



Art Association
of Australia and
New Zealand

Annual Conference 2014
www.aaanz.info

GEOcritical

AAANZ

Conference 2014

4- 8 December

Inveresk Precinct, Launceston

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MAKING IT HAPPEN

BUDGET/COORDINATION/SPONSORSHIP

Jess Sattler, Elk Events, Launceston

WINIFRED BOOTH TRUST DAY COORDINATOR/ GEOcritical SUPPORT

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Georgie Parker and Academy Gallery Volunteers; QVMAG Guides and Friends

Students of TCotA and Architecture & Design, University of Tasmania, Inveresk

COMPILATION OF PRESENTATIONS AND ABSTRACTS

Wendy Roberts

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The 2014 AAANZ Annual Conference takes place at the Inveresk Cultural Precinct, Launceston, Tasmania, 5-7 December. The first conference day is dedicated to postgraduate workshops convened by Conference Keynotes Prof. Jeff Malpas and Marian Pastor Roces, followed by two days of presentations. An optional day in Hobart at the end of the conference, on 8 December, includes a visit to MONA and a final keynote address by Dr Amanda Ravetz at TCotA, Hunter Street. The conference is hosted by the Tasmanian College of the Arts (TCotA: Launceston and Hobart) University of Tasmania, in association with the University's School of Architecture and Design, sharing the Inveresk site with TCotA; and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) whose Museum shares the Stone Building with TCotA, Academy of the Arts.



The theme for the 2014 AAANZ Conference was chosen not for as a specific reference to the growing field of 'geocriticism' but for the potential embodied in the conjunction of its two elements, signified in the conference logo designed by Sawtooth ARI director, Marisa Molin.

GEOcritical is a concoction that both delimits and opens up creative speculation. Taking the GEO prefix sits us firmly on earth, world, ground, and by extension, in specific places and conditions of being. Importantly for this conference, it can be the place from which to speak or create. Together with GEO, 'critical' can work in at least two ways: for example, referencing critique (in speaking, writing, process, action) in both its contemporary and historical frames; or in reference to the current state of the world or earth in which artists, designers and architects must inevitably intervene. In combination, **GEOcritical** can drive discussion on anything from intercultural critique to biennale culture, and beyond; expose the driving issues for contemporary artists, writers, researchers, designers, curators, makers, architects and administrators coming from differently grounded and located practices; while encouraging reflection on past practices and critical turns.

LOCATION, LOCATION...

The Inveresk Precinct is a short walk from Launceston city centre.

The Academy Gallery, Venue 9 on the **Arts Tasmania ARTBIKES** map of Launceston (<http://www.arts.tas.gov.au/artsatwork/artbikes>) is the conference hub; Venue 7, Sawtooth ARI is the host of the Friday night conference launch; Venue 1, Design Tasmania, hosts the Saturday night AAANZ Book Prizes. A hardcopy of this map and a map of the Inveresk Precinct is included in the conference pack.

GEOcritical FRINGE

The 2014 AAANZ Conference has supported a small "fringe" of events and exhibitions to add variety to the delegate experience. All Launceston galleries are listed on the Arts Tasmania ART BIKE map of Launceston (see <<http://www.arts.tas.gov.au/artsatwork/artbikes>>)

DO/THINK GEOCRITICALLY: WORKSHOPS FOR TASMANIANS

Supported by the Winifred Booth Trust

Coordinated by Gillian Marsden

TCotA Inveresk/ Thursday 4 December

Ross Gibson (ACT), Denise Ava Robinson (TAS), Amanda Ravetz (UK), Julie Brooke (ACT)

SAWTOOTH ARI

Level 1, 160 Cimitiere Street

GEOcritical Conference Reception, Friday 5 December 6.00pm

Opening hours: Wednesday-Friday 12.00-5.00; Saturday 10.00-2.00

December Program:

Birds of a feather, Ashley Bird (TAS); *New game*, Nancy Mauro-Flude (TAS); *Sentimental blokes*, Shannon Field (TAS)

In addition to the December program, and with the support of the Winifred Booth Trust, Natalie Holtsbaum (Hobart) has curated the **AAANZ GEOcritical** exhibition in the Front Gallery:

Geocritical: don't just agitate - decorate, Sue Henderson (TAS); *The appearance of colours*, Anne Mestitz (TAS);

Unstable objects Antonia Sellbach (TAS)

THE MILL GALLERY

(Above Stillwater Restaurant, 2 Bridge Street, at the Gorge end of Paterson Street)

Opening night Thursday 4 December, 5.30pm

Opening hours: 10.00-5.00, 7 days

NEO:GEOcritical is an exhibition curated by Amanda James (Josh Foley) that playfully explores allusions to geometry, geology and all the intersections occurring between these subjects. A wilfully eclectic show, James's intention has been to present artwork that may not only examine the criticality of our human situation upon the globe but has also aimed to display and arrange the work so that the conjunctions and juxtapositions between the works within the Mill Gallery serve to enhance, disturb or exemplify the theme of GEOcritical.

Tasmanian artists: Joel Crosswell, Leon Cooper, Sue Henderson, Courtney Foote, Michelle Knowles, Matt Cottrell,

Adam Foster, Nathan Clark, Edna Broad, Josh Foley, Marisa Molin, Colin Langridge, Peter Sly, Erin Linhart, Irena Grant-Koch, Gillian Marsden, Penny Mason, Nathan Stent, Sean Morris

Supported by the gallery, curator and artists.

QVMAG - MUSEUM

Inveresk, 10.00-4.00, 7 days

Mark Tribe (New York), *The Dystopia Files (2010-11)*, multi-channel video

For further information see: <http://www.marktribe.net/dystopia-files/>

Extended viewing, Friday 5 December, to 5.00pm for conference delegates.

Courtesy of the artist; supported by QVMAG

Anish Kapoor: *The Making of 'Dismemberment Site 1': Infinity on Trial (2011)*

Directed by Bridget Sutherland

Previously shown 2012-13. MCA, Sydney

Screening in the Auditorium, Inveresk 3, 4, 5, 8 December, during Museum hours.

Courtesy of the director; supported by QVMAG

BOOK, JOURNAL AND THESIS PRIZES

The annual Book and Journal prizes are awarded at the conference and are keenly awaited by delegates and the publishing sector. This year the awards will be made on Saturday 6 December, commencing at 5.30pm in the Claudio Alcorso Courtyard of Design Tasmania, the home of the Design Tasmania Wood Collection of contemporary wood design as well as a retail outlet for exemplary Tasmanian craft. The building itself, edging into historic City Park, is a combination of the 1896 Price Memorial Hall and the 1998-2001 extensions by David Travalia and Rick Leplastrier.

The AAANZ is the only body in Australasia to focus on art-historical studies, including museum catalogues and monographs. Prizes are awarded in the following categories:

1. Best book (\$500 supported by The University of Sydney)
 2. Best anthology (\$500 supported by The University of Sydney)
 3. Best large exhibition catalogue (\$500 supported by The University of Melbourne)
 4. Best small exhibition catalogue (\$100 supported by The University of Western Australia)
 5. Best scholarly article in *AAANZ Journal* (\$500 supported by The University of Sydney)
 6. Best essay/catalogue/book by an Indigenous Australian or New Zealand Māori (NZ\$500 supported by Christchurch Art Museum)
 7. Best artist-lead publication, essay/catalogue/book (NZ\$500 supported by Massey University)
 8. PhD prize (\$1000 supported by Taylor and Francis)
- Introduced in 2013, the prize is sponsored by the publishers of the *ANZIA*. Entrants present a brief version of their thesis to judges and audience members on Friday 5 December, before the official conference launch.



KEYNOTES ABSTRACTS

Jeff Malpas

From GEOcritical to Topo-Poeitic: Art and Design from the Perspective of Place

9.00 am, Saturday 6 December 2014, Tramsheds Theatre, Inveresk, Launceston

What does it mean to be GEO-Critical, and what is the significance of the terms strangely capitalised prefix? Is GEO-critical to be understood as a relative of geo-criticism? In what way does it genuinely address the earth (which is what is named in the prefix GEO-) and how might the earth be addressed 'critically'? The framework for my discussion will derive from my own notion of the topographic - the GEO-critical being taken as indicating a possible mode of topographic inquiry. I will explore the nature of topography, and of *topos*, in relation to notions of 'earth' as well as of the 'critical', including the tendency for *topos* to be overlooked even when it is supposedly thematized. The aim will be to offer an account of what it might mean to engage in a genuinely GEO-critical, or topo-graphic mode of art and design practice - a practice that might be termed a mode of geo-poiesis or topo-poiesis.

Marian Pastor Roces

Cannibals and Cultural Studies

2.00pm, Saturday 6 December 2014, Tramsheds Theatre, Inveresk, Launceston

The paper thinks aloud about a recent writing project: a small book about killings that transpired in the 1970's (and in spurts through the next decades) on the island of Mindanao, Philippines. The events involved communities self-identifying as Christians and Muslims, and indeed as identities in violent conflict. My research managed to put on record Christians who admit, now, in their 70's and 80's, to wholesale killings of Muslim families, including babies, animals, sundry stray people. Within a Cold War context, this ethnocide was deliberately perpetrated as a terror campaign that involved signature mutilations and occasional cannibalism. The book considers these matters through a Cultural Studies lens, which allowed me to remain outside a number of disciplines I have kept a critical distance from, even as I deployed their strategies: history, journalism, anthropology, development studies, political science.

In this paper, I regard my book--which may remain unpublished for some time, due to real possibilities of vengeance strikes that do not contribute to a good outcome from the delicate peace agreement just signed between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, brokered by Malaysia--with peripheral vision taking in the current events in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, and other parts of this vicinity. I circle terrorism, therefore, wondering if Cultural Studies is up to the scale of these matters.

Amanda Ravetz

Place and Reverie

6.00pm, Monday 8 December, Dechaunaux Theatre, Tasmanian College of the Arts, Centre for the Arts, Hunter Street, Hobart

At Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, are a series of sensual, black, soft ground etchings by contemporary Indigenous artists from Yirrkala. These reanimate some of the 198 string figures collected by the anthropologist Fred McCarthy in 1948, recently brought back to public attention by anthropologist Robyn McKenzie.

This talk references these and other string figures to weave together three apparently disparate elements into some form of continuity – ideas about place and place making; the role of creativity in academic scholarship; and experiences of reverie.

Using examples of my work across art and anthropology the talk will speculate about place as an important source of ontological security, suggesting how, as part of an enquiry into places and their ability to stimulate feelings of belonging and holding, we must indeed consider reverie.

What is it though, that connects this triad (place, place making, reverie)?

The short answer has to do with the power of an aesthetic discourse that affirms existing reality, but in alternative ways, and does so for a limited time only. The string figure works here as a symbol of affirmation, alternation and limitation. Just as the string moves sinuously between one point of the body and another, dissolving and reforming imagery, so the 'as if' of reverie might help creatively remake ontological security.

Jeff Malpas is Distinguished Professor at the University of Tasmania and Visiting Distinguished Professor at Latrobe University. He was founder, and until 2005, Director, of the University of Tasmania's Centre for Applied Philosophy and Ethics. He is the author or editor of 21 books with some of the world's leading academic presses, and has published over 100 scholarly articles on topics in philosophy, art, architecture, and geography. His work is grounded in post-Kantian thought, especially the hermeneutical and phenomenological traditions, as well as in analytic philosophy of language and mind, and draws on the thinking of a diverse range of thinkers including, most notably, Albert Camus, Donald Davidson, Martin Heidegger, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. He is currently working on topics including the ethics of place, the failing character of governance, the materiality of memory, the topological character of hermeneutics, the place of art, and the relation between place, boundary, and surface. See: jeffmalpas.com

Marian Pastor Roces is an independent curator and critic who maintains a long-term research interest in cities, clothing, museums, international art exhibitions, and contemporary art that produces and anatomises density. Among her major curatorial projects in the last decade are: *The Politics of Beauty*, a international symposium funded by the Prince Claus Fund of the Netherlands; *Science Fictions*, an exhibition involving some of the world's artists/ interlocutors of the truth of science, funded by Singapore's National Arts Council; the Philippine pavilions at the World Expositions in Aichi, Japan and Zaragoza, Spain, for which her country was recognised, both times, with a grand prix; and the Boysen Knox-Out EDSA Project, public art on a very large scale on the principal artery of Metropolitan Manila. Published internationally, she is however keenest to pursue the development of a critique of biennales, resulting in the essay "Crystal Palace Exhibitions" (in *Over Here*, MIT Press and republished in *The Biennale Reader*, Bergen Kunsthalle); and the paper, "Biennales and Biology" delivered as a Power Lecture with the Power Institute, Sydney University. She is currently preparing for publication a book on bloody murder rampages constituting state violence in the Philippine south in the 1970's.

Pastor Roces founded and heads TAO INC, a Philippine corporation curating exhibitions and the establishment of museums, cultural projects, publications, public art projects, and assistance to urban planners. She is also a founding partner of Brain Trust Inc., a policy think tank, which recently completed the current Mindanao 2020 Peace and Development Plan.

Amanda Ravetz is an anthropologist and artist whose expertise lies in the inter zone between anthropology and art/design. Her research interests include visual cultures and place; expanded notions of drawing in relation to film; artistic epistemologies; improvisation, play and reverie in art and anthropology; and ontologies of creativity. Recent research projects include "Why drawing, now?" a study of the role of drawing in making community and "Entering the maker's space", a practice-led enquiry into enchantment, reverie and gesture in drawing and stitch. Her most recent book *Collaboration Through Craft* (2013), an edited volume with Alice Kettle and Helen Felcey, offers a challenging new argument for the collaborative power of craft, analysing the philosophies, politics and practicalities of collaborative craft work. Her edited volume with Anna Grimshaw, *Visualizing Anthropology* (2005) investigates new collaborative possibilities between anthropology and other fields, linked to image-based work. Amanda's films have been screened in the UK, Finland, Latvia, Portugal, Germany, Majorca, USA and India.

Amanda is senior research fellow at the Manchester School of Art, research associate with Knowing from the Inside project at Aberdeen University, research associate with On the Edge Research at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, and was Visiting Fellow at the School of Art and the Humanities Research Centre, Australia National University, September–December 2014

Design & Art Australia Online: The HOW and the WHY Workshop.

www.daaao.org.au

Dr Gillian Fuller
NIEA, UNSW Art & Design

Saturday 6 December, 1.00-1.45, Lecture Room, TCotA Inveresk

Design & Art Australia Online (DAAO) is a key piece of ARC funded online infrastructure for Australian visual cultures research, but do you know how to use it? what it can do? and how to make your research visible through it?

DAAO is a collaborative e-Research tool and database built upon the foundations of the Dictionary of Australian Artists Online, which was itself based on Joan Kerr's *Dictionary of Australian Artists and Heritage*. By opening up DAAO to public participation, and sharing data with Australia's leading research and collection institutions, we have expanded our dataset substantially: over 14,000 biographical records on Australian artists, designers and curators, over 23,000 works and 20,000 exhibition and recognition records. The dataset grows daily and, as it does, new narratives, works and connections across Australia's cultural histories are being exposed. DAAO is open to all and it's free.

Come to our workshop to:

Learn what DAAO can do

Learn how DAAO can support new approaches to research

Give us feedback; we always want to know how we can improve.

ABSTRACTS

Listed by session and venue

All Launceston sessions take place at the Inveresk Precinct, 2 Invermay Road, Launceston. In addition to Keynotes, workshops and meetings, the conference consists of five sessions of papers across two days in up to seven parallel venues.

The sessions are:

- | | | |
|----|----------|-------------|
| 1. | Saturday | 11.00-12.30 |
| 2. | Saturday | 3.30-5.00 |
| 3. | Sunday | 9.30-11.00 |
| 4. | Sunday | 11.30-1.00 |
| 5. | Sunday | 2.30-4.00 |

The venues are:

- | | |
|----|---|
| A. | Lecture Room, TCotA, Academy of the Arts (also known as the "the art school" or the Stone Building or SVPA) |
| B. | Auditorium, QVMAG Museum ("the museum") |
| C. | Meeting Room, QVMAG ("the museum") |
| D. | Rory Spence Lecture Theatre, School of Architecture & Design ("Architecture") |
| E. | Tutorial Room, School of Architecture & Design ("Architecture"; Architecture Seminar Room) |
| F. | Annexe Theatre, TCotA (in The Annexe or "Theatre") |
| G. | Annexe Studio, TCotA (in The Annexe or "Theatre") |

... which means that if you are presenting at 9.30 on Sunday morning in QVMAG Meeting Room, you're in Session 3C. A useful locative shorthand, perhaps.

SESSION 1A: Space-time and the studio: the teaching and making of contemporary art

Convenors: Mark Webb (QUT) and Charles Robb (QUT)

The complex spatial interactions of objects and encounters that comprise individual art-making and studio teaching processes are poorly served by linear accounts of those activities.

Both making art and teaching art are constituted in the temporal process of negotiating the present by linking the immediate past with an immediate future. Given this complex spatio-temporal dimension to the studio, a simple linear model falters when considering many practices. Both individual creative practices, and the practice of studio teaching, are by definition, an assemblage of approaches, methods, and works, but also activate impulses, engagements, influences and references that cannot be apprehended by one-dimensional models.

Instead both are potentially better served by more complex and speculative models, such as zones, genealogies, ecologies, and topologies, to reflect on and respond to. Indeed the methodological imperatives of studio-based research degrees require artists/lecturers to consider the meta-form of their studio activities, provoking and informing the academic exigencies of teaching contemporary art.

Astrid Lorange and Tim Gregory (UNSW) *Geophilosophical inquiry as radical studio methodology*

This paper proposes that the prefix ‘geo-’, and geophilosophical inquiry more broadly, be understood as a complex interplay of manifold temporalities. These temporalities range from the relatively inflexible (institutional, rhetorical, colonial afterimage) to the relatively volatile (policy, fashion, market, theory). ‘Geo-’ encompasses, but is not limited to, the temporalities of ‘the global’ and ‘the anthropocene’, concepts which have come to dominate ways of thinking about material, making and process. As such ‘geo-’ pushes towards a context for the singularity of the world rather than the globe, the universe rather than the multiverse: it understands the incompatible, irreconcilable and unthinkable as always existing together in a comixture of fast and slow engagements, not able to be relegated to sealed categories (nonhuman, pre-human, post-human). This paper follows on from the authors’ previous work on radical art school pedagogy, and suggests the geophilosophical as a way of structuring contemporary studio action as always within and without institution, law, capital, vocation. It proposes the ‘geo-’ as a way of situating practice with the aim of producing an outcomebased (post)studio pedagogy in which locational, situational, material, particular, urgent and vague factors are put to play in an error-prone and error-inclusive space of making and thinking. The realisation (both material and conceptual) is thus on the political and social conditions of making-thinking as contemporary to its becoming, instead of the becoming (always situated elsewhere) as the source for inquiry and documentation.

Mark Webb (QUT) *Negotiating indeterminacy in studio teaching: using the zones of material and immaterial play to shape pedagogies and practices in art*

The processes of studio-based teaching in visual art are often still tied to traditional models of discrete disciplines and largely immersed in skill-based learning. These approaches to training artists are also tied to an individual model of art practice that is clearly defined by the boundaries of those disciplines. This paper will explain how the open studio program at QUT can be broadly understood as an action research model of learning that ‘plays’ with a post-medium, post-studio approach to making art. This emphasises developing conceptual, contextual and formal skills as essential for engaging with and practicing in the often-indeterminate terrains of contemporary art. It will explore how this approach looks to Sutton-Smith’s observations on the role of play and Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development in early childhood learning as a way to develop strategies for promoting creative learning environments that are collaborative and self sustainable. Social, cultural, political and philosophical dialogues are examined as they relate to art practice with the aim of forming the shared interests, aims, and ambitions of graduating students into self initiated collectives or ARIs.

Sharon Jewell (QUT) *Wonder and the method: fields of play in the studio*

Practice-led research in the academy is framed in part by the demands of traditional research that separates methods from the particularities of practice to produce models that can be reapplied in the field, with a means and ends imperative. This presents problems in creative acts that expressly seek to find a place where difference and wonder constitute, at least for this practitioner, the desired outcomes of research. This paper I will discuss the ways in which models of creative practice might be seen both to form and to change in the act of practice itself. As frameworks for situating processes and meaning in my creative work, models are inseparable from those things they seek to explain. Materials and forms, spaces of practice and adjacencies are more than the variables within a system, but integral to the specific meaning of the system itself. In discussing this mutual elaboration of work and model I refer to Pierre Bourdieu’s analogy of a game unfolding across a field of play. Decisions are never made with respect to the state of things as they are, but to the forward movement across the field, toward a future that is given in the present movement.

I argue, however, that the difference between the “logic of practice” that Bourdieu develops through his example of the game, and art practice lies in the observation that in the latter, the rules themselves are also emergent. The result of this is the sense of wonder that prevails in the midst of practice, and an approach of both responsiveness and trust, acknowledging imperatives that move beyond a means-ends model.

Session 1B: Pacific: Time, Rim, Ocean

Convenors: Sue Best (UNSW), Ann Stephen (USydney)

This session will examine the many ways in which the vast geographical region of the Pacific has featured in art production and reception. Broad questions that the panel might address are: Is the Pacific a useful term to classify cultural production? How has this region been imagined by European and Australasian artists as both visitors or collectors? How have European conceptions of the Pacific been contested by contemporary Pacific artists like Shigeyuki Kihara and Kalisolaite 'Uhila? Possible topics include: the depiction of the Pacific and its peoples in nineteenth-century voyages of discovery; contemporary responses to such images; the Pacific as a primary site for the 'Primitive' imaginary. Similarly, we would be interested in papers that critically evaluate the Asia Pacific Triennale and the recent curatorial projects of the Getty organised around the theme of Pacific Standard Time. The session aims to interrogate the way in which geography is mapped onto culture or used to organise cultural production. We are particularly interested in how modern and contemporary artists have critically engaged with the images and fantasies about the Pacific.

Harriet Field (UNSW) *The spectre of Salome: inverting fantasy in the work of Shigeyuki Kihara*

This paper examines the deconstruction of fantasies of the Pacific in the work of artist Shigeyuki Kihara by focusing on the presence of her spectral alter ego Salome. In Kihara's work, the figure of Salome signifies the inverse of the fantasy of an idyllic Pacific, presiding instead over images of destruction and decline. Denis Diderot termed the Pacific "the great ocean of fantasy." As a vessel for European hopes for an undiscovered utopia, the vastness of the Pacific was reduced to a fantasy constructed around the unbridled pursuit of pleasure. The concept of a hedonistic paradise spread across the South Seas has survived the decline of colonialism and remains as much a part of contemporary conceptions of the Pacific as it was during Diderot's time. The depiction of fantasy at the expense of reality continues to dominate images of the Pacific. Intervening in and deconstructing these fantasy images is integral to Kihara's work.

The character of Salome, inspired by a 19th century photograph *Samoan Half Caste* (1886) and named for the titular character from Oscar Wilde's play, first appeared in Kihara's performance piece *Taaluga: the Last Dance* (2006). Kihara's invocation of Salome, always wearing the same distinctive black Victorian dress, raises the spectre of colonialism to loom over both her work and the Pacific itself. Salome is both a historical and a contemporary figure. The spectral figure guides the viewer through a temporal field that encompasses Samoa's colonial past and postcolonial present, allowing her work to exist beyond the confines of time and era. Salome's presence signals a disruption; a disruption of fantasy and a disruption of time. I will be discussing Kihara's video works *Siva in Motion* (2012), *Galu Afi: Waves of Fire* (2012) and photographs from her 2013 exhibition *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* I argue that the figure of Salome signifies an inversion of fantasies of the Pacific, allowing Kihara to weave together historical and contemporary perspectives to create an alternate image of the Pacific.

Ann Stephen (USydney) *A subterranean reading of Tusalava*

In a renewed attempt to tackle the volatile subject of primitivism, this paper forms part of a collaborative project to shift a long standing critical impasse (pace William Rubin, *Primitivism in 20th century art* (1984) MoMA and the ensuing debates). I will consider how art history can map the flow of ideas and capital that run through the avant-garde's fascination with origins and the objects of colonial collecting through the South Pacific research undertaken by the artist/filmmaker Len Lye for his first animation *Tusalava* (1929) which included a study of Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913). Lye's local primitivism, that straddles psychoanalysis and ethnography, oscillates between autobiography and provocation.

Susan Best (UNSW) *Fiona Pardington: redeeming damaged life*

This paper examines Fiona Pardington's series *The Pressure of Sunlight Falling* which was exhibited at Govett-Brewster Contemporary Art Museum in New Plymouth, Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2011. The exhibition was comprised of 21 large-scale photographs of nineteenth-century life casts of the heads of different peoples of Oceania. The life casts were originally taken as a phrenological exercise intended to buttress emerging theories of racial difference. While the central idea of phrenology that parts of the skull are indicative of character traits and moral capacities is not necessarily a racist idea, in nineteenth-century writings on the Pacific, as Bronwen Douglas argues, "phrenological terminology could easily slide into conventional racist essentialism." Indeed, the belief that there was a biologically determined hierarchy of peoples that could be ascertained by measuring skulls was one of the unsavoury ideas associated with the phrenological enterprise as it was deployed in the Pacific.

Pardington's photographs breathe an entirely new life into these embarrassing relics of a more flagrantly racist past. The series brings back into wider circulation these largely forgotten casts taken on one of the last so-called 'voyages of discovery' of the early nineteenth century. While these heads have been shown in recent decades in the more circumscribed contexts of exhibitions of historical ethnography and scientific voyages, it was a considerable risk on Pardington's part to place them in the contemporary art museum where the display of people as racial specimens, without the typical distancing framework of ideology critique, might be viewed as profoundly politically incorrect. This paper examines how Pardington radically reinvents these shameful artifacts through a reparative Māori perspective on the unstill history of the ethnographic past.

SESSION 1C: Geocritical modernisms: transforming Surrealist photography

Convenor: Dr Donna Brett (USydney)

The recent global turn in modernist studies has brought to the fore questions of diaspora, exile, and peripheral modernist cultural work. As an avant-garde movement, Surrealism had earlier signaled the importance of internationalism as a bulwark against colonialism, Eurocentrism and Imperial hegemony. Whilst Breton notoriously censured the "surrealist conformism" virally spreading in the wake of the movement's international success, his commitment to a global avant-garde movement nevertheless challenged the hierarchical logic of "original" and "copy", "centre" and "periphery". In an essay for Art in Australia, Breton argued "each one of us, from Paris to Sydney, from New York to the very depths of Asia, has an actual physical part in this world convulsion", cementing his vision of an aesthetic movement tied to geo-cultural transformation.

This session explores the eclectic experimentation with Surrealist photography from beyond the centre. The papers explore an engagement with the aesthetics of transgression and transformation that are attached to a modernist commitment to the city and the body as sites for both desire and alienation.

Assoc Prof Natalya Lusty (USydney): Surrealism in the 'Hallucinatory City'

The Surrealist map of the world, published as a collective declaration in the Belgian review, *Variétés*, offers an anti-Imperial reconfiguration of the global world. Occupying the centre of the Surrealist map is the Pacific Ocean, with an oversized New Guinea hovering over Australia. The Surrealists were not alone, however, in positioning the Pacific at the centre of the world in the interwar years. In an advertisement from the late 1930's, Qantas Empire Airlines produced its own stylized map of the world, placing Sydney at the heart of "the four quarters of the earth". The paper explores the international reach of Surrealism through the work of Olive Cotton, Max Dupain and Douglas Annand. Against the backdrop of what Laurie Duggan has described as the "hallucinatory city", referring to Sydney's cultivation of a modern, cosmopolitan sensibility in the interwar period, emerged an impressive body of Surrealist-inspired work in photography and the commercial arts. The paper examines the spread of a vernacular surrealism in Sydney before its "official" arrival in 1939 with the Herald exhibition, sparking James Gleeson's essay, "What is Surrealism?" in 1940 and Breton's commissioned essay, "Originality and Liberty", the following year.

