reference 3

yeah, Western, that was specialized for fish fried fish. You got a fish, that size Yeah. And with chips and fish to. Yeah, go there.

Reference 4

Yeah, had a very nice time thinking backwards now that we talking about this interviewing, yeah.

Reference 5

They're very good old days.

Reference 6

aye a lot of memories come out. This comes out. You know, this comes out feeling this.

Reference 7

Some some white guys used to go.

A4. Personal Interactions with Harry Ramesar

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

Actually, Harry Don't speak much with him because you go there. There's no appointment and thing like that, you just go there, and you wait in a in a queue and then.

Reference 2

You wait for your turn, and then you'll you'll tattoo you and you'll send you so. So, there wasn't much that it you can talk about, but just the basic.

Reference 3

If you'll, you'll you'll ask you your age and why you like tattoo and oh how you how you. Learned about him and and things like that, but basically you there wasn't much a started talking to him because as I said at 18, was still young. So, you don't wanna ask.

Reference 4

I had to had no problem, just that you have to go there and there's no appointment. As I said, you just have to wait in the queue. So, you go there early, you'll you'll have it done. Otherwise, you you got the following day.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

I was young too, and then I said, well, let me go check. So, they introduced me to went up. There was quite stern like, you know, like a no-nonsense person.

Reference 2

You can sit and chat when you talk. Like, you know, just talk generally about the town itself and how long he's around in town.

Reference 3

We talk about everything.

Reference 4

Harry, we never went to the tattoo because we were not allowed to put tattoos at that time. Parents were very strict to school. And then twice I remember him ordering tea for me.

Reference 5

I got used to him when I got more comfortable knowing really normal, it'll be it'll be OK. I know what's happening here and it's someone that you can talk to. It's not like a, you know, someone strange doing anything in your body. So, we decided that's all I've got for now. You should come. I should come straight to him.

Reference 6

Well, try to get get to know him, be become familiar with when I have an idea when I'll be comfortable. We're actually putting the the marks on me like that's how I got you.

Reference 7

had a good relationship with him man.

Reference 8

Because you're gonna be getting hella kind of guys coming there. Yeah, to put tattoos and stuff. So, he has to draw the line somewhere.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

Oh, when I met him, he was a very down to earth man, you know, we Indians find the our older generation more to be more respected.

Reference 2

So, when I met him he he talks a little bit of English if he knows. If he when he knew that I was Hindi, then he should say the Hindi word for a girl or a daughter.

Reference 3

then I started work in Durban. After that when I started work in Durban, it was opposite him. It was called Grand Shoe and if I had lunch, then I should go see him. I should buy him tea. I should buy him Bhaga from Patels.

Reference 4

nothing extraordinary. I think maybe with the guys he had a better conversation with him and better interaction.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

Met Harry and we got on big buddies.

Reference 2

Harry and I would have you know we should sit with no clients, etcetera. We should sit and, you know, discuss yesteryear and you know how things were done and how things are now.

Reference 3

you know what I said, Harry Do you ever get a break?

Reference 4

As much as I want to, but I don't. I'll say come on Harry you're much older than us, at least have a break.

Reference 5

If you have the tattoos done, yeah. So, I said no. Harry you stop the like. I mean, you work six days a week here said like, you know, and I know you love your job, and you know, but people love your job as well by tattooing them. So, you should have a break though. So, we had our little conversation every now and then.

Reference 6

was a wonderful guy. He was an artist, no doubt. Right? He had his own skills other than if he if he sort of missed out the passion or something like, you know, you can only put the thing on there and then this. But he's still immaculate. He's accurate.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

friends because when I had nothing to do is to buy my drink and go sit on my leave working. I should sit in his shop, and I would have my drink and we used to talk.

Reference 2

After one he's he's close shop about half past twelve, one. Then I used to go sit with him.

Reference 3

While settling here to he'll be joking.

Reference 4

He was busy, but we obviously got there closing after he closed shop. Yes. Then I should just go with a friend or just sit there pour my drink and and I shoot, relax, and talk. Then have a small break. Yes. And then we were just alone.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

He's very likely to help you.

Reference 2

Good Friends

Reference 3

we should normally converse in jokes.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

Ah yes, it was quite an education, really. Because all I saw really is tattoos on the wall, the pictures of tattoos. Yeah. And I said I'd like to have a tattoo. And he said yes, sit down. What do you want? So, I picked this one up.

Reference 2

they were just this, you know, business transaction has to sit there. We'll we'll probably talked about something or other, but I don't know what the what the you know probably the weather or something like that.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

Get there and he doesn't want to do a tattoo a 14 year old, so he says you must get a consent letter.

Reference 2

So, we go right down West St. Buy a pad, write a consent letter. Buy a pad, write a consent letter.

Reference 3

So, he didn't actually double check if it was your father, he just just wanted a signature.

Reference 4

OK, so like I said, the first time I get there, my friends all had these tattoos.

Reference 5

When they were over 18, obviously so Harry, chopped them tattooed them, so get there too early and he said no, I can't do this unless you get a Letter from your parents.

Reference 6

Giving you permission to have a tattoo put on your body because it's a lifelong thing and it, you know, your argument that he's not going to do it.

Reference 7

His best story was. I've been to India is where the people are really poor. They can't afford it. They can't afford food. They can't afford this. There is nothing. If you think South Africa is bad, just visit India once and you know.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

And like his conversation was like, you know, he he will tell you everything about tattooing and how he's done this from for so many years and it takes your mind off the pain.

