Unruly Objects

**Thursday,
4 December 2025**

University of Western
Australia, Perth

The University of Western Australia acknowledges that we are situated on Noongar land, and that Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge. We pay our respects to the traditional owners of the lands on which we live and work across Western Australia and Australia.

AAANZ Conference WiFi — UnifiGuest
username **aaanz2025** password **Unruly25!**

Registration and info
Reception at LWAG

Morning tea,
10:30 - 11.00am - LWAG, Verandah

Chill out space (snacks, drinks)
LWAG, Schenberg Study Room

Lunch
University Hall, Dining Hall

Afternoon tea station
2.00 - 3.00pm - IAS

Unruly Book Fair
11.00am - 2.00pm - University Hall, K Common

Lost on Campus map
studentvip.com.au/uwa/main/maps

MATILDA BAY

MATILDA BAY RESERVE

St Thomas More College

University Hall

P23
P38
P2
P35
P35
P39
P4

MOUNTS BAY ROAD

HACKETT DRIVE

TENNIS COURTS

Music

SOMERVILLE AUDITORIUM

Dolphin Theatre

Recreation Centre

Octagon Theatre

P28

P1

RILEY OVAL

The University Club

P3

Law

OAK LAWN

The Refectory

Economics & Commerce

Social Sciences

Student Central

Guild Village

Admin East

Hackett Hall

ARTS

PATRICIA CRAWFORD COURT

Saw Promenade

WINTHROP AVENUE

Winthrop Underpass

WHITFELD COURT

Winthrop Hall

TROPICAL GROVE

GREAT COURT

Reid Library

JAMES OVAL

Gillett Promenade

St Catherine's College

Administration

P22

SUNKEN GARDEN

GGGL

P19

PHYS

P16

MATH

IAS

EZONE NTH

Civil & Mechanical Engineering

STIRLING HIGHWAY

PARK ROAD

LWAG

P20

Computer Science

Robert St Building

P18

Media Services

Child Study

Electrical Engineering

P15

Fairway Underpass

Trinity

FAIRWAY

P40

Ken & Julie Michael Building

P17

COOPER ST

CLARK ST

EDWARD ST

Oceans Institute

P34

Broadway Building

Masonic Hall

P29

Love House

55 Broadway

P44 P45

HAMPDEN ROAD

GORDON STREET

P31

P30

Education

Nedlands Lecture Theatre

ALVA

Conference

ALVA LAWN

Cafeteria

ALVA Studio

Early Learning Centre

P42

Clifton Street Building

CLIFTON STREET

STIRLING HIGHWAY

SCALE (m)
100
50
0

N

LIFTS
ACCESSIBLE RAMPS
ACROD PARKING
PUBLIC TRANSPORT
ACCESSIBLE TOILETS

DAY 2 — THURSDAY 4 December

8.30 - 9.00am	Registration
9.00 - 10.30am	Panels

LWAG: First Nations led programmes

Panel #21: **Light of Day – Working creatively with Indigenous photographic archives**

CONVENOR/RESPONDENT — Stephen Gilchrist

PRESENTERS — Cim Sears, Rebecca Richards

ARTS:[G59] Fox Lecture Hall

Panel #22: **Unruly bodies —** *Session #1 — Embodied sovereignties and decolonial memory. Land, flesh, and ink as archives of resistance — rethreading ancestral space into the present*

CONVENOR — Angela Viora, *Monash University*

PRESENTERS — Dorell Ben, *University of Queensland*, Ruihan Ma, *University of Sydney*, Justine Fletcher, *Toi Rauwhārangi Massey University*

ARTS:[159] Austin Lecture Hall

Panel #23: **Absence and abundance in nineteenth-century art history —** *Session #1*

CONVENOR — Emily Eastgate Brink, *University of Western Australia*, Elisa deCourcy, *Australian National University*

PRESENTERS — Molly Duggins, *National Art School*, Elisa deCourcy, *National Gallery of Australia*, Catherine Webb, *Australian National University*

PHYS:[G41] Ross Lecture Theatre

Panel #24: **Unruly interventions: artistic and curatorial disruptions in the museum —** *Session #1 — Institutional refusals and curatorial disruptions*

