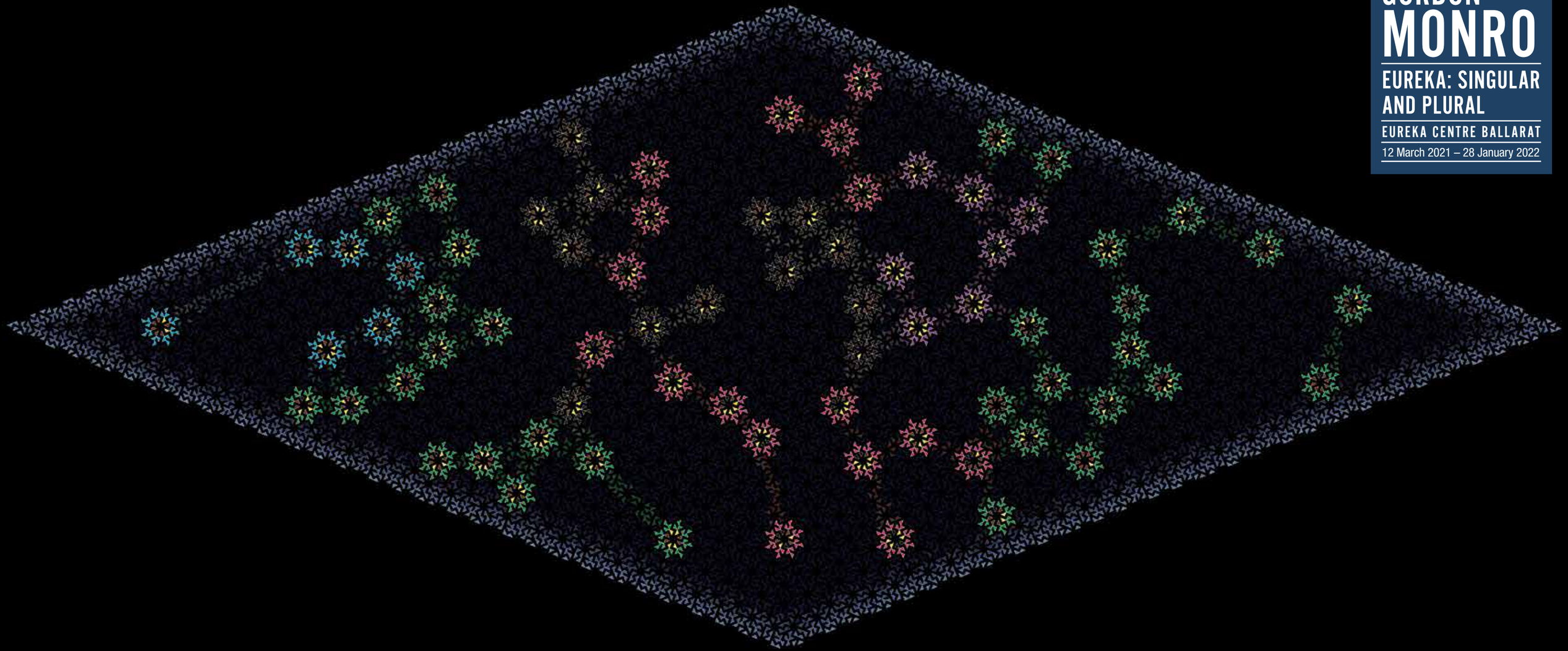

GORDON MONRO

EUREKA: SINGULAR AND PLURAL

EUREKA CENTRE BALLARAT

12 March 2021 – 28 January 2022

EUREKA: SINGULAR AND PLURAL – GORDON MONRO

"According to the standard view, the past is fixed, what happened happened, it cannot be undone, and the future is open, it depends on unpredictable contingencies. What we should propose here is a reversal of this standard view: the past is open to retroactive reinterpretations, while the future is closed since we live in a determinist universe. This doesn't mean that we cannot change the future; it just means that, in order to change our future, we should first (not "understand" but) change our past, reinterpret it in such a way that opens up towards a different future from the one implied by the predominant vision of the past." - Slavoj Žižek[1]

Gordon Monro is an artist who makes images from data. He works in a field known as generative art where data is imputed into a computer program and visual imagery is created. In his project, *Eureka: Singular and Plural,* Gordon has sourced data from the events connected to the 1854 Eureka Stockade to create an artwork built around the random fragmentation of an eight-pointed Eureka star.