Reference 2

And I was actually telling the the guys he was so good at his tattooing.

Reference 3

And he always like, gave you advice what to do and You know, being an elderly person like you'll give you advice about, you know, not joining wrong companies and things like there's very good customer customer service.

Reference 4

And yeah, so he kept you going and then eventually a tattoo was over. He didn't even feel the pain.

Reference 5

Not that I know of, but I when I was there, I know that he didn't allow, you know, back in the day, people used to have alcohol because of the pain he he never allowed that day and he should always because I heard him telling people there no drugs, no alcohol before I tattoo.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

Well, I was taken there by my 3rd brother, and he showed him, his tattoos. He said right.

Reference 2

As an individual, I don't know him that well.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

Just come back from India and being on a on a a month, I think it was about a month and we sat there talking and he was explaining how it's all how safe it. Well, I don't know what's up now how safe it was there. We guys sleeping on the streets. People didn't hassle them. It was all fine and that.

Reference 2

There was a couple. There was a couple and I I got something off that. That was my, you know, we walked in, and I said I'd like to have a tattoo. He said, what would you like? And he showed me some of his stuff and all that. There were some drawings.

Reference 3

And where Harry was a very I I can remember, he was like, put you at ease. You know, you sit down with the guy and it's like friendly chats. And that's how we got talking. You just come back from England I mean from India.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

I met him 1, 2 times across the road when he used to come for his fish curry... They made the best fish Curry in the world.

Reference 2

So, it was a Wednesday and then you don't make appointments. I just said, you know, I'm coming for a tattoo and yeah. he said pull in, whenever you, whenever you come, let's go.

Reference 3

I said no, I'll pop in one of these days.

Reference 4

To answer your can't remember what is. The pain had me, I can't remember any discussions.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

Himself, he wants to know how we know him. So, you see, because of friends, because of friends. We talk and chat when you see the tattoo and all and then.

INT 17 Transcript

Reference 1

we were very close.

Reference 2

I'm the second youngest grandson. I was actually his favourite.

Reference 3

he used to take me to work with him. Like I spent the entire day with him.

Reference 4

So, they're every day and the minimum was like 3 people on the seats. So, I'd spend the day with him, and he'd give me tracing paper and he'll tell me this is what I want you to do. He'll give me stencils and we'll use the tracing paper and this cover and get my lines properly.

Reference 5

He was always very, very pleasant.

Reference 6

He never used any vulgarity. He never used the harsh word he was always humble.

Reference 7

He wouldn't discipline. He'll he'll speak to you nicely.

Reference 8

He was just such a gentle soul.

A5. Tattoo Studio Premises

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

well, whenever I went there, there were the people in in the queue.

Reference 2

Before me, so you have to wait till 10. So, he was always busy.

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

Aye, it was a small little place.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

we used to go up and the place was like dark. You know, there's not a, not a normal tattoo parlour. Everything is bright. And so, you have to go up the stairs and maybe one day it's quite dark there too. And in the passage, when you used to be the last one right in the corner, he was.

Reference 2

you got the bench. He's got a bench. He got his table, the wooden table around the table there. He sit there on the table, he got a white cloth cloth in there. And then on the wall you got these tattoos, and you know, you need to see which one you want. You show it to him and then he he got like a drawer. They pull out all his tracing paper.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

Very small place.

Reference 2

it was very dimly lit.

Reference 3

You know the olden days, but it was very what can you say? He was a very neat kind of person. Like very orderly.

Reference 4

Where you should sit and put your hands there on his table. Or if you can come a bit near to him and carry on with your conversation with him.

Reference 5

You'd be talking. You wouldn't know when the tattoo would be done. Yeah, he and he had a couple of chairs there where people should sit and watch, or some who came.

Reference 6

Walls. Yes, he had it. Like on frames. OK, with those press studs. And then you have obviously some designs in his drawers as well. Yes, he had this like a Chester draw for the water, I think.

Reference 7

About two for about 6 or 8 draws. When you pull them out, you can see. Black and white photos in it. capture this. Because at that time, as I told you, you should take photographs with his camera.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

Aye, a small shop with a couch. A small something. Just a seat.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

one table in the centre and benches and chairs to clients sit.

Reference 2

It's very simple.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

all I saw really is tattoos on the wall, the pictures of tattoos.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

You know, the thing about Harry it is it was a run-down shop.

Reference 2

So, when you get in the door is here. Harry is sitting here, so you're going to get a tattoo from Harry, but you only got one place to sit, is there. So, you sit in front of him.

Reference 3

Now, over this table. And your hand is there, or your shoulder and he gets himself comfortable to that one position. So, you can't move around the room or, you know, lay on your back or something.

Reference 4

It was difficult, I promise you, but I don't know.

Reference 5

But like I said, when I've been there in 1985, it was just one single chair, like the chair, a desk.

Reference 6

Yeah, there were pictures of these designs on the walls, you know which ones?

Reference 7

He had, like, a whole, like, maybe a thick book full of them. All kinds

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

It was small. How would I say it was small? Well, it was old.

Reference 2

small and you just had a 1 stool to sit on to wait your turn to get tattooed and he had his table there where you walk. And it was like very organised.

Reference 3

you pick the the tattoo on the wall you knew where that tracing was kept.

Reference 4

And then you will pull out the tracing

Reference 5

Private and small like you wouldn't know that it was a tattoo shop if you walked past.

Reference 6

A nice place, very quiet and safe also.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

But it's very, very eery place. Looked like, you know. What you call that a dodgy looking, dodgy looking place?