CONVENOR — Arvi Wattel, University of Western Australia

PRESENTERS — Nathan mudyi Sentance, Powerhouse Museum, Lauren Booker, *University of Technology Sydney*, Savannah Smith, *City of Melbourne art and heritage collection*, India Urwin, *University of Sydney*

GGGL:[107] Woolnough Lecture Theatre

Panel #25: **Contemporary art histories —** *Session #1*

CONVENOR — Darren Jorgensen, *University of Western Australia*

PRESENTER — Terry Smith, *University of Pittsburgh*

MATH:[G17] Cheryl Praeger Lecture

Panel #26: **Container technologies: on Learning, labour, and legacy**

CONVENORS — Narelle Desmond, *University of Melbourne*, Hélène Frichot, *University of Melbourne*

PRESENTERS — Zoë Sofoulis, *Western Sydney University*, Catherine Bell, *Australian Catholic University*, Narelle Desmond, *University of Melbourne*, Ela Egidy, *University of Melbourne*

ARTS:[G60] Arts Lecture Room 4

Panel #27: **Leaking, haunting, resisting, redefining: rethinking the parameters and functions of therapeutic objects**

CONVENORS — Amelia Wallin, *La Trobe Art Institute*, Jacina Leong, *RMIT University*

PRESENTERS — Kate Moss, *University of Western Australia*, Briony Galligan, *Victorian College of the Arts*, Abbra Kotlarcyzk, Shannon Lyons, Lisa Liebetrau

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EZONENTH:[109] Learning Studio

Panel #28: **How aesthetic objects reassemble publics: dissensus and things-in-common in socially engaged art —** *Session #1*

CONVENOR — Tintin Wulia, *University of Gothenburg*

DISCUSSANT — Patricia Spyer, *Geneva Graduate Institute*

PRESENTERS — Angela Goddard, *Griffith University*, Ryan Presley, Tintin Wulia, *University of Gothenburg*

EZONENTH:[111] Learning Studio

Panel #29: **Unruly materialities and counter-geographies —** *Peformance - lectures*

CONVENOR — Azza Zein

PRESENTERS — Hannan Jones, *Glasgow School of Art*, Alexandra Peters, Tina Stefanou, *Victorian College of the Arts*, Miriam La Rosa, *Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre, City of Greater Dandenong*, Azza Zein

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ARTS:[G61] Arts Lecture Room 5

Panel #30: **Open Session #3**

CONVENOR — Brett Mitchell

RESPONDENT — Oron Catts

PRESENTERS — Beth George, *University of Western Australia*, Cami Mancilla, *University of Nebraska–Lincoln*

ARTS:[G62] Arts Lecture Room 6

Panel #31: **Open Session #4 —** *Collection case studies: power, patron and tactility*

PRESENTERS — Maurice O'Riordan, *Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education*, Loren Adams, *University of Melbourne*, Emily Whelan, *University of Melbourne*, Shae Legall

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10.30 - 11.00am	**Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery —** Morning Tea
11.00am - 2.00pm	**K Common, University Hall —** Unruly Book Fair
11.00 - 12.30pm	Panels