The arrival of fortune-seeking immigrants on the Ballarat goldfields, and their banding together to protest an unfair mining licence system, culminated in the Eureka Stockade uprising on 3 December 1854. Eureka was a social revolution, part of an international struggle for equal rights and democratic reform. At the time, a global technological revolution was also underway. The railway opened in Melbourne and a telegraph line between Melbourne and Geelong was established. The first telegraph message sent was about the Eureka Stockade.

Eureka: Singular and Plural explores the interweaving of these social and technological revolutions. Referencing the Eureka Flag, Gordon recasts Eureka's historical subjects as stars within an evolving constellation - a diamond-shaped pictogram that could be a metaphor for the Eureka Stockade. The parallel technological revolution is expressed through the telegraph's language of Morse code. Within this structured yet dynamic space alternative scenarios emerge that disrupt Eureka's established histories.

The story of Eureka is built around notions of destiny: of mostly heroic men, prone to action, who shaped the course of history. We see people as the makers of history. We're interested in the human story and especially the virtuous or despicable actions of key protagonists. But what if these important people were not present or were otherwise waylaid or indisposed, would history have happened differently?

Gordon takes the beloved story of Eureka and reshapes it into a mimetic code subject to endless causal variation. He deemphasises individual agency as the main determinant of history and, in the most serviceable way, subverts Eureka's ontology. This creates an unsettling tension between idealist and materialist perspectives on history.

Eureka: Singular and Plural is a highly symbolic visual representation of a mesosystem: a self-contained space where people and socio-cultural and technological phenomena interconnect. Here entities commune in a mysterious interplay between order and chaos. They lurk and drift and collide. They precariously traverse the line between autonomy and heteronomy in a face-off between choice and destiny, between the singular and the plural.

Anthony Camm
Eureka Centre Ballarat

1 Slavoj Žižek, 'Hegel, Retroactivity & The End of History' in *Continental Thought & Theory: A journal of intellectual freedom,* Vol 2, Issue 4, 2019

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 13th December, 1854.

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

THE Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to make the following Rules and Regulations, and to appoint the undermentioned Fees or Rates for the transmission of communications by the Electric Telegraph to take effect from the 1st day of December now current, in lieu of all former Rules and Regulations, Fees or Rates, under the provisions of the Act of Council, 17 Victoria, No. 22.

By His Excellency's Command,

J.12,727. WILLIAM C. HAINES.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

1. No charge will be made for the date, address or signature to any message.

2. Messages must be written with ink, in a clear and legible manner, and bear a proper date, address and genuine signature.

3. Messages will be delivered free of charge within one mile of the Office, over that distance porterage will be charged; and messages to be delivered on shipboard, an extra charge to cover boat expenses will be made.

4. Messages will be transmitted in the order of their reception, and no precedence will be allowed in transmission, except for Government Despatches, the Police Service, and in cases of sickness or of death.

5. All messages will be held strictly confidential.

6. Payment of charges in advance will be required, except for replies to interrogatory messages on which may have been written the words, "Reply paid for."

7. To lessen as much as possible any liability to error in the transmission of messages from defective manuscript, it is desirable that the use of figures should be avoided, and that words at length be substituted; and the public in using the Electric Telegraph, are requested to be particular in giving a full and correct address to every message, so that no delay in delivery may occur.

SCALE OF CHARGES.

For any distance under ten (10) miles, one shilling and sixpence for the first ten words, and one penny for each additional word.

Over ten and under twenty (20) miles, two shillings for the first ten words, and twopence for each additional word.

Over twenty and under fifty (50) miles, four shillings for the first ten words, and threepence for each additional word.