Reference 2

Sort of a dodgy location here. Yeah, location within.

Reference 3

Quite private place. I didn't hear anything.

Reference 4

Well, like I said, it was like a gloomy passage. And yeah, walking there. In like I was more like scared of the pain.

Reference 5

And that section where where Harry was, it wasn't like an Indian section of town. OK, yeah, it was more like people didn't frequent that that often, but more like the white really.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

He had this little table there with all his his five or six pots of ink on there, and he had this cloth a cringe when he used it. It was about this big dark green. I think it was green or red with blood, but it was like almost stiff from wiping the guys.

Reference 2

Very small little place. Very small little room.

Reference 3

I only remember it was a pretty pokey, small, little place table chairs. All your stuff was out there.

Reference 4

I don't think it. I don't think it was. It was a dwelling where he lived when he was just more of an office, like a little office type of thing.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

There's no space there's just enough space for you and one person to sit in, in, in, on the outside, on the chairs, over here, you walk into the, you walk into the parlour, you end up the first floor.

Reference 2

you walk into the parlour those those dinghy wasn't like posh, it was small, but it served its purpose.

Reference 3

The room was darkish, dark. Yeah. Wasn't brightly lit up. There was like your normal old globe and things. But he had good eyesight.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

Just a little room. Nothing too big or fancy this table. In the chair that you're sitting in. Nothing fancy.

Reference 2

Just old furniture,

Reference 3

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's got big pictures everywhere. I mean, big posters, you picked your your, your tattoo from.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

it wasn't very executive and wasn't very big.

Reference 2

I think that drawing from paper, paper form draw.

Reference 3

his drawer, and some and some on the walls too.

IIT 17 Transcript

Reference 1

It was small studio. It had his patterns on the walls. He had a desk and he had, uh there. I remember two benches.

Reference 2

There was a a little Like a cupboard in the back, we see you. He should keep his tracings and ink. And he had this tattoo magazine.

Reference 3

And in the middle of the studio, there was his workbench and where he had his his power supply for his tattoo tattoo machine. That time they had those big power supplies.

Reference 4

it was like a more like a desk that he used to use as workbench.

Reference 5

So, on the right-hand side is where he sat and in the front face with the back towards the door is where the customer.

Reference 6

So, he used to keep his traces in his draw. So, when a customer to walk in and they would ask for a specific design, it would be on the wall.

B. DIGITAL ARCHIVES RELEVANCE

B1. Conventional Archive Methods

INT 17 Transcript

Reference 1

with the current technology, with today's technology, more people would rather open up a laptop or a phone.

Reference 2

One out of 1000, maybe, or even a million people hardly even just open up a book anymore.

Reference 3

At things online, 100%, it's everyone now Even even the the the general, even the older people, my, my father-in-law is 79 and he's with his phone more than anything. So, it's it's it's everyone. It's not just specific age group.

B2. Current Tattoo Industry

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

Now how many people are still alive will remember him.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

Tattoo is becoming a big industry now, right?

Reference 2

Now it's body art and it's a big business now and and people recognise it and and I thank and I'm grateful that you're acknowledging.

Reference 3

So, I said, Jake, can you touch it up a bit? He says he will never touch it because that is done by the legend, he will not touch it.

Reference 4

He says you just leave it like that.

Reference 5

You do not touch that.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

Like like like now we went to these tattoo shops it sort of bright. And this was like a gloomy dingy dungeon, you know? I mean, it wasn't. Yeah, I can't remember the windows anything, but it was.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

And it's a big contrast now because I mean nowadays it's a common thing my granddaughter's got, my daughter in laws have got.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

A lot of the youngsters, when they showed them the tattoos and they laugh, the ones that do tattoos now. They don't understand what went into this.

B3. Foreign Tattoo Customers

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

by four, he's finished, unless when the ship comes.

Reference 2

The people come to come there. I say sailors. sailors

Reference 3

they only knew him, that's all. Yes. And they came. They come in, they come there and sit till sometime the whole day. Because they had to take que

Reference 4

they're not here for a long time. They come for every week or so.

Reference 5

the first thing they will do. They'll come and have a tattoo. Everything can be a secondary.

Reference 6

At that time, he was very busy when the ship comes. Yeah. No time to play. So, they don't even have lunch. yeah, you'd go straight through.

B4. International Viewership

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, just, just, just very advanced, you know, advanced advanced. Thing and to know, I assume people know overseas also got this. Some of the tattoos.

Int 17 Transcript

Reference 1

He was a pioneer in Durban, but also because we're we're the one of the busy ports in Africa. There are a lot of guys, a lot of ships coming in naval officers, uh from even different countries they came to Harry and had the tattoos done by him, so it is an international I mean.

Reference 2

I think he's he's made a difference. Not just here, but world.

B5. Should there be a Digital Archive of Harry Ramesar?

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

Yes, I think he was a a pioneer.

Reference 2

There were only two people in the country and you was in the KZN. And then and there was one guy in the Cape. So, and the people came from far and wide to see him. So, there should be. There should be something.

Reference 3

And there were guys that have met that just to Harry to to have a tattoo just to say that they they got a a tattoo from Harry.

Reference 4

They were from other people, other people, they they got tattoos, but they just wanted one from Harry to say that they got from Harry.

Reference 5

I think the excellent idea, I mean this thing would have been lost. You, you. You'll never see it.

Reference 6

But this is an excellent idea.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

I would have thought that maybe the guy passed on everything was just destroyed.