LWAG: First Nations led programmes

Panel #32: **Trace – Indigenous printmaking practices**

CONVENOR — Andy Quilty

PRESENTERS — Brett Nannup, Karen Mills, Zena Cumpston

ARTS:[G59] Fox Lecture Hall	*Panel #33:* **Unruly bodies** — *Session #2 — Bodies out of order: feminist, neurodivergent, and queer interventions. Bodies that "do not function properly" by normative standards — reclaiming value, visibility, and agency*
	CONVENOR — Angela Viora, *Monash University*
	PRESENTERS — Cecilia Sordi Campos, *RMIT University*, Sioban Unwin, *Curtin University*, Madeleine Dobson, *Curtin University*, Simeran Maxwell, *National Gallery of Australia*
ARTS:[159] Austin Lecture Hall	*Panel #34:* **Absence and abundance in nineteenth-century art history** — *Session #2*
	CONVENOR — Emily Eastgate Brink, *University of Western Australia*, Elisa deCourcy, *Australian National University*
	PRESENTERS — Emily Eastgate Brink, *University of Western Australia*, Miguel Gaete, *University of Melbourne*
PHYS:[G41] Ross Lecture Theatre	*Panel #35:* **Unruly interventions: artistic and curatorial disruptions in the museum** — *Session #2 — Embodied and material interventions*
	CONVENOR — Arvi Wattel, *University of Western Australia*
	PRESENTERS — Michelle Broun, *La Trobe University*, Gretchen Stolte, *University of Western Australia*, Lizzie Riek, *University of Queensland*
GGGL:[107] Woolnough Lecture Theatre	*Panel #36:* **Practitioners of Contemporary Art Histories** — *Session #2*
	CONVENOR — Darren Jorgensen, *University of Western Australia*
	PRESENTERS — Jon Tarry, *GZA Runway*, Oron Catts, *University of Western Australia*, Lizzie Muller, *University of New South Wales*
MATH:[G17] Cheryl Praeger Lecture	*Panel #37:* **Fathoming the unfathomable**
	CONVENOR — Paul Sutherland, *Curtin University*
	PRESENTERS — Inga Fillary, *University of Auckland*, Luke Smythe, *Monash University*, Sam Beilby, *University of Western Australia*
ARTS:[G60] Arts Lecture Room 4	*Panel #38:* **Women, art, architecture and the avant-garde to neo-avant-garde**
	CONVENORS — Joanne Drayton, Annabel Pretty, *Unitec School of Architecture*
	PRESENTERS — Kirsten Hudson, *Curtin University*, Kate Rhodes, *State Library Victoria*, Annabel Pretty, *Unitec School of Architecture*, Georgina Downey, *University of Adelaide*
EZONENTH:[109] Learning Studio	*Panel #39:* **Dusting off: the Peter Mudie archives** — *Roundtable*
	CONVENOR — Jo Law, *University of Wollongong*
	PRESENTERS — Lucas Ihlein, *University of Wollongong*, Louise Curham, *Curtin University*, Eleanor Suess, *Deakin University*, Paul Boye, *University of Western Australia*, Lee Kinsella, *Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery*
EZONENTH:[111] Learning Studio	*Panel #40:* **Surrealist objects and uncanny affect in contemporary visual culture** — *Session #1*
	CONVENORS — Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*, Vick Souliman, *University of Sydney*
	PRESENTERS — Anna Hoyle, *University of Melbourne*, Nazarinna Marie Macalintal, *Curtin University*, Penelope Bartlau, *RMIT University*
ARTS:[G61] Arts Lecture Room 5	*Panel #41:* **Open Session #5** — *Body Fugitive*
	PRESENTERS — Deb Fisher, *RMIT University*, Susan Buchanan, *RMIT University*, Vivien Bedwell, *Queensland College of Arts and Design*
ARTS:[G62] Arts Lecture Room 6	*Panel #42:* **Towards a civic economy of the unruly**
	CONVENORS — Fred Cahir, *Federation University*, Chris McAuliffe, *Australian National University*, Amelia Wallin, *Australian National University*
	PRESENTERS — Jacqueline Chlanda, *University of Queensland Art Museum*, Anna Hickey, *University of Queensland Art Museum*, Peta Rake, *University of Queensland Art Museum*, Fred Cahir, *Federation University*, Chris McAuliffe, *Australian National University*, Amelia Wallin, *Latrobe Art Institute*
12.30 - 1.30pm	**University Hall, Dining Hall** — Lunch
1.30 - 2.30pm	**Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery** — **Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Māori, Pasifika caucus**
2.30 - 4.00pm	Panels
LWAG: First Nations led programmes	*Panel #43:* **Boorloo/Walyalup art and cultural histories**
	CONVENOR — Brenda L Croft
	PRESENTERS — Michelle Broun, Brenda L Croft, Tjalaminu Mia, Richard Walley OAM
ARTS:[G59] Fox Lecture Hall	*Panel #44:* **Unruly bodies** — *Session #3 — Unruly aesthetics: memory, performance, and archival disruption. Reframing memory and history through performance, post-crisis embodiment, and feminist archival practice*
	CONVENOR — Angela Viora, *Monash University*
	PRESENTERS — Emma Round, *National Gallery of Australia*, Xusha (Sasha) Chen, *Massey University*