Natalya Lusty is an Associate Professor in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. She is the author of *Surrealism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (Ashgate, 2007), *Dreams and Modernity: A Cultural History* (Routledge, 2013), with Helen Groth and the edited collection, *Modernism and Masculinity* (CUP, 2014). She is working on a new project, "Department stores, cosmopolitan identity and vernacular modernism, 1900-1960."

Dr Donna West Brett (USydney): Ilse Bing's Surrealist turn

On wandering the streets of Paris in the 1930s Siegfried Kracauer wrote of a strange dichotomy, that at the same time as walking through the lively streets of the city, they were becoming as distant as memories creating a fluctuating image in which "reality is fused with the dream" and "refuse is mixed with stars". This haunting image as Therese Lichtenstein notes posits Paris as a city in a state of flux. On arriving in Paris in 1931 from Frankfurt Ilse Bing was soon engaged with the elusive nature of surrealism and in capturing the fleeting imagery of the city with photographs that recall Breton's 'convulsive beauty' and her friend Kracauer's sense of strangeness. Bing pursued the representation of abandoned and ruined structures, and the liminal spaces of the urban fabric through a surrealist vision. This paper explores the impact of surrealist Paris on the development of Bing's oneiric vision of reality in which she sought to represent the "air between things".

Dr Donna West Brett is Lecturer Modern Art in Art History and Film Studies at the University of Sydney. She is author of 'Interventions in seeing: GDR surveillance, camouflage & the Cold War camera' in *Camouflage cultures* (Ann Elias, Ross Harley & Nicholas Tsoutas, eds, University of Sydney Press 2014), and curated *Joseph Beuys and the 'Energy Plan'*, University of Sydney 2012 and *The stranger's eye*, Peloton, 2010. She is currently writing a book on German photography & place after 1945 (Routledge Advances in Art and Visual Studies 2015) and is a member of the editorial committee & reviews editor for the Australian & NZ Journal of Art.

Dr Victoria Carruthers (ACU): Between Informel and the Demon of Analogy: Examining the surfaces and skins of Emilia Medkova's Prague

Emilia Medkova's photography, portraying the shabby, peeling surfaces of mid 20th century Soviet Prague, has been incorporated under the rubric of the highly political and frequently underground Czech surrealist movement. The scholarly literature focuses principally on the way in which the ambiguity of her photographs oscillates between the formal values of modernist photography and the poetic obfuscations of surrealism. The similarity with a kind of Bretonian marvellous has emerged as a way of understanding the particular flavour of Medkova's practice, especially given the correspondences between her photographic compositions and the playful morphologies of the Rudolfine painter, Giuseppe Arcimboldo so admired by the surrealists.

Medkova's work, however, does not entirely conform to this ludic sense of the marvellous but eludes the sublimating processes of surrealist visuality, leaving the viewer with an uncertain resolution arguably more disquieting than marvellous. While the forms of her images hint at visual resemblances, provoking what Roger Caillois (after Mallarmé) called "the demon of analogy," Medkova's urban skins are stretched across a body more akin to Bataille's insistence on the abjection of the formless rather than Breton's

idealised marvellous. In this paper we intend to investigate some of the confluences evident in the work of Medkova with surrealism's more visceral ideologies in the historical, social and political context of Prague in the 20th century.

SESSION 1D: Routes and roots – narratives, processes, networks and traces of Australian art and architecture

Convenors: Flavia Marcello (Swinburne), Dr David Beynon (Deakin), Dr Ursula De Jong (Deakin), Dr Mirjana Lozanovska (Deakin), and Ian Woodcock (UMelbourne)

Australia is a place of overlapping geo-cultural mobilities that both complement and problematise totalising narratives of influence on Australian art and architectural historiography. This session explores the interplay between Routes and Roots¹ to engender a more heterogeneous and multi-representational view of Australian art and architecture. Papers are invited that analyse patterns, processes and networks to test geo-critical influences as additive sets of parts rather than sequences of individual moments and that address the following over-arching questions: What identity slips are inherent in the dialectics of European v. British? Australian v. Indigenous? Western v. Eastern? How has Australia negotiated the paradox between its geographic and cultural proximities? How can the relationship between Routes and Roots lead to new understandings of shifts in cultural identity from loss (the tyranny of distance between an emigrant people and their origins) to surplus (the overabundance of identities within a hybridising/localising populace of diverse origins).² This session welcomes responses within four areas:

- 1. Australia as progeny of empire: the uses of art and architecture to fabricate unity, identity and authority in a fledgling colonial settlement through opportunity, adaptation and experimentation.*
- 2. Australian modernity: modes of dissemination of Modernity-Modernism-Moderne via Australian artists and architects; differences of approach to the modernist agenda; the position of Australia as a conduit between East and West.*
- 3. Australia as immigrant nation: the dialectics of migrant v. émigré and their agency & socio-cultural status, struggles with belonging, displacement, language, and re-settlement.*
- 4. Australia as Asian: Asia's presence (marginal or integral?), the filtration of Asian cultural expression, the appropriateness (and appropriation) of Asian models, the relationship of art and architecture to changing demographics.*

Papers may end up posing more questions than they answer and therefore provide more scope for reconciling Australia's shifting geo-cultural identity with its production of art and architecture.

The session articulates with the conference theme, GEOcritical, by exploring how Australia's artists and architects have reconciled their own roots with their routes to the Southern land and what trans-culturalisms are brought about in these processes. By situating history as a series of narratives, flows, networks and traces it enriches debates on Australia's position as an unstable centre with a multitude of dissolving peripheries. It proposes a complex and interdisciplinary historiography that involves the act of mapping as history. It engages with Australia as a place from which to speak and to create taking into account both the roots of practitioners and the varied and complex routes that various lines of influence, and sometimes the practitioners themselves, took to arrive here. Each specific sub-theme of the session respectively engages more deeply with the conference themes: empires and imaging, shifting subjectivities, migratory artists and transculturalism.

1. Mirjana Lozanovska, 'Migrant housing in the city and the village: from Melbourne to Zavoj', in Open House International, vol.34, no.3, September 2009, 44.

2. Nikos Papastergiadis, Spatial aesthetics: art, place and the everyday (London: Rivers Oram, 2006).

Dr Alex Selenitsch (UMelbourne): Four Ways: the spatialization of identity

House and Landscape are archetypal subjects of identity, and in Australian culture extend across all the arts. In architecture, the house appears to take priority over landscape, but the two are intimately related, whether the architectural discourse concerns agrarian or suburban contexts.

This paper uses a fictional design by the author of an altered suburban house to take advantage of these archetypes. The design is one of a group of five projects which, decade by decade, reify the transition of a post WW2 refugee from a New Australian to an Aussie. The design to be discussed in this paper represents the 1980s, and explores architectural images of the desire to establish an Australian identity after a decade of looking to, and for a short period, living in the mother country of England.

Rather than attempting a built version of 'the Australian House', this project approaches identity as a process that uses different strategies and therefore presents a scheme of modifications to a standard suburban house. Four different strategies of gaining identity (satire, creativity, meditation and imitation) are located in pavilions derived from the four corners of the given suburban house, while an inhabitable backyard provides the key overall image of 'Australia'. This creates a mandala-like spatial form for the suburban block and allows the architecture to provide a number of co-existent, even contradictory images of identity. Analysis of the project will show how the obvious ability of a person to be present in one space, observe another space and remember other spaces, can be exploited to provide images of complex identity.

Grace Carroll (ANU): Celtic Twilight at Fairy Hills: Christian Waller and the Celtic heritage in modern Australia

In the early 1920s, Australian artists Christian and Napier Waller designed and furnished a Celtic-themed Arts and Crafts home at the aptly-titled region of Fairy Hills, in the outer Melbourne suburb of Ivanhoe. The Waller house is one of the most intriguing artist

houses in Australia. Through their designs for the house and its interior (which included hand painted custom furniture), the couple created an environment that espoused their aesthetic and romantic ideals, which were drawn from their Celtic heritage. The importance of this heritage was particularly felt by Christian Waller, who repeatedly drew on myths, legends and imagery from the Celtic world in her prints, illustrations and stained glass windows. Rather than an isolated case in early Twentieth-Century Australia, the Waller House highlights the significant, but little understood, influence of Celtic Revival in this country, which was also championed by the composer Fritz Hart and the poet Bernard O'Dowd. This paper situates the Wallers' house at Fairy Hills, and Christian Waller's art more broadly, within the international artistic and political discourses that surrounded the Celtic Twilight. It is argued that, for Christian Waller in particular, her desire to engage with her Celtic heritage led her to establish networks with artists in Australia, and overseas in Ireland and the United Kingdom. For Waller it was the Celtic world, not Australia or England, which she considered 'home'. Her geographic distance from her ancestral home, moreover, strengthened her ties to the Celtic world, and encouraged her to create a domestic and working environment that reworked this heritage within modern Australia. Thus, this paper asks whether standard frames of approaching twentieth century Australian art are sufficient when used to analyse artists like Waller, whose work and influences challenge these frames. Waller's immersion in the Celtic Revival, and subsequent indifference to standard themes of nationalism and the landscape tradition, make her oeuvre a kind of slippage, one not found in the recognised story of Australian art and, therefore, neither wholly understood and nor fully appreciated.

Nerina Dunt (UAdelaide): *Urban Indigenous art: the international intervention of 1990*

The year 1990 was critical in terms of the development of the profile of urban Indigenous art. Commencing a decade of immeasurable proliferation of the genre, key international exhibitions in Italy, the USA, France and Scotland took place in which urban Indigenous artists featured, primarily for the first time. The subsequent success in each instance established a series of curatorial models that shaped the trajectory of how the genre might be exhibited and supported into the future. However, it was the precedent of exposure within a global context that would have an enduring effect on the dissemination of urban Indigenous art, as the genre's actors were in turn presented with myriad opportunities to expand their arts practice. The consequence of this resulted in the further expansion of international and national audiences throughout the decade.

This paper examines the series of four critical exhibitions of urban Indigenous art that took place in 1990 beginning with the 44th Venice Biennale. This renowned event was an inaugural occasion in itself when, for the very first time in its history, Indigenous artists had been selected to represent Australia. The remaining three exhibitions of focus include *Contemporary Aboriginal Art: The Robert Holmes à Court Collection*, which travelled to three locations in the USA; *L'été Australien à Montpellier: 100 chefs-d'œuvre de la peinture australienne* in Montpellier, France; and *Contemporary Aboriginal Art 1990 - from Australia*, the visual art component of the Australian Indigenous festival *Tagari Lia = My Family* held in Glasgow.

In analysing and comparing the exhibitions' features, it is clear that decisions pertaining to the selection of artists and their works were underpinned by diversity as a curatorial rationale. The collective significance of this was reflected in Australia where its own art world was motivated in spite of the international success, toward broader appreciation and acceptance of urban Indigenous art than what had occurred in the previous decade.

SESSION 1E: Site-specific art in Australian art museums

Convenor: Dr Lucy Hawthorne (UTas)

This session will examine site-specific art in Australia's art museums, with a focus on its role in interpreting, challenging and re-presenting existing knowledge as mediated by the museum. For many artists, the museum is not only an exhibition space, but also a material and subject in itself. The types of site-specificity vary greatly, and may relate to the physical, ideological and/or historical aspects of the museum. Site-specific art has the ability to question cultural norms, highlight gaps in knowledge, and address other current issues relating to national identity and politics. It can also highlight aspects of the museum usually invisible to the visitor, including the connotations associated with architectural features, locational politics, and display methods. Due to art's marginality, it is an ideal platform from which to publicly challenge these cultural assumptions and norms, and it can do this in ways unavailable to curators, museum boards and historians.

The session examines the role site-specific art plays in deconstructing the ideologies and politics of the art museum. The museum is identified as not just a location or a neutral space to exhibit art, but a meaningful place with the ability to construct knowledge and promote dominant cultural values. Therefore, the 'GEO' of 'GEOcritical', relates to the physical museum as a site and basis for artworks that critique these values as communicated by, for instance, gallery layout, architecture, collections, exhibitions or accessibility.

Mary Angove (NGA): *Public art as Spectacle: democratising the public art museum or repressing the aesthetic?*

The exterior architecture of the public art museum is in a continual state of redefinition because of changing social, cultural and political influences.

The public art museum, accessible to the broader general populace, began in the late eighteenth century as the power of dynastic art collections became acknowledged and exploited by governments in order to further national patrimony and convey ideals of

social ascendancy. Recognition of the relevance of museum architecture in initiating communication with the public and setting up perceptions of the museum's interior is noted by Douglas Davis in *The Museum Transformed*. Davis writes that the public art museum cannot be matched by any other building type in 'symbolic or architectural importance ... nearly always redefining its capacity and expanding its audience.'¹ Davis outlines the historical path of the museum and its boundless architectural changes to accommodate an ever broadening audience demographic and collection requirements.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, architects have been presented with the challenge to redefine the character of the museum as either a generic 'neutral' space, or a space suited to the dynamism of its interior contents. A number of museums have installed public art as spectacle, intended to stimulate audience activation, through provoking public response and thus instigating a perceptual shift from the assumption, cited by McGregor Tan Research, of a museum's monotonous contents.²

The use of public art by museums points to Gielbelhausen's view that past 'boundaries between the museum and the city have become fluid.'³ Public art removes the barrier between the museum's container and contents, and, it is generally assumed, aligns the building's exterior with the needs and expectations of contemporary audiences. However, issues surrounding the trivialisation of art highlight the necessity for a review of the effectiveness of employing public art to redefine a museum's projected message to one which is more socially inclusive.

My paper investigates the history and evolution of the public art museum's use of public art as spectacle, and addresses how these institutions might overcome issues raised by the artist and viewer, and achieve their goal of enhancing audience activation and accessibility.

Madeleine Preston (UNSW): *The museum in the expanded field – the influence of one work on another*

Rosalind Krauss' *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* is a touchstone in contemporary art teaching. In recent years Krauss' *Sculpture in the Expanded field* and her later text *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* have been used by artists and academics alike in support of a range of research based practices and work. If as is often stated we are in Krauss' post medium age where mediums have expanded and obsolescent forms are combined what might the expanded field and post medium art mean for artists who use the museum as their medium.

For the artist working with the museum or archive the issue is often how to avoid being subsumed into the institutions overarching narratives. Is it possible for artists to work effectively with archives and collections and retain critical distance from them. This paper will address the inherent difficulties of working within or critiquing the museum using its methods of display and laws of attraction. The presentation will examine display and the creation of archive based art work using Rosalind Krauss texts, Boris Groys work on contemporary art and the art of the project in *Going Public* and Gustaf Sorbin's poetic meditations on realia, the material world and the museum beyond closed doors.

Dr Lucy Hawthorne (UTas): *Semiotics and spatial politics: site-specific art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales*

'Semiotics and Spatial Politics: The Art Gallery of New South Wales,' (AGNSW) traces an evolution of this neo-classical monument to nationhood, identifying a number of key site-specific artworks for which the gallery is an integral element. I examine the way in which certain aspects of museums actively reflect and promote prevailing national attitudes and values. I also outline the semiotics of the art museum, and the way in which things like museum layout, wall colour, and architecture subconsciously affect the way we interpret works of art.

I argue that it is the more unusual features, such as the museum's entrance vestibule that tend to attract site-specific response. The AGNSW's varied architecture, with its combination of grand neo-classical and modern white-walled spaces, clearly demonstrates the effect of the museum environment on works of art. Interestingly, it is the older, culturally loaded areas, rather than the gallery's minimalist Modern spaces, that are more popular for site-specific response. I also examine the ways in which artists have challenged the artificial separation of the AGNSW's collections along racial lines, and have revealed the politics of museum layout. Museums have always articulated national identity, and often emphasise or privilege certain artists, styles, eras or ethnicities over others. The museum is a predominantly physical space, and so decisions such as a gallery's layout or hanging methods, subtly communicate value and power. Site-specific art has the ability to actively question these spatial politics in a very public way. The artworks also highlight some of the limitations of existing definitions of site-specificity, particularly the schema outlined by Miwon Kwon in *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002). The site-specific artworks examined in this paper relate largely to spatial or physical aspects of the gallery, but most do not fit neatly into Kwon's phenomenological model. Many of the works critique the ideologies of the museum, whether along collection lines or the values communicated by museum architecture; yet again, most of the artworks are not fully explained by Kwon's institutional critique model. As such, I argue that her models need to be extended to take into account recent spatially-oriented site-specific art practice and propose that my alternative set of models - based on artist intention and strategy - enhance those of Kwon's.

SESSION 1F: Border crossings: photography as a medium of inter-cultural connection

Convenor: Melissa Miles (Monash)

This session aims to shed new light on photography's histories and potential as a medium of inter-cultural connection. Photographs are striking markers of difference and similarity, and the ease with which they circulate in print and online makes them potent tools

for inter-cultural engagement. Advancing beyond discussion of photography as a tool for objectifying and disempowering racial 'others', the session will consider the many ways that the production, publication, circulation, exhibition and reception of photographs have fostered international cultural exchange or connections from the late colonial period to today. These forms of photographic connection take a variety of forms. They may occur at the level of production and related 'people to people' connections between photographers working in foreign lands, their subjects and their peers. Yet they also extend to the circulation and consumption of photographs across geographical and cultural boundaries, through the publication of photographs in post cards, magazines, books, exhibitions and websites. More formal modes of inter-cultural connection may also be addressed in relation to the important role of photography in contemporary international cultural diplomacy, and in curated exhibitions, events, festivals and publications.

This session relates directly to the conference theme, as it is grounded in the circulation of photographs across geographical, historical and cultural spaces. Photographs have long traversed borders, and as such are an ideal medium for exploring issues of cultural difference and exchange. In taking a critical approach to the inter-cultural production, circulation and consumption of photographs, the session seeks to examine the ways in which the local and the global are imbricated in visual culture historically and in the contemporary moment. The practice of migratory photographers, and the consumption of photographs across borders and amongst diverse cultural groups are key to this session. As a result, the session testifies to the instability of the notion of cultural centres and their marginalized peripheries. More complex, intricate patterns of cultural exchange and connection will be revealed in this critical process.

Jessica Neath (Monash): *Photographing Aboriginal reserves in the aftermath of colonialism*

In the late colonial period Aboriginal reserves in Southeast Australia became places of photographic production where Aboriginal residents posed for non-Indigenous photographers. Historically, the circumstances surrounding these cultural exchanges were unequal and the photographs helped circulate a colonial narrative of extinction. Yet contemporary uses promote other meanings and in many cases have transformed these historical photographs into a rich cultural resource for Aboriginal descendants who continue to have a connection with these sites. Furthermore, recent alternative readings that focus on the photographic encounter have revealed a more complex historical moment of inter-cultural connections and Aboriginal claims to country. These developments indicate the 'infinite recodability' that Christopher Morton and Elizabeth Edwards argue is inherent to photography and the value of exploring the medium's material processes.

Following these new methodologies, this paper considers how Aboriginal reserves continue to be photographed in the aftermath of colonialism. A key example is the photographs of Wybalenna by contemporary Aboriginal artist Ricky Maynard. Maynard's photographs reference the contentious history of this former reserve on Flinders Island in the Bass Strait, popularly considered the final resting place for Tasmanian Aboriginal people before its closure in 1847. By focusing on the material processes in the production of these photographs, this paper analyses photographic meanings beyond a politics of objectification. Maynard's cultural approach involves the medium in practices of 'holding up country' which define the landscape photographed while also interrogating histories of dispossession. From this perspective we can consider how Maynard's artworks engage viewers in new dialogues about Australia's troubled past of inter-cultural relations and begin to delineate another history of photographing Aboriginal reserves.

Catherine De Lorenzo (UNSW): *Shifting agendas?*

This paper looks at two exhibitions of Australian photography sent to China: one in 1979, the other 2012. The first, Gael Newton's *Australian Pictorial Photography* (1979, AGNSW), was mounted at a time when photography departments in Australian state and national galleries were in their infancy and as such it both reflected collection opportunities and underscored the idea of photography as a medium with aesthetic credentials. The exhibition toured several states before the new director of the AGNSW, Edmund Capon, also saw the advantage of sending it to China, where he'd observed an increasing interest in photography. In 2012 *Making Change: Celebrating the 40 Years of Australia-China Diplomatic Relations*, a cross-institutional collaboration between the ACP (Kon Gouriotis) and COFA (Felicity Fenner), claimed to be an innovative exhibition with 'change-making film and photo-based art by 24 of Australia's foremost contemporary artists... mark[ing] the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and China'. As all the artists were Aboriginal, this exhibition did more than celebrate Whitlam's diplomatic innovations: it presented a particular take on contemporary Australia. If the Pictorialism exhibition emphasised art in photography, *Making Change* emphasised contemporary Aboriginal culture through photography. It might be tempting to propose that Newton's Pictorialism followed in the footsteps of Beaumont Newhall's evolutionary aestheticism whereas Gouriotis & Fenner's exhibition, with its polyvocal catalogue essays and complex cultural underpinnings, was inspired by newer critical photo histories such as Michel Frizot's. I shall argue, however, that the two exhibitions have much in common.

Shuxia Chen (ANU): *Photographic Encounters: Photographs of Lois Conner and her journeys to the reforming China*

The Joint Communiqué issued by the People's Republic of China and the United States in January 1979 marked the normalization of diplomatic relations between these two nations late in the Cold War. China had just announced its reform policies in December 1978, following the end of the Culture Revolution, policies which aimed to rebuild China into a strong modern nation to join the global community. Against this background of America's curiosity toward this Socialist country with its old civilisation, and China's

embrace of foreign investment and longing for cultural understanding, American photographer Lois Connor undertook the first of many subsequent journeys to China, in September of 1984, with a Guggenheim Fellowship. Since then, with her nineteenth-century style large format “banquet” camera, Connor has been photographing both the natural and built landscapes of China for the last three decades. Inspired by the traditional Chinese ink painting scroll format as well as landscape painters such as J. M. W. Turner, Connor captured another culture through its landscapes in her panoramic platinum prints.

Since the implementation of the opening up policies after 1978, more and more foreign photographers have undertaken photographic trips to China. Current studies on foreign photographers in China focus on those who visited and lived in China during the late nineteenth century and early twenty century, including Terry Bennett’s *History of photography in China: Western photographers, 1861-1879* (2010), and Claire Roberts’ *In her view: the photographs of Hedda Morrison in China and Sarawak 1933-67* (1993). Little has been researched on the recent history of foreign photographers in China, particularly in the post-Mao reform era. How did the foreign photographer adapt to the new environment of a newly opened-up socialist country? How did Chinese photographic circles react to the visit of foreign photographers when China had just been through the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and opened up to the world? What kind of mechanisms had developed between the two parties? Did these mechanisms change over time? Through the case study of Lois Connor’s photographic encounters with China, her interaction with the Chinese Photographers Association and the exhibition of American contemporary photography that she organised, this paper examines exchanges between foreign and Chinese photographers in the first decade of reform in the People’s Republic of China.

SESSION 1G: Art and the natural world: ‘making spaces that see’ *

Convenors: Eva Hampel (UWollongong) and Kim Williams (UWollongong)

The Land Art movement of the 1970s defined new directions and thinking for art relating to nature. Artists explored new forms, processes and concerns in this groundswell of work exploring the natural world, dissolving boundaries as they did so. But what happened after that? To what extent and in what form did the natural world enter the field during the return to language in postmodernism and postcolonialism? And where is it now? In 1996 the literary critic Cheryl Glotfelty commented on the near invisibility of concern with the natural world in contemporary writing at that time, saying:

If your knowledge of the outside world were limited to what you could infer from the major publications of the literary profession, you would quickly discern that **race, class, and gender** were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but you would never suspect that the Earth’s life support systems were under stress. Indeed you might never know that there was an Earth at all. (Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996, p xvi)

In the last decade there has been a strong return to nature in eco-art and the new materialism. But did the natural world drop so far out in the 1980s and 90s, or has this work just been overlooked? This session calls for papers that explore the artistic and theoretical journey in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

The session invited an exploration of forms of earth and environmentally focussed art, in theory as well as practice, specifically in the historical context of the last twenty years of the 20th century, when environmentally focussed work appeared to lose visibility in artistic discussion after an intense flowering in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Exploration of earth, world, ground is clearly fundamental, and the role of critique, imagining, subjectivities, instabilities, anxieties, urgency and so forth equally so. The intent is to explore the shifts in both theory and practice, and by implication social context, which occurred during this period in relation to their implications for art engaging with nature or the earth, and which prepared the ground for the upwelling of work on this theme over the last decade.

Glotfelty, C. and Fromm, H. (eds) 1996. The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. University of Georgia Press, Athens and London.

** Phrase used by James Turrell to describe his work: Chinati Foundation Symposium, 1995, Art in the Landscape, Marfa, Texas.*

Eva Hampel (UWollongong) and Kim Williams (UWollongong): Art and the natural world: a material age?

In recent years art dealing with the natural world has had greater prominence than it has enjoyed since at least the late 1970s when the Land Art movement defined new directions and thinking for art relating to nature. The rise in recent work in this area has accompanied a rising sense of social and political urgency on broad scale environmental issues. Bruno Latour states:

what has happened in the recent past is that issues about natural entities.....no longer play the role of calming cold reasons, but have become some of the hottest topics of public controversies. It is as if nature and geopolitics had been conflated (Latour 2011).

Parallel with this development is a resurgence in artwork with environmental concerns after a period in which it has been suppressed. Theoretical shifts which occurred in the late 20th century, first towards a focus on linguistic deconstruction after the 1970s, and now a move away from it, have profoundly influenced artists’ approach to nature as a subject. Concurrent with this are ‘new materialist’ perspectives that allow for forms of engagement with the natural world that are not necessarily activist or politically focussed in orientation, although these forms are not excluded.

Changing perceptions of what nature *is* have been instrumental in the development of these new directions. In challenging [the] 'anthropocentric post-Enlightenment intellectual tradition in which philosophical and scientific divisions between subject and object, culture and nature – what Latour calls the 'Great Divide' – ensured the primacy of people among beings both inert and in motion' (Horton and Belo 2013) (p1), does new materialism offer a new paradigm for art relating to the natural world?

Chris Denaro (QUT): *Remembering the Peel Island Lazaret through re-imagining the Teerk Roo Ra forest*

This paper will discuss my current research which aims to re-member the site of the Peel Island Lazaret through re-imagining the Teerk Roo Ra forest as a series of animated artworks. Teerk Roo Ra National Park (formally known as Peel Island) is a small island in Moreton Bay, Queensland and is visible on the ferry journey from Cleveland to Stradbroke Island. The island has an intriguing history, and is the site of a former Lazaret and quarantine station. The Lazaret treated patients diagnosed with Hansen's disease (or Leprosy), and operated between 1907 and 1959.

In this paper I will discuss conceptions of the non-indigenous historical context of the Peel Island Lazaret and the notion of the liminal state (Turner, 1967). Through this discussion conceptions of place from Australian cultural theorist Ross Gibson are also examined.