Reference 2

100%.

Reference 3

If this never happened. This would just be like a memory to me. Yeah, but now I'm seeing this, like bringing back everything.

Reference 4

because people a lot of people don't know about.

Reference 5

All this they don't know, but we got it. We got this thing in archive now and I never got my family, you know? And I said, you know, that's going to watch something.

Reference 6

I had that put I had That put, yeah.

Reference 7

And you know, we did it broadly. The knowledge of the people they get to everybody gets to know.

Reference 8

Well, you will if you never. If this never happened and if you know, having something like an archive. Yeah, this is a. This is a brilliant idea.

Reference 9

came up with something like this? Brilliant.

Reference 10

Likely to work 100%.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

Something amazing.

Reference 2

No, it's not only a good thing. It's an amazing stuff.

Reference 3

That's why I want to keep the copy of this? Yes, because nobody remembers him like we do.

Reference 4

Yes, if they only know that you put this thing they want to reminisce about their old days. Yeah, about the younger days.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

You see now when you compare the archive, right? When you walk into a cave. Now I don't see. Comparing you, you look at the pictures or drawings or the painting, the cave, etc. Right? You know it captures your mind. These happen 100 years ago some 150 years ago. So etcetera. Yes. So, the record now that will actually give you a picture if you are interested in that you also get interested in this archives of this tattoos you know because it comes from yesterday show and something that you have to you know.

Reference 2

Pay attention to and they think. Hell, you know, those were the days where this was done and that was etcetera.

Reference 3

it's nice for the elders to see, like, you know, hey, that was during my time it was, you know, talk about that and what else.

Reference 4

I think so, it's true because he was a famous guy.

Reference 5

I mean his name must live on whatever he was, the creator of all.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, I think so, because at that time a lot of people knew him, yes, but a lot of people were scared to take it because of the pain.

Reference 2

Yeah, I think so because he did a lot of tattoos.

Reference 3

He did a lot of different tattoos.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

I think so. He deserve it.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah. I don't see. I can't see what's wrong with it.

Reference 2

Yeah, we I think so, yes.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

There should actually be.

Reference 2

Yeah, definitely, definitely. I never heard of anyone else in tattoos at that time.

Reference 3

everyone knew him as at Saville St was Harry.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

But they they must see from where it was and from where it is now.

Reference 2

I would recommend that for his stuff to be like in archive because I mean, they were he was like one of the you can say like the legend that started the the the tattoo industry in Durban.

Reference 3

So, so, so like they came out originally with the with the designs and things in those days and and and I think I think some of those designs are coming back now because they had like they they they set tattoos that they did.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, they should. The man has tattooed a lot of people. It's such a lot of people like, he's like a legend, which when you talk about tattoos become very, very, very, very, very famous. Now everybody is like every other person's has tattoos now.

Reference 2

I mean, he's like a legend. Yeah, like a legend. And.

Reference 3

Everybody was connected with the tattoos in Durban in those days, not only in Durban and people came from far and wide. Just get tattoos in Durban.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

Of what you're doing, it's really good because this in Durban definitely. I mean, Joburg and in Cape Town. I don't know what that tattooing things would have been, but in Durban it was It was very rare for people to have tattoos and it was very it was very novice.

Reference 2

It should definitely be what you're doing.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

Well, I think it's very interesting.

Reference 2

It’s really very interesting because I can relate directly to it. I’m as you get older; you sort of become more history. You know, you’ve give my love a lot of things you’ve done in your life.

Reference 3

I think it’s fascinating actually.

Reference 4

Well, hey, yes, because I want to read some more now.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

There should hey.

Reference 2

Honestly, yes, yes, yes. Because if you have Harry’s tattoos to any person back in the day in Durban or came from Joburg went past and wanted a tattoo, went to Harry. Yes. So, he’s tattooed lots of people.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

The thing is, pioneer, he was a pioneer. Definitely. definitely, definitely.

Reference 2

So, others could learn from him? Yeah. These artists. The ones that are doing now.

Reference 3

You know, like your friend and things like that. If you put this on the archive on online or do you put it there? The museum in town. That’s where all our fans are.

Reference 4

a guy who wants to become a teacher who can do is interested. He can go up there and look at it. We can look up all this and give him ideas.

Reference 5

and you have anybody that's interested in and then when you go to start, you know exactly what you do just follow Harry's footsteps.

Reference 6

Yeah, I think it's a brilliant idea. Good. Fantastic. Yeah, fantastic idea.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

You should.

Reference 2

Yeah, yeah.

Int 17

Reference 1

Yes, definitely. Well, personally, I I want my my grandfathers this history of the he is he is a legend and I I want it known.

Reference 2

You know, yeah. And also on the other hand, for people now to learn from where the tattoo industry actually started, and it didn't start with him. He learned from people.

B6. Tattoo Artist Competition

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

There were only two people in the country, and he was in the KZN. And then and there was one guy in the Cape. So, and the people came from far and wide to see him.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

he was the only one there at that time.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

Many I have these ones. With the matchstick.

Reference 2

I never heard of anyone else in tattoos at that time.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

But then at that time, he was only known artist.

Reference 2

Yeah, but, but if you spoke tattoo in Durban if you spoke tattoo, I'm talking about 80s and below. If you spoke tattoo, then Harry was your man. There's no, I mean to us there's no known and there are there to artists except people that that is from like this one I've got from someone who was incarcerated in jail and died.