ARTS:[159] Austin Lecture Hall	*Panel #45:* **Shadows of their former selves: researching puppets as unruly objects**
	CONVENOR — Sam Bowker, *Charles Sturt University*
	PRESENTERS — Andrew Yip, *University of New South Wales,* Nicole Anae, *Central Queensland University*, Lynne Kent, *UNIMA Australia*, Emily Collins, *Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory*
PHYS:[G41] Ross Lecture Theatre	*Panel #46:* **Unruly interventions: artistic and curatorial disruptions in the museum —** *Session #3 — Relational practices and critical reframing*
	CONVENOR — Arvi Wattel, *University of Western Australia*
	PRESENTERS — Karen Blennerhassett, *University of Auckland*, Isabel Baker, *State Library Victoria*, Mia Palmer-Verevis, *Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts,* Isabel Di Lollo, *University of Western Australia*
GGGL:[107] Woolnough Lecture Theatre	*Panel #47:* **Populism, exhibition politics, and the aesthetics of mass appeal**
	CONVENOR — Chelsea Hopper, *Monash University*
	PRESENTERS — Chelsea Hopper, *Monash University*, Emeline Robinson-Shaw, *Monash University*, Douglas Maxted
MATH:[G17] Cheryl Praeger Lecture	*Panel #48:* **Objects in flight: fragments of home(s) and fugitive domesticities**
	CONVENOR — Nevena Mrdjenovic, *University of Technology Sydney*
	PRESENTERS — Amina Kasar, *University of Sydney*, Gabrielle Bergaman, *Museum of Brisbane,* Sherita Sharma, Karen Sorensen
ARTS:[G60] Arts Lecture Room 4	*Panel #49:* **'Signs leave the desert of codes': no topic against the historicists**
	CONVENOR
	Robert Cook, *Art Gallery of Western Australia*
	PRESENTERS
	Patrice Sharkey, Rachel Ciesla
EZONENTH:[109] Learning Studio	*Panel #50:* **Surrealist objects and uncanny affect in contemporary visual culture —** *Session #2*
	CONVENORS — Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*, Vick Souliman, *University of Sydney*
	PRESENTERS — Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*, Victoria Souliman, *University of Sydney*
EZONENTH:[111] Learning Studio	*Panel #51:* **Open Session #6**
	PRESENTERS — Amanda Morgan, *Victorian College of the Arts,* Felicity Andrews, *University of Queensland Art Museum*, Maayan Amir, *University of the Negev*
ARTS:[G61] Arts Lecture Room 5	*Panel #52:* **How aesthetic objects reassemble publics: dissensus and things-in-common in socially engaged art —** *Session #2*
	CONVENOR — Tintin Wulia, *University of Gothenburg*
	DISCUSSANT — Patricia Spyer, *Geneva Graduate Institute*
	PRESENTERS — Tara Heffernan, *University of Melbourne*, Elia Nurvista, *Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut*, Roy Thaniago, *Geneva Graduate Institute*
4.00 - 5.30pm	**PHYS:[G41] Ross Lecture Theatre —** *Keynote #3* **— Brenda L Croft**
6.30 - 8.00pm	**Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA) — Welcome drinks and exhibition tour Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA) —** RSVP: pica.org.au/kambarang-birak-exhibitions-tour/ **_____gs (Shop 13, 375 William Street, Northbridge) — 'Metalux' Exhibition Opening —** 6pm to late

Panel #21

LWAG: First Nations led programmes

Light of day – working creatively with Indigenous photographic archives

CONVENOR/RESPONDENT

Stephen Gilchrist

Belonging to the Yamatji people of the Inggarda language group of northwest Western Australia, Dr Stephen Gilchrist is an Associate Professor in the School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Western Australia and Co-Director of the Berndt Museum. He is a writer and curator who has worked with the Indigenous collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2003-2005), the British Museum, London (2008), the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2005-2010), and the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College (2011-2013). Stephen has curated numerous exhibitions in Australia and the United States and has written extensively on Indigenous Art from Australia. From 2012-2016 he was the Australian Studies Visiting Curator at the Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University. He has taught Indigenous Art in Australia and in the United States. He works with major Australian and international institutions and contributes to international dialogues surrounding the scholarship and interpretation of Indigenous art and culture with a focus on Indigenous curation as an expression of sovereignty.