The concept of two overlapping realms is then explored through the clues and shared stories about the people who inhabited the site. There is then an explanation of my own approach to re-member this place through re-imagining the forest that witnessed the events of the Lazaret. I then draw on theories of the uncanny from German Psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch, Austrian Neurologist Sigmund Freud and South African animation theorist Meg Rickards to argue that my experience of the forest of Teerk Roo Ra was an uncanny experience where two worlds or states of mind existed simultaneously and overlapped, causing a viscerally unsettling uncanny experience. Through an analysis of Czech Surrealist Animator Jan Švankmajer's cinematic narrative *Down to the cellar* (1982), my creative work *Structure #24* (2011), and Australian Artist Patricia Piccinini's cinematic artwork *The Gathering* (2007), I discuss the situation of the inanimate and the animate co-existing simultaneously. Using this approach I propose an understanding of the uncanny as an intellectual uncertainty as outlined by Jentsch (1906). I also develop the notion of the familiar being concealed and becoming unfamiliar through mimicry (Freud, 1919). These discussions form an introduction to my creative work *Nocturn #4* (2014) which re-members the forests of Teerk Roo Ra as an uncanny place primarily expressed through animation.

Merri Randell (Visual practitioner): *The Fen: a discursive, abject, postproduction story space*

On the topic 'Art and the natural world: 'making spaces that see'' my paper will detail the conception of spaces or landscapes that consume, breathe and reproduce - visually and audibly - so that these typically hidden botanical events can be experienced as a story space entitled 'The Fen'. The aim of the 'The Fen' project was to create a 'story space' that cultivates and challenges enduring dominant non-indigenous cinematic myths about the Australian landscape by using perverse and abject (Kristeva, 1982) audio-visual strategies.

The non-indigenous cinematic myths of the Australian landscape are introduced through a contextual discussion based on theories from Australian writers Ross Gibson, Robin Wright and Kirsty Duncanson about the landscapes presented in *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Weir 1975), *The Man from Snowy River* (Miller 1982) and *Lantana* (Lawrence 2001). This discussion is further contextualised through a discussion of the representation of landscape in cinematic myth, *Mister Chuck*, by Tracey Moffatt (*beDevil* 1993). Concepts of identity from Australian anthropologist Nicholas Smith, and personal reflections from Australian settler writer Marcus Clarke are also presented as part of this contextual discussion. Following this, I elaborate on theories offered by Australian writers Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs that draw on French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's theories on abjection to unpack non-indigenous Australians' largely unconsummated desire to understand and unite with an intolerant and sometimes vengeful landscape.

Metaphorically, abjection describes anything that is cast-off or excluded from the dominant social norms, and can include people, objects, spaces, motion and stories. Cast-offs represent the binary opposite of what is accepted by the dominant social norms, such as right and wrong, life and death, or "human and non-human" (Creed 1993, 8). This project sought to challenge and update dominant social norms by creating a physical lived story space based on Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa's (2006) concept of the lived cinematic image as 'lived space'. Located in a gallery, the story space I created consists of audio-visual artworks that present an abject interpretation of trees that inhabit under-represented swamp and native forest landscapes located in Moreton Bay (Queensland) and Byron Bay (New South Wales).

Documentation of 'The Fen' story space can be seen at: <http://vimeo.com/89293862>

SESSION 2A: Hacking the metropolis

Convenor: Nancy Mauro-Flude (UTas)

'Hacking the metropolis' applies a hacker ethos (creative speculation) to thinking how one can address a city as a living system with its gaps and limitations; an integrative poesis of processing between orders as extant between geology, plants, machines and humans. Aware that nowadays many of not most electronic devices (from phones to cameras to traffic sensors) are factually internet-enabled micro computers. There is an abundance of data flying about that is not entirely species-dependent for its encoding, decoding or recoding, in many ways we are no longer the sole traders in the realm of the symbolic as a species, for example, within the interaction of human text with machine coding, language is not the exclusive domain of human thought but also that of the internal logic of computers.

'Hacking the metropolis' is a rebuff to the mechanical control codes hardwired into daily urban spaces that we find ourselves living in and through; by no means is it advocating for digital withdrawal but attempts to reach a point of awareness through demonstration in order to inform our embodied awareness and daily use of gadgetry; highlight the everyday engagement we have with computers and the fact we are sharing meaning with machines.

In an age when even the availability of natural resources depends on computational logistics, are contemporary municipalities increasingly becoming like a black box? The 'black box' is a commonly used term within computing, theatre and engineering. It refers to a system or device whereby transfer characteristics (the input / output signals) maybe known or visible, but it is the internal workings or liminal space is where this unknown materializes.

There is a desire for transparency in opening and laying the black box (input and output code) bare, knowing that there can never be total transparency, because it will always be relative to the position of citizen, audience or viewer (or the field of research).

Practically, the idea of the black box, a vast capacious or abyss-like space to be demystified, probed and re-enchanted (and even placed into a white cube) and this is the perspective or terrain from which this panel discusses these terms.

Selena de Carvalho (Independent artist): *Unpacking the cardboard box*

Recently I have been working on a project called the *Evolutionary StraitJacket* a project where participants are encouraged to wear costumes of extinct animals and sing Karaoke songs that are lyrically rich with tales of evolution. The *Evolutionary StraitJacket* hopes to encourage participation and employing humor as an entry point, through a ridiculous, poetic, neo-ritual as opposed to getting hung up on the apocalyptic tragedy of it all, by 're-wilding in order to contemplate a more sustainable future. Interested in the poetics of the dance between technology, environment and creativity, and what may emerge when these forces intercept, my creative works respond to a sense of place and discovery, exploring a belief that everything has the potential for mystery as we move through places and place move through us. As an artist in a constant process of reading the world through my own subjective lens using creativity as a vehicle to translate this unique perspective. I am a neo explorer, interested in the 'forgotten' or dilapidated pockets of human built spaces that have been left to entropy, these falling down buildings have a limited life span as development is usually just around the corner. I make up my own rules while I am anchored to integrity and respect. This is also a perspective I have taken to wild places that have imminent plans for destruction through logging or mining. I bear witness to change, storing inside of me a catalogue of places that no longer exist.

The paradox inherent in our contemporary relationship with the natural world is discussed, how we yearn for the untamed and yet so often seek to control it. Focusing on the imminent sense of fragility regarding interconnectivity, technology is often employed as a means to reflect on our relationship with the atmosphere.

Elissa Ritson (Independent artist): *'Book of the Garden': contemplating our position*

In my presentation I'll be investigating the fearful dichotomy between craving wildness and seeking safety, which the garden encapsulates by challenging the boundaries between submission and control in a dance with the natural world. In particular I'll be looking at how five urban-based artists unfurled this theme in the *Book of the Garden* exhibition: contemplating their own positions relative to their broader environments.

The idea of gardens, although once a broader term, is nowadays most commonly tied to the residential, suburban garden. It is a curious non-space where poetry takes root in the ground, and intuitive learning blossoms. Cycles and systems can be laid bare in the garden as it forms itself from the sun, the rain, the soil, the coding in its seeds and the interactions with its inhabitants. As a link to nature it is tangible and philosophical, physical and spiritual.

In *Book of the Garden*, an exhibition of plant life and paper, the garden was the setting for unfolding and reflecting on existence. Like the act of gardening, the act of drawing, of making art, is often simultaneously inwardly and outwardly focused. A series of small decisions, minor meditations, collisions in time, that provide a structure for growth. Done well, and with generosity, both art and the garden provide a place of growth for those outside of the process as well. The realm of plants connects the earth to the sun, and animals to the earth, but also taps into an ancient root of knowledge tracing through humankind. In the garden, we can learn things that feel like they are being remembered from a time now past.

Dr Julia Drouhin (Miss Desponias Salon / LAMU-Paris): *Art of radio transmission and geophonic public space*

If hacking is not just for computer code but also social code, is there a potential to attempt a social rewiring through playful insurrection? If we don't have the means to significantly influence web propaganda and surveillance, there are other media that can be used to pursue a subversive aesthetic. Radio transmission is one. It has been used as such since the early 1900's when amateur broadcasts disrupted naval communications. Radio broadcasting is an old, traditional form that has been continuously hijacked. More subversive than aesthetic, despite the Futurist's effort to occupy radio space as an art form, radio transmission is mutating to a digital form, just like television. The hertzian system could then become an abandoned and forgotten realm, and for this very reason terrestrial radio offers a high potential for experiential performance and participative creation that explores the art of transmission.

The DIY possibilities in the mastery of this old technology can provide a medium on a human scale, especially with short wave radio. Even if the transmission perimeter is limited, it is a link to a geospecific audience. Radio waves and electromagnetic phenomena can be used to build temporary networks made up of transmitter and receiver modules. Broadcasting free content with analog

frequencies can affect an architectural and social environment but above all create a disembodied sonic public space. This use of radio generates sound streams that can activate an imaginary and poetic territory in which the public is invited to immerse themselves. We can use the term *geophonic* public space as it involves immediate and ephemeral propagation of inaudible and audible information through narrative intervention. A geophonic public space can provide a space for debate, governed by the pleasure of conversing freely, in the tradition of free radios that radically differ from the conventional mass media. They do not impose their programs on a wide audience counted statistically, but infiltrate a molecular audience in a way that changes the nature of communication between those who speak and those who listen. This possible dialogue enhances the meaning and potential of radio art which could serve as a vehicle for communication, not in terms of distribution, but between the individuals involved. Traditional forms of radio can offer an alternative approach to the sense of urbanism in a digital age, creating temporary autonomous zones.

The Bureau of Word Witches [Kate Britton and Prue Gibson] (UNSW): *The speculative writing hack*

We propose a puckish model of hacked writing, defined as art writing that is immanent to its subject. If we puncture the limits of human comprehension, we start to explore possibilities beyond mortal life. This facilitates a new discourse surrounding the problem of authoritative and expert art writing. Taking the work of artist Pia Van Gelder as a platform, we launch into an experimental passage of data interference, a performative interruption of conventional art writing habits, to break open a space to “write with” the artwork, rather than in judgment of it. Isabelle Stengers and Gilles Deleuze inform our collaborative interest in developing an immanent and speculative art writing practice that reclaims a pre-critical writing voice. The object/subject dyad is dismantled and the expert patriarchal art voice is toppled from its apical position.

If the black box is in input output code, where transmissions radiate between the artwork, the art journal, the audience, the exhibition space and the material as subjectile forces, then an art writing practice that is reciprocal and immanent might allow new capacities to emerge. Our art writing practice addresses systems of art information as a mode of anticipating the non-human, using a non-chronological and unbounded methodology. This takes the form of a performative and collaborative writing process: to think with the objects, as objects, becomes an exploration of a matrix of connections and coded interceptions. We are the word-witches and we reclaim art writing as a new form of sorcery, that responds to the allure and immanence of machinic art systems.

SESSION 2B: [dis]Pleasures of the spectacle in interfaces of art and architecture

Convenor: Dr Jen Brown (UTas)

The pleasures of the mega-spectacle are evermore persistently asserted in contemporary urban public spaces. Inevitably, it seems, they arise in the context of specially engineered occasions such as arts festivals, cultural celebrations and observations of historical anniversaries, as well as in creative design for the ubiquitous promotion and advertising of capitalist economies. The large-scale projection and mapping of imagery/sound onto iconic buildings after dark and the proliferation of huge electronic screens in public spaces are peculiarly 21st century interventions that promote the pleasures of looking and listening within an intense and restless flow of ever-more spectacular imagery. Navigating public spaces in the city after dark has always been an experience of intense immersion but now, in a radically altered electronic mediascape, the parameters have changed. On the one hand, one may now find oneself swimming through imbricated layers of the real and the virtual wherein the apparently solid surfaces of buildings disappear behind a dance of ephemeral signifiers. On the other, one may find oneself pushing through a crowd of sweaty bodies, lured by the spectacle into an urban milieu, yet simultaneously distanced from it and from those around, preoccupied with texting and uploading images to the Internet via smart mobile devices.

What precisely are the pleasures of this brave new world that plays seductively with art and design as public spectacle, and in what sense are they undercut by darker currents? What are the politics at play in specific manifestations of the spectacle in interfaces of art and architecture? Where has discourse on the dangers of the spectacle moved to since Guy Debord’s seminal critique of 1968? What are the potentials and risks for artists who make video works for public screens or engage in projecting and mapping architecture with imagery? Can the critical voices of ephemeral public art forms (eg artists such as Krzysztof Wodiczko, Barbara Holzer and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer in the 1980s) still maintain potency in a globally oriented world where advertising is quick to appropriate the tools and processes of the artist in the service of capital and a passive public may no longer recognize the difference?

Underpinning such questions is a desire to articulate and reflect on how our connections with place, as contemporary artists and designers and audiences, may intersect productively and critically with the multiple emerging social and technological vectors of our times. This aim of this session is to draw together insights from both theory and creative practice in order to illuminate and evaluate the import of the mega-spectacle in contemporary life, a geo-critical project of global proportions!

Dr Biljana Jancic (USydney): *Critical boredom*

Within civic space that presents itself through public spectacle, perhaps critical visual cultures can look to anti-spectacular forms of communication. Subverting the language of the mega-spectacle can allow for critical moments that create a visual pause, intermission or break to interfere with the passage from one photo opportunity to the next. This paper will consider two possible strategies that use light projection to create moments of self-reflexive awareness of space and location. These are: projection

without signifiers and projection of spatial signifiers back on to the space. The research in this paper will be practice-led through my own work with spatial interventions.

To explore the idea of 'projection without signifiers' I will consider the way projected light can be used to highlight and interfere with existing architectural features. In urban spaces lighting is often used to flood-light significant buildings from the outside. In opposition to functional street lighting or light filtering out from inside buildings, the idea of lighting buildings to highlight their presence in urban space is a semantic exercise, which frames and directs attention to edifices of civic importance. I'm interested in exploring the way that this practice turns buildings into uncanny apparitions of themselves and does something to dislocate the building from its temporal situation. In my own artistic projects I have been interested in extending this logic to spatial interventions. To date my work has explored the structural properties of projection, or the ways in which projected light can be used to divide, inscribe and delineate spaces. I have been using projected light as a device for bridging the meta-theatrical language of the stage and cinema.

This paper will look at some previous projects in which I have worked with constructing sculptural objects that shape and direct light. Rather than projecting spectacular images, I have used light as a structural element to create spatial realignments. Using light constructively in this way to demarcate space has the potential to both articulate and remix signifiers in a site. For an upcoming series of projects I am working with moving images shot inside gallery spaces project back into the space. For this new series of works I am interested in warping time and space in the gallery context through mirroring, doubling and déjà vu. Through the use of projections I am aiming to explore a folding in of time and space. The first in this series of projects will happen at the project space 55 Sydenham Road Marrickville NSW 2204 in November 2014 in time to be presented as a part of this paper and I will also show proposals for other future projects. Some of my projects will feature in the paper.

Elisha Masemann (UAuckland): *Light interventions and the anti-spectacular*

In a TED talk given in Sydney earlier this year (TEDxSydney 2014), architect and lighting designer Mark Major discussed the problem of 'over illumination' in today's cities. He stated, 'we have as much right to be concealed as we do to be seen.' Major's remarks draw attention to the desire to 'light up' cities at night from spectacular architectural lighting displays to artificial lighting that fuels the 70 billion pound night-time retail economy in London, for example. Whereas light was once designed to bring safety to the streets, today in large scale art projects and business zones, light is used in ways that can be interpreted as public spectacle, channelling council agendas to boost urban economies through cultural and commercial growth. Major's comments highlight the potentially harmful effects of the use of light in the service of capital, but they also draw us closer to discussions on the ways in which artists and designers may be contributing to bigger and more dazzling displays of the 'mega-spectacle' than that lamented by Guy Debord in 1968.

If artists, designers, architects and urban planners are collaborating in greater numbers to create mega-spectacles in urban spaces, this potentially places further strain on the connection between individual and city space. The purpose of this paper is to highlight a relatively unknown group of artists who have used light subversively in a series of 'guerrilla light projects' that attempt to reclaim a relationship between the individual and the city. Graffiti Research Lab, street artist Armsrock, and the Gorilla Lighting crew are working at intersections of creative practice, intervention, urban geography and architectural mapping, but with very different results to artists operating within large public art projects. Their interventions are designed to revitalise (non)places, drawing attention to abandoned areas of the city, mapping industrial ruins, derelict buildings and old television towers in 'invisible' and concealed recesses of the city. Using mobile floodlights or specially engineered mobile projection units, they activate sites of controversy or simply add ephemeral light messages of their own. Working practices such as these can offer an interesting counter-dialogue to emerging discourses on the contemporary mega-spectacle. They speak to individuality and presence in city space. Equally, they can encourage critical inquiry into the underlying commercial associations of what it means to 'light up' the dark.

Jamil Yamani (UNSW): *Critical Projections: Beyond councils and corporations*

My paper will examine how the nature of Public art and the spectacle of building projection has become a typical mainstream cultural event that has a number of restrictive elements placed upon it. Projection mapping and building projection can trace their roots to the Son et Lumiere spectacles from the 1950s in France and further to Trompe l'oeil and the patronage of Italian renaissance paintings of architectural perceptions of perspective. Today, many building projections are event based spectacles, such as Sydney's annual Christmas Lights, Vivid Festival Sydney, New Years Eve spectacles and numerous other sporting, cultural and religious events. These events are driven and financed by corporate clients, municipal councils and cultural and religious organisations. Like the patrons of Renaissance Italy, their aim is to promote the client to an elevated status. However, it can also be said that Art Galleries and museums are equally commercial and corporatized spaces not just public art events. The high cost of projectors, computers and operators means that building projection events are dominated by a few projection companies where most of the content is designed by animators, motion graphic designers and 3D designers.

The question is can building projection be cutting edge and Avant Garde anymore? Does the notion of 'democracy' and the public space mean that projections are 'for the people' Rosalyn Deutsch explains that "the discourse about public art is itself a political site—a site, that is, of contests over the meaning of democracy and, importantly, the meaning of the political".¹ Or does the rhetoric on public space and public art confuse the medium of projection that has its roots in cinema and film? I wish to contribute my personal experience of working with high end projection systems and public shows to this important debate. In tandem my

response to these questions is through the development of research that focuses on the use of light and narrative to re-evaluate public space.

¹Deutsche, R, *Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy*, Social Text, Duke University Press, No. 33, 1992: 35

SESSION 2C: Curators and consequences in Australian art

Convenors: Assoc Prof Joanna Mendelssohn (UNSW) and Prof Catherine Speck (UAdelaide)

This session invited papers that examine the trajectory of the development of curatorial scholarship in developing both knowledge of and an understanding of Australian art. It especially invites papers that interrogate the impact of particular curatorial careers and policies in collections management and in specific exhibitions. In brief this would be an examination of both the impact of curatorship on shaping what constitutes the field of Australian art, which in relation to the geography of Australia, takes in it expanded geographic field.

In this session the "GEO" is the geography of Australia, and its specific cultural needs. "Critical" because the proposed papers will interrogate the present by examining the past actions of those people who have worked to shape what we see and how we see it.

Assoc Prof Alison Inglis (UMelbourne): *Peopling the Landscape: Andrew Sayers and the portrait exhibition Heads of the People*

This paper will examine one aspect of a particularly distinguished curatorial career – that of the influential curator and director, Andrew Sayers AM – by focussing on a specific exhibition, namely, *Heads of the People: A Portrait of Colonial Australia*, which was presented at the National Portrait Gallery at Old Government House between June and October 2000. A ground-breaking exhibition, co-curated with Tim Bonyhady, the extensive display and scholarly catalogue sought to interrogate the development of portraiture in colonial Australia and the factors that led to the emergence of a National Portrait Gallery. This case study will also shed light on the broader impact of exhibitions in shaping a knowledge and understanding of Australian portraiture over the last half century.

Prof Catherine Speck (UAdelaide): *The 'Link' exhibitions: 1974-79*

This paper looks at curator Ian North's Link exhibitions staged in at the Art Gallery of South Australia from 1974-79. This was a time when artists were turning their backs on establishment venues like state art galleries and abandoning making art of monetary value; instead they were looking to alternative venues and producing conceptual art. Adelaide's Experimental Art Foundation was on the horizon, it was yet to open later in 1974, but these beliefs about where art was heading were in 'the ether'. This paper looks at how Ian North steered an astute institutional response to a growing disillusionment with late modern art, and how he worked with his bureaucracy and artists to stage a series of important early conceptual art exhibitions from a state gallery base at a very time artists were decrying such institutions as out of touch and irrelevant.

Eric Riddler (AGNSW): *'By some means or other': Will Ashton and the development, under duress, of an exhibition program for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales*

When Will (later Sir William) Ashton took on the position of Director of the then National Art Gallery of New South Wales, in February 1937, he found himself in charge of *150 years of Australian art*, an ambitious exhibition scheduled to open in just under a year's time. It was to be the Gallery's first major survey of Australian art for two decades, during which time the institution's curatorial practice had diminished to hosting the annual prize exhibitions, biennial scholarship exhibitions and the occasional travelling exhibition from overseas. 'We will manage it by some means or other', Ashton declared, as he called upon public institutions and private collectors to lend key works. Artists were asked to send him a list of their most important works and the owners' details. Ashton's experience with this exhibition proved valuable when, during the Second World War, much of the Gallery's own collection was sent offsite for safekeeping, the building's harbourside location across Woolloomooloo Bay from the Garden Island Naval base having brought it into enemy target range. Faced with pressure to close down the Gallery for the duration; turning the building into a casino for visiting Allied servicemen being one of the suggestions touted at the time; Ashton instead embarked on a series of short term loan exhibitions of local artists. A series of retrospective exhibitions of four living artists, Margaret Preston, William Dobell, Roland Wakelin and Lloyd Rees, was followed by memorial exhibitions to J. Muir Auld and J. S. Watkins. Smaller exhibitions of works on paper by Will Dyson and Hans Heysen, loan collections of Australian art and the occasional touring exhibition shipped, even in such perilous times, from an allied country, helped to keep the Gallery active. The series of exhibitions organised by Ashton proved to be an important model for the professional development of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in the post-war age.

Dr Anthea Gunn (AWM): *'Big historical pictures': First World War official war art and Australian art history*

The Australian War Memorial's official war art from the First World War is unquestionably a collection of national significance. It is also one whose origins are anomalous amongst art collections in Australia. It was formed by the conditions and serendipities of war

and was initially curated by non-specialists in the visual arts. Artists were chosen predominantly for being Australian, in London and willing to travel to sites of conflict. The artists responded to the expanded geographic field for the Australian national identity and consequently expanded that of Australian art history. Art was one part of a much larger collecting project to record the war while it was still unfolding abroad, for a postwar audience in Australia.

This paper considers these unique circumstances for the curatorship of a national collection and the consequences this has for the collection today. The centenary of the commencement of the official war art scheme is December 2016 and so it is an appropriate time to consider how we understand this collection and its place in Australian art history and curatorship. This paper will argue that art historians have primarily understood the collection through the framework of connoisseurship, concentrating on those artists with an established place in the narratives of Australian art history, and consider alternatives to this approach.

SESSION 2D: Open Session: Reconsidering histories

Convenors: Dr Deb Malor (UTas) and Dr Karen Hall (UTas)

Dr Raymond Spiteri (Victoria University of Wellington): *Out of step: Len Lye and Surrealism*

The artist Len Lye is perhaps the only New Zealand born artist to have documented links to the surrealist movement in the 1930s. After arriving in London in 1926, he joined the English avant-garde circles familiar with French surrealism, and would participate in the British surrealist movement of the 1930s. At the same time as being recognized as a surrealist artist, Lye was also developing his direct-film practice, based on drawing and painting on the film stock to produce a new form of filmic abstraction.

The question addressed in this paper is the aptness of the surrealist label for Lye. The works that come closest to a surrealist mode—the 1928 film *Tusalava*, photographs and drawings circa 1930—precede the emergence of an organized surrealist movement in England; while the works he executed during the second half of the 1930s, particularly the films, had already moved beyond specifically surrealist concerns.

Indeed, the apparent surrealism of this work was based on a type of ‘Antipodean primitivism’. His knowledge of European modernism encouraged Lye to appropriate themes and motif from indigenous Pacific cultures (Maori, Samoan, and Aboriginal) as a way to construct his own identity as a modernist artist. Although this strategy enabled him to gain acceptance as a member of the British avant-garde, it did not provide a lasting foundation for his practice. It is in this sense that Lye was out of step: anticipating the advent of surrealism in Britain, yet already having moved beyond surrealism once it finally arrived. More generally, Lye’s work during the 1930s exemplifies the expatriate condition: negotiating the complex identity of settler, colonial and metropolitan cultures.

Dr Susan Lowish (UMelbourne): *Thinking beyond chronology: reconfiguring an art history for rock art in Australia*

Art history survey texts are notorious for situating rock art at the beginning of their chronologies and predictable in their use of the same few examples of art in their opening pages. This is the case for studies of world art, just as it is for art in Australia. Art historian James Elkins claims that *Real Spaces* (2003) by David Summers ‘is the only recent attempt to write about the entirety of world art history without relying on chronology as a central ordering principle’. This paper reviews this claim and asks if a similar schema to Summers’ could be employed in the re-writing of Australian art history?

Instead of following a timeline for art’s creation, whereby rock art always figures as an origin story, there is great potential and possibility for re-examining rock art’s relationship to art’s history from a number of perspectives that would enable such chronologically primitivising tendencies to be avoided. Drawing on recent research into the history of artist’s engagement with rock art in West Arnhem Land, this paper argues that rethinking the criteria by which we evaluate and assess the contribution rock art makes to the history of art is a necessary step in retaining its value for future generations.

Judy Annear (AGNSW): *‘The photograph and Australia’*

This paper would present the themes which underpin the major exhibition, *The Photograph and Australia* opening at the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney in March 2015. There has not been an exhibition of this kind drawing on collections nationwide since *Shades of light* at the National Gallery of Australia in 1988.

There is no one simple trajectory if we think of ‘Australia’, whether as a European idea before colonisation, or as a reality for the Indigenous people who lived here well in advance of colonisation, and continue to do so. Australia, in its current form has existed for 114 years. It has shifted and changed since federation of the colonies in 1901 and no doubt always will. People might believe they know what ‘Australia’ and ‘Australian’ actually mean but apart from geography, and physical realities, the rest seems to be fluid, open for discussion and debate.

Photographic history is something we are piecing together. Given the medium came into existence elsewhere and was introduced here, it joins all art forms, except the Indigenous, as being something we have both adapted to and adapted for our own purposes. Photography is however not only an art form, it is a recording device operated by what has become most people. It can operate as mass communication and as an esoteric art form. There is nothing else quite like it, except perhaps the word, in terms of flexibility.

This exhibition emphasises the ways in which photographs function in social, cultural and political contexts, exploring photography's role in representing relationships between Indigenous and settler cultures, the construction of Australia, and its critique. It necessarily builds on the foundational work of photo historians Gael Newton, Alan Davies and the next generation, but where it differs is in its conceptual rather than strictly chronological approach to the medium, and the medium's relationship to time. Further, the practices of collecting and disseminating the photograph, as well as the photographic constructions of place and webs of social connection are examined.

If what we are dealing with is a **phenomenon** rather than simply a form then analysing that phenomenon and its dynamic relationship to art, society, peoples, sciences, genres, processes is critical to our modern understanding of ourselves and our place in the world as well as the medium itself.¹

¹See Geoffrey Batchen, blog.fotomuseum.ch/2012/10/5-a-subject-for-a-history-about-photography, accessed 22 April 2014.

SESSION 2E: Creating/action: physical and abstract sites of arts practice

Convenors: Miik Green (Curtin) and Lauren McCartney (Curtin)

This session sees the conference theme, GEOcritical encompassing territory of two sites: from the artist as maker/creative producer to approaches in/developing of methodologies in arts practice. 'Creating/Action: Physical and Abstract Sites of Arts Practice' seeks to open a platform to discuss ways of making and doing, from critical sites of practitioner to researcher. It is here that abstract concepts in creative practice become tangible works of art, and production in the studio inspires the conceptual.