C. PARTICIPANT RELATED

C1. Are Participants Happy with their tattoo?

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

Yes, the only thing. Yeah, as you say, they did deteriorate the the the first one I had like 50 years ago in 73 and the second one is 44 years ago.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, definitely, definitely.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

It was really lovely and bright, where you can see the red and the yeah, it was nice and shiny, yeah.

Reference 2

No, I never have. I have never been sorry I had them done.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

Don't have anymore. The skin is losing that type of elasticity I watch a couple of times. I wish. Hey, let me go for one more and I look at it, nothing, and it's just, you know, I've had my time with it. I've enjoyed what I've got.

Reference 2

I was happy hey.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

For what it's done to me, yeah, I would have, I said. I'm sure I would have. You know, it's it's sort of set me apart from from from other guys at one stage.

Reference 2

a lot of comments about it from time to time. But yeah, I I suppose I would have no regrets about having it.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

I don’t think so.

C2. Digital Archive Attitude

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

I feel grateful. to do a thing like that for Harry I feel. I feel good.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah. How I remember him.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

You know, this is like mind blowing. I didn’t know you put it on the Internet.

Reference 2

A lot of I’m talking about us, Indians, a lot of Indians are going to see this now.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

And yeah, even more welcome to document it, do whatever you need to do to get. Let's expose let's. I mean, let's get it further with everybody. Have a look at the life of Harry, in KZN.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

Like, you know, he's remembered for his work that he's done.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

That's good. That is good. It's kept record.

Reference 2

Oh, that'll be interesting.

Reference 3

I tell you unique, it's a unique subject.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

Thank you so much for doing this.

C3. Participant Digital Literacy

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

I go to the library.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

Medieval communication.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

when I saw your post on Facebook about him. I reacted straight away to it. To me, it's really very interesting.

Reference 2

Ohh look my source on it now is I think people Google so much. Now they're bound to get onto this and and gain some knowledge out of it.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

I don't have internet.

Reference 2

I've been to Harry say 50 years ago. Right. If you didn't show it to me, it was like or if you didn't come off. I didn't phone you. I've seen you had written the paper and things like that. I wouldn't have thought anything about it. Yeah. Nothing. Nothing, nothing.

C4. Participant's reaction to viewing their tattoo design on the digital archive

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

I feel proud.

Reference 2

Feels good.

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

it does bring back memories.

Reference 2

That's quite exciting as you say, it takes you back down Memory Lane, yeah.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

Ohh wonderful. I think you know. Some people keeps you know. It's it's, it's a memory.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

Harry is gone but he is still alive!

Reference 2

There's something there to see.

Reference 3

You can gain a lot from it.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

They're they're still on record.

Reference 2

Yeah, I never thought that I never thought that.

Reference 3

Well, it brings back memories. Those days nobody could tell me anything. I wanted it and I got it. Yeah, that's why reason. But the first one. Because of the arthritis.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

Its documented. I love it.

Reference 2

I'm, like, super happy that I have seen that and it's documented yoh!

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

Oh, I would love. to see it. Because, I mean, it's on me, so I'll be proud of seeing it.

Reference 2

It was good sharing. It was good sharing the info with you and I'm, so it was good sharing and I'm grateful that people still recognize the industry, the tattoo industry because people like people don't recognize this as being an artistic thing.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

It's it's lovely. I'm looking here. I mean, you can see this man's work.

Reference 2

Yeah. And it gives you more insight into what he's done is like, like I said, this man was a legend and he's worked. He worked across the the plane, so he might have some weird tattoos as well, yeah.

Reference 3

Yeah, this man started in somewhere in the 30s.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

This is fun, down memory lane.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

I never thought I'll ever see anything like this again.

Reference 2

this is something else.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

It brings a lot, I gives me an eagle power.

Int 17 Transcript

Reference 1

Nostalgic. It's it's I'm actually impressed.

Reference 2

I never expected to see the tracing again.

D1. Hand Poking

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah. we had one guy that was good that we trusted.

Reference 2

My, my little brother, years ago, all the the drawings and the tattoos.

Reference 3

Just seeing from other people.

Reference 4

none of the men would take big tattoos. They all small.

Reference 5

See it from other people. Yeah, they could have saw it on TV or something.

Reference 6

Used to use earring one year earring. In the 70s. So, when I got involved in a fight, the game shouldn't. So, the earring got lost. So, I decided let's put a dot cannot get lost.

Reference 7

That one mother, mother. Everybody's putting the girlfriend and I said no mother. My mother cannot change, only girlfriends can change.

Reference 8

Painful. Yeah, because it was one needle.

D2. Popular Tattoos

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

and the other famous one was that the lady with the bikini? Yeah, that was another famous one. The the guys used to put on the forearm on the inside of the forearm.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

Lovely eagle picture.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

At that time, most boys were putting on saints

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

most of them my friend they put their girlfriends strangely.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

Hands, with a knife going through it. Yeah, yeah.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

He used to give this one most of the time.

Reference 2

Remember the guys putting this, this one Statue of Liberty popular.

Reference 3

There's other ones, like I said, the Panther.

Reference 4

Wild cats will have all those those tigers and Panthers and all that.

Reference 5

Oh, the ladies. That one yoh, many of the ballies they got that.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

I've seen so many people with this, the Red Indian lady.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

Back in the day in Fu Manchu was one of the most popular tattoos, was of the gang.

Reference 2

This is a popular one as well with the skull and the bones.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

And what was a very common one was the lady and with the bikini with the legs folded front.