PRESENTATION #1

Cim Sears

Abstract: A multidisciplinary First Nations artist, Cim shares the revelatory and deep connections between her own creative art practice and the photographic archives in the Berndt Museum. After discovering members of her Stolen Generation family were contained within the archives, Cim now works with the archives to professionally rehouse, categorize and prepare them for accessibility to the Indigenous families of WA. Her extensive (Government held) Indigenous family records dating back to 1902 has given her an instinctive understanding of the museum's archives and their complex history. The importance of photographic archives as a window into finding family and understanding lost or supressed histories will be discussed in relation to Cim's own creative techniques in her search for family and true narratives.

Cim Sears' art practice contemporises a journey of reclaiming her First Nations mother's stolen identity and how their relationship became a complexity of dreamlike scenarios, of startling discoveries and an extraordinary life together. Having obtained a Master of Visual Arts by Research at ECU in 2020, and a Photography and Arts degree prior, Cim now works out of a studio at Goolugatup/Heathcote and is also a member of the Swan River Print Studio. Painting, photography, printmaking, text, ceramics and archives constitute Cim's multidisciplinary art practice that has become a lifelong search to piece together lost fragments of her Western Desert ancestral history and culture.

PRESENTATION #2 — The Muda (history) is bigger than the archive: using photos for communicating and exploring Adnyamathanha identity

Rebecca Richards

Abstract: Rebecca uses the curation of the *Minaaka Apinhanga exhibition* of Adnyamathanha photographs at the South Australian Museum as a research methodology to explore the significance of photography in contemporary Adnyamathanha culture. The exhibition process demonstrated how photographs exert a powerful influence on Adnyamathanha identity and interconnectedness. This process also highlighted the fundamental role of the spirit in contemporary and historical Adnyamathanha perspectives on and interpretations of photographs. *Yura Muda* (Adnyamathanha history) serves as the epistemological paradigm within which this research is situated.

Rebecca is a proud Adnyamathanha and Barngarla woman from the Northern Flinders Ranges. Rebecca was the first Indigenous Rhodes Scholar and the first Indigenous graduate of the University of Oxford. She recently completed her PhD in Anthropology at the University of Adelaide and currently serves as the Collections Manager at the Berndt Museum. She continues to work in the preservation of Adnyamathanha and Ngarrindjeri history through digital storytelling and cultural archiving. Her work bridges tradition and innovation.

Panel #22

ARTS: [G59] Fox Lecture Hall

Unruly bodies

Abstract: Across three sessions, this panel brings together eight papers exploring the body as an unruly object—resisting aesthetic norms, institutional discipline, and cultural containment. In art history and contemporary practice, bodies often appear as excessive, fractured, politicised, or hybridised sites of meaning. Following Grosz's (1994) notion of the body not as a static entity but as "a situation", and Jones' (1998) theorisation of embodied subjectivity in performance, we ask: how have artists mobilised unruly bodies to disrupt dominant narratives?

From the cultural tattoos of a Rotuman-Gujarati woman asserting ancestral sovereignty, to Gade's hybridised Buddha bodies that dissolve the boundaries between tradition and modernity in contemporary Tibetan art, these works foreground embodiment as political and philosophical terrain. Practices of counter-memory surface in deconstructed colonial tools transformed into wearable acts of decolonisation, and in feminist performance photography reconfiguring memory in the wake of COVID-19. Other projects confront personal and collective silences—whether through menstrual blood as an aesthetic and political expression of infertility, or through neurodivergent body-minds challenging compliance-driven pedagogies. Archival activism emerges in the case of Frances Phoenix, whose feminist protest art merges domestic craft with public demonstration. Unruly fashion practices by Leigh Bowery, Michaela Stark, and Nicol and Ford reject normative body ideals, creating garments in dialogue with queer and trans self-representation.

Together, these presentations traverse Indigenous epistemologies, queer and feminist art histories, disability and neurodiversity studies, and postcolonial critique. They position the body not merely as a subject or image, but as an aesthetic strategy of rupture—an active agent that exceeds, reframes, and reimagines what art can do.