We invited proposals that encompass this area of the theme, also to reflect ideas of

- *Modes of exchange – shifting spaces or concrete sites?*
- *Transitions in arts practice: doing and being, making and researching*
- *Negotiating research and creative production*
- *Liminal spaces: material/immaterial,*
- *Site: places of process and outcomes*

The panel's primary focus is on the role of the artist in a contemporary arts practice, from art making to researching, from studio production to interdisciplinary exchange and collaborative spaces.

Our response to the conference theme GEOcritical undertakes an analysis of site in terms of arts practice, thematically combining 'critical' (critique/critically/crisis) with the prefix GEO (earth/ground/land). While visual artists and researchers work in various ways to pursue knowledge or produce creatively, delineators exist when shifting from making to writing or approaching cross-disciplinary research. These liminal spaces can be seen as either modes of exchange or sites of transition, where the artist crosses from the 'critical' to the 'GEO'. These locations are the dialogic heart of arts practice, where distinctions between artist/researcher and maker/producer dissolve or clarify, merge or materialise.

Miik Green (Curtin): *Tilted Yeezus: Arts practice, Richard Serra, Kanye West*

In the age of globalisation, artists are its canaries in the coalmine and we are struggling for breath. David Pledger

This paper examines resistance in a contemporary arts practice. Along with examples from my own practice, it presents a diverse range of practitioners, artists and artworks through which conflict, tension and stress can be seen as instigators of transformation. This panel sees the conference theme of *GEOcritical* encompass both a site of critical thinking (research) and also creative production of the artist (action). As both an artist and researcher, the *doing* and *being* of the artist can be seen in and outside the studio, where making becomes interacting and creation becomes engagement with the world. With resistance in mind, the artist actively engages the other, the creative struggle or artistic conflict. My research focuses on the embodiment of resistance that allows for exchange, the discordance heard in Kanye West's album *Yeezus*, and imagined in the aftermath of sculptor Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*.

David Pledger sees a similarly tenuous interchange, similar to the dyspnoeic artist attempting to breathe life into culture in his quote. It is in the transition from material resistance in the artist's studio to their role in society that this concept is manifest as action in arts practice. Similar to matter placed under tension and stress, the artist similarly experiences pressure to perform or create while also balancing everyday responsibility. This is the artist's struggle - the expectations placed upon an artist and their practice. While this struggle polarises practitioners, it can also be viewed as a refining force that can eliminate impurities, a process through which the artist may emerge transformed, critical revelation initiating a life-altering experience. Is the struggle commensurate with that of an arts practice, and if so, does the reward cover the cost? Are the two able to be separated? These, and other related questions, are ideas that can be traced back to my studio, a site where my engagement occurs on a material level between mutually resistant substances.

There is a price for resistance, a cost attached to this struggle (or necessary conflict) through which change and transformation may occur. It is an expense the artist bears in order to render visible and reveal, an exertion that redefines and re-establishes meaning. This premise proposes resistive modes of collaboration as well as alternative approaches to public art and other extensions of arts practice. These are the possibilities the artist must grapple with if they are able to obstruct, object, and even outlast. To return to Pledger's excellent analogy, the artist exists in a cultural coalmine, a space in which the threat of expiration is ever-present. It is important to remember, however, that these actions come at a price, and in toxic sites such as these, the cost is always greatest to the canary.

Charles Robb (QUT): *The space of make: a topological account of the studio*

Approaches to art-practice-as-research tend to draw a distinction between the processes of creative practice and scholarly reflection. According to this template, the two sites of activity – studio/desk, work/writing, body/mind – form the ‘correlative’ entity known as research. Creative research is said to be produced by the navigation of world and thought: spaces that exist in a continual state of tension with one another. Either we have the studio tethered to brute reality while the desk floats free as a site for the fluid cross-pollination of texts and concepts. Or alternatively, the studio is characterized by the amorphous, intuitive play of forms and ideas, while the desk represents its cartography, mapping and fixing its various fluidities. In either case, the research status of art practice is figured as a fundamentally riven space.

However, the nascent philosophy of Speculative Realism proposes a different ontology – one in which the space of human activity comprises its own reality, independent of human perception. The challenge it poses to traditional metaphysics is to rethink the world as if it were a real space. When applied to practice-led research, this reconceptualization challenges the creative researcher to consider creative research as a contiguous space – a topology where thinking and making are not dichotomous points but inflections in anamorphous and dynamic field. Instead of being subject to the vertical tension between earth and air, a topology of practice emphasizes its encapsulated, undulating reality – an agential ‘object’ formed according to properties of connectedness, movement and differentiation.

Taking the central ideas of Quentin Meillassoux and Graham Harman as a point of departure, this paper will provide a speculative account of the interplay of spatialities that characterise the author’s studio practice. In so doing, the paper will model the innovative methodological potential produced by the analysis of topological dimensions of the studio and the way they can be said to move beyond the ‘geo-critical’ divide.

Tane Moleta (Victoria University of Wellington) and Mizuho Nishioka (Massey University, Wellington): *Digital biophilia*

Edward O. Wilson’s 1984 *Biophilia* describes the human being as seeking a bond to the natural world. Wilson states that an active engagement with plants, animals, seasonal systems and the element of nature evoke a sense of connectivity and well-being. Recent adaptations to this hypothesis include an urban design movement named the Biophilic City. Wellington City (NZ) has put in place a number of initiatives to increase the quality and access to green spaces available to the general public.

Conversely Wellington City’s attempt to expand a ‘free use’ WiFi network across the waterfront has been pitched with great success and an aim to ‘keep people informed connected and up to date 24-7’. Although general public are highly motivated to engage with a specific kind of connectivity (WiFi), one could propose the public is being highly selective when engaging with the ‘living systems’.

The Digital Biophilia project presents a series of works that aim to discuss the boundary between nature and technology through the systems of simulation in relation to increasingly dense possibilities of streaming information. Using a number of genetic algorithms and real time data feeds the works collate wind speed, temperature, tides, pollen count, biometric data and altitude to reconfigure the way in which we engage with the simulation of the natural environment. The work repurposes a range of electronic devices components sourced from a number of printers, projectors, and scanner sensors to begin to embed or re-create the temporal aspects of the natural environment. These were then reconstituted to author a novel type of imaging device that yields an attempt to adjust simulation and visualization of a landscape environment that adheres to a contemporary lifestyle.

Digital Biophilia was explored through a number of stages:

- How do we deal with the relation to simulation and the physical experience of being in a natural environment?
- How might we begin to visualize our relationship to our natural environment?
- How technology or device might rescript our relationship between simulation and visualisation?

This presentation addresses the conference theme of GEOCRITICAL through a body of creative practice that centres on a public art project titled Digital Biophilia. The project was submitted as a proposal for the letting space project run by the urban dream brokerage and exhibited in late 2013. The team members for this project came from diverse backgrounds including and Architect, Programmer, Sound Engineer, and a Photographer.

Lauren McCartney (Curtin): *The weight of painting: the transition of feminist Action Painting, from research to practice*

In order to offer an alternative to the heroic ideal of the modernist male action painter, this paper explores the role of the female body as an instrument for painting, specifically through the body’s failure to overcome its medium. By presenting my exhibition *The Weight of Painting* this paper aims to satirise the trope of the modernist painter by braiding the gestures of action painting with the grid through overtly feminine activities, such as hula hooping and watercolours. The physical nature of action painting uses the exaggerated movements of the body to relinquish control of paint application. This paper argues that it is through the subtle domination of this movement (via the use of living brushes and repetitive gesture) that the ‘masculine’ ideal is exemplified. This paper aims to uncover new ways of using the body as an instrument for painting by examining what drives action painters to dominate their material. My quest to demonstrate this is built on the writing of Mira Schor, Rune Gade and Shirley Kaneda as I negotiate the transition from idea to process, questioning what occurs when my paintings don’t fail in the sense that they are

unsuccessful, they fail when my instrument (body) cannot complete the task it sets out to do, or completes the tasks with many flaws. These issues come into play through my body as it challenges the lack of control I have with my material, highlighting the subjectivity of the male action painter and exploring the possibilities of the feminine body as an instrument and support for painting. Ultimately, this methodology is a fusion of theory in the contemporary assertion of feminism with a body of work that reflects the ideas and developments made through the transition of research to practice.

SESSION 2F: Locating art and social practice

Convenors: Marnie Badham (UMelbourne) and Gretchen Coombs (QUT)

The emerging practice and subsequent discourse of 'art and social practice' draws on legacies of community art, activist art, and the like. More generally, socially engaged art (SEA) has proliferated as a discourse through conferences, books, and residences, most recently at the Open Engagement conference at Queens, New York. Until recently, the dominant discourse of this field of practice pitted the aesthetic to the ethical; however, it was in this conference that the polemic faded in favour of discussing specific projects and their production, less of their reception or the critical frameworks that informed the artwork.

Because of this tendency, we felt that a conversation of how localised practices would afford a layered and rich understanding of how local politics and funding might inflect how artists who are now working in this field. This panel will consider how funding, higher degree research, and presentation of these various practices influence how artists construct their practice. For example, in the US, often social practice comes out of an interest in new social economies while in the UK and Australia, it may come out of a rejection of governmentalized/ instrumentalizing community arts practices.

The goal of this panel is to illustrate how socially engaged art responds to its context and the histories that have constructed its conditions of production as well as its reception. As such, these art and design practices would mark deep contours of localized practice each with specific genealogies. The panel invites participants working in communities both local and global; this juxtaposition will highlight rich differences in practice, locational identity, and deepen the current socially engaged art discourse. Grant Kester illustrates the importance of a site context in Conversation pieces and The one and the many when considering socially engaged art practices. He believes site plays a critical part in the inception, creation, and execution of artworks that includes work with or on behalf of members or a public or a community. Building on this notion, this panel seeks to understand the variegations of socially engaged art.

Gretchen Coombs (QUT): Vans, Trailers and Trucks: mobile strategies of engagement

As part of their social or public practice, many artists have repurposed large vehicles—vans and trucks, trailers—that then are driven into public spaces to engage people and with the aim to provoke social change. This paper gives a brief overview of some of these mobile projects, with a focus on *The Nanny Van* (2014) and Ghana ThinkTank's mobile project in Corona, New York (2011), outlines the aims of each work, and considers the publics they have activated. These projects highlight how an artist's social practice becomes situated in local political and economic contexts as well as in discursive sites that help frame them as art.

John Vella (UTas): PCCDD – Proximity and the Cult of Community Cultural Development Disorders

"You have approval to work on a selected public site; you have an artist lined up to work with the community; the local government is helping with landscaping and some funds; a service club has offered in-kind assistance; a sympathetic architect is involved in the working party and you've had some legal advice on contracting the artist...The most important thing is that all stakeholders have a shared understanding and reach agreement on the processes and expected outcomes; ownership and responsibilities before the project commences."¹

There is a certain comfort in knowing where you are and who you are with, feeling as if you are part of a family or community. But there is also something potentially insidious about proximity for there is after all, a fine line between intimacy and suffocation... (Note to self, 2006).

Driven by ulterior motives (namely to make art), the socially engaged artist often has to feign 'proximity'. Over the long or short term he/she remains compromised by his/her very intent; an outsider pretending not to be, conjuring systems orchestrated to appeal and/or otherwise relate to the animate and inanimate dimensions of *the local*. In this context, socially engaged artworks harbor a longing for belonging; a fundamentally flawed, if not failed, enterprise, in that it belies the artist's inability to be OF a specific place or community. This incapacity to be deeply 'OF,' ironically exacerbated by the possession and perception of expertise, instigates a suite of dilemmas relating to the desire to 'make' good (art) and 'do' good (for the community).

Welcome to PCCDD.

¹http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/10193/Public_Art_and_community_cultural_development.pdf PUBLIC ART AND COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, Practical issues to be addressed before getting started

Amy Spiers (UMelbourne): *Problems need to be thought (and fought): critique and social practice in post-critical times*

This paper draws on post-critical sentiments from a range of fields, including philosophy and art theory, to examine how they relate to and inform current trends in social practice. In recent years, theorists of the post-critical, such as Bruno Latour, have questioned the usefulness of critique in a world confronted by the possibility of global economic and environmental disaster. It has been suggested that dissecting reality and revealing problems to an unwitting public might not be the most effective response to these crises. Latour argues that the “critical spirit” of suspicion and demystification “has run out of steam”. He asks, “is it really our duty [as scholars and intellectuals] to add fresh ruins to fields of ruins? Is it really the task of the humanities to add deconstruction to destruction?”

This paper discusses how an anxiety about the efficacy of critical projects has become prevalent in social practice discourse, with many artists in this field viewing themselves as problem solvers, not problem creators. As a result, social practice artists regularly disavow critical artistic strategies, which are viewed as negative and unproductive, in favour of artworks that generate constructive and positive social effects. For some artists, social practice differentiates itself from other fields of art precisely because it is not about critique, but works instead to find solutions and enact change.

I examine how this view is buoyed up by the perception, most notably posited by theorist Grant Kester, that a commitment to critique has become hegemonic in the art world and must be countered with socially engaged alternatives. While I am sympathetic to Kester’s desire to call into question the conventions of critique in contemporary art, this paper argues that a rejection of critique risks amounting to an anti-intellectual position that seeks to instrumentalise art towards the goal of social change. I discuss how social practice artists and theorists often misrepresent the important and generative role of critique in comprehending society’s problems and imagining new possibilities.

The paper concludes by urging a reconsideration of the usefulness of critique for social practice. Via a discussion of a recent participatory art project that I created with artist, Catherine Ryan, entitled *Nothing To See Here (Dispersal)*, I contend that there are critical approaches that can be socially engaged and productive. Art can contribute to social change by destabilising our relationship to present social conditions; challenging assumptions; unsettling habitual ways of thinking; and making the familiar strange. Through a description of this project, I assert that the value of social practice art lies in its capacity to make what is easily accepted seem problematic, rather than merely providing practical solutions to obvious problems.

SESSION 2G: Open Session: Making, doing, thinking

Convenors: Dr Deb Malor (UTas) and Dr Karen Hall (UTas)

Elise Hilder (Griffith): *Dinosauria and the photographic landscape: representations of Prehistoric space in Central-Western Queensland*

What does it mean to ‘dig deep’ into millions of years of time and space and how can that be communicated through photography to a contemporary audience?

Exploration of the past raises many issues for the photographer today, since prehistory, specifically pre-human history, has a somewhat incredible and surreal connection to the contemporary, physical world.

Throughout prehistory, Queensland has changed as a result of continental drift, tectonic uplift, and climate shifts. Between 251 - 66 million years ago, the Mesozoic landscape of Central- Western Queensland flourished during the reign of the dinosaurs. Desolate in its terrain yet rich in peculiarities today, the Queensland Dinosaur Triangle of Winton, Richmond and Hughenden evokes a sense of the unreal, as the Mesozoic creatures buried deep beneath the black soil rise to the surface.

Often inconceivable to us on the surface, these dinosaurs exist as incomplete stories of geologic deep time. Today, such stories are visible either through obscure fossilised fragments or extravagant dinosaur simulacra. With a focus on the landscape and the aesthetics of digging, this project specifically considers the return of the dinosaurs through the fossil record, as they are excavated during remote, in-field palaeontological excavations. As both a scientific and cultural ritual that shapes particular relationships to the land, excavation is a human endeavour that seeks to forge connections between the past and present through the act of digging. Yet, excavation of the prehistoric landscape is re-considered through the camera as an indeterminate space where the past and present co-exist, but cannot always be neatly understood, revealed and unveiled.

Through practice-led research, the photograph therefore aims to elicit a cinematic and surreal sense of disorientation and mystery that explores: the obscurity of the partial fossil record; the concealment of dinosaur bones in protective plaster jackets; the isolated and immensely remote desert landscapes that encompass the excavation spaces; and the strangeness of people digging the earth for these fragmentary shards of history. Challenging the traditional indexical and didactic function of the photographic record in expedition photography and palaeontology, this near-documentary work therefore, adopts both pictorial and documentary strategies that actively seek to create anti-didactic engagements within scientific spaces.

Such a near-documentary response, therefore, often combines the direct realism of expeditionary photography with: the displacement and spacing of neo-surrealism; the pictorial density, mise-en-scene and excessive light of the cinematic; languages of sparseness and immensity of space; the aesthetics of digging; and the Retrospective Historiographic Mode (artist-as-historian).

As a form of near-documentary practice, photography is thus critically positioned to consider how prehistoric landscape is transformed through human inquiry and intervention, but also how the photograph itself can transform our reading of prehistoric spaces inaccessible to the general public.

Elisabeth Bodey (ANU): *before, during and after - a story about a moment in time*

For some years now I have been interested in Aboriginal culture and belief systems and have visited Central Australia often. This talk will tell the story of what was for me a significant moment in time i.e. when I heard a particular song form being sung in the context of Aboriginal women's ceremonial performance at Mt Liebig in the Northern Territory in 2011. It was one of those moments you need to have occasionally as it brought together aspects in my thinking and suggested new connections I could build on, of visual and auditory experiences and how these might be pursued in my painting practice.

Two music performances in Melbourne at the 2012 New Music Festival secured connections and developed them further. These were a performance of Morton Feldman's *Patterns in a Chromatic Field* and of John Luther Adams *Inuksuit*. Subsequently my painting has become a response to the visual and auditory aspects of space and place, creating a visual language structured by the spaces of time and place.

The period **Before** provides the earlier context for my practice, a time when I visited and was drawn to Central Desert culture and place, thinking about depictions of landscape and place through an enjoyment of materiality and the 'felt' response to all its aspects. It connected to my interest in music as an additional thread to pursue.

During was the time I was present at the Women's Law and Culture Week, when I heard the moment of sound that provided the link I needed to bring together my different ideas.

After tells how expanded perceptions of place and the effects of this moment gave new insights into my painting, showing me ways my practice could benefit from these experiences of a place. I'll briefly outline the direction I have taken since.

It is a story about how being in a different place, a different landscape, can expand our perceptions, our knowledge and understandings of place and practice.

Zsolt Faludi (UTas): *'The Thing' and 365 ceramic jugs*

The aim of this paper is to discuss the process of a year long visual arts performance. The work is based on a ritual that attempts to capture and visualize ideas articulated by Martin Heidegger in a cluster of his late essays and lectures written after the Second World War. Among these, *'The Thing'* (1951) plays a particularly important role. According to one reading of *'The Thing'*, there is an overall ontological shift associated with the dominance of technology in 'modern life'. The result homogenises things (everything in fact) into a grey zone of the 'distanceless.' In this 'zone,' distinction and qualitative richness shrivel to a minimum, and the complexities of relationship (including the relationship to oneself) diminish under the equalizing pressure of transformation into what Heidegger calls 'standing reserve' (Bestand). Consequently, the 'world,' supposedly constructed for human habitation, is increasingly failing its occupants and becoming uninhabitable not only for its primary creators but for all creatures. Heidegger's account, articulated in the above-mentioned essays and lectures sixty years ago, seems to have much greater purchase today due to a universally accelerating 'forgetfulness,' a forgetting of what is basic, original and essentially human. The underlying intention of my project then, is to provide a counter-measure to this forgetting through performance and ritual. My project is based on a concrete and rigorous algorithmic methodology that includes various forms of ritualized repetition: I am making a ceramic jug every day for a year and writing passages from *'The Thing'* repeatedly over one and the same piece of paper. Through this process I anticipate the release of the 'thing', and its reappearance from the annihilation brought about by an aggressive and sterile framework that Heidegger calls 'Gestell.'

SESSION 3A: Nation, translation and exchange in modern Southeast Asian art (1)

Convenor: Clare Veal (USydney)

In 2013 the Guggenheim Museum, New York, held an exhibition of contemporary Southeast Asian art, entitled No Country: Contemporary Art from South and Southeast Asia. The exhibition's title reinforced the tropes of fluidity and borderlessness that pervade discourses of 'global' contemporary art. This may be contrasted with efforts in the wake of post-colonial narratives to expand the modernist canon beyond the purviews of Euramerica, and to recognise the specificity of modernist artistic development in different geographical and cultural contexts. These developments, which have been generally grouped under the term 'alternative modernisms', have been significant in opening up of a field of modernist studies in non-Euramerican contexts. However, they have also been increasingly tied to histories of artistic development that confirm nationalist narratives and ideology that may limit the ability to recognise the importance of international and inter-regional exchange between image producers in the development of modernism.

In addressing case studies in Southeast Asian artistic modernism this panel examines the ways in which local producers have articulated art making through relationships, exchanges and translations with the foreign. To this end, the panel will evaluate the extent to which contemporary discourses of post-nationality may be viewed as novel developments in the history of Southeast Asian art.

Nation, translation and exchange in modern and Southeast Asian Art will critically interrogate the situation of Southeast Asian modernist art discourses within a national framework that is based within reified and geographically defined borders. In drawing attention to the ways in which modernist artistic discourses in Southeast Asia have been constructed through relations with the

'foreign', it moves beyond contentions that the dissolving of borders and boundaries in art is a novel development occurring with the advent of the contemporary. In examining the geographical movement of artists, texts and works, the panel also encourages discussion on the ways in which artistic meaning may be constructed in relation to or in opposition to the limitations and potentialities of working and speaking from different geographical locations, as well as the ideological significance of the construction of artistic identities along those lines.

Seng Yu Jin (UMelbourne): *What's in a name: the politics of translation in artwork titles*

What is in a name? Artwork labels often displayed in art museum exhibitions provide information about the artwork, and usually comprise of the artwork's title, among other information about the artwork. This paper investigates the assumed stability and historical accuracy of artwork titles by examining translations of the titles of two social realist paintings, *The National Language Class* (1959) by Chua Mia Tee and *Persecution* (1965) by Koeh Sia Yong, both exhibited at the 1966 Equator Art Society exhibition. In doing so, this paper questions how artwork titles are translated, as well as assumptions of what constitutes a source or original title. It also draws attention to how titles and their translations provide entry points into the scripting of the story of Singapore and how it is constructed to marginalize, erase and forget contentious and problematic aspects of the country's history. The assumption of fixed and stable titles is questioned in *Persecution*, a history painting which has three titles given: in Chinese 檢舉 (*Persecution*), Prosecution in English, and Bahasa Melayu (Siksa di-zaman Jepun) (*Extermination During the Age of Japan*), the title given by the artist and documented in the 1966 Equator Art Society catalogue when the work was first shown to the public. The multiplicity of source titles in three different languages, English and Traditional Chinese (languages that are "foreign" to the region), and Bahasa Melayu (an indigenous language of Southeast Asia), raises the question of why the English translation of the Chinese title, 檢舉 (*Persecution*) was privileged over the other possible titles in other languages, and eventually accessioned as such into Singapore's national collection.

This paper takes an interdisciplinary approach by drawing from translation theories, art history and museum studies to interrogate and critically examine the act of titling artworks that tantamount to the act of naming as a manifestation of power over what is being named. The translation an artwork title is a political act that brings focus to the importance of how the meaning and interpretation of artworks could be mediated by the state's dominant national narrative.

Yvonne Low (USydney): *The arts of independence: nationalizing art and the rise of 'professional artists'*

One significant outcome following the dissolution of empire cultures at the end of the Second World War (1941-45) was a decisive move toward professionalizing and nationalizing art, which in turn led to the entrenchment of an amateur-professional divide in art practice. This paper examines the rise of nationalism as a common experience across Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, and the socio-political impetus to develop national cultures and art by the peoples of these countries. It traces the organization of an informal institutional base where newly formed art societies spurred the development of exhibition platforms and gave unprecedented access to the "common man" to learn art and to become "professional artists". By examining the historical development of three postwar art associations in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, respectively, this paper discusses how the role of an artist gained national credence as a profession, and concomitantly, how the production and reception of modern art formed the linchpin for the development of a common national culture. It argues for the need for a more nuanced understanding of the art world social-system complex in which the professionalization and nationalization processes with its own set of agenda and requirements ought first to be acknowledged.

Simon Soon (USydney): *Fabric and the fabrication of a Queer Narrative: the batik paintings of Patrick Ng Kah Onn*

This presentation reflects on the possibility of a queer narrative in Southeast Asian modern art history by bringing into focus a series of batik paintings, featuring male nudes, which were created in 1962 by Malaysian artist Patrick Ng Kah Onn. It seeks to locate Patrick's practice within the cosmopolitan aspiration of the Wednesday Art Group at the same time as it attempts to deconstruct the dominant reading of the batik as a modern art medium that exemplifies an aesthetic form unique to Malayan/Malaysian art history. Underlying this attempt is to revisit the currency of gender and sexuality and frame batik's modern history within a different range of desires and aspirations.

Part of this is to demonstrate how Patrick Ng's later adoption of batik as a painting medium might enable us to re-read some of his earlier iconic oil paintings executed a few years before, chiefly his 'Spirit of Earth, Air and Water' which has been gazetted by Malaysian National Heritage Register List, and his 'Batek Malaya', which won the First Prize at the First Southeast Asian Art Conference and Competition in Manila. I hope this process will intersect familiar institutional discourse and historical narratives to a queer moment in Southeast Asia's modern art history. It is on this note that the fabric as medium can be potentially expanded to suggest its processual register, to fabricate as verb. Seen in this light, what are the possibilities that the anecdotal could serve as a significant methodology to the study of art history and visual culture? What stories could they potentially yield?

SESSION 3B: Ruins in/of the landscape

Convenor: Dr Yvonne Scott (Trinity College, Dublin)

This session is devoted to the critical analysis of imagery and objects responding to the idea of ruination in its spatial and temporal contexts, and its potential practical and philosophical interpretation.

The creation, and representation, of ruins in the landscape enjoyed a peak in the visual culture of the 18th and 19th centuries when a fascination with antiquities as a means of reconstructing architectural history, coincided with picturesque and romantic engagements with notions of a lost past, and the related philosophies of the struggle between nature and culture. This fascination found form both in the contemporaneous landscaping of demesnes, and in the traditions of landscape painting, particularly in – but not confined to – Europe.

Since the twentieth century there is evidence of a continued fascination with the image of the ruin, manifest in a strategic range that appropriates selectively, alluding to traditional ideas as points of reference (and of departure) for contemporary issues.

Definitions of the term 'ruin' vary not least due to the inference of process rather than fixity and, while in the past, the meaning of 'ruin' in creative productions tended to be narrowed to the conventions of the time, its more recent appropriation as a motif absorbs and extends from selected/combined past usages, providing a platform for more recent semiotic interpretations.

The contemporary application of related theory includes ideas projected by Robert Smithson who, in 1967, coined the evocative phrase 'ruins in reverse', a term that has taken on new inferences in the wake of the more recent global impact of economic and related ecological hubris. In addition, contemporary events involving (ie caused by or impacting upon) natural phenomena, have triggered timely responses, ecocritical and other, by artists and by interpreters of their work.

The relationship between art and man-made structures (including architecture) is effected in the representation of ruins expressed through painting, sculpture, photography, and new media both static and time-based. Critical analysis of the imagery and objects necessarily involves contextualizing and interpreting them in relation to socio-political environments, and drawing on relevant theoretical perspectives. The placement of ruins within the inferred 'scene' of the image plays on spatial relationships and hierarchies, while the process of ruination itself raises questions of causality, of inter-temporal relationships and references, of conflicts of nature and culture (and the ecocritical perspective it gives rise to), and so forth – and the potential for analysis, in particular in referencing the current or contemporaneous state of the world or earth in which artists habitually intervene.

Chiara Mannoni (UAuckland): *Restoring, de-restoring, reinventing Antiquity - How the classical profile of the Acropolis was reshaped in the last two centuries*

Since the early cases in the fifteenth century, restoration has been used as a way of re-elaborating, understanding and reinterpreting both ancient sculpture and monuments. Through restoration not only were entire collections of statues reconstructed with missing details, fragments, or reinvented parts, but also wide archaeological areas reshaped/remodeled according to the aesthetical taste of each historical period. On the other hand, restoration deeply influenced the way in which the wide public perceived antiquities, monuments and ancient history, according to the criteria used in reconstructing/non reconstructing/reinventing the missing parts on the ancient original pieces.