Reference 2

other one was as well, also quite popular the guy just put a heart and across the heart like a woman going through and whatever they want to write in it, you know, the the girlfriend's name or the mother's name or his love it is also quite popular.

Reference 3

he did a lot of saints.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

this naked, naked woman. Yeah. And then I was wanting to have it, you know? I just liked it.

Reference 2

(naked women) Most of the guys my plus and minus. They got this.

Int 17 Transcript

Reference 1

yes, the tribal arm bands were very, very popular.

D3. Tattoo Popularity

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

At that stage there were a lot of people putting tattoos even my late Yeah, brother. My late brother-in-law. He put the tattoo by Harry.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

And if somebody looks at it now, they're getting to the archive. They look at how his work and stuff. They look at all those tracings you've got and if they are budding up and coming tattoo artists.

Reference 2

Of this way of doing things, instead of doing the modern style like you know for sure because this this, this, this is tops man.

INT 12 Transcript

Reference 1

Women shouldn't come there very often. They're mostly guys.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

Like I said, word got around about Harry's, you know, tattoo artist and people were much interested.

Reference 2

And people were much interested like.

Reference 3

And up, up until this day, if you see someone with a tattoo and and if they have got a tattoo like this one here now. They will ask, hey bru, where you got your tattoo done? Did Harry do your tattoo? Harry did it because this guy also come from the old school and all those tattoos that come from the old school at Harrys time. So here he was, famous then.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

He was busy all the time.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, they should come at his place. And once, once, once in two months, they should come. And he had lot of local customers. Local yeah.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

Well, the church. I was a non-believer. I didn't believe it. And they don't believe in tattoos. You mustn't mark your skin.

Reference 2

Well, my immediate family, like my wife and my mother-in-law, they were definitely against it. Yeah. You going to church? And you've got tattoos. You're going to go to hell.

INT 2 Transcript

Reference 1

He was busy.

Reference 2

You got to be in the queue. Book an appointment and come back. no. The guys are sitting and waiting in the queue to get to him as soon as he's done with that guy come to take you up.

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

And I was actually telling the the guys he was so good at his tattooing.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

It was, yeah. He had a lot of people. He had a lot of people there. Yeah. Yeah, I think I think people sit there. I don't know for some other reason. I think they interact. You don't know whether because the tattoos or what but.

Reference 2

You just took your turn, and you sat down.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

And none of my buddies had tattoos.

Reference 2

We came out of the army. You weren't allowed in those days. Nowadays I don't know, but in those days, you had tattoos, they didn't want to know your story. So, no one in that I'd known and had tattoos was only when we were like I said, on the beach and that we were there all the time.

Reference 3

Like my dad, he had the the Panthers. You know that Black Panther?

Reference 4

you know, I should ask my mom in those days. We had it done when she said Ohh. Just like your dad.

Reference 5

Many people, none of my friends, had tattoos from Harry.

Reference 6

The only tattoos with my friends started in the 2000s. That's when they started having, because by then I was having fairly regularly and the guys were seeing all the new one, all the new stuff coming out.

Reference 7

Could be I had a girlfriend once and I said, you know, I had some tattoos and she said, oh, I don't like tattoos. So sweet. OK. So, I went in and I had a tattoo done a while later, I came back and I showed her. And she said, you know. If I if I see you have another tattoo, that's it. We finished. What? The next day. I had two tattoos done.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

It was frowned upon in a lot of places and things if you want to go for a job interview or some year to cover it up.

Reference 2

because it was basically associated with because it had been to prison, I think.

Reference 3

I put a few fathers off. When I went to visit their daughter's, I would think.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

The guys in the gang, got all their tattoos from Harry.

Reference 2

Harry never advertised; it was always word of mouth. Yeah, those days, there's no social media. So, when you go back and you tell your friends. Hey, where did you get you tattoo from, eye I got it from Harry.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

I have to say I know a lot of people that have tattoos.

Reference 2

he was very good man and he's too good at that age.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

So, they assume now if you got a tattoo now, you're like rugged guy just there and then

Int 17 Transcript

Reference 1

he always have a queue of people waiting for him.

Reference 2

There was never a day where you go to see Harry and there's no people, no customers waiting.

Reference 3

They'll be waiting before he actually got there and opened the door and that goes every day.

D4. Tattoos as Deviance

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

you know you wanted to be like Macho.

INT 5 Transcript

Reference 1

I remember in the army when we went in there, couple of guys got sent home because they had tattoos, Cape Town guys.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

The guys that came out of jail. who we used to hang around with. they used to come with their own tattoos from jail. Fu Manchu

Reference 2

in those days, you look at the person and you judged him as a bad person, you know, back in the day, that guy with the tattoos. the mindset back in the day.

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

Yeah, uh. Many, many, many moons ago because why? I was a naughty teenager. My younger, younger days.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

No, no they didn't.

Reference 2

but some people maybe at that time taking it to say they can take pain.

Reference 3

Some people were scared of pain yes, so they wouldn't take it.

D5. Occupation Influences

INT 3 Transcript

Reference 1

The guys in the Navy had tattoos, you know, the guys that worked in the Navy so and most of them were done by him.

Reference 2

And and if you look at most of the Navy guys, especially the Indian guys and whatever. They've all got these similar tattoos that Harry has done for them because they all carried like a certain mark on them, you understand.

Reference 3

Like certain ones was for the Navy, certain ones were certain people like that sort of thing and and and they did a fantastic job.