CONVENOR

Angela Viora, *Monash University*

Dr Angela Viora is an artist, educator, and scholar from Italy, currently living on the unceded lands of the Kulin Nations (Naarm/Melbourne). She lectures in European Languages and Cultures (Italian Studies) at Monash University, where she integrates the study of language, literature, and history with the study of the creative arts, art history, popular cultures, and media. Viora's core practice is body-based performance art. She works at the nexus between performance art and studies, artivism, European and migration studies, education, and art history and theory. As an expat obsessed with the humans-space relationship and the socio-political aspect of art, she researches on the body-place relationship, identity and sense of belonging as permeable processes, through an interdisciplinary and phenomenological approach.

Formally trained in visual and performing arts, art history, theory and critic at the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts (IT), she then completed a PhD at Monash University (Centre for Theatre and Performance) in 2019 with a practice-led thesis in performance art. Viora has presented her work internationally over the years, including at BOAA – Biennale of Australian Art, Daegu Art Factory (SK), the MAXXI Museum in Rome (IT), and the 12th Istanbul Biennial (TK). She has been participating actively in major international conferences in the fields of Italian and migration studies, performance studies, education and pedagogy, and the creative arts. These include AAANZ, PSi - Performance Studies International, ACIS Australasian Centre for Italian Studies, the Diaspore Italiane symposia, LaSalle Performance Pedagogy & Practice, and TaPRA.

Viora has been teaching European languages and cultures, and art history for +15 years at Italian and Australian Institutions, including at the Italian Institute of Culture in Melbourne and at the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts in Turin. She's currently part of the educational pilot project PhotoVOICE in collaboration with colleagues from Monash Australia, Monash Prato, and the University of Padua (IT). Over the years, Viora has worked extensively as a researcher and a curator in interdisciplinary, community-engaged art projects both in Europe and Australia, in partnerships with institutions such as the Polytechnic of Turin (Architecture), UniCredit Bank (IT/DE), the Italian Ministry of Justice, and the City of Melbourne. She's a member of the Brimbank Arts Advisory Committee for Public Art & Community Engagement (VIC) and collaborates with the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV).

Viora's interest in making socially engaged, site-specific art within communities reflects in her research: her latest art project 'The P.R.omised Land – New Italians in Australia' (2023-24) was a solo exhibition and interactive cultural project at CO.AS. IT. Museo Italiano in Naarm/Melbourne, merging photography, live performance, video screening, language translations, and a symposium. Viora has published internationally on performance and public art, artivism, embodiment, education, and audience reception. She is the author of 'The Ecology of the Performance Art Process' (Routledge 2025).

Session #1: Embodied sovereignties and decolonial memory. Land, flesh, and ink as archives of resistance — rethreading ancestral space into the present

Abstract: This panel examines the body as a living archive of ancestral sovereignty and cultural survival. From Rotuman-Gujarati tattoos to reimagined Buddha iconographies and wearable counter-memorials, artists mobilise embodied practices to unsettle colonial narratives and restore interwoven ties between place, history, and identity.

1. *Cultural Tattoos* – ancestral and diasporic identity as sovereign territory.
2. *Unsettled Buddha Bodies* – tradition, modernity, and impermanence in Tibetan art.
3. *Jewellery as a Counter-Memorial* – wearable acts of decolonisation and truth-telling.

PRESENTATION #1 — Cultural tattoos: a Rotuman-Gujarati woman's heterotopic heterochrony

Dorell Ben, *University of Queensland*

Abstract: The Indigenous cultural tattoo is perceived within cultural communities as living entities tethering ancestral memories and identities through inked flesh. The cultural tattoo becomes a visual reality parallel to these ancestral histories. I borrow from Michel Foucault to position myself as a heterotopic map that exists outside normative structures of power and culture, simultaneously within society and other than it. In this paper, I explore the act of the tattoo designs, motifs and patterns as visual sovereignty locating my hybrid body through my cultural heritage as a Rotuman-Gujarati IndoFijian woman. Using my Rotuman epistemology which perceives the world in two parts: the 'Oroi ta (ancestral space) and Ran Te'isi (material, physical space), I posit the cultural tattoos tether the body in the physical space to the ancestral space through an embodiment. I intend to explore the fusion of sacred patterns and designs as agents of return that speak back to colonial powers and assert the cultural tattoo as sovereign territory. I examine the fạ'i and trajva as cultural and spiritual inscriptions existing across time, space, and identity. I examine the unruliness of a cultural pattern, its revival practice that unsettles dominant narratives of a mixed-heritage woman, and my Indigenous diasporic identity. I argue that my artforms and use of the fạ'i and trajva pay an homage to my ancestries. I propose cultural tattoos are a portal to multiplicities as unruly archives of resistances.