Through the analysis of both Leo von Klenze's memoranda on the preservation of the Acropolis temples and the first Law on the protection of ancient monuments issued in Greece, this paper aims to analyze the first restorations realized on the Athenian Acropolis between 1834 and 1875. The role of Klenze in these restorations will be evaluated together with his conceptual ambiguities about the Romantic and the Neoclassic aesthetic on ruins and antiquities. At the same time, the Edict of 1834 and the Royal Decree of 1837 on the preservation of Greek historical monuments will be analyzed according to their implications with restoration, conservation of ancient monuments and reshaping of archaeological landscapes.

The last part of the paper will consider how the interventions realized on the Acropolis during the twentieth century until the more recent years, have mostly been devoted to the improvement of what was modelled/shaped during the nineteenth century. In particular, the numerous restorations and de-restorations of the Temple of Athena Nike will be discussed to arise some questions about the legitimacy of the interventions on historical landscapes and monuments: how far can the current profile of the Acropolis be considered an authentic classical profile? How far can a monument that was dismantled and reassembled three times be considered an original ancient monument?

Through the case of the Athenian Acropolis this paper will evaluate some of these ethical and aesthetical ambiguities on restoration of ancient monuments and historical landscapes.

Lara Nicholls (NGA): *Utopia/Distopia: a short history of ruination in Australian art from contact to contemporary*

This paper critically explores the development of our relationship to and depiction of the Australian landscape in both a physical and metaphorical sense throughout the short history of Australian art post contact. In particular, it looks at the stark absence of ruins and ruination in the early works depicting the Australian landscape in late 18th century and 19th century, despite the prevalence of the cult of the ruin in European poetry, art and landscape architecture. This is in contrast to our sudden fascination with the dystopian ruination of the nation in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The earliest images of Australia made by western hands were largely topographic and 'scientific'. These works were made in an era fully versed in the lexicon of ruins where formal gardens were being transformed into parklands replete with all the connotations of nature prevailing over culture. It showed a mother nature in check and benevolent. Early Australian landscape painting was made very much in this ilk. There was no room for 'ruins' in a space that civilisation apparently had not reached. The first part of this paper examines the works of artists on Cook's *Endeavour* and Matthew Flinders' *Investigator* before looking at the colonial response to nature.

The sudden appearance of the Australian ruin in 20th century depictions of the land and the later 21st century depictions of a dystopian world where ruins have been superseded by detritus is the crux of this discussion. By the 1940s artists embraced a certain version of the ruin and here four tenets of this development are identified. First, the depiction of the spinifex ghost town, a place that time forgot populated by the few amid ramshackle, dilapidated buildings (usually the very buildings depicted in 19th century works as signs of progress and prosperity). Secondly, the urban slum of the inner city of the 1940s and 1950s referenced in the works of Yosf Bergner, Danila Vassilieff, Robert Dickerson, Charles Blackman. Thirdly, the ruination of nature through the development of suburbia is explored in the art of John Brack and his depiction of the encroaching suburbs in Melbourne's outer reaches. Finally, the contemporary response to the notion of ruin as the detritus of man's existence and the emergence of the dystopian vision of the Australian landscape is examined including works such as Callum Morton's *Valhalla 2007*, Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro's *Home invasion* suite of 2005.

Dr Joanne Drayton (UAuckland): *Ruin and wreckage in the war art of Frances Hodgkins*

This paper examines the work of New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins, who used ruin and wreckage in the English countryside to communicate a personal and particular vision of the Second World War.

Hodgkins created a language of war symbolism through her paintings of dereliction in the Dorset countryside. Artist, critic and commentator, John Piper was so impressed with the originality her of symbolism that he wrote in his 1941 review of her show at the Leicester Galleries, London: "This is Frances Hodgkins's war art ... tragic comments on dereliction and wreckage. They are not of war subjects, but humanity at war is the emotional background for these rubbish heaps among the outhouses of a south Dorset farm" (*Spectator*, 17 October 1941). Hodgkins, in her work, takes mundane structures and familiar environments – farm buildings, farmyards and farm machinery – and imbues them with a psychological sense of chaos and war. In paintings such as *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck* (1940-1), she found her equivalent of Paul Nash's *Totes Meer*. Here a seemingly banal, domesticated rural landscape is strewn with decaying structures and mechanical rubbish. Across a rich red-brown ground are scattered jarring forms and seemingly incongruous colours that communicate through both abstract pattern and place. Always in these war works hover ambiguously between representation and abstraction.

Hodgkins paintings of Purbeck, in Dorset, in the early to mid-1940s are regional elegies to conflict. They are English neo-romantic lamentations – that integrate the cold metallic machinery of Paul Nash's war images with the hauntingly gothic mood of John Piper's architectural structures and the faceless struggle of Graham Sutherland's Welsh miners -- to create something unique. This paper will focus on Hodgkins's war art reflecting on the lateral almost obtuse choices of subject matter, investigating the language of signs and symbols she used to communicate both the personal and the wider impact of war. It will locate her work in its socio-political, and cultural context, and reflect on how she used ruins in the landscape as a vehicle to communicate some of her most innovative and influential art.

SESSION 3C: (Re)making the Australian home - a new 'view from the interior'

Convenors: Prof Peter McNeil (UTS), Prof Mark Taylor (UNewcastle) and Dr Georgina Downey (UAdelaide)

There has not been a major conference on the Australian domestic interior held for more than a generation. Yet 'Australia is the small house' was the famous contention of Robin Boyd in The Australian Ugliness (1960). Indeed the aspiration to the ideal Australian home continues into the twenty-first century, with Australians obsessed with domesticity, reflected in our consumption of décor advice (in print, television and online media).

We start from the intellectual premise that the Australian home was an interior space 'from another place' – that it was, and remains, hybrid, travelled, impure. Moreover, home, as Sigmund Freud cautioned, can be unheimlich, that is, not always comfortable, or secure. The Australian home was a site for cross cultural Imperial and colonial exchanges that were rarely equal, especially so when white homes came at the cost of the dispossession of a race of first people. Given the disturbing, and at times violent aspects of our colonial history, we concur with Haskins and Jacobs when they propose that: 'Leaving home, making home, and being dispossessed of one's home overlap and intersect in historical experiences of colonialism.'¹

We ask 'how did the Australian settler house become 'home' in terms of comfort, taste, and security?' And in turn, we wish to consider how 'making home' enabled the building of networks for integration and citizenship.

1. Victoria Haskins & Margaret D. Jacobs, 'Introduction', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 28 nos 1 & 2, 2007, p xi

Winthrop Professor Richard Read (UWA): *'My head is my only house unless it rains': Nested interiors and technological traffic in Charles Sheeler's and Richard Hamilton's paintings of modernist interiors*

Captain Beefheart's lyric points to the nesting of interiors - homes within homes - in the uncanny age of surveillance and the hyperobject. As a machine for living, the modern interior witnesses constant technological traffic of bodies and commodities across real and imaginary thresholds that simulate nostalgia for traditional demarcations between inside and outside. One powerful way to think how domestic interiors are experienced sensually and affectively is to substitute for the words 'interior' and 'interior' Kant's aesthetic categories of the 'beautiful' and 'sublime' from *The Critique of Judgment*. The ways in which telephones, televisions, ipods and computers centre us in the home and deliver us to advertisers recalls the way in which the opposed terms of Kant's dialectic operate upon the subject to ensure that 'we must be both cajoled and chastised, made to feel both homeless and at home, folded upon the world yet reminded that our true resting place is in infinity. It is part of the dialectic of the beautiful and the sublime to achieve this double ideological effect' (Eagleton).

Conceived of as a comfort zone where we recover from work, the home is a place where commodities are consumed yet propel us back to the impersonal domain of the workplace where commodities are produced according causal process and autonomous laws that resemble Kantian nature. Media within the home soothe us from the fray to which we must return by reducing external crises to transient spectacles within an anodyne flow of barely actualized events. Heidegger asked "What is this uniformity in which everything is far or near - is, as it were, without distance?" Benjamin posited the home as a phantasmagoric release from the reality of work where comforting and alarming objects coalesce. Freud recognized in the Uncanny a meeting of the extremes of the beautiful and the sublime that defend us from what is repressed in the unconscious. Traditional paintings of interiors present us either with windows showing external landscapes or views onto other rooms suggesting deep interiority. This paper looks at two paintings of interiors that use intermedial techniques to enlist the implied viewer in vicarious experiences of alienated interiority. The first is Charles Sheeler's *Self Portrait* (1923) and the second is Richard Hamilton's *The Saensbury Wing* (1999-2000) Despite their intermediality, both use painting's capacity to freeze information flows to mount detached critiques of the embeddedness of domestic interiors in global networks.

Dr Andrew Montana (ANU): *From indigenous land to elite colonial scenery: the Pinschofs at home in Studley Park and Mount Macedon, Victoria*

The Austrian born merchant, industrialist, economist and Consul for Austro-Hungary in Victoria, Herr Carl Pinschof (1855-1926) made Australia his home after serving as the Honorary Secretary for Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) arts and industries at the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition, the representative agent for Austrian arts and industries at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition and again at the 1881 Adelaide Exhibition. Marrying Elsie Pinschof nee Wiedermann (1851-1922) in Melbourne in 1883, the famed Viennese soprano and the first teacher of singing at the University Conservatorium, the Pinschofs established a home in Windsor, and a country residence at Mount Macedon, Victoria, near the vice-regal country house and large hillside properties of the mercantile and professional elites. Belmont, their residence in Studley Park Road, Kew, in what was once a boulevard of estate mansions, followed. With elevated positions near the Studley Park nature reserve and set back from the Yarra River, many of these mansions had sweeping views of Hobson's Bay, the Macedon Ranges, the city and its spawning suburbs.

Believed by art historians to have moved to Studley Park in 1900 to live at Studley Hall (formerly Waverley), the Pinschofs lived in Studley Park between 1894 and 1900 at Belmont (demolished), during the period when Pinschof began focusing on collecting contemporary Australian art. Today, Belmont's late-Victorian interiors may be seen as symbols of an established European family, whose aspirations and privilege marked their transplanting of continental cultural values in a colonial city of the British Empire, soon the provisional capital of the federated Australian nation.

This paper scrutinises the development of the Studley Park area as an elite site, transformed from indigenous land to suburban colonial scenery, and takes Belmont as its primary case study. The Pinschof properties at Windsor and Macedon, and their later residence Studley Hall are interwoven, perceived and interpreted through surviving photographs, paintings and the printed word. It brings to life intangible history and considers Belmont at Studley Park Road as a setting from which the Pinschofs promoted and transacted a cultural, political and commercial milieu.

Virginia Wright (UTS): *Hidden In Plain Sight: archive, internet, and systemic lacunae*

This paper shows how erroneous conclusions can arise from the failure to consider real and virtual blind spots in collected and written histories. It uses a narrative of forgotten people and unnoticed products to present a history of two Canadian brothers, two Australian brothers, and five million chairs. My tracing of this substantial manufacturing activity and long-term commerce reinforces the evidence of economic and geographic historians whose studies of a somewhat anarchic global history challenge the encapsulation of nation-based, official histories. Many accepted views in Australia and New Zealand about the origins of 19th century domestic style and consumption evoke habitual notions of British craft traditions or American industrial design. While appearing to be statements, they are frequently speculations. For example, consumer goods have been described as British because they arrived from the Port of Liverpool, or American because they arrived from the Port of New York, whereas in both cases, for nearly a century, these products were just as likely to be trans-shipped exports from Canada.

In the study of Australia-Canada, Australia-Britain, and Australia-U.S.A. relations, historians have concentrated on the politics of nation-building and empire and on the pivotal economic realms of agriculture, mining, and finance rather than the trade in

Canadian-made consumer goods. At the same time, histories of furniture and the decorative arts in Australia and New Zealand have favoured English topics, emphasizing British influence if only through a superior accrual of information. As a result, there is a pervasive undervaluation of North American influence and innovation in the development and expression of Australasian domestic life. In the case of Canadian-made furniture, the reasons for this notable oversight are integral to the history itself and to the methods of its archival documentation and subsequent digitisation.

This paper demonstrates that an awareness of textual and pictorial absences in collected information and artefacts is critical to the understanding of any individual or network. In their book *Empire and Globalization: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850- 1914*, authors Gary Bryan Magee and Andrew S. Thompson explain the need for improved clarity and individuation in discussions of British Empire trade and expansion by noting that 'the different characters of the settler colonies themselves affected the networks' and 'it mattered that Canada was among the first dominions to develop a strong manufacturing base'. The success of Ontario-made domestic furniture in Australia and New Zealand was not an intrinsic outcome of imperial economic development but rather the extrinsic result of a trading network's ability to look beyond national borders and produce sizeable, reliable supplies of an everyday item in perennial demand. That universality of design was the key to sustained growth as well as one cause of its invisibility.

Felicity Fenner (UNSW): *Your place or mine?*

The outward image of the place we call home – Australia – historically dominates and subsumes personal experiences of home in exhibitions of Australian art. The thesis argues, and demonstrates through a series of curatorial projects, that exhibitions can, alternatively, embody intimate experiences of place that more accurately describe the experience of 21st century Australia. Citing recent Australian socio-political and literary culture as a backdrop, it is shown that the prism of home is an effective curatorial device through which to transmit and receive new insights into aspects of this place we call home, Australia.

The conceit of 'home' is adopted in the thesis both as a curatorial theme and as a framework for engagement. The research reveals how reference to home can guide viewers from simply 'understanding' meaning to 'inhabiting' (being at home within) the intellectual and sensory space of artworks and exhibitions. When the idea of home is embedded in the curatorial approach, artists' knowledge and experience – particularly those at odds with mainstream perceptions of Australian culture – can be articulated. Thus, the exhibition becomes a catalyst for new ways of seeing and thinking about place.

Contextualising the author's curatorial projects with others in the region seeking to define a post-globalisation sense of identity, the thesis reveals how the curator can employ the framework of home to facilitate new insights into place. To achieve this, three key curatorial strategies are applied to exhibitions of Australian art: the inclusion of works that are based on real life, intersect with or *are* real life occurrences; the creation of installations in the gallery space that are physically immersive or inhabitable; and the co-production with artists of participatory works in public and non-institutional spaces.

Through a series of curated projects, the prism of home gives voice to (bottom-up) understandings of place, providing an alternative to external (top-down) perceptions typically associated with the visual lexicons of national and cultural identity.

SESSION 3D: c.1970 – the ends of painting (1)

Convenors: David Homewood (UMelbourne) and Paris Lettau (UMelbourne)

The late 1960s and early 1970s is often remembered as a moment of radical artistic transformation. Strategies related to the forms of the readymade and installation grew increasingly popular. In order to remove the 'artist's hand' from the production process, artists increasingly outsourced fabrication of their works. The Xerox machine, Instamatic camera and Portapak video became increasingly ubiquitous. In addition, new genres emerged around this time: durational performances made up of everyday gestures and actions, ephemeral artworks located outside the gallery, site-specific interventions that critiqued the museum as a social institution, and theoretical essays about art presented as artworks themselves.

This art-historical development can also be framed in negative terms: as a widespread abandonment of the traditional artistic media of painting and sculpture. Many artists, as well as writers and curators, genuinely believed painting and sculpture had finally exhausted their potential. The traditional forms had become 'sick' – owing perhaps to the weight of their own history, and no doubt exacerbated by Late Modernism's preoccupation with the purification of the medium. The solution was to adopt new forms better capable of responding to their historical moment and materials not burdened with the 'look' of art. Art-historical accounts of the period have often focussed on these novel forms and materials. They are taken as somehow representative or paradigmatic of the period, while artists still working in the ostensibly traditional modes are arguably swept to one side.

Prof Charles Green (UMelbourne): *Describing the World: Leaving Art*

This paper reconsiders photorealism's place as a key avant garde strategy in the early 1970s. It will look at that trend's appearance at Harald Szeemann's *documenta 5* and its subsequent disappearance.

Christina Barton (Victoria University of Wellington): *Painting and the Post-Object*

This paper will present and examine selected art writings by Wystan Curnow, New Zealand's foremost art critic of the 1970s (and beyond). Curnow was both a champion of the 'new' expanded sculptural practices loosely defined as 'post-object' and an insightful

advocate of late-modern abstract painting. Despite their seeming incommensurability, he was able to argue for deeper ontological connectedness, via a notion of 'presence' that was developed from his readings in American literary and art theory of the 1960s. The dual outcomes of his approach were: to provide a coherent redefinition of art as both post-formalist and anti-expressive realist, thus auguring the post-modern in New Zealand; and to defy the insularity of the then-hegemonic nationalist art history, by both articulating how local discourses were different from those of the centre, at the same time as establishing connections with what he then deemed to be the advanced centre for contemporary art, New York. Curnow's writings offer a truly 'geocritical' alternative to dominant art histories then emanating from both the powerful centres of art and their peripheries. This paper will show how his work nuances and counters the negative prognoses of Terry Smith's 'Provincialism Problem', as well as offering a model to qualify the flattening effects of contemporary globalization.

David Homewood (UMelbourne): *Autocritique as Auto: Ian Burn's Reflexes*

This paper will offer an interpretation of a group of works Ian Burn referred to as his 'last paintings': the *Reflexes* (1966-67). The monochromatic surface of these works was created through the airgun application of autopaint. The resulting finish brings the series into formal proximity with Minimalist art, and signals Burn's inclination at the time to get away from inherited artistic techniques, materials and forms. In this paper, I argue that the industrial materials and techniques used in the production of the *Reflexes* complicate the conception of artistic labour as something that stands apart from other forms of labour. The polished autopaint surface lends the *Reflexes* a peculiar identity, located between handcrafted artisanal ornament and anonymous mass-produced thing.

SESSION 3E: Light, sight, meaning (1): vision and blindness in painting and photography

Convenor: Georgina Cole (National Art School)

This panel examines the construction and meanings of sight and seeing in works of art and architecture. It aims to elucidate the ways in which seeing is conceptualised in various cultures at various times and to examine how and what the viewer of an artwork is made to see. For example, close looking may reveal that a building's meaning may be dependent on the changing light of the day, something concealed by the static nature of photographs. At the same time, the panel addresses the representation of the absence of sight and the critique of vision. The senses of touch, hearing, taste and smell have animated art making and art writing since the Renaissance. Blindness, for example, was explored in art and philosophy as an alternative epistemology exclusive of sight. A thorough questioning of vision continues to inform contemporary artistic approaches that expose the limitations of ocular-centric perspectives.

Papers were invited that explore any dimension of seeing, including the absence of visual perceptual faculties and the critique of vision. They could address the relationship between seeing and knowing, seeing and believing, and seeing and surveying, as well as the curtailing of sight and the role of light in shaping visual experience. Artworks or works of architecture could be discussed for their representation of various kinds of seeing or relationship to natural or constructed light sources. Representations of blindness might also be considered, as well as artworks that privilege non-visual forms of sensory engagement.

The panel invited close examination of the evident yet overlooked aspects of artworks, elements that have been marginalised in art historical discourse. It examines the means by which artworks construct and characterise different kinds of sight, which contributes, in turn, to the imaging, imagining and inhabiting of place. The consideration of the absence of sight and the critique of vision relates to the bodily apprehension of objects and spaces and is suggestive of the themes of place, earth and being that GEOcritical entails.

Michael Hill (National Art School): *Blindness and Rebirth in Caravaggio's Conversion of St Paul*

Caravaggio's *Conversion of St Paul* (1601, Cerasi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome) is dominated by three seemingly disjunctive elements: one, the internalized intimacy of the scene; two, the radically foreshortened body of Paul; three, the massive piebald horse, unconcerned by the event that has just thrown its rider. Various commentators have explained saint and the hushed atmosphere, but most remained baffled by the horse and none have united all in common purpose. The following paper advances a hypothesis that seeks to do just that. Caravaggio depicted the horse stepping lightly over Paul, with a delicacy that suggests that the horse, rather than dumb witness, is attuned to the dark and hushed room-like space now filled with sacred air. The horse is one of God's creatures, to whom St Francis, the medieval exemplar of Church reformers right up to Caravaggio's day, had preached the gospels; with equal empathy, Francis had also emphasized the presence of other animals, the ox and the ass, at Christ's Nativity. This is apposite, because Caravaggio's Paul, with arms outstretched and glowing with light, is laid out like the new-born Christ as revealed to St Brigid, a vision of the nativity long made commonplace by painters and other storytellers. Paul's blinding, in other words, is expressed as a rebirth. According to the Acts of the Apostles, Christ entered Paul's body during his conversion, and with this in mind a second layer of figuration in the painting can barely be ignored: Paul's hands are sprayed in a manner that suggests the reception of stigmata – when the scales fall from his eyes, he will walk with his Saviour. By evoking Christ's nativity, and to a lesser extent His Crucifixion, Caravaggio turned the story of Paul's blinding into an allegory of being reborn unto Christ. The contemporary wag that likened the painting to an accident in a stable may have been onto something.

Georgina Cole (National Art School): *Picturing blindness in eighteenth-century France*

At once the age of reason and the age of feeling, the eighteenth century is characterised by its philosophical and scientific rethinking of the role and nature of sense perception. Through the interventions of Locke, Newton, Diderot and Condillac, sensation played a crucial role in the understanding of relationships between mind and body, internal and external experience, and self and other. While contemporary thinkers applied themselves to the epistemology of sensation and its role in the generation of knowledge, they were equally exercised by its lack; indeed eighteenth-century philosophers and artists were deeply fascinated by the experience of blindness. This paper explores images of blindness in two eighteenth-century paintings by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Greuze. It suggests that blindness, as a subject for painting, offered a way of rethinking the role of sight and touch in the hierarchy of senses and their relationship to knowledge, morality and selfhood. Addressing these images through Enlightenment ideas relating to sensation and sensibility, the paper examines the rise of touch as a key aspect of eighteenth-century sociability and epistemology. In addition, it considers the implications of blindness for the experience of art in the eighteenth century and the increasing role of touch and feeling in its production and reception.

Kathleen Davidson (Independent scholar): *'How to see clearly': Henry De la Beche and the nineteenth-century geological observer*

From the late 1810s, Henry De la Beche, geologist and founder of the British Geological Survey, produced a succession of images on the subject of sight and the efficacy of observation. De la Beche forged new ground in representing and disseminating the visual dimensions of geology for both specialist and general audiences. His campaign culminated in the establishment of the School of Mines and the Museum of Practical Geology in 1851, Britain's first purpose-built science museum, where this interest in the visual aspects of science converged with those of art and industry and were incorporated into virtually every aspect of the museum building and its program. In this paper I will examine De la Beche's drawings and lithographs critiquing vision and his wide-ranging interest in sight and the reliability of vision, commencing as a traveller on the Grand Tour. Optical aids and popular visual technologies – including spectacles and magic lanterns – eyewitnesses, and references to blindness and light are prominent features throughout these images. As well as portraying different methods and capacities for seeing, De la Beche used drawing to conceptualise the connotations of vision and to engage in contemporary debates about the merits of observation as the basis of scientific investigation.

Dr Keith Broadfoot (USydney): *To paint blind: Williams after Glover*

Ian McLean has argued that the haunting quality of John Glover's Australian paintings is 'at its most palpable in the melancholy solitude of the wooden ranges that frame his scenes like a looming amphitheatre watching over him with all the sublime terror of an absolute unbounded other. Here the space of the picture resists any imposed order, and Glover must paint blind in the hope of finding an order from inside his own consciousness – or in the most modernist of strategies, let the space compose itself.' There is no doubt, as both Patrick McCaughey and James Mollison have exhaustively argued, that Fred Williams was Australia's greatest modernist painter. However, the modernist nature of Williams's art should be seen in terms of McLean's bold claim that Glover was already engaged in the 'most modernist of strategies'. Williams only becomes the most complete Australian modernist painter by returning to and repeating Glover. I will offer some suggestions for understanding the often commented upon tactile nature of Williams's art in relation to this return to Glover and the necessity of painting blind.

SESSION 3F: HELL: underworld, unworldly, ungrounded earth (1)

Convenor: Dr Edward Colless (UMelbourne)

As an antique and medieval underworld, the geological and geographical depiction of Hell obtained some spectacularly horrifying art direction: vast canyons seared by howling infernal winds; rivers of filth and boiling blood sweeping along corpses or souls clotted together like clumps of effluent; miasmatic and volcanic swamps of ordure blistering, bubbling and bursting plumes of acidic stench.... The modern theological prospect of Hell as a non-place, a lonely condition of banishment or even self-imposed exile from God's grace, appears timidly and dismally unimaginative in comparison with the panoramic vigor of this tellurian terror. But with the increasing likelihood of the human species being unable to adapt to (or evolve in compliance with) the vector of global warming, and with human extinction a possibility in the twenty-second century, Hell seems to have a place again: and its address is Planet Earth.

Lucy Bleach (UTas): *Eye of the volcano*

Like a wind, like a storm, like a fire, like an earthquake, like a mud slide, like a deluge, like a tree falling, a torrent roaring, an ice floe breaking, like a tidal wave, like a shipwreck, like an explosion, like a lid blown off, like a consuming fire, like spreading blight, like a sky darkening, a bridge collapsing, a hole opening. Like a volcano erupting.

— Susan Sontag, *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*

In 2010 I threw a rock into an erupting volcano in Vanuatu for a friend who had just died. After I threw the rock the local villagers who had accompanied me up the volcano said that this was a good thing to do, for when they die, their volcano opens up its sides through hidden cracks at its base to let the souls of the recently departed enter its molten heart.

In 2012 I met a man whose home was the soul surviving structure from a lava flow on the Big Island, Hawaii, that had consumed all other homes in the region. Neighbouring villagers said he was living on the edge of hell; he believed he was living with acceptable risk...after I left him the angry wound of the ground continued to open up around his home, weeping hot rock around the perimeter of his diminishing boundary, until finally the creeping fissures subsumed his home. (I watched the documented footage via the web, the spontaneous moment caught in a suspended funeral pyre in the public domain.)

In 2014 I climbed the slopes of Stromboli – named in local dialect *iddu*, or simply “him” – while he shuddered and purged scorching volumes from his insides, all the while hissing a continuous billow of mushrooming steam that consumed him (and me) and shifted land to sky. He is flanked by two villages on either side of his slopes, whose residents keep a vigilant eye on his murmurs, breaths and projectiles.

I explore geological viscera, doubtful plutonic objects, exploding igneous forms, protracted crustal creep, impact and lag. I scrutinize tragic volcanic artifacts such as the *Dog of Pompeii*; tiny elliptical balls of obsidian known as Pele’s tears and a marble plaque erected in 1631 on the main street of Portici directing its residents to flee when the sky is filled again with Vesuvius’s smoke. Such events and artifacts index a volatility and terror that consumes, compels and drives us (our imagination, our sense of mortality and our deep connection to the unstable liquid earth). They invite us to look into the eye of the earth, the deep hole from which the earth (in all its taboo) is borne.

Dr Lynn Brunet (Independent scholar): *A journey to the Otherworld: Peter Booth’s paintings from the 1970s*

Peter Booth’s Painting 1977 is one of the most recognisable of the artist’s works, appearing in the story of Australian art as a profound and enigmatic image. Here, the ominous figure that confronts the viewer appears as a purveyor of prophecy and doom undergoing a shadowy journey through a fiery and apocalyptic landscape. A companion piece from the following year leads us into more mysterious territory with the symbolism becoming even more idiosyncratic. These and other similar landscapes by Peter Booth from the 1970s have been understood in terms of the artist’s childhood experience of industrial Sheffield as well as the bombing of the city during WWII. To date, however, the apocalyptic symbolism within these works has escaped any detailed investigation into their mythological significance.