Over fifty and under one hundred (100) miles, six shillings for the first ten words, and fourpence for each additional word.

Illustrative Table shewing the prospective rates for the transmission of Telegraphic Messages according to the accompanying Scale of Charges.

From	To	First ten words.	Each additional word.
		s. d.	s. d.
Melbourne	Sandridge	1 6	0 1
Melbourne	Williamstown.	2 0	0 2
Melbourne	Geelong	4 0	0 3
Melbourne	Queenscliff... ...	6 0	0 4
Sandridge	Williamstown.	1 6	0 1
Williamstown ...	Geelong	4 0	0 3
Geelong...	Queenscliff... ...	2 0	0 2

The Offices will be kept open for the transaction of business by the public, generally between the hours of 8·30 A.M. and 8 P.M.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 13th December, 1854.

ELECTION FOR THE COUNTY OF GRANT.

THE Lieutenant Governor directs it to be notified that the representation of the Electoral District of the County of Grant having become vacant by the resignation of WILLIAM CLARK HAINES, Esquire, a Writ has been issued by the Honorable the Speaker for the election of a Member to serve in the Legislative Council for the said District, and that the following arrangement has been made for the election, viz.:—

Place of Nomination	Geelong.
Date of Writ	13th Dec., 1854.
Day of Nomination.....	3rd January, 1855.
Polling Day	10th Jan., 1855.
Return of Writ	17th Jan., 1855.

By His Excellency's Command,

WILLIAM C. HAINES.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 12th December, 1854.

APPOINTMENT.

HIS Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to appoint

WILLIAM CLARK HAINES, Esquire,

to be Colonial Secretary of the Colony of Victoria, subject to the approval of Her Majesty, in the room of John Vesey Fitzgerald Foster, Esquire, resigned.

By His Excellency's Command,

J. MOORE,
Assistant Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 13th December, 1854.

REGISTRARS OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

THE Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to appoint the undermentioned gentlemen to be Deputy Registrars and Assistant Deputy Registrars of Births and Deaths, under the provisions of the "*Registration Act*," 16 Victoria, No. 26, viz.:—

Deputy Registrars.

MR. JAMES WITCHELL, for the District of Winchelsea and vicinity.

MR. DAVID MACPHERSON, for the District of Timboon.

MR. THOMAS HORSBRUGH, for the District of Rokewood and vicinity.

Assistant Deputy Registrars.

GEORGE VICARY, Esquire, for the District of Dean's Marsh, Apollo Bay, and Cape Otway.

PHILIP TEMPLE BOLIVAR LANG, Esquire, for the Mount Garoce District.

WILLIAM ROWE, Esquire; FRANCIS BEGGS, Esquire; and DR. JOHN CHERNSIDE, for the District of Woady Yaloak.

By His Excellency's Command,

J.13,640. WILLIAM C. HAINES.

Victoria Government Gazette, No. 118, Friday 15 December, 1854, page 2858. State Library of Victoria, accessed 12 February 2021. http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/archive/1840-1859/1854

REVOLUTIONS

Eureka was a social revolution, demanding and achieving a much fuller participation by ordinary men (not yet women) in political representation, as well as an end to the unfair mining licence system. It was linked to the Chartist movement in Britain, which demanded a vote for every adult male (not just property owners), and more broadly to a wave of revolutionary activity in Europe in 1848 against autocratic governments. The European revolutionaries demanded democratic participation, economic fairness, freedom from injustice, and in some cases national independence. The successful American revolution of independence was also a continuing influence.

At the same time as the social revolution, Victoria was on the edge of a technological revolution. In the early 1850s, dual-powered ships using both steam and sail started to travel the England-Australia run; short-run coastal "steamers" were already in use. In 1854 the first steam train service in Victoria began in Melbourne (Flinders Street to Port Melbourne), and a railway line to Geelong was under construction. And, most revolutionary of all, in 1854 the first electric telegraph service commenced in Melbourne. (In earlier use, "telegraph station" referred to stations like the one on Flagstaff Hill in Melbourne that used signal flags hoisted on a mast). The electric telegraph line reached Geelong at the start of December 1854, and the first message transmitted from there was news of the Eureka Stockade. If the telegraph had been available in Ballarat at that time, the disaster at Eureka might well have been averted. (The telegraph reached Ballarat in 1856.)