INT 4 Transcript

Reference 1

he tattooed a lot of sailors as well-being on there near the harbour there.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

And most of these drivers at that at that time we bus conductors, right? All of them.

Reference 2

And almost everyone I know. Drivers or connectors they all had tattoos from Harry. Yeah, whole lot of them.

E1. Harry Ramesar's personality.

INT 1 Transcript

Reference 1

He was just a friendly person.

Reference 2

Yeah, you, you go, you go to him. No problem. It's a very pleasant person. He was a very pleasant person.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

he was very cheeky. Yeah, he was cheeky, but for all the right reasons.

Reference 2

had a naughty side too.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

Vice pleasant calm guy.

Reference 2

was a wonderful guy.

INT 15 Transcript

Reference 1

very, very good gentlemen.

INT 16 Transcript

Reference 1

Well, well, to me he was a good guy. He seemed to be alright. He didn't charge too much.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

Was quiet himself, you know? Yeah. Harry wasn't the person that was. You know, while he's doing your tattoo and you know, talk way and things like that, no?

INT 9 Transcript

Reference 1

Oh yeah, yeah you he was very kind, kind, loving gentleman.

Reference 2

Kind and want to know about us, you know? What you do and so on work and all, and then.

E2. Harry Ramesar's popularity.

INT 10 Transcript

Reference 1

Everyone knew of harry.

INT 11 Transcript

Reference 1

You know how he he's well known in town.

Reference 2

no nonsense guy. He's when he's there. He's authority.

Reference 3

He was the master, Harry.

INT 13 Transcript

Reference 1

he was a legend.

INT 14 Transcript

Reference 1

Not a funny guy, but he was a joking type guy because he's meeting different kind of people.

INT 6 Transcript

Reference 1

he was the go-to. I was working up on the gold mines at that stage and he was the go-to.

Reference 2

Tattoos for all the young guys that were on holiday down into Durban, that for the people, the tattoo, he was the only one I ever heard about.

INT 7 Transcript

Reference 1

So, cross the road was Harry's joint and everybody knew that.

Reference 2

everybody knew Harry. No, no. Everybody knew him. If you want a tattoo, you go chat to him.

INT 8 Transcript

Reference 1

My older brothers, right and there was a lot of people that I know, went to Harry.

APPENDIX F

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF RECORD MANAGEMENT

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Records and Record Systems. Source: (ISO 2016:3-7)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Records are both evidence of business activity and information assets. Any set of information, regardless of its structure or form, can be managed as a record. This includes information in the form of a document, a collection of data or other types of digital or analogue information that are created, captured and managed during the business. Managing records encompasses the following:

a) creating and capturing records to meet requirements for evidence of business (digital archive) activity;
b) taking appropriate action to protect their authenticity, reliability, integrity and useability as their business (digital archive) context and requirements for their management change over time.

In the management of records, metadata is data describing the context, content and structure of records and their management over time. Metadata is an essential component of any record.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Records</td></tr>
<tr><td>General</td><td>Records document individual events or transactions. Regardless of form or structure, records should possess the characteristics of authenticity, reliability, integrity, and useability to be considered authoritative evidence.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Characteristics of Authoritative Records</td></tr>
<tr><td>Authenticity</td><td>Is one that can be proven to:

a) be what it purports to be;
b) have been created or sent by the agent purported to have created or sent it; and
c) have been created or sent when purported.</td></tr>
</table>

Reliability	a) whose contents can be trusted as a complete and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts to which they attest; and b) which can be depended upon in the course of subsequent transactions or activities.
Integrity	A record that has integrity is one that is complete and unaltered. A record should be protected against unauthorised alteration. Policies and procedures for managing records should specify what additions or annotations may be made to a record after it is created, under what circumstances such additions or annotations may be authorized, and who is authorized to make them. Any authorized annotation, addition or deletion to a record should be explicitly indicated and traceable.
Useability	A useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted within a time period deemed reasonable by stakeholders. A useable record should be connected to the business process or transaction that produced it. Linkages between records that document related business transactions should be maintained. Metadata for records should support useability by providing information that may be needed to retrieve and present, such as identifiers, format or storage information.
Metadata for Records	a) a description of the content of the record; b) the structure of the record (e.g. its form, format and the relationships between the components comprising the record); c) the business context in which the record was created or received and used; d) relationships with other records and other metadata; e) identifiers and other information needed to retrieve and present the record, such as format or storage information; f) the actions and events involving the record throughout its existence (including the date and time of the actions, changes to the metadata and the agents undertaking the actions).
Record Systems	
General	Records systems comprise a number of combined elements that identify records requirements. Records systems should: a) apply record controls

	b) carry out processes for creating, capturing and managing records; and c) support the creation and maintenance of logical relationships between records content and metadata for records.
Characteristics of Records Systems	
Reliable	Records systems should be capable of continuous and regular operation in accordance with authorized policy and procedures. Records systems should: a) routinely capture records within the scope of the business activity they support; b) routinely function as the primary source of authoritative information about actions documented in the records; c) enable the participation of any authorized agents; d) present records in useable form; e) support timely access to records; f) protect records from unauthorised use, alteration, concealment or destruction; g) store records for as long as they are needed; h) provide mechanisms, where necessary, for importing (or otherwise incorporating) records and metadata for records into the system or exporting them from one system to another; and i) allow for disposition actions to be carried out on records.
Secure	Measures such as access controls, monitoring, agent validation and authorized destruction should be implemented to prevent unauthorized access, alteration, concealment or destruction of records. Information about the controls that were applied to a record and when they were applied should be recorded in the record's process metadata.
Compliant	Record systems should be managed in compliance with community or societal expectations and the legal and regulatory environmental requirements. Records systems' compliance with such requirements should be regularly assessed. The records of these assessments should be retained.
Comprehensive	Records systems should be capable of managing all required records of the range of archive activities to which they relate. Records systems

	should be capable of managing records created using the range of technologies used in the area of archive activity to which they relate.
Systematic	The creation, capture and management of records should be systematized through the design and routine operation of records systems and by adherence to authorized policies and procedures.