In order to understand the complexity of the symbolism within these paintings it is necessary to turn to the rich tradition of myths, legends and folktales associated with the Otherworld that have accompanied the history of the Sheffield region. When the city of Sheffield was founded the city fathers chose the Roman and Norse gods Vulcan and Thor for its coat of arms in order to represent a place “whose prosperity is almost entirely founded on the working of metal.” Because the world of smith-craft was always one that had been regarded with a certain degree of mystery, involving supernatural powers and great prestige, and because the extraction of metal entailed digging into the earth, the mythologies, superstitions and folklore that became associated with this industry were plentiful. Some of these myths involved entry into the dark regions, the Otherworld or realm of the dead, reflecting the layering of pagan religions that had been introduced into the region by the various colonising groups. By the modern era these myths, legends and beliefs had been re-cast many times, often with a liberal dose of romanticism and fantasy. Importantly, for our purposes, these myths and stories were particularly relevant to the workers in the metal working industry, the cultural group into which Peter Booth was born.

This paper will examine several of Booth’s paintings from the 1970s revealing these hellish landscapes as a rich repository of motifs drawn from the legends and stories associated with entry into the chthonian realms that informed the industrial culture of the Sheffield region.

Mark Titmarsh (UTS): *Only a devil can save us now*

In the beginning there was nothing, a cold eternity of silence. Such is the implication of the foundational philosophical question, “Why is there something and not nothing?” In 1927 George Lemaitre, author of the Big Bang Theory, replaces this unthinkable nothingness with the sudden inexplicable arrival of an extremely dense and superhot Singularity, that in turn becomes the event horizon of our expanding universe. It sounds suspiciously similar to biblical stories of creation because Lemaitre was himself a Jesuit priest who moved to religion about the same time Martin Heidegger dropped out of theology studies to become the philosopher of phenomenological horizons.

In this paper I will consider the clash of geo-science and eco-existentialism through Heidegger’s concept of earth, introduced in his 1935 essay The “Origin of the Work of Art”. In it, earth functions as both a nihilating nothing and an endless fecundity poised between absolute non-ground and overwhelming subterranean lover. I will chart the story of our planet as abyssal earth, as it tears itself away from any notion of the natural. This will involve a journey from an ancient Greek Hades through a Medieval inferno and Modern technological Leviathan to a Contemporary enraged Gaia-thing taking final revenge on an errant humanity in the last stages of climate crime.

Supplementally, by using the writing of Michel Haar I will show that the ungrounding dehistoricising aspects of earth interrupts any understanding of contemporary aesthetics by introducing that which withdraws from sight and that which withdraws from saying. This will result in a contrast between historical notions of beauty based on the earths graphic outline and the submersive

borderlessness of wetlands, the swampy realm of a fallen angel whose violent obscurity forms the basis of any possible play of light and dark.

SESSION 3G: Open Session: *Production/Reception*

Convenors: Dr Deb Malor (UTas) and Dr Karen Hall (UTas)

Rebecca Edwards (UMelbourne): *Decorative painting in and out of context*

Predominantly associated with ideas of the unification of the arts in the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic movements of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the genre of decorative or mural painting is often overlooked or disparaged in modernist accounts of twentieth century art history. As an art form defined by site -specificity it seems diametrically opposed to the ideals of autonomy later embraced by the avant-garde. Yet, as recent scholarship has begun to explore, decorative painting's relationship with the surrounding architecture was reliant on visual effect rather than the subject matter depicted – an understanding which accorded with the increasingly formal mode of viewing that later found currency amongst Britain's earliest modernists.

Focusing on the decorative artist Frank Brangwyn, one of the most active muralists of this period this paper proposes to reconsider the viewing and visioning of decorative painting in the first decade of the twentieth century. Primarily, as the name denotes, decorative mural schemes were intended to serve as decoration, to beautify the interior –whether domestic or civic – for which they were intended. However, displayed within an artificially lit room, encased in fitted wood paneling at a height well above the viewer's direct eye line, these paintings were often viewed in a less than ideal environment. Acutely aware of these conditions artists were forced to employ particular visual devices and compositional constructs - enhanced contrasts of chiaroscuro, form and patterning – in an attempt to lift the work of art beyond its architectural frame whilst still maintaining an harmonious relationship with its surroundings.

This paper aims to engage with the viewing contexts of decorative painting in the early twentieth century and the implications for artists and art production when the circumstances under which a work of art is seen, are altered. To some, mural paintings were accessible in situ, but for a great proportion of viewers, it was through reproduction in art periodicals and publications that decorative schemes and their formal conventions became familiar. Through examination of Brangwyn's work in situ and reproduction, this paper seeks to explore how these changing contexts shaped understandings of the term decorative in the early twentieth century and reconsider the role of the decorative within the threads of early British modernism.

Dr Julie Cotter (Monash/FederationU): *The curatorial construction of Tom Roberts - where are the portraits?*

The portraiture by Tom Roberts has been viewed as a product of his need for financial gain in order to undertake his more important landscape and genre pictures. This narrow view simmered throughout Australian art history but was definitively supported in the eighties with the substantial display, exhibition and curatorial scholarship of Roberts and his colleagues who worked within the paradigm of Australian Impressionism. The construction of Australian national identity has been substantially supported by the landscape tradition in Australian art, portraiture and its linkages to a British tradition considered to lack the bravura and scape of a sunny Australian landscape.

Portraiture has long been considered by curators and writers as the poor cousin of art practice, conservative critics supporting the view that it should be regarded as maintaining a low level on the hierarchy of art and the product of artists who can be considered second-rate and desperate for money. Thirty percent of Roberts's output consists of portraits, many of these works not commissioned, yet he continues to be documented as an artist who was forced into portrait painting.

While a significant collection of Roberts's portraiture was included in the recent Australian Impressionism exhibition and the retrospective of Roberts's work in 1996, the scholarship accompanying the exhibition continued to explore the economic parameters of the portraiture, the work lacking the same critical and theoretical engagement associated with the landscape pictures.

This year I was honoured to present the National Gallery of Victoria Annual lecture in the Clemenger Auditorium attended by 250 people. My subject was Roberts's portraiture, feedback from many in the audience indicating they were previously unaware of the range and diversity of his work. My paper will address the exhibition practices and scholarship of Roberts's work and the consequences of the framing of this perspective.

Dr Meg Keating (UTas): *Giving voice: the art of dissent*

This paper will discuss the work *The Ministry of Pulp* in the context of the recent Salamanca Art Centre annually curated exhibition Giving Voice: The Art of Dissent. The exhibition featured eight artists that documented their opinions on the pressing social and political issues facing the world today; from major economic crisis and raging wars to pollution and climate change through to religious persecution.

The paper will discuss *The Ministry of Pulp*, its underlining themes and motivations as well as the other artworks presented within the exhibition in order to analyze the impact and reaction of socially and politically engaged works within the localized Tasmanian context.

The Ministry of Pulp is a work that combined traditional Chinese paper cutting techniques with digital animation and it specifically addresses the ongoing debate about the building of a pulp mill in Tasmania. A mill was first proposed at the Wesley Vale site in

1989 and re-proposed at Bell Bay in 2007. The work aims, through the combination of the static but spatial qualities of paper cutting and digital animation to extend the representational capacity of both mediums in order to facilitate a poetic resonance that becomes a viable way to interrogate the different voices within environmental debates as well as reflect upon the contested nature of the issue.

SESSION 4A: Nation, translation and exchange in modern Southeast Asian art (2)

Convenor: Clare Veal (USydney)

In 2013 the Guggenheim Museum, New York, held an exhibition of contemporary Southeast Asian art, entitled No Country: Contemporary Art from South and Southeast Asia. The exhibition's title reinforced the tropes of fluidity and borderlessness that pervade discourses of 'global' contemporary art. This may be contrasted with efforts in the wake of post-colonial narratives to expand the modernist canon beyond the purviews of Euramerica, and to recognise the specificity of modernist artistic development in different geographical and cultural contexts. These developments, which have been generally grouped under the term 'alternative modernisms', have been significant in opening up of a field of modernist studies in non-Euramerican contexts. However, they have also been increasingly tied to histories of artistic development that confirm nationalist narratives and ideology that may limit the ability to recognise the importance of international and inter-regional exchange between image producers in the development of modernism.

In addressing case studies in Southeast Asian artistic modernism this panel examines the ways in which local producers have articulated art making through relationships, exchanges and translations with the foreign. To this end, the panel will evaluate the extent to which contemporary discourses of post-nationality may be viewed as novel developments in the history of Southeast Asian art.

Nation, translation and exchange in modern and Southeast Asian Art will critically interrogate the situation of Southeast Asian modernist art discourses within a national framework that is based within reified and geographically defined borders. In drawing attention to the ways in which modernist artistic discourses in Southeast Asia have been constructed through relations with the 'foreign', it moves beyond contentions that the dissolving of borders and boundaries in art is a novel development occurring with the advent of the contemporary. In examining the geographical movement of artists, texts and works, the panel also encourages discussion on the ways in which artistic meaning may be constructed in relation to or in opposition to the limitations and potentialities of working and speaking from different geographical locations, as well as the ideological significance of the construction of artistic identities along those lines.

Clare Veal (USydney): The Royal Thai Photographic Society and the construction of national photography

Since the 1960s, the Royal Thai Photographic Society (RTPS) has dominated Thailand's 'artistic' photography scene. In the absence of photographic courses in the country's premier artistic institution, Silpakorn University, the RTPS played a key role in the establishment of photographic courses and competitions, and as an advocate for the artistic value of photographic practice. All photographers who have been declared National Artists of Thailand have been members of the RTPS, and the Society's photographic competitions have worked to establish the outlines of a canon of Thai photography. This was further legitimised through the patronage and involvement of various members of the country's royal family in the Society's activities. In particular, the RTPS ensured the dominance of Pictorialism as the dominant mode for the representation of the Thai landscape, as demonstrating the 'essence' of Thai identity.

However, from its initiation as a photo club for foreign residents of Thailand in 1951 by a Danish photographer, T.M. Christensen the Royal Thai Photographic Society has been forged in negotiation with foreign understandings for the evaluation of the artistic merit of photographic practice. In discussing the relationship between these modes of internal and external legitimisation, this paper aims to formulate a genealogy of artistic photography in Thailand and the aesthetic categorisations that came to define designations of 'art photography' as well as 'Thai photography.' This approach reveals the modalities by which the aesthetics of a Thai national photography was formed, through and by exchanges with the 'foreign.' At stake in these exchanges was not only sets of aesthetic proscriptions for inferring the artistic quality of photographic images, but also an ideology of landscape centred around a conservative royally-defined national identity.

Matt Cox (USydney): Born in translation: Modern Indonesian art in Europe

The Indonesian national hero and pedagogue Soewardi Soerjaningrat who was exiled to Holland in 1913 for the publication of his text, "Als ik een Nederlander was" (If I was a Dutchman) and its subsequent translation from Dutch to Malay, also enlisted the ideas of Convergence and Concentricity in which intercourse between the local and foreign were advocated as an advantageous and fruitful cultural enterprise.

It is important to remember that it is not possible for a culture to progress when that culture isolates itself. It must not be forgotten that isolation implies coagulation, or fossilisation, and regression or decadence, indeed the death of a civilisation in the life of the people. Intercourse with foreign cultures is the way to cultural progress.¹

However, in navigating the history of Indonesian Modern art one is aware of clear prejudices that have tended to isolate the discourse in terms of ideological positioning and the mythology of nation building. Whilst landscape and the depiction of women have provided very direct allegories for country and sites of conquest, the heroism of the male painter and guerrilla fighter have been equally powerful symbols of a geographic and political determination that has conflated artistic and nationalist's discourses.

This paper suggests that rather than submit to a geographically specific and politically determined reading of Indonesian Modern art, an alternative history that engages with the complexities of colonial relationships on an international scale might be more rewarding.

Specifically this paper looks at Indonesian artists working alongside European artists in Holland and France prior to the formation of the Indonesian nation in what might be described as a situation of the "local" in exile. Rather than think about the monolithic nature of states, nations and cultures this paper endeavours to map out some inter-terrestrial relationships that whilst offering glimpses of an imagined community were really the product of personal biographies and individual friendships. In particular, this paper will examine the collegial relationships of Raden Mas Jodjana with Chris Lebeau in The Hague around 1920 and Salim Sariochmin with Fernand Leger centred in Paris during the mid 1930's.

¹K.H.D, *Tentang puntjak-puntjak dan sari-sari kebudayaan di Indonesia, Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (Conclusions of the Taman Siswa General Conference in Jogjakarta), March 1950, in Radcliffe, D., 'Ki Hadjar Dewantara and the Taman Siswa Schools: Notes on an Extra-Colonial Theory of Education', *Comparative Education Review*, 15/2, Colonialism and Education, 1971, pp219-226.

Christine Clark (NPG): *Traversing worlds: the art of Widayat*

Haji Widayat (1912-2002), acclaimed as one of Indonesia's modern greats, is admired for his extraordinary versatility, imagination and constant incorporation of the new into his stylistic investigations. Although recognised for his *dekora-magis* (magical-decorative) manner – many works were rendered in a rhythmic repetition of flat meticulous motifs that densely filled the entire field – he experimented widely, working in an array of styles and themes, freely appropriating and adapting imagery from various national, regional and international cultural sources. His experience in Japan in the early 1960s became a major influence on his practice. Widayat moved to Nagoya for two years to concentrate on Japanese traditional arts: *ukiyo-e* style woodcut prints, ceramics, landscape gardening and *ikebana*. Yet his interest in these traditional expressions was chiefly in transforming them for his own articulations. The time in Japan was particularly significant as it exposed Widayat to modern Euro-American as well as Japanese art in addition to leaving a lasting impression on his content: long after his return to Indonesia cherry blossoms, deep sea fish, female nudes and striptease imagery repeatedly appear in his work.

This paper uses Widayat's work as a case study, while referencing other major Indonesian artists who were his contemporaries, to interrogate this historically significant artist's translations and adaptations of the foreign, the seemingly new and unfamiliar. Widayat merged styles and influences from several artistic worlds and while many of his contemporaries were articulating a nationalistic consciousness he most frequently depicted enchanted, fantastical worlds inspired by nature, myths and folklore, religious literatures, and primordial states through his particular Javanese prism. Alongside his *dekora-magis* stylistic investigations, he regularly explored abstraction and other modernist tropes. The paper examines the fluidity of local, inter-regional and cross-regional incorporations that ultimately created Widayat's distinctive modern expression.

SESSION 4B: Ruins in/of the landscape (2)

Convenor: Dr Yvonne Scott (Trinity College, Dublin)

This session is devoted to the critical analysis of imagery and objects responding to the idea of ruination in its spatial and temporal contexts, and its potential practical and philosophical interpretation.

The creation, and representation, of ruins in the landscape enjoyed a peak in the visual culture of the 18th and 19th centuries when a fascination with antiquities as a means of reconstructing architectural history, coincided with picturesque and romantic engagements with notions of a lost past, and the related philosophies of the struggle between nature and culture. This fascination found form both in the contemporaneous landscaping of demesnes, and in the traditions of landscape painting, particularly in – but not confined to – Europe.

Since the twentieth century there is evidence of a continued fascination with the image of the ruin, manifest in a strategic range that appropriates selectively, alluding to traditional ideas as points of reference (and of departure) for contemporary issues. Definitions of the term 'ruin' vary not least due to the inference of process rather than fixity and, while in the past, the meaning of 'ruin' in creative productions tended to be narrowed to the conventions of the time, its more recent appropriation as a motif absorbs and extends from selected/combined past usages, providing a platform for more recent semiotic interpretations.

The contemporary application of related theory includes ideas projected by Robert Smithson who, in 1967, coined the evocative phrase 'ruins in reverse', a term that has taken on new inferences in the wake of the more recent global impact of economic and related ecological hubris. In addition, contemporary events involving (ie caused by or impacting upon) natural phenomena, have triggered timely responses, ecocritical and other, by artists and by interpreters of their work.

The relationship between art and man-made structures (including architecture) is effected in the representation of ruins expressed through painting, sculpture, photography, and new media both static and time-based. Critical analysis of the imagery and objects necessarily involves contextualizing and interpreting them in relation to socio-political environments, and drawing on relevant theoretical perspectives. The placement of ruins within the inferred 'scene' of the image plays on spatial relationships and hierarchies, while the process of ruination itself raises questions of causality, of inter-temporal relationships and references, of conflicts of nature and culture (and the ecocritical perspective it gives rise to), and so forth – and the potential for analysis, in particular in referencing the current or contemporaneous state of the world or earth in which artists habitually intervene.

Renee Joyce (JCU/NGA): *Collecting Ruins*

Sigmund Freud collected objects: items that spoke of a society long-past, of geographies ruined by success and loss. He surrounded his most private locality, his desk, with a multiplicity of found objects, each an icon to what had been. Predating Freud stretches a long historical discourse of collectors of the ruins of societies lost and geographies found; the collectors of medieval relics, the wealthy of the Enlightenment and the earliest purveyors of survey collections which came to form the earliest museums. Engaging with a heavily codified set of cultural constructs of collection, classification and display each of these individual collectors found, defined and then encased their findings in locations venerated for the purpose: rooms, tables, boxes and cabinets. In doing so they physically and conceptually distilled the external and internal geographies of their respective periods, each which expanded beyond their grasps, into a structured and defined space, a space that could be understood or controlled.

In the fragmented physical and social landscapes of the contemporary world, rampant consumerist behaviour has led to a profusion of discarded objects waiting to be found: icons and relics of the past and present. Yet, in a technological environment where you can 'curate' and share every moment of your existence in a digital format it would be expected that collecting, classifying and displaying found objects, fragments of our world and those past would be left to the hallowed halls of institutions and away from the individual. This proves untrue in the contemporary art environment where there has been a quiet continuation, perhaps even a resurgence or reincarnation of the early collectors, where individuals use the discarded ruins of the present as well as those of the past to distil and understand their world. An increasing number of contemporary artists are using collected objects in their practice and in doing so are engaging with a significant historical discourse of cultural constructs of collection, classification and display of found objects as means of exploring, interpreting, defining and controlling the world. This paper will present a critical investigation in the continuation of these cultural constructs of collection, classification and display in the art practice of a small selection of contemporary Australian artists who use collected objects as a central component of their practice.

Cassandra Sturm (Curtin): *Place in creative practice – ruins and found objects*

Found objects sourced from landscape environments, and used as the materials of creative practice, have a material presence which also invokes the presence of the place from which they came. At times natural and at times cultural detritus, I argue these found objects are 'ruins,' as fragments within the structures of cultural and creative practices. They share in common with concepts of the 'ruin' a fragmentation and nostalgic preoccupation with *place* – which will be examined here within the frameworks of writing by Dylan Trigg, Jeff Malpas and Edward Casey. Part of a larger practice-led research project, the discussion will follow the path of my own studio research, engagements with these authors, and other artists' practices.

The research has been prompted in part by my observation that collaboration of a sense of materiality and specificity to place in creative practice seems to appeal to an authenticity and agency culturally invested in the 'local' and in material presence. For example, assemblages or installations using found objects by artists such as Richard Long or, local to Australia, Rosalie Gascoigne and David Jones, are seen as authentic re-presentations of personal experience of landscape. The practices I will discuss here, including my own, foreground the experience of landscape as sensory environment. In addition, their processes and strategies of making can be seen to trace the paradigm shift in Australian practice to seeing landscape as a significant realm of self and cultural critique. The combination highlights the importance of contingent and transient perceptions and experience in the formation of critique. As 'ruins,' the found objects used in these practices draw attention to both our nostalgic imaginings of landscape, and the authenticities we ascribe to the experience of place.

Dr Barbara Garrie (UCanterbury): *Ruination and rejuvenation: photography in post-quake Christchurch*

This paper considers the role of photography in documenting the post-quake landscape of Christchurch, NZ. Severely damaged by the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, Christchurch's urban environment is one currently in a state of transformation. Many domestic dwellings and buildings of civic importance have been lost and the city has, for a number of years now, had to contend with disruptions to its roading and amenities infrastructure. However, while the quakes undoubtedly reduced parts of Christchurch to ruins, the city and its communities have continued to function in these extreme circumstances. In this paper I therefore consider a number of photographic projects originating in Christchurch that have engaged with the ruination of the city as a *process*: a process not of continued degradation but of redevelopment. While images of urban ruins have gained currency within the work of a number of contemporary photographers, often such pictures present these structures or sites as ghosts lost to the past.

Alternatively, I argue that many of the recent projects undertaken in post-quake Christchurch are significant in engaging with the 'presentness' of the Christchurch experience. Key within this discussion is the work of photographer Tim J. Veling whose projects such as *Orientation* (2011), *Support Structures* (2012) and *Thx 4 the Memories* (2013) represent an ongoing commitment to photographing the changing city and documenting the transformation of the ruined landscape.

SESSION 4C: Contemporary art and feminism

Convenors: Dr Jacqueline Millner (USydney) and Dr Catriona Moore (USydney)

There has been an international groundswell in engagement and curiosity about feminism's role in the development of contemporary art. 'Contemporary Art and Feminism' examines this generative relationship, and feminism's current relevance to art making and analysis. Arguably, feminist critique has suffused the thinking of many disciplines, from art history to literary studies

and indigenous history. It has illuminated the assumptions that underpin knowledge and exposed gaps in perspectives to generate far more complex, inclusive and comprehensive histories and theories, creating paths to greater social justice and equity. Feminism scrutinizes the building blocks of culture and identity, seeking to explain how power relations — including those that naturalise gender inequality — are embedded in knowledges and practices. As such, feminism is one of the ways in which we can most usefully come to an understanding of our image culture and the way visual images narrativise power relations.

Pioneering this critique in Australia nearly fifty years ago, feminist artists helped to forge the transition from modernist to postmodernist cultural strategies. They prioritised skills, subject matter, media and design principles that had been neglected in late modernism's formalist enthusiasms. They communicated inventively with broader audiences and re-routed both women's traditional arts and the conventional high art media of painting and sculpture. Today these experiments remain a central platform of contemporary art, including notably of emergent forms of visual arts interventions in participatory and networked democracy known as 'social practice'.

The session will map specific contemporary practices and theories engaging with feminist art practice, history and theory. More broadly, it asks how feminism has informed and framed contemporary art practices, theories, collections and histories. The conference theme, *GEOcritical*, is inclusive. It understands critical practice in part as "(speaking, writing, process, action) in both its contemporary and historical frames" and the proposed CAF panel does this in an interventionist sense, as outlined in the conference themes statement. The CAF panel interrogates current thinking and practice on contemporary art and creative cultural politics from feminist perspectives. It addresses several of the issues noted in the conference themes statement, such as "shifting subjectivities; unstable centres and dissolving peripheries; vernacularisms; anxieties and urgency; transculturalism and migratory artists (and) spatial negotiations". Moreover feminist interventions in contemporary art have targeted the kinds of environmental and ecological concerns that the conference prioritises.

Courtney Coombs, Caitlin Franzmann, Dr Rachael Haynes (Deakin), Anita Holtsclaw and Dr Courtney Pedersen (QUT): *Recipe for Revolution: feminist social practice and contemporary consciousness raising*

Feminism both informs and frames contemporary social practice in the visual arts in a number of significant ways. As Eleanor Heartney, Helaine Posner, Nancy Princenthal and Sue Scott pointed out in 2007, 'the feminist art movement mounted an attack on some of the most ingrained assumptions about art and artists'. The interruption of many of those assumptions made the plurality of contemporary art possible. LEVEL was founded in 2010 as an all-women space with dedicated exhibition, studio and residency programs, and evolved into a feminist collective with a complex of projects in different locations and contexts, manifesting as exhibitions, discussions, workshops and participatory artworks. Largely inspired by the collective models of the second wave, LEVEL utilises collaboration and a commitment to critical engagement with ideas of gender and social practice.

Feminist practices have been actively engaged at the forefront of these issues since the 1970s and this historical context is important to consider in the contemporary turn to 'the social'. George Baker and Liam Gillick have commented on how the legacy of feminism was ignored in both Nicholas Bourriaud's and subsequent accounts of 'Relational Aesthetics' in the late 1990s. The influence of Bourriaud's text was far-reaching, and 'relational' became a catch-all term for social, community orientated, activist and site-reflexive projects, both within and outside of the gallery. As Angela Dimitrakaki points out, the ensuing artistic activity and debate displayed a blatant disregard for the collective and affective forms of work that have long been adopted and adapted by women artists and feminist groups.

This paper discusses *We need to talk*, an ongoing participatory, collective work involving workshops, picnics and public discussions and positions this project within this historical context, reclaiming the 'relational' or 'social practice' space in the art world as an explicitly feminist and activist one. In its most recent manifestation held at GOMA in 2014, participants devised a collective 'Recipe for Revolution', sharing ideas and food in a large-scale picnic. In this way *We need to talk* examines dialogic forms as creative work and the potential of conversation as a form of social practice. LEVEL operates as a discursive space and our projects are focused on ways of opening up and sharing dialogues about feminisms. This approach draws on the legacy of consciousness-raising strategies of the second wave, but at the same time, rethinks these strategies in a contemporary context. As bell hooks advises 'consciousness raising groups, gatherings and public meetings need to become a central aspect of feminist practice again. Women need spaces where we can explore intimately and deeply all aspects of female experience'. It does not represent a nostalgic return to these strategies, but a contemporary feminist reclamation of the processes of conversation and participatory works that open up future possibilities for activism and advocates for change.

Louise Mayhew (UNSW): *On top of the artworld: feminism and collaboration in the new millennium*

In 2013, Clark Beaumont were catapulted from their fresh post-university practice to one of the year's most significant art stages—the Kaldor Art Project, 13 Rooms. Over the course of 11 days the young duo shared a small space atop a plain white plinth. In the rooms around them students, performers and volunteers (re)created works by internationally renowned artists including Marina Abramović, Tino Seghal and Santiago Sierra. The circumstances by which Clark Beaumont came to represent Australian performance at this crucial event are well-known, oft-repeated and already imbued with the mythic overtones of chance and luck. In this paper I will argue, however, that as a pair of young female collaborators, Clark Beaumont exemplify a feminist-collaborative turn in contemporary Australian art. This paper will discuss Clark Beaumont's practices within the framework of contemporary feminist theory and practice and, more specifically, locate them within a contemporary feminist-collaborative turn. Alongside Clark

Beaumont I will discuss the Hotham Street Ladies, Inter Collective, Even Books, The Holy Trinity and The Sisters Hayes, relating these groups both to one another and the history of feminist art practices in Australia.

Dr. Una Rey (UoNewcastle): *Intercultural practice and women artists: from primitivist provocation to 'luminous cross-cultural collaboration'*

Intercultural collaboration and dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists, especially painters since the emergence of the Western Desert painting movement, have been most sustained and most visible via a small number of male artists endorsed through local art histories of modernism, conceptualism and postmodernism.

In parallel, the studio or sites of 'social practice' that constitute contemporary art making on and around cultural borders are less often critiqued, and rarely in terms of feminism. This is in part due to the contentions and polemics that surround intercultural practices more generally, which often obscure issues of gender and feminism.

This paper critically examines intercultural collaborations in the paintings of Ildiko Kovacs and Kim Mahood as well as Sydney filmmaker Lynette Wallworth's recent collaboration with Martu artists and New York based singer Antony.