PRESENTATION #2 — Unsettled Buddha bodies: rethinking contemporary Tibetan art through the works of Gade

Ruihan Ma, *University of Sydney*

Abstract: This paper aims to rethink how contemporary Tibetan subjectivity can be explained using "Buddha bodies" in the works of Gade (b. 1971), a leading contemporary Tibetan artist in China. Gade's practice is marked by an intense focus on the formal exteriority of the Buddha: replacing traditional Buddhas with pop cultural iconographies and semi or non-human bodies that blur into an archaic, mural-like painterly effect, or experimenting with materials that (de)construct the Buddhas. These unsettled Buddha bodies mediate and are inscribed by the Tibetan lived reality, in which tradition, religion and modernity entangle, hybridise, and ultimately dissolve into each other. As his Buddhas, though infused with contemporary mantras, still radiate a theological and transcendental aura, Gade remarked to me, "Might we dream the same dream as a monk did three hundred years ago? Between the contemporary and the traditional, there may be no difference." I understand Gade's artistic attempt as twofold: first, to activate and preserve the visually distinct Tibetan within the modern world; and secondly, to convey the idea of impermanence, beyond any fixed identity. It is the Buddha's existence in this way that works to mute its physicality and reveals its philosophical depth. Asking how has Gade realised this through his formal development, the paper traces Gade's career from the 1990s onward in three stages: the Impersonal Beauty of Buddha, the Game of Deconstructing Buddha, and the Life as a Tibetan "Painter." Based on fieldwork conducted in Tibet in June 2025, this paper argues against readings of Buddhist imagery as a "logo" for the "brand" of contemporary Tibetan art, and advocates for an artist-centred methodology to uncover an art history from the very margins.

Ruihan Ma is a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of Sydney, researching contemporary Tibetan art in China to uncover an art history from the domestic and international margins. Her research interests encompass artmaking and thinking from geographical, cultural, and religious peripheries within China. Ruihan holds a BA from ANU and an MA from the University of Sydney, where she received the Francis Stuart Prize for best thesis in Asian art. She is a recipient of the RTP Stipend and Tution Fee Offset Scholarships (International) and has recently undertaken fieldwork in Beijing and Lhasa with support from the John Anthony Gilbert Research Grant and FASS Travel Grant. She currently serves as the postgraduate representative for the Australasian Network for Asian Art (AN4AA).

PRESENTATION #3 — Jewellery as a counter-memorial offering: mapping a creative practice

Justine Fletcher, *Toi Rauwhārangi Massey University*

Abstract: My practice-led research investigates how I, as a Pākeha contemporary jeweller, understand, interpret, and purpose my work in the socio-historical context of Aotearoa. I define an unruly body as one, that by choosing to interact with an object, picks a side, takes a stand, makes a statement. It is this interaction that defines the unruliness of both body and object as we, human bodies, facilitate action.

My contribution is grounded in my recently completed MFA project, which entailed deconstructing four axes that used to belong to my late father, a Waikato dairy farmer. I interrogated whether subjecting these objects - part of the colonial landscape - to a process of unmaking and remaking, might be steps toward a form of restoration. My work was guided by the writing of prominent Māori academic Moana Jackson as I investigated how I might tackle the thorny subject of decolonisation from my Pākeha perspective. The

third iteration of the axe deconstruction offered people the opportunity to select one of the 224 pieces to wear outside the gallery space in the form of jewellery. Transforming the space into a workshop, I turned the installation into a series of portable counter-memorials. Undertaking to choose a piece, and subsequently wear it as a pendant, ring or pin, was to actively engage in acknowledging our nation's past truths and be sincerely occupied in restoring processes championing tino rangatiratanga, which translates variously from Te Reo Māori to self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, self-government, domination, rule, control, power.