Policies and Responsibilities. Source: (ISO 2016:8-10)	
Policies and responsibilities should support the fulfilment of requirements for the creation, capture and management of records and the design, use and management of records systems. In order to ensure that records systems meet identified records requirements, policies and responsibilities should specify responsibilities and authorizations for the following: a) records creators; b) those involved in the management of the records; c) other users of records systems. Policies should be supported by procedures that provide more specific instructions on creating, capturing and managing records.	
Policies	The objective in issuing and implementing policies on managing records should be the creation, capture and management of authentic, reliable and useable records that possess integrity and support and enable business activity for as long as they are required.
Responsibilities	Responsibilities and authorizations for creating, capturing and managing records should be defined, assigned and promulgated.
Monitoring and evaluation	Criteria should be established to monitor and evaluate records, policies, systems, procedures and processes.
Competence and training	People with assigned responsibilities relating to creating, capturing and managing records should be competent to perform these tasks. Competence should be regularly evaluated, and training programs to develop and improve such competencies and skills should be designed and implemented where required.

Appraisal. Source: (ISO 2016:10-12)	
An appraisal is a process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be created and captured and how long the records need to be kept.	
Scope of Appraisal	The scope of appraisal should be determined by considering the reason(s) for conducting it. Reasons for conducting an appraisal may include the following: a) establishment of a new organization; b) losing or gaining functions or activities; c) changing business practices or needs; d) changes to the regulatory environment; e) the introduction of new systems or system upgrades; f) changing perceptions of risk or priorities. The scope of appraisal should also be determined by identifying the functions, activities or work processes affected by the reason for conducting an appraisal.
Understanding the business.	Appraisal requires an understanding of the organization and its business activities.
Determining records' requirements	Record requirements are requirements for evidence of business activity. Record requirements are based on an analysis of business activity and its context.
Implementing records' requirements	Record requirements may be implemented through records systems, records controls, policies on managing records and procedures, or a combination of these.

Record Control. Source: (ISO 2016:10-15).	
Record controls should be developed to assist in meeting record requirements. Their design and implementation should take account of the nature of the records systems with which they need to interact.	
Metadata schemas for records	Metadata schemas should be developed to define the metadata used to identify, describe and manage records. In order for records to possess the characteristics of authoritative records, their associated metadata should be based on an authorised metadata schema. Six broad classes of metadata may be used in

	the management of records. They may be applied to all entities, or fewer, depending on the complexity of the implementation. The six classes are the following: a) Identity – information to identify the entity; b) Description – information to determine the nature of the entity; c) Use – information that facilitates immediate and longer-term use of the entity; d) Event plan – information used to manage the entity, such as disposition information; e) Event history – information recording past events on both the entity and its metadata; f) Relation – information describing the relationship between the entity and other entities.
Access and permissions rules	A set of rules identifying rights of access and the regime of permissions and restrictions applicable to records should be developed.
Disposition authorities	Disposition authorities should be developed to regulate the disposition of records. Responsibility for the development of disposition authorities should be identified by law, regulation or policy.

Processes for creating, capturing and managing records. Source: (ISO 2016:10-19).	
Processes for creating, capturing and managing records should be integrated into procedures and applicable systems, including record systems, and should involve the use of record controls, where appropriate. Decisions about the design and implementation of record processes should reflect an understanding of existing record processes and the record systems in use.	
Creating records	Records are created, received, and captured to conduct business activity. Business, legal and other requirements for records are identified through appraisal. These requirements are used to specify records creation when work processes and record systems are designed or redesigned. The creation of records should involve the creation of content and metadata that document the circumstances of their creation.

Capturing records	When appraisal indicates that it is necessary to keep and manage certain records over time to meet identified requirements, this should be done by capturing them in a records system. Capture should involve, at a minimum, the following: a) assignment of a unique identifier (either machine-generated and readable or human-readable); b) capture or generation of metadata about the record at the point of capture; c) creating relationships between the record and other records, agents or business. At the point of capture, the metadata documenting a record's context should be fixed and kept as evidence of the transaction. Unique identifiers should persist over time.
Records classification and indexing	Classification links records to their business context by associating them with categories in a business classification scheme. Record classification includes the following: a) linking the record to the business being documented at an appropriate level (for example, to a function, activity or work process); b) providing linkages between individual records and aggregations to provide a continuous record of business activity.
Access control	Access to records should be managed using authorized processes.
Storing records	Records, regardless of format or media, should be stored to protect them from unauthorized access, change, loss or destruction, including theft and disaster. This means that measures should be put in place to ensure the following: a) appropriate storage environment(s) and media; b) the use of protective materials and special handling procedures where necessary; c) routine protection and monitoring of physical and information security;

	d) the development and testing of authorized disaster planning and recovery procedures and the training of relevant personnel.
Use and reuse	Records should be useable for as long as they are retained. Record systems should be designed to support the easy use of records.