

2023

Research & Strategy Portfolio

Bree Turner, PhD

[LinkedIn profile](#)



- Researcher
- Design Strategist
- Writer

Hi! I'm Bree.

*I'm a mixed methods social researcher,
design strategist and writer from
Australia, with over 10 years industry
experience. Currently based in Paris.*

About Me

I have held research and teaching positions at two of Australia's leading universities, The University of Melbourne, and RMIT University where I obtained my PhD in social science.

Alongside my academic pursuits, I have worked extensively in the not-for-profit sector for reputable organisations such as Carers Victoria, YWCA, MSI Asia Pacific and Plan International Australia.

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My friends call me for:

- restaurant recommendations.
- an empathetic ear.
- a plan of attack.

Work Examples

1. Pandemic Diaries
2. Understanding Youth
Political Participation
3. The Act In Activism



The following three examples of my work highlight my mixed methods (and often creative) approach to research and design as well as my ethical and empathetic practice.

Pandemic Diaries

I produced two creative outputs from the diaries of people aged 65+ living alone during the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 (Melbourne, Aus), in order to promote empathy across the generational divide.



**"I tell people I enjoy being on my own
but in fact I hate it."**

Participant

Pandemic Diaries

Project Background

Leading sociologists (who collected diaries from people aged 65+ living alone during the COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne, Aus) wanted their research to reach a broader audience, to encourage people to care more about the ageing population and loneliness.

Methods

- I consulted with the client to identify their needs and goals.
- I read the researcher's scientific outputs to date and the 32 diary entries.
- I conducted a thematic analysis of the diaries.
- I surveyed people under the age of 65 to gain their thoughts on the existing research themes and to see their potential for empathy.
- I kept a reflexive journal.

Findings

- Many participants wrote about food as a marker of time.
- Participants used music, radio and television to distract themselves from loneliness.
- Hunger and loneliness share a home in the brain.
- Younger people have similar experiences of loneliness, thus capacity for empathy.

Design outputs to reach audiences outside academia:

- I wrote an essay on the connection between hunger and loneliness which was published in the book 'New Voices On Food Vol.2'.
- I devised an audio play based on the research which will serve two purposes 1) It will encourage empathy as listeners will be taken through the experience of loneliness. 2) It will use therapeutic sonic techniques to help relieve feelings of loneliness.

Understanding Youth Political Participation

I worked with 25 Youth Activists from Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam to build capacity in research for advocacy purposes, to develop a Theory of Change and produce a report detailing how to better engage youth in politics and social change efforts.



"Power comes from the community and those who have experiences [of racism, sexism etc] should be at the forefront of policy and structural change."

Survey participant, Australia

Understanding Youth Political Participation

Project Background

Plan International Australia run an annual program called the Youth Activist Series for young people in Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam. Plan wanted to build capacity in the areas of feminist research for advocacy purposes in order to strengthen youth advocacy efforts across the three countries.

Methods

- I consulted with the client to identify their needs and goals.
- I read reports and academic journals on youth participation.
- I designed and facilitated four online participatory workshops using Miro and Zoom.
- Youth participants and I designed a youth led research project using a mixed methods approach, which included surveys, focus groups, thematic analysis and standpoint feminism.

Findings

- Young people want to engage in politics, but need clearer pathways and support to enable their participation
- Diversity and inclusion encourages participation, young people want to feel better represented in decision making.
- Young people in Vietnam want conduits to bridge the gap between young people and policy makers.
- Young people in Indonesia are active on social media, but they want more formal mechanisms for participation.
- Young people feel undervalued and powerless when it comes to participating in political movements.

Outcomes:

- 25 youth participants from Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam developed skills in secondary research, data collection, analysis and report writing.
- We co-designed a theory of change
- We wrote a 23 page report on the project which will be used in advocacy efforts moving forward.

The Act In Activism

I created a unique and innovative methodology to explore feminist identity and digital activism for my PhD thesis.

This research was designed to elevate the voices of feminist activists and was commended for its ethical practice.

One of the outputs from this research was a theatre performance. The performance served as both a rigorous research tool and allowed me to share the research with a broader non-academic audience.



"I try to be myself online - I try not to say or do anything online that I wouldn't say/do irl [in real life]. But I am probably braver online, where I can be free."

Interview Participant

The Act In Activism

Project Background

A leading criminologist at RMIT University was seeking a PhD candidate to research how social media was being used as a social justice tool. This was a part of a larger research project exploring citizen participation in responses to crime and justice via social media. The PhD candidate also needed to explore the intersections of gender-based violence, technology, justice and digital culture.

My PhD Methodology

- Literature review.
- Digital ethnography of feminist activists who use social media, particularly Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- 15 in-depth qualitative interviews with feminist activists.
- Performance as research.
- Focus group discussion.
- Surveys.