Assoc Prof Linda Tyler (UAuckland): *Pornography in the Public Eye: making an art exhibition with a feminist agenda in 21st century Aotearoa*

In August 2013, a feminist exhibition opened at Gus Fisher Gallery at the University of Auckland in New Zealand entitled *A Different View: Artists Address Pornography*. Funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand's Marsden Fund, this art exhibition was one component of a much larger programme of action research examining the effects of pornography on society. Rather than being simply "anti-pornography", the approach to the research was premised on asking whether human ethics and social justice are best served by the hush of contemporary tolerance.

Twenty New Zealand artists were commissioned to make or submit art works for inclusion. The hope was that during its eight week season, *A Different View* would build space for questioning representations of gender and race in the name of sex. Bringing together works from artists with diverse experiences, perspectives, and interests, the overall effect was neither singular nor didactic. The reception of the exhibition was mixed: feminists felt that in its refusal to occupy a fixed position, it was uncomfortable and unsettling in places, and at points perhaps complicit with the very object of its critique. Yet in the public programmes and discussions which accompanied its presentation, it seemed that the exhibition had succeeded in its ambition to make calls upon the viewer to wonder more deeply and engage more critically with the heteronormative gaze of mainstream pornography and its place in our society. It also invited viewers to consider the relationship between pornography and other forms of representation of gendered bodies and sexualities.

This paper will evaluate the production and reception of the exhibition as an example of feminist praxis and also assess the viability of its attempt to walk a fine line neither denouncing nor celebrating 'pornography' – but spelling out an ethical bottom line: in the words of the organisers "nothing, including individual pornographic pleasures, should be a cover for misogyny, sexism, and racism."

SESSION 4D: c.1970 – the ends of painting (2)

Convenors: David Homewood (UMelbourne) and Paris Lettau (UMelbourne)

The late 1960s and early 1970s is often remembered as a moment of radical artistic transformation. Strategies related to the forms of the readymade and installation grew increasingly popular. In order to remove the 'artist's hand' from the production process, artists increasingly outsourced fabrication of their works. The Xerox machine, Instamatic camera and Portapak video became increasingly ubiquitous. In addition, new genres emerged around this time: durational performances made up of everyday gestures and actions, ephemeral artworks located outside the gallery, site-specific interventions that critiqued the museum as a social institution, and theoretical essays about art presented as artworks themselves.

This art-historical development can also be framed in negative terms: as a widespread abandonment of the traditional artistic media of painting and sculpture. Many artists, as well as writers and curators, genuinely believed painting and sculpture had finally exhausted their potential. The traditional forms had become 'sick' – owing perhaps to the weight of their own history, and no doubt exacerbated by Late Modernism's preoccupation with the purification of the medium. The solution was to adopt new forms better capable of responding to their historical moment and materials not burdened with the 'look' of art. Art-historical accounts of the period have often focussed on these novel forms and materials. They are taken as somehow representative or paradigmatic of the period, while artists still working in the ostensibly traditional modes are arguably swept to one side.

Prof. Ian McLean (UWollongong): *Is Papunya painting conceptual art?*

Western Desert painting has often been compared to various Western modernist art styles, particularly abstract expressionism and late Western modernist abstraction. However, the first Western artists to show an interest in the work – such as Tim Johnson, Ulay and Abramovic, and Imants Tillers – were conceptualists whose practice was in opposition to these modernist styles. Abramovic claimed that her whole art practice after her sojourn in the central Australian desert owed its origin to what she had learnt there. Tillers was intrigued that 'the first Papunya' canvasboards were done in 1970-1 ... exactly the same historical period in Australia as

conceptual art'. Tillers, who holds great store in coincidence, went further, claiming that 'Papunya paintings have a very strong conceptual aspect and in several aspects can be identified with the dematerialised aspects of the Australian conceptual art of the early '70s.' This paper considers these claims from an art historical perspective, asking if Papunya painting can legitimately be included in what more recently was called in the 1999 exhibition of that title, 'global conceptualism' – Terry Smith, for example, did not include it in his catalogue essay that considered conceptual art in Australia and New Zealand. Or is the claim that Papunya painting is conceptual art as off the mark as those made for it being abstract expressionist or late Western modernist, showing an ignorance of the history, motives and aims of both Papunya painting and conceptual art.

Angela Godard (QAG/GoMA): *The body as a tool: labour and the art of Robert MacPherson*

Brisbane-based artist Robert MacPherson has been exhibiting for over 40 years. An autodidact, MacPherson's work has demonstrated an interest in conceptual art practices of the 1960s and 70s and has often focused on the act and limits of painting. His varied and capacious practice has also at times taken as its subject numerous work practices and their obsolescence. This paper surveys a little examined aspect of MacPherson's practice: that of its conception and examination of the role of artistic labour. The inherent revaluation of both artistic "work" and the art work itself involved in conceptual art are evident in MacPherson's practice in many ways, as well as his elevation of forms of labour to the status of art. This paper will argue that these are subjects to which the artist has continually returned to in his varied works. This paper will also contextualize these aspects of MacPherson's practice with recent international theoretical explorations of the subject of labour, and will find that the question of labour provides a revealing new reading of the artist's work.

Prof Andrew McNamara (QUT): *Conceptual Modernism: Inversions, Confirmations, Conversions, Aberrati*

Australian art culture has always been obsessed with a geo-cultural framework of understanding. Hence, its emphasis on time space metaphors: time lag, delay, tyranny of distance, or a centre-periphery model of dependent influence. It is not temporal or spatial distance alone that is always significant, but the catalytic impact of contact between differing, sometimes tangential, cultural and artistic frameworks. Inversion theories are an interesting side effect of this dynamic. Until recently, such formulations would have been regarded as provincial, no matter how interesting. The example of minimal and conceptual art practices of the late 1960s, early 1970s is fascinating in this regard because it is either regarded as a type of endgame or as heralding a transformation from modernism to contemporary art. Yet, in nearly all cases the artists believed they were following the trajectory of modernism — either reclaiming its earlier spirit or maybe radicalizing it — but essentially remaining within its parameters. By following modernism to the letter, the practices ended up somewhere wholly foreign. Similar examples occur in Australia, such as Robert Hunter's studious minimal-conceptual painting or Robert MacPherson's assiduous adherence to Greenberg's vision of modernism (with art work that Greenberg would barely recognise as modernist in his framework). This pattern of conforming to produce "aberrance" requires a different (art-historical) conceptual treatment than the time-space models of the geo-cultural framework. Instead, they suggest dynamic, uneven, complexity of chemical models. This paper will suggest that such alternative concepts may even provide a better assessment of contemporary art in a global framework today.

SESSION 4E: Light, sight, meaning (2): contemporary perspectives on sight and sense

Convenor: Georgina Cole (National Art School)

This panel examines the construction and meanings of sight and seeing in works of art and architecture. It aims to elucidate the ways in which seeing is conceptualised in various cultures at various times and to examine how and what the viewer of an artwork is made to see. For example, close looking may reveal that a building's meaning may be dependent on the changing light of the day, something concealed by the static nature of photographs. At the same time, the panel addresses the representation of the absence of sight and the critique of vision. The senses of touch, hearing, taste and smell have animated art making and art writing since the Renaissance. Blindness, for example, was explored in art and philosophy as an alternative epistemology exclusive of sight. A thorough questioning of vision continues to inform contemporary artistic approaches that expose the limitations of ocular-centric perspectives.

Papers were invited that explore any dimension of seeing, including the absence of visual perceptual faculties and the critique of vision. They could address the relationship between seeing and knowing, seeing and believing, and seeing and surveying, as well as the curtailing of sight and the role of light in shaping visual experience. Artworks or works of architecture could be discussed for their representation of various kinds of seeing or relationship to natural or constructed light sources. Representations of blindness might also be considered, as well as artworks that privilege non-visual forms of sensory engagement.

The panel invited close examination of the evident yet overlooked aspects of artworks, elements that have been marginalised in art historical discourse. It examines the means by which artworks construct and characterise different kinds of sight, which contributes, in turn, to the imaging, imagining and inhabiting of place. The consideration of the absence of sight and the critique of vision relates to the bodily apprehension of objects and spaces and is suggestive of the themes of place, earth and being that GEOcritical entails.

Dr Andrew Yip (AGNSW/ UNSW): *Second sight: drones, video games and the displaced subjectivity of the war on terror*

The War on Terror has been accompanied by a bombardment of images. The most memorable of these, such as the Wikileaks video *Collateral Murder*, exemplify the depersonalised mass media image of twenty-first century warfare: the strangely displaced subjectivity characteristic of an era of combat that has produced not only the surreal situation of young American pilots flying drone incursions into Pakistan from bases in Nevada, but an accompanying string of robotic acronyms that sever combat from its human capital. Artists such as Harun Farocki, Baden Pailthorpe and Jannane Al-Ani have begun to utilise the technologies and vision of military surveillance and the virtual worlds of military simulators to analyse and critique the politics of not only the war on terror, but also how narratives of identity and place are created around conflict zones. This paper looks at the virtual eye of military surveillance as a second sight in contemporary art.

Anita Holtsclaw (QUT): *To see and be seen: cinematic constructions of gender and spectatorship in contemporary screen-based art*

Discussions of gendered representation in film, and contemporary art practices that draw on cinematic language, largely focus on the inescapability of the authorial male gaze. This focus fails to account for how female artists and filmmakers negotiate gender in their work. It fails to acknowledge how women practitioners have learnt to see, and neglects the agency of the viewer. 'To see and be seen: cinematic constructions of gender and spectatorship in contemporary screen-based art' addresses how gendered representation can be structured within visual art practice through a series of creative moving-image works. Using the aesthetic language of French New Wave cinema as its primary point of departure, this paper investigates how gendered representations are constructed by and seen through cinematic language. In doing this it proposes latent possibilities present within the dominant gaze created by patriarchal relations of power. By exploring these possibilities through creative works that explore the gendered syntax of film through light-sensitive constructions of spectatorship, this paper reveals how the 'masculine' authorial gaze is learnt culturally; and how this can be recontextualised by the female artist. The authorial gaze addressed in this paper is not limited to the vision of the auteur, but also addresses our desiring gaze as spectators, where I argue, the architectural conditions of viewing directly construct and alter our scopophilic engagement with cinematic representation.

This paper will primarily focus on practitioner reflection into how contemporary screenbased installation art practice constructs and fragments dominant conceptions of cinematic sight. Additionally it will discuss how feminist film theory, Luce Irigaray's writing on the gaze, notions of spectatorship, and left-bank examples of French New Wave cinema have informed these works.

Boni Cairncross (UNSW): *Sensorial propositions / spaces of resistance: Lygia Clark and performance*

The sensorial turn in recent decades has seen a thorough critique of the privileging of sight within cultural practices. Arguments put forward by cultural theorists, such as David Howes and Constance Classen, dismantle the notion of the senses as 'natural faculties'. Instead Howes and Classen argue that the five-sense hierarchy is a particularly western construction of perceiving the world underpinned by the classical division of 'mind and body'. In visual arts, Modernist aesthetics draws on this western conceptualization of the senses, the rationalist paradigm, by privileging sight and its associated modes of reception – contemplation and critical distance. The Modern gallery, the white cube, supports and continues this focus, functioning as a visual machine that disconnects 'art' from the chaos of everyday life. However, the proliferation of performance practices in the visual arts during the mid-twentieth century prompted a radical redefinition of what art can constitute by generating a space by which the body became a medium in its own right. Thus we see the emergence of artistic practices that privilege a multi-sensory engagement of the bodies of artists and audiences alike. The heightened focus on socially-embedded bodies and the experiential that performance art creates presents a privileged space in which we can examine how the human sensorium is not only constructed through the social, but exists in a constant flux.

This paper will examine the performative 'propositions' of Brazilian artist Lygia Clark and her approaches that privilege a multi-sensorial and participatory engagement. The recent MoMA retrospective exhibition – *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art* – will feature as a case study of the problematics of sensorial aesthetics within the institution. These propositions not only explore the dominant sensory conditions of creation, but can be seen as attempts to confront and re-condition sensory perception, producing alternative modes of being. Such arguments are persuasive and can be perceived in the practices of many contemporary artists. Crucially, this paper asks if these artistic propositions offer an embodied critique of the rationalist sensory paradigm that privileges sight, or do these artistic approaches simply produce multi-sensory encounters that facilitate sensing for sensing's sake?

Dr Jan Hogan (UTas): *The glimpse: seeing sensation*

My paper explores the importance of the glimpse in the gaining and depiction of knowledge about the land. As we walk, our sight is in constant negotiation of the terrain around us, we glimpse protuberances and hollows, light and shadows, accumulating knowledge on our way. I propose that depictions of the land developed from 'the glimpse' portray an understanding of the environment in terms of sensation. The peripheral knowledge gained from the glimpse informs the body as it locates itself, allowing the body to make constant decisions and adjustments. Knowledge is gained through bodily sensations rather than through intellectual enquiry.

The western landscape tradition has privileged the gaze, allowing for the land to be possessed and appropriated for colonialist interests. Juhani Pallasmaa (2005) argues that 'The hegemonic eye seeks domination over all fields of cultural production, and it seems to weaken our capacity for empathy, compassion and participation in the world.' The art traditions of Indigenous Australians have demonstrated other ways of depicting the Land that emphasise the need for negotiations and the interrelationship between nature and culture. Through a discussion of my drawing practice I will propose how knowledge gained by the glimpse and how it is used in Aboriginal art can develop an empathetic response to the land and its inhabitants.

SESSION 4F: HELL: underworld, unworldly, ungrounded earth (2)

Convenor: Dr Edward Colless (UMelbourne)

As an antique and medieval underworld, the geological and geographical depiction of Hell obtained some spectacularly horrifying art direction: vast canyons seared by howling infernal winds; rivers of filth and boiling blood sweeping along corpses or souls clotted together like clumps of effluent; miasmic and volcanic swamps of ordure blistering, bubbling and bursting plumes of acidic stench.... The modern theological prospect of Hell as a non-place, a lonely condition of banishment or even self-imposed exile from God's grace, appears timidly and dismally unimaginative in comparison with the panoramic vigor of this tellurian terror. But with the increasing likelihood of the human species being unable to adapt to (or evolve in compliance with) the vector of global warming, and with human extinction a possibility in the twenty-second century, Hell seems to have a place again: and its address is Planet Earth.

Guillaume Savy (VCA, UMelbourne): *Sun and Soil*

Antique metaphysicians, these men who pointed at the sky, called humanity's earliest days the "Golden Age". A solar era of purported harmony, a celestial perfection from which things could only go downhill. Archaeological digs, in a noteworthy act of alchemical reversal, address however the Palaeolithic, the old "Stone Age", as our ancestral home-time: an era during which mankind, still gesta(l)ting language, could look at itself and see the earth staring back; a wholeness beyond the grasp of our symbolising mind, a Planck scale of cognition.

In this paper I discuss this axis of soil to gold, or earth to sun, upon which we locate ourselves. I focus in particular on the traumatic connotations of dirt, catastrophe and graveyard evoked by the earth, and on our efforts to absolve the earth of itself through itself. Following the example of the alchemical magnum opus—seeking to transform lead into gold, to arguably tether the earth back to the sun—which requires *nigredo*, a descent into chthonic darkness, as an unavoidable stage of its process. Be it by the operation of the romantic sublime, or in the construction of subterranean utopias, it is through an ungrounding of our planet, that we render its bleak promises bearable.

Ruth Watson (UAuckland) & Gregory Kan (Independent scholar): *Telluric Insurgencies: what lies beneath*

The verb, to map, carries intriguing histories. One version is *to bewilder*... now, unsurprisingly, obsolete: map, v^2
Obs. Rare-1.... 1425, "Festivals", 175 in Leg. Rood (1871) 216: "*Oure lady.... Lay still doted and dased, As a woman [sic] mapped and mased.*"

Since when was the map allowed to *be wilder*? The fifteenth century also had *mappies*, *mappekyns*, and *mapkins*, meaning creatures that nibble, thereby applicable to bunnies or rabbits. Europeans rushing towards increasingly rational paradigms didn't want to be in the hutch with a brood of bunnies, so they too were lost from our language, and the map – today as ubiquitous as any rabbit – often forgets its origins in desire. The wildness of the map allows entry to other spaces. Land movement or displacement can be revealed through a process called interferometry. A black and white orthographic underlay is overlaid with false colour imagery produced by satellite data, collected after an event such as an earthquake. The two representational tropes collide abrasively; like a dangerous clown, their dirty rainbows disturb. Landforms are rendered undecipherable beneath the explosion of colour and this method chimes with the devastations implied. When used in conjunction with a model of the human body, interferometry takes on the option of getting under the skin, fusing surfaces with the subcutaneous. Exterior worlds merge with the architectures beneath, inspiring convulsive geophagies. One geology supercedes another; new orders are formed, none of them certain or automatically benign. This paper presents art, writing and the interrelationship of the two, flexing and (con)foundings alternative geostories.

Dr Edward Colless (UMelbourne): *Incurable Black Earth: At the altar of Molech and in the Morlock's Pit*

Ecological sentiments of supplication to the Earth – honoring it as planetary ark in space, maternal body, nest or cradle, or (worse still) as homeland and territory or world – sound like sanctimonious fairytales in comparison with the indiscriminately irradiating noise of the terrestrial tectonic cataclysms manifesting as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, or the unleashing of viral pandemics. And perhaps the most treacherously anthropocentric sentiment of all: the Earth bearing the security of *terra firma*, as the ground, *nomos* and dwelling place of life (ethical, intellectual, artistic).

Ought we not redeem the Earth from these timid pieties, even if it means acknowledging earth's geology, geography and geomancy as black storms, as groundless matter, traumatic eruptions, putrescent sludge, molten horror, or as corpse-grinder and death-drive: catastrophic and convulsive? Georges Bataille invoked a black, fecal sun as the occulted, eclipsed counterpart to the generative star

of spiritual illumination and sublunary fertility; we might address in turn a black, damned earth. Its abominable hell is not a prison reserved for punishment, but an *oubliette* for the incurable: a cannibal's dung pit and sink-hole of the universe.

SESSION 4G: Critical Actions in Fashion meets Art Projects

Convenor: Dr Llewellyn Negrin (UTas) and Dr Jess Berry (Griffith)

Since the 1980s there has been an increasing convergence between fashion and art. Thus, fashion designers on the one hand, have increasingly explored the role of dress beyond its functional purposes while on the other, artists have incorporated dress in their exploration of more embodied forms of art practice. The conceptual convergences between fashion and art projects often have at their core, a desire to engage with social and political critique especially in relation to the institutions and systems of power that shape them. Projects such as Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonk's collaboration with Erwin Wurm critiquing the perfected body through performative sculpture; to Martin Margiela's re-assessment of the fashion system through deconstructivist and subversive practices; or Lucy Orta's clothing and architecture projects that confront social and environmental issues, are among many recent examples where the blurring of the boundaries between fashion and art has led to new critical paradigms. This panel invited papers from any historical period that consider the work of artists, designers or fashion/art collaborators who have worked with dress as a social tool, political action, resistance, intervention or institutional critique. This session engages with the conference theme insofar as it seeks to highlight the way artists, designers and theoreticians from differently grounded and located practices are seeking to challenge established institutional structures and power hierarchies through the development of hybrid creative practices which transgress traditional boundaries.

Dr Llewellyn Negrin (UTas): Art meets fashion: a paradoxical relationship

While artists have generally tended to have a critical view of the fashion industry and its commercial imperatives, in recent times, as the worlds of art and fashion have increasingly converged, some of these artists are now being commissioned by fashion designers to make work for their stores or advertising campaigns. A case in point is Cindy Sherman who, despite her long history of creating works that subvert the ideals of feminine beauty promoted by the fashion industry, has entered into a number of collaborations with the fashion industry including a series of advertisements for *Comme des Garçons* in the mid 1990s and for designer Marc Jacobs in 2006. Similarly, Silvia Kolbowski, whose work reflects critically on the ephemeral nature of fashion and its relation to consumerism was commissioned by *Comme des Garçons* to install work in their store in SoHo, New York in 1995. This paper will consider the significance of this partnership between the fashion industry and those artists who are critical of it. It will be argued that while at first glance such collaboration seems contradictory, it ultimately serves to further the fashion industry's commercial interests. For, the more haute couture signals its apparent distance from commerce through its association with art, the more its monetary value increases. The economic success of fashion houses such as *Comme des Garçons* rests on their ability to promote themselves as being 'above' commerce. Haute couture's disavowal of its commodity status through the employment of advertising that appears as art, and boutiques that appear as galleries, is one of its main marketing ploys. In this context, the embracement by leading fashion designers of artists who criticize the operations of the fashion industry thus paradoxically represents the ultimate promotional strategy.

Dr Wes Hill (Southern Cross): Hipster fashion and 'and aesthetic of knowingness'

Once a countercultural label, the term 'hipster' has now reached a new level of notoriety. The protracted demise of this subcultural identity has been widely discussed in recent years, a phenomenon Mark Greif describes as "the degeneration of our most visible recent subculture." Chiefly classified in terms of their fashion sense and role in gentrification, hipsters have also become the target of a backlash against a certain type of cultural stance – against those who present themselves as knowing, ironic, hip and socially detached. The term has its roots in the Beat Generation of the 1950s and early-1960s, and was famously used in Norman Mailer's 1957 essay, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," to describe a new type of white, postmodern neo-avant-garde figure; a composite of the "negro", the "bohemian" and the "juvenile delinquent". From Mailer's countercultural stereotype, which rests on an image of the African American as a subaltern being of cool knowledge, exoticised passion and violence, today 'hipster' is more often than not used pejoratively, as if condescendingly describing an elite member of Richard Florida's 'creative class' in a post-GFC era.

The proposed paper will investigate the recent vilification of the hipster in relation to an 'aesthetics of knowingness', in an attempt to unpack attitudes towards cultural connoisseurship and the crisis of value that has come to define recent art. I will historicise the hipster as a type of postmodern and post-postmodern flaneur, detailing the work of the British artist Mark Leckey as an example of how hipster-like ideals are posed in relation to contemporary, post-critical practice. Leckey, who won the Turner prize in 2008, often discusses his work in relation to the 'casuals' that emerged in Liverpool in the late '70s and early '80s – a fashionable subculture of working-class youth who wore designer sportswear, training shoes and asymmetrical hairstyles. Described by Leckey as akin to being in disguise, casuals – like hipsters – adopted an aesthetic style that was highly visually literate, prone to being misread yet ultimately seeking subcultural recognition. Through historical contextualisation, the proposed paper will discuss the fashion-centric signifiers of the hipster as a way to speculate on post-hipster trends in contemporary art.

Dr Grace McQuilten (RMIT): *Sudanese-Australian Art & Fashion: The Socio-Political Context*

This paper explores the social and political context of Sudanese-Australian art and fashion through the examples of the Twitch Women's Sewing Collective and Miss South Sudan Beauty Pageant. How are such practices, which emerge at the intersection of art and fashion, critically engaging with issues of social exclusion, systemic inequality and cultural diversity in a climate epitomized by the catchphrase "team Australia"?

In the last decade, we have seen a rapid growth in the population of Sudanese-Australian migrant communities in Australia, for the most part stemming from humanitarian policy in the late 1990s and early 2000s, in particular a surge in Sudanese refugee arrivals during this time.¹ Settlement of Sudanese migrant communities has been the subject of controversial public debate, played out in the media through much reportage of gang violence, police interaction, emphasis on cultural differences, and negative portrayals of community settlement.²

Interventions and responses to these issues have arisen in artistic practices that draw on visual and material cultures, including textile art, photography, fashion, video, documentary, craft and design – that critically engage with, and transform, mainstream representations of Sudanese-Australian communities. International comparisons, for example in pop culture in America and fashion in South Africa, help to explain the use of art and fashion as practices that engage with structural inequalities in unexpected ways. The Miss South Sudan beauty pageant has been the subject of much popular interest and also criticism in the media, particularly as a result of perceived outbreaks of violence at the time of this event, and provides a complex case study for the relationship between art, fashion and social inequality in Australia. A less controversial, but equally important example is the Twitch Women's Sewing Collective, a fashion-based social enterprise in Melbourne started by women from the Twitch language group of South Sudan.

This paper considers questions of visibility, power and political processes in relation to migration, and maps emergent forms of political engagement emerging at the intersection of art, fashion and pop culture.

Notes

¹As the ABS reports, "Between 1996–97 and 2005–06, the country of birth composition of humanitarian migrants changed as a response to changing international circumstances. Over the past few years, people born in Sudan and Iraq have had the highest number of Humanitarian Program migrants. In 2003–04, 38% of all humanitarian migrants (or around 4,500 people) were born in Sudan. In 2005–06, over one-fifth (22%) of humanitarian migrants (3,700 people) were from Sudan with a further 11% coming from Iraq." Migration Review 2007.

²Recent work has been undertaken by the Centre for Advanced Journalism, University of Melbourne to redress these negative media representations of Sudanese communities through media training. There has also been a lot of research looking at police interaction, racial profiling and justice issues, including the Victoria Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's report of December 2008 *Rights of Passage: The Experiences of Australian-Sudanese Young People*; the recent Victorian Legal Services Board report, 'Boys, you wanna give me some action?' *Interventions into Policing of Racialised Communities in Melbourne – a Report of the 2009-10 Racism Project* and most recently the Victoria University research project *Don't Go There: Young People's Perspectives on Community Safety and Policing*, released in August 2010. What emerges in this literature is that visual difference is an important factor in the way migrant communities experience settlement in Australia.

Dr Amy Jackett (Charles Darwin): *Indigenous Art and Fashion in the Top End*

Indigenous art and fashion have an increasing connection in Northern Australia. In many ways, Merrepen Arts Centre of the Nauiyu Nambiyu (Daly River) Community has led the way in the past year with newfound national exposure through the 2013 Melbourne Cup Fashions on the Field, senators in parliament, the gifting of their fabric to the Duchess of Cambridge, their 2014 festival which focused on fabrics, and Kieran Karritypul's award-winning textile work in the 31st Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award. Also in 2014, the inaugural Australian Indigenous Fashion Week (AIFW) featured a diverse range of garments made with fabric designs from Indigenous art centres across Australia, including screen-printed dresses from Babbarra Designs.

Textile production lies at the heart of many Top End art centres which play an integral role in remote communities as they bring people together and facilitate the continuation of culture and cultural education. However, funding cutbacks have recently placed pressure on generating enterprise income. There is tension as to whether indigenous fabrics should remain a hand-made, high-end art product, or whether other avenues should be considered if they will yield a greater, sustainable income. Using Merrepen Arts and Babbarra Designs as key examples, this paper explores different approaches to textile production and cross-cultural collaborations with artists and fashion designers in the Northern Territory. It also illustrates how traditional designs are translated and blended with new designs and how these remain intimately connected to stories and places.

SESSION 5A: Drawing as a mode of thinking GEOcritically

Convenors: Annalise Rees (UTas) and Antonia Aitken (UTas)

How are contemporary drawing-based practices revisioning the environment?

This session will open up discussion in relation to current drawing practices that investigate environment as a primary source. It is intended that the session will instigate dialogue between artists who use varying methodologies to engage with environment, examining how it is contextualised and expressed within creative practice. Drawing-based practice will be thought of broadly to consider drawing within an expanded and trans-disciplinary field, to consider how these types of methodologies are used to encounter and respond to site. The questions raised aim to investigate the destabilisation of established languages and systems of 'knowing' and especially those historically associated with drawing and landscape. The following questions are starting points for discussion.