The social and the technological revolutions cannot be disentangled. Even if an invention is made, it will only be taken up if the broader society has a use for it. Ancient Greece had inventors and engineers capable of creating such devices as the miniature steam engine attributed to Heron of Alexandria and the intricate clockwork device known as the Antikythera Mechanism, which had more than 30 gears and functioned as an astronomical calendar. But a society based on slave labour had no reason to develop these devices into anything more than toys to amuse the aristocracy.

In contrast to the situation in the ancient world, European society from the late 18th century on was capable, not only of devising a steam engine, but of bringing it into widespread use. Industrialisation spread rapidly and led to the displacement of skilled artisans by cheaper mechanised factory production; this was one of the factors contributing to the upheavals of 1848. Another was an increase in literacy, coming about as more roles in society demanded it, and enabled in part by cheap industrial production of reading material. This led to the development of a popular press: "freedom of the press" was among the demands of revolutionaries in 1848. It is noteworthy that the only person actually sentenced to imprisonment over the Eureka rebellion was a newspaper editor. The explosive spread of telegraph lines and railways in Victoria after 1854 came about, not just because they were available, but because they fulfilled urgent needs of the colonial society of the time.

I have taken Morse code, as used with the electric telegraph, to symbolise the ongoing technological revolution that was intertwined with the social revolution represented by Eureka.

Gordon Monro
February 2021

Acknowledgement of sources

There is considerable uncertainty around some of the events connected with Eureka.
I am not a historian, so I have relied on the work of those who are. Sources consulted include:

- *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* by Clare Wright, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2013.
- *Eurekapedia,* (http://www.eurekapedia.org), Ballarat Heritage Services.
- *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* (http://adb.anu.edu.au/).
- *To Pierce the Tyrant's Heart* by Gregory Blake, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2009.
- *Eureka: The Unfinished Revolution* by Peter Fitzsimons, William Heinemann Random House, North Sydney 2012.
- 'The Legend of Lalor's Arm: Eureka Myths and Colonial Surgery' by Nicola Cousen, *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol 88 no. 2 (Nov 2017), pp. 212-234.
- 'The Australian Telegraph Network 1854–1877' by David H. Thompson, Museums Victoria, (https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/2625).
- *The Eureka Stockade: The Consequence of Some Pirates Wanting on Quarter-Deck a Rebellion*, by Raffaelo Carboni, J.P. Aktinson & Co., Melbourne 1855. Downloadable from (http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit/pdf/p00051.pdf)

The names of the people involved in the events of the Eureka Stockade are spelt in more than one way. In general I have used the form in the Eurekapedia.

The mathematical pattern used is based on what is known as an Ammann-Beenker tiling.

• "Ammann-Beenker", in D. Frettlöh, E. Harriss, F. Gähler: *Tilings Encyclopedia,* (https://tilings.math.uni-bielefeld.de/substitution/ammann-beenker/).

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EUREKA CENTRE BALLARAT

12 March 2021 – 28 January 2022

Artist's talk and exhibition celebration:
Saturday 5 June 2021 at 5pm

Artist's acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Eureka Centre for giving me the opportunity to make this work. I also wish to thank the historians who have worked on the Eureka story over the years, and in particular Clare Gervasoni and Dorothy Wickham for their work with the Eurekapedia, a wonderful source of Eureka-related information.

Image: Gordon Monro, *Eureka: Singular and Plural* 2020, computer generated image.

EUREKA CENTRE BALLARAT

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CITY OF BALLARAT

Eureka Centre is a cultural facility of the City of Ballarat

We respectfully acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Eureka Centre stands. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge their continuing connections to Country and Culture.

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