Key Findings

- Five feminist activist personas.
- Feminist activists 'scrapbook' their identities on social media in order attract and build communities.
- Theatre is a radical empathy facilitator.
- Although digital activism often gets pejoratively referred to as 'performative activism', it does not equal 'less real' or insincere or a failure to produce outcomes. Rather, all activism can be viewed as performative; activism is performed, and performance is a powerful activist tool.

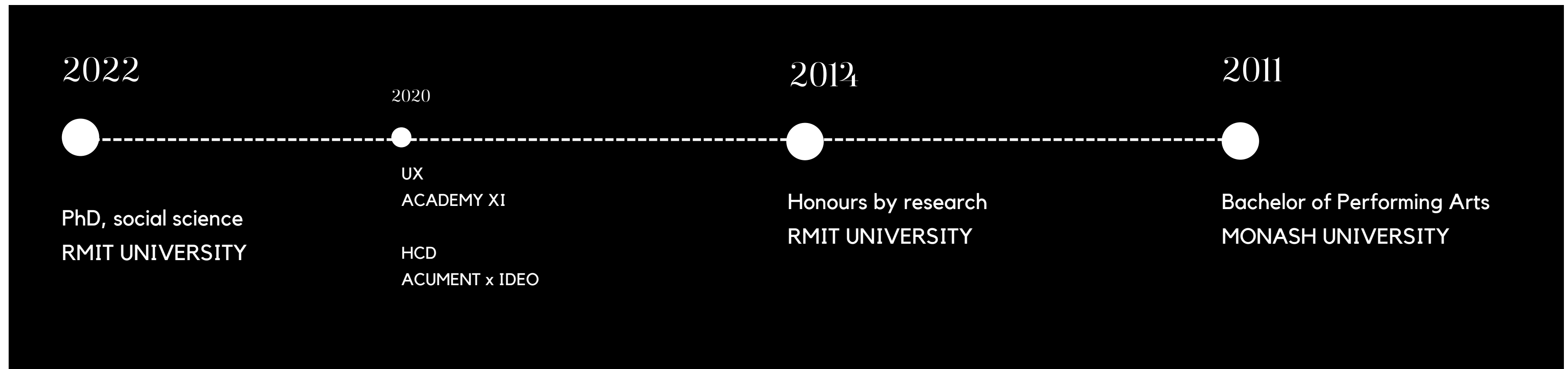
Outcomes:

- 80,000 word thesis titled 'The Act In Activism, an exploration of feminist digital activism through performance'.
- A play (script and performance) called The Act In Activism designed to reach a broader audience beyond academia.
- A co-authored chapter in the book '#MeToo and the Politics of Social Change'.

Education

I'm a life long learner with an insatiable curiosity. My research to date has explored gender, sexual and reproductive health, social movements, media, performance and performativity.

I'm committed to personal and professional development and enjoy teaching and learning within community.



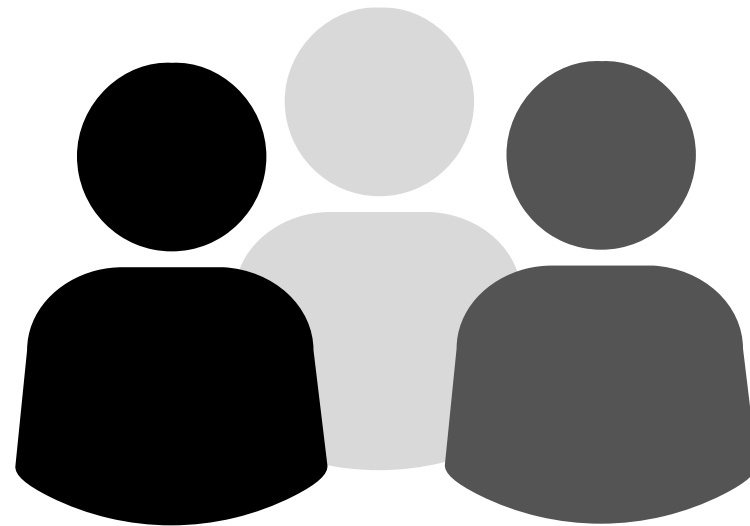
Testimonials

"The Miro board was well structured, the desk reviews gave good insight into the existing literature, and Bree did such a good job running the sessions."

-Workshop participant

"I've learnt so much from Bree when it comes to understanding and integrating research in advocacy and I will definitely carry this with me in my future work."

-Plan International Australia team member



"Love the layout of the Miro board! (I'm obsessed)"

-Workshop participant

"The process of choosing a research question and research method was really cohesive and Bree was well prepared."

-Workshop participant

"Bree created such a safe and judgement-free space for us to explore our feminism and navigate the complex issues affecting marginalised people today."

-Research participant

Let's
chat!