How does contemporary drawing practice:

- *Subvert established pictorial frameworks?*
- *Interrogate monological narratives and linear time concepts?*
- *Ask questions about belonging and displacement?*
- *Expand our thinking in relation to knowing and unknowing?*
- *Operate as a methodology of exploration?*
- *Establish alternative modes of re-thinking our relationship to environment?*

Annalise Rees (UTas): *Navigating the unknown in relation to place, space and drawing*

In 2014, the technologically driven present, satellites and GPS track and record our every move. Earth has become a 'known' quantity. It is 45 years since Apollo 11 successfully landed on the moon, and yet the world's oceans, parts of the Amazon, the great icy wastes of the Antarctic and the whereabouts of flight MH370 remain largely, if not completely unknown. We have developed complex tracking and mapping systems to help us contain, categorise and cope with the uncertainty of being. But, despite these sophisticated systems, gaps in understanding, comprehension and knowledge surround us, not only through ignorance but perhaps more dangerously through arrogance and reliance upon the authority and totality of such systems. To accept that we don't know and that uncertainty is in fact a useful state of being, to promote enquiry, curiosity and wonder (these being crucial drivers of progress and innovation), is perhaps a more productive approach for examining our presence in the world. This paper will discuss an investigation into how drawing based methodologies might present experience of the unknown in relation to maritime navigation and cartography as locative systems and practices. The paper will investigate current studio research, discussing the use of the studio/exhibition space, field sites and the artist journal to consider how the unknown may be physically and conceptually manifest through the explorative practice of drawing and its use as a means of encountering place and space.

Antonia Aitken (UTas): *Drawing contested ground*

Using a multidisciplinary approach to making with walking and drawing at its core, I am investigating how a slowed-down and embodied awareness may invite a more dialogical or conversational interaction with land. As writer Rebecca Solnit describes 'conversation is, among other things, a more democratic model, as well as one closer to the systematic interdependence of ecosystems, than the monologue of mastery and masterpieces...' (Solnit 2001, p. 5).

How can we then use walking and drawing processes to begin to breakdown or query some of the dominant pictorial and narrative frameworks that continue to stifle meaningful relationships and understanding between indigenous and settler Australians about land?

How do we formulate responsible, ethical attachments to land that are not based on ownership as a form of entitlement? As Deborah Bird Rose reminds us 'Country is not ours... country is an intergenerational, interspecies gift of life' (Rose 2014). I am exploring this notion of the gift, believing that for necessary change to occur, it is essential to enter into a dialogical relationship with country that stems from acknowledgment, responsibility and celebration.

In my current research I am also looking notions of multiple-place encounter as a more communicative project that moves us away from a framework of favoring 'special' or 'home place' attachments. How do we carry various locations and attachments with us as we move through new spaces and how does the journeying process allow us to interact and locate ourselves within a broader worldview or 'other' narratives?

This paper will look at a range of walking and drawing experiments that explore these questions and track my journeying across country in search of a better understanding of the way different environments inform and are informed by us.

Sarah Pirrie (Charles Darwin): *Runoff – drawing a becoming nature*

This paper examines the material processes of drawing installation *Runoff*; first exhibited in 2012 at Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA) and recently as part of a group exhibition *135th, Meridian, East*, at Australian Experimental Art Foundation (AEAF). Made within the geo-climatic conditions of Darwin, Northern Territory, *Runoff*, explores Naturing (becoming Nature) through spatio-temporal variants, including climatic influences on the medium of paper/pulp, beach collecting after anthropogenic disturbances combined with wet and dry season relational changes to matter and form and the formless between. Central to the premise of this artwork is the meta-language of drawing as an act of trace and a continuum of action and process that re-enacts environmental conditions and complexities of the Human/Nature nexus.

Walking along the beach today is an active pursuit undertaking changes of lexicon from Nature Reserve to fishing spot, Traditional land to recreational zone (to name but a few). With each affect comes a myriad of processes and behaviours for Nature. The beach, or to be more expansive the littoral zone including intertidal mangrove environments, has become a socio-ecological hotspot reflecting a new era of human forming Nature. This land sea borderline articulates the dichotomy of nature and culture, within a framework of use and identity. Here anthropogenic disturbance is seen at a local or regional level. It is the "pulse" disturbance of community events and attitudes; the annual Darwin Beer Can Regatta or firework celebrating Territory Day, the weekend fishing trip or sunset drinks.

Runoff considers the ontology of becoming in a time related practice that choreographs the emplacement of people within the environment through physical positioning and new cognitive imaginings of Nature. The material processes of *Runoff* understand drawing within contemporary notions of materiality, permitting the sourcing of content through the material presence of the artwork. Drawing a becoming Nature allows for a dynamics of matter to provoke thought: matter is charged with a divergent force

allowing multiple players (artist, beer can, drinker, sea sponge, storm) to exist beyond representation, traversing Walter Benjamin's world of horizontal fields, symbolic and enclosed signs.

SESSION 5B: No-man's-land

Convenor: Dr Martin Walch (UTas)

One represents a critical moment in humanity's relationship with our planet. The entrenched battlefields of the Western Front were the sites of cataclysmic events that landscaped France and Germany on a scale and intensity never before seen. Significantly, it was the stalemate of trench warfare and the need for daily updated maps of the conflict that led to the technological synthesis of the camera and the airplane. This moment was the critical point that led to the development of photogrammetry and ultimately to satellite imagery and the contemporary geo-referencing of data and images. The session invited contributions that stimulate discussion to reveal a range of interpretations of what No-man's-land might mean - what places and spaces might embody the concept in the present day, and how those spaces might be represented - and to consider the cross-over between wasteland and wilderness – when is a place one or the other or both?

Dr Martin Walch (UTas): No-man's-land: wasteland and wilderness

This paper explores the historical origins of No-Man's-Land and investigates its aesthetic character through reference to images from the battle-fields of The Great War. This framework is then used as a basis from which to interrogate the representation of No Man's-Land in video games, and to speculate on its meaning and significance in contemporary visual culture.

Prof Deborah Barnstone (UTS): Between the walls: the Berlin No-Man's Land reconsidered

The Berlin No Man's Land is a stunning metaphor for the complex German engagement with history; it is at once a mark in the urban landscape, a green space, an urban wilderness, a scar, a "zipper," and a souvenir. When the first vestiges of what would become the notorious Berlin Wall appeared in 1961, no one anticipated the complex spatial construction that it would eventually become.¹ Initially a roll of barbed wire put in place to prevent East Germans from leaving for the West, in the first week or so border guards and citizens alike escaped by simply jumping the barrier (as the famous photograph above shows). Over time the barrier developed into a double concrete wall, one east and one west, with a complicated "security zone" in between comprised of watch towers, sand beds, tank barriers, dog runs, and bright lights, because it quickly became apparent that a simple wall was not adequate to prevent East Germans from escaping. The area between the walls was called the Death Strip and the No Man's Land. In the Cold War Era, it was a symbol of the division of Germany; the brutality of the East German regime; and the ineffectual politics of the period. It was incidents like the shooting death of Peter Fechter, a young East German who tried to escape by scaling the wall and running through the No Man's Land, that gave the zone its names. He was detected, ordered to stop, then shot multiple times just inches from the west side of the wall. East German security police rendered West Berliners helpless by threatening to shoot them if they tried to rescue Fechter who bled to death in full view of horrified West Germans. Since the wall came down in 1989, the zone has had a mixed reception. Germans have engaged with the space of the No Man's Land in numerous ways. Large portions of the former No Man's Land quickly became swatches of urban wilderness as the offensive elements like the watchtowers and barbed wire were removed. In some instances, the areas have been quickly built over obliterating all traces of the negative memory; in other instances, they remain wild urban parks or neglected empty lots, largely overlooked; and in other cases, such as the Wall Park, the defensive area has been reconstructed in order to counteract the human tendency to forget unpleasant historical facts. Yet this too is fraught with difficulty since it is a simulation of the historic condition that, many argued, cheapens historical fact and cannot reproduce the real horrors of the zone. While the Wall itself has attracted substantial attention, the No Man's Land has not. Yet the No Man's Land is as significant as the wall(s) itself. Its story is one of the aesthetics of memory and rupture and the complex perceptions of a neglected urban space.

¹ Recent book that treat parts of the story include: Brian Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: U. Chicago, 1997); Andrew J. Webber, *Berlin in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008); Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: UMP, 2005).

John Chrisstoffels (UCanterbury): Fields of green: green fields, green screens and green rooms

Beginning with the wider contexts of utopian ideas by Artists, pre and post, World War 1 (1914-18). I would like to suggest the complicit role played by contemporary artists and filmmakers in creating a globally fast moving 'no-man's-land' of art that in turn further supports Globalised Industries and the loss of personal identity. In particular I would like to suggest that Marc Augé's anthropological ideas of transient space as the 'non-place' and how it might be extended from Shopping malls and Airports into Cinemas and Galleries.

I also believe that Augé's discourse on 'non-places' maps extremely well on top of the ideas of 'no-mans-land' circa 1914-18 and I will expand on this.

While Marx saw work as a necessary evil, William Morris in his novel 'News from Nowhere' (1890) took a Darwinian approach to his Libertarian Socialist beliefs whereby he believed that, with the right aesthetics, eventually we would develop a natural love for 'toiling in the fields' alongside a profound and deeper understanding of our human condition. For many, the traumatic aftermath of

World War 1 erased any idea that Mankind was capable of anything other than it's own destruction. Arguably artist movements like Bauhaus and de Stijl, with particular interests in architectural concerns, sought to provide us with a minimalist 'padded cell' for Mankind protecting it from self-harm through a new utopian enlightenment based on abstract aesthetics of colour space and geometry.

The 'no-man's-land' in the fields of Flanders is relocated into the modern transient architecture of the 'non-place'.

Today the contemporary gallery and museum becomes a 'no-mans-land' where we might gaze and contemplate but it is not our own space. Gallery staff will remind us that we cannot touch the work for fear of damaging it and we cannot photograph it for fear of exploiting the work. This lack of tactile engagement is further exasperated with conceptual concerns and the rise of digital moving image throughout galleries creating the Post-medium condition whereby even our ideas about artists and art making must be left at the door.

It is however at this point a paradox might occur where the absence or obsolesces of a medium leads us to fully appreciate its most purest essence. No doubt we are at the beginning of a new epoch.

Sheridan Coleman (Curtin): *Seeing, imaging and imagining unvisited lands*

With the eponymous Blue Marble picture and the advent of unmanned satellite photography, the human project of mapping the world's geographical forms is all but over. Not only has the human animal settled in nearly every land area in the world, but it has developed innumerable systems for giving visual form and representation to those places it doesn't itself inhabit. The most contemporary of these systems for picturing wilderness and wasteland is the online satellite imaging technology Google Earth. Patched together from countless aerial photographs, Google Earth presents a tapestry-like image of the whole world, and also features images taken by remote-controlled robots of underwater landscapes, close-ups of impassable mountaintops and an archive of historical landscape pictures. Such pervasive visual access to places that the user might not have been to or indeed ever go to is unprecedented, and gives rise to a multitude of questions about what it means to visualise places that we can't see with our own eyes.

This paper will raise three key questions, which will be addressed and illustrated with works by selected artists including the presenter, Will Kwon, Susannah Castleden, Mishka Henner and Max Pam.

1. Is the project of mapping and discovering the whole world over? What is there left that the reach of mankind hasn't touched in some way?
2. What draws us to imagine wilderness and uninhabited landscapes from afar, then indeed to represent them in artworks? What is the philosophical or psychological role of untouched wilderness to those of us living in urban and domestic settings?
3. Can seeing the world, whether through the portals of Google Earth, a landscape painting or a travel brochure, amount to experiencing place in some form? What can we know from looking through these portals to other places? Are they simply mirrors of longing?

SESSION 5C: Feminist Practice and Visual Arts Research: Australian contexts

Convenor: Dr Courtney Pedersen (QUT)

The creative practice-as-research paradigm has significantly influenced Australian artists over the past decade. Increasingly, artists in this country and elsewhere are seeing postgraduate research as an integral part of their creative development. The critical and reflective perspective required of practice-led and practice-based research has much in common with feminist research methodologies, but an ongoing productive dialogue between these two fields is yet to be established. Feminist scholarship has evolved significantly over the last four decades, not only reinterpreting 'history', but also reimagining the structure of knowledge and our engagement with it. As Griselda Pollock has pointed out, feminist interventions in art are fundamental reassessments of both "the objects we are studying, and the theories and methods with which we are doing it." This applies equally to processes of making. Although practice-led and practice-based research has become increasingly popular, its strategies for contributing to academic discourse still seem to be contested and/or undervalued. With the ERA research assessment ranking process still a live issue for university art schools and departments, this panel asks what feminist art practice can contribute to visual arts research culture, and considers what has been achieved by feminist practice within the institutional frameworks of creative practice research so far.

This session topic is grounded in Australian experiences of institutional research culture and the rise of creative practice-led research in the visual arts. By exploring the possible connections between creative practitioner research and feminist research methodologies, this session aims to contribute to the critical discussion of new approaches to the visual arts in this country.

Dr Karen Hall (UTas): *Corporealities: practice led research and the embodied production of knowledge*

This paper will explore the intersections of feminist theories of embodiment with practice-led research. In particular, this intersection opens up questions about the extent to which practice led research requires us to take seriously corporeal modes of knowledge, and their place within the academy. I return to Elizabeth Grosz's argument that the body is 'the repressed or disavowed condition of all knowledges' and 'may create upheavals in the structure of existing knowledges'. Practice led research requires a continuous navigation of the tension between theory and practice as represented by the outcomes of research – the tensions between artefact and text, between process and resolution – and their value and legitimisation within a university environment

increasingly concerned with measurable indicators. Grounding the production of knowledge in the body, the lived experience of a particular place and time through a specific, gendered body, requires us to conceptualise and articulate the research process differently. In a dialogue between corporeal feminist philosophy, drawing primarily on Grosz and Rosi Braidotti, and practice led research methodologies, I will explore how corporeal presence and material engagement inform the production and perception of knowledge in the academy.

Jasmine Symons (University of South Australia): *Ambiguity makes sense – for a mum and a painter*

My contemporary painting practice is a surrogate relationship through which I explore the puzzles of family life. My autobiographical research project looks at the possible connections between being a mum and a painter, and explores why the two roles can make sense for each other. Painting as a vehicle for working things through has unique qualities because it taps into bodily and emotional ways of knowing. It's also a safe and private place to explore possibility. My thoughts about the relationship between being a mum and a painter are enlivened by the work of writer, philosopher and social critic Julia Kristeva who has developed a framework for understanding art practice as a powerful form of reflexive critique.

I'm especially interested in ambiguity and ambivalence, for example the way family life can simultaneously feel expanding and restricting. Though it can be precarious to admit to conflicting feelings as a mother, ambivalence, unlike indifference, is an active position which I see as healthy. I'm proposing that transition is a permanent state of being for a mum, and that painting can be a useful tool for negotiating transition. A sense of fusion between myself, my kids and my maternal ancestry, of our individual and collective identities, makes everything feel interwoven and timeless. As both a mum and an artist, experience is constantly being shuffled around in a non-linear time frame, being processed and put into place.

Dr Rachael Haynes (Deakin): *Performing, lecturing, exhibiting: the archival impulse and the feminist performance lecture*

Contemporary art practice has benefited significantly from the work of feminist art historians to reclaim and insert women artists into the canon of art history by focusing on the gender of art discourse, a critique of art history itself and the process of legitimization, which it performs. However, as Mira Schor points out, patrilineage continues to pay homage to the mega fathers and mega sons of art history and determines the legitimacy for both male and female artists of the next generations. Schor argues that artists of the 1990s generation were the first who could also claim artistic matrilineage. As an artist of this generation, this practitioner reflection will discuss feminist research methodologies as utilised within visual arts practice through the lecture performance. This is a hybrid creative format, which intervenes in pedagogical methods and forms of knowledge transmission. It explores language and performativity in relation to feminist art histories and facilitates the construction of a living archive – one that re-interprets the significance of feminist practices, past and present, and emphasises the subjective and affective register of this interpretation. This paper posits a conception of practice and its documentation as a living archive, one that does not necessarily evolve in a linear or chronological manner, but looks for other resonances between works and ideas. In this way, it links to Griselda Pollock's provocation of the Virtual Feminist Museum, and the significance of an encounter between and with artworks assembled by a feminist logic. The lecture performance becomes a text score that can be re-performed in the context of each exhibition. This paper will discuss the creative potential of this mode to embrace an embodied form of knowledge making and to (re)perform feminist art epistemologies.

SESSION 5D: Open Session: Narrative, spectacle, audience

Convenors: Dr Deb Malor (UTas) and Dr Karen Hall (UTas)

Dr Toni Ross (UNSW): *Questioning Debordian orthodoxy on spectacle culture: Thomas Demand's High Line billboard project (2013)*

Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) opens with the following claim: 'In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation.' Debord's Marxist-inspired critique of post-WWII capitalism creating a world where all social relations are mediated by the all-pervasive images of consumerism retains a powerful hold on contemporary visual art and criticism. The Debordian legacy resurfaces when spectators who gaze upon or contemplate instances of spectacle are cast as passive consumers, devoid of critical consciousness or political empowerment. A related aspect of Debord's thesis, signalled by the citation above, characterises the world of constructed appearances (representation itself) as a fatal deviation from genuinely felt or experienced life.

This paper draws on Jacques Rancière's recent questioning of these elements of Situationist wisdom to discuss a large-scale public artwork produced by Thomas Demand in 2013. The work was commissioned for the High Line, a public park built on an abandoned rail line elevated above the streets of Western Manhattan. Demand contributed to the High Line Billboard series where prominent artists are invited to present artworks on a large, old-fashioned billboard adjacent to the High Line at the junction of West 18th St and 10th Avenue. Each work in the series is installed for one month, and alternates with advertising by a parking facilities company that owns the billboard space and donates it to the High Line Art program. The brief for artists invited to participate in this program

is to 'engage with the uniqueness of the architecture, history and design of the High Line and foster productive dialogue with the surrounding neighbourhood and urban landscape.' The demand that public artworks engage with the history and localised qualities of the sites in which they are placed has become commonplace in recent decades. From the perspective of spectacle culture critiques, such stipulations might be viewed as an antidote to the abstraction of spectacle from lived experience identified by Debord in the 1960s. However, I will argue that Demand's billboard image for the High Line questions rather than affirms certain verities of Debordian orthodoxy.

Elsbeth Pitt (NGA): *Mike Parr: the dream, the image, locates itself*

Between 1978 – 1982 the Canberra School of Art Gallery staged a series of performance art programs titled ACT 1, ACT 2 & ACT 3. Australian artist Mike Parr participated in ACT 1 and ACT 3, devising and presenting a series of pieces 'conceived around the theme of absence of the artist'.

In the first of these performances, *Dream 1*, Parr set himself adrift in a small boat at night, later recounting his experiences to students gathered at the Canberra School of Art. In *Dream 2*, Parr instructed a friend to write down whatever was in his mind on waking, an action Parr would instigate by remotely turning on a blue light in his friend's bedroom when walking by the lake at early morning; transcripts of these waking moments became available to Parr's 'audience' only in retrospect. An additional performance staged as a part of *Dream 2* involved setting a fire at the edge of the lake that could be vaguely seen and smelt as it burned throughout the night.

The absence of the artist in these works entailed the blindness of his audience. Rather than rely on sight as the primary means by which his audience should experience his work, Parr's performances cultivated a range of spaces – temporal, empathic, sensorial, imaginary – through which he and his audience were required to move. This paper will chart the corporeal and conceptual spaces inhabited by the artist and his audience in an effort to understand the ways in which Parr's work relies on non-visual perception. The paper will also draw on the Geocritical theories of Bertrand Westphal in order to reassemble these spaces, and in doing so, will endeavour to gauge the Australian unconscious that Parr claimed Lake Burley Griffin symbolised, writing, 'The image, the dream, locates itself'.

Felicity Chadwick (NAS): *Altered origins: Bakhtiari – companion of chance*

Viewed from a slightly self-indulgent perspective this paper narrates the story of 'Bakhtiari – Companion of Chance'; a dual-sided textile embodying the artist's memories of a life split within and across different continents. But as Bakhtiari's story unfolded, the artist's world and her vision of it expanded, until the story within the silken folds became one that may be globally recognised. Bakhtiari's mutations are symbolic of life-stages that are not ordered, not fixed, and possibly interchangeable at any time. Tea-dyed and digitally-printed with surreal personal landscapes, the handcrafted silk object's phases reflect the artist's life stages;

- Stasis - 'a period of little or no evolutionary change in a species', a phase of little change, where physical and emotional boundaries are easily conceived and recognised.
- Mutation Mantle 1 & 2 - 'the act or process of changing', a reversible nomad's mantle embodying memories from multiple geographies.
- Transformation Mantle - 'change in form, appearance, nature, or character', a reversible shell, assumed or discarded in response to the environment.

Realising that existence comes not from compartmentalising geographies as disjointed matter, but rather a dawning that although physically separate, the geographies are emotionally linked and that one cannot exist without the other. A body and soul, form and matter existence; a personal hylomorphism where the soul is represented by the corporeal self, and the geographies by the body. A life where actualities are separate and where emotions coalesce, evolving into a single potential.

A separate yet connected existence where the corporeal self, although altered, rather than the geography, is the constant. Where the self moves and adapts to the different geographies, sloughing off the outer mantle of one environment to assume an alternate mantle in response to the other environment, where the inner-psyche has shifted to embrace a wider, more encompassing global outlook.

Unlike the lives of the more than 50 million displaced people around the world today the artist's comfortable nomadic life is one of choice, with an expected 'happy-ever-after' ending. Sadly, multitudes of displaced people have been forced to trudgingly escape their homes through imposed necessity; an exodus precipitated by extreme actions of the myopic few. The second part of the paper will glance at the artist's attempt to arrive at a personal reconciliation and understanding of the current toxic state of the world.

The transformation of Bakhtiari – Companion of Chance is personified by an accompanying video of an interpretative contemporary dance performed to a soundscape of personal memories.

SESSION 5E: Geographies of professionalisation

Convenors: Danny Butt (UMelbourne) and Rachel O'Reilly (Independent writer and curator, Amsterdam/Berlin)

The expansion of the market for university qualifications (for artists, curators, and administrators) has combined with the rise of the international biennial/festival to produce expanded and geographically synchronised fields of professional art discourse.

Professional practitioners travel in circles of international prestige, evaluated less by their development of an institutional archive and more by their relationships with contemporary producers and institutions.

The historical marker of professionalism was a certain autonomy and a disinterested, neutral, public character that distinguished itself from mere exchange-value. However, the expansion of mechanisms of professionalisation through privatised universities and cultural institutions questions this disinterest. As Samuel Weber notes, professionalism requires “a certain kind of place, or, more precisely, a certain kind of placement.” The professional is in a structural location, programmed by global forces, that formats particular places and sites in terms of their potential for profit.

The dynamics of this “placement” have been on display in actions against corporate sponsors of large-scale exhibitions funded from industries including oil and gas, mandatory detention, and speculative finance. Sponsoring corporations are actively profiting from the neoliberal and neocolonial transformation of territory, property and democratic governance. The political economy of the presenting institution supports a curatorial ideology of neutrality: a withdrawal from thinking the political as the means of holding institutional power. This neutrality is justified in an appropriation of art’s “autonomy”, yet the autonomy of the artist is never global. As Guattari describes it, “the task of the poetic function... is to recompose artificially rarefied, resingularized Universes of subjectification.” In other words, the aesthetic work of resingularisation can be seen as moving in an opposite direction to globalising neutralisation.

This panel asks how artists, critics and curators orient themselves to the geographical imaginary of professionalisation, navigating local and global forces that produce contemporary artistic subjectivities.

Rachel O’Reilly (Independent writer and curator) and Danny Butt (UMelb): *Indentured aesthetic autonomy on the professional frontier*

Australia can be seen as a nation that has effectively neoliberalised its cultural infrastructure over the last three decades, constructing a speculative futurity for an institutionally unbound professionalism that subtracts a historical ‘labour’ consciousness from dominant forms of production. The effect of this “turn” in the visual arts has gone relatively untheorised in critical art writing, partially due to its coincidence with a relatively healthy public arts funding until very recently, a transition that brings institutionalised “professional” art work and workers into line with a global paradigm of deskilling and proletarianisation.

In this space, the coincidence of curatorial and artistic professionalism with the neoliberal State form risks working away at a frontier of a frontier - a frontier of labour, value and place - whereby the reimposition of speculative limits for capital, or the demand for foundation, results in what Angela Mitropolous describes as “calls for genealogical order” that could be observed both in calls for and against the boycott of the 2014 Sydney Biennale.

As nominally “public” institutional art on the biennial becomes increasingly bound up in contractual play in the post-welfare state, fine art’s residual discourses of modernist autonomy appear not simply paradoxical, but indicative of a “machinery of fealty” that circulates the performative defence of aesthetic autonomy precisely to suppress the material-symbolic dynamics of its contractual base.

Exploring Mitropolous’ elaboration of the contractual and the subject-form, and responding to recent re-examinations of aesthetic and political autonomy by UK and European theorists and historians in the wake of major arts cuts and populist takeovers of re-nationalized funding programs of export-oriented utility, this paper pays special attention to the spatial and contractual fix of neoliberal disposition in the ‘contemporary’ to ask questions about affective composure, forms of negation, divestment and reinvestment as alternate forms of professional response-ability.

John Bywater (UAuckland): *Thinking ‘art’ as a local correspondent: doing art criticism from Aotearoa New Zealand*

The increased integration of art from Aotearoa New Zealand into global circuits over the past several decades resembles countless other realignments between locally-identified art scenes whose involvements with the Western, modern tradition have also been located away from its main concentrations of financial and cultural capital. In parallel with broader changes in the practice, reception and circulation of art from Central and South America, Africa, Asia, the former socialist world, and the Middle East, the technological, ideological and conceptual shifts that intermingle in ‘globalisation’ have realigned many Western European and North American art worlds in widely differing but comparable ways. Further, as Western modernism’s pretensions to universality have increasingly broken down, conditions for a closer approximation of a planetary discourse have arrived.

Aotearoa’s situation is one that provides a distinctive and useful vantage on the re-thinking of the Western modern conception of art as something of (potentially) universal address. The import and export of art and artists, alongside and in tandem with access to international discourse online, in print, and through travel, has enabled work identified with Aotearoa to be more worldly and to participate effectively in a wider cultural conversation. For the critic—as, of course, for artists, their audiences and art historians—what might be understood to be ‘New Zealand art’ has been transformed. To avoid internalising any element of exoticism in play, it is necessary to ask how in the valuation of both New Zealand-identified art outside New Zealand and work from elsewhere within New Zealand, the critic can avoid deferring reflexively to appearances of either indigenouness or cosmopolitanism but must think critically within these wider horizons, in order to be alert to and help to establish the local value in contributions within them.

Local Time [Natalie Robertson, Alex Monteith, Jon Bywater and Danny Butt] (Auckland): *Local Time: Manukau*

Extending our historical work on cultures of water in specific sites, in 2014 Local Time began an inquiry related to the Manukau Harbour in Auckland as part of the *Other Waters* exhibition and event. Our methodological approach explores histories of the land through the negotiation of mana whenua (local authority), in this case with Te Kawerau a Maki, tangata whenua (the local people) of Waitakere/Te Waonui-a-Tiriwa above the harbour's northern head. This engagement started with the question of whether and how it might be appropriate to camp on the site of Te Ahua pa, using our habitual mode of camping as an inquiry into place, and whether and how water from local puna wai (freshwater springs) could be provided for the audience and participants in the exhibition. This presentation reflects on the significance and challenges of the process and its contribution to the Local Time collective's ongoing negotiation of its relationship to the professional ground of the contemporary art environment.

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Design: Marisa Molin
 Compile: Wendy Roberts
 Edit: Deb Malor, who takes all responsibility for errors of fact, typos and liberties with the texts.
 Cover image: Sue Henderson
Chockstone, Uphill Buttress, 2010, ink on paper, 119 x 40