Justine Fletcher is a Pākehā contemporary jeweller, of Irish and English descent. My practice is an ongoing investigation of how I understand, interpret, and purpose ornament in the sociohistorical context of Aotearoa New Zealand. I have recently completed an MFA at Toi Rauwhārangi Massey University, my major project an interrogation of how I define jewellery, and how its potential hybrid nature can reframe and reimagine our interactions with place. I use various cultural mapping systems as structural elements around which to make adorning objects, which I term 'toolornaments', that act as counter-memorials.

Panel #23

ARTS: [159] Austin Lecture Hall

Absence and abundance in nineteenth-century art history

Session #1

Abstract: This double panel wrestles with the tension between absence and abundance in nineteenth-century art history. A period characterised by increased visual saturation, the nineteenth century indulges in the excesses of the encyclopaedic, the proliferation of new media, and novel modes of display. Such visual abundance is often a result of concomitant blindnesses, or a wilful exclusion or erasure. This panel wishes to consider how these mutually informing qualities – absence and abundance– continue to both consciously and unconsciously direct our curatorial and art historical approaches to the nineteenth century. Across a variety of materials, including wax, paint, and print, our panelists consider how absences or abundances function as indications of the unruly nature of the art historical archive in the modern period. In this dynamic between absence and abundance, objects, or their lack, become unruly, uneasily accommodated by established art historical conventions. Across both panels, we aim to complicate colonial archives and the material meaning of objects that evoke this nineteenth-century impulse toward excess or erasure.

CONVENORS

Emily Eastgate Brink, *University of Western Australia*

Elisa deCourcy, *Australian National University*

Dr. Emily Eastgate Brink is an Associate Professor of Art History and Curatorial Studies at the University of Western Australia, where she focuses on the art and visual culture of the global eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her scholarship explores the European engagement with alterity in the later nineteenth century, with an emphasis on Asian 'otherness,' monstrosity, and the invisible threat of disease. As an affiliate with the Humanities for Health and Medicine at UWA, Dr. Brink also lectures on the history of medicine and art, with an emphasis on medical portraiture, the normative body, and representations of illness. Brink's work has broad applications to the visual study of science, the history of material economies, as well as the construction of identity in the modern period. Her work has appeared in a variety of peer-reviewed journals, including *Ésprit Créateur*, *Word and Image*, and *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* and has received support from the Australian Institute of Art History, the National Library of Australia, the Mellon Foundation, and the Stanford University Humanities Center.

Dr Elisa deCourcy (Australian National University/ National Gallery of Australia) is a writer and curator based on Nguannawal and Ngambri Country. Between 2020-2023 she held a prestigious Australian Research Council DECRA Fellowship for the project 'Capturing Foundational Australian Photography in a Globalising World'. Her DECRA project combined archival research, practice-led investigation and consultation with First Nations Communities on heritage collections of colonial photography and colonial art. Elisa has been the recipient of fellowships from the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Austin, Texas (2018); the Australian Academy of the Humanities (2018); the Bibliotheca Hertziana Max Plank Institute of Art History, Rome (2023) and the University of Oxford (2023). She has written about photography and colonial art for the National Portrait Gallery, London, the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris; the National Gallery of Victoria, Naarm/Melbourne and the Powerhouse Museum, Gadigal Nura/Sydney as well as a range of national and international scholarly journals. Her monograph, *Early Photography in Colonial Australia*, will be published by Miegunyah/Melbourne University Press in October 2025.

PRESENTATION #1 — Traversing the Macquarie collector's chest

Molly Duggins, *National Art School*

Abstract: An unruly artefact combining natural history collection, furniture design, and landscape painting, the Macquarie collector's chest (ca. 1818,

SLNSW) is rarely included in histories of Australian art. Crafted and decorated by convicts in Mulubinba (Newcastle) under the supervision of Captain James Wallis and gifted to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, it represents an important early attempt to record and refine the natural resources and topography of the colony of New South Wales for a British audience. Through its compartmental framework, the chest visually orders the flora, fauna, and environments of Mulubinba, replicating in miniature the display tactics of nineteenth-century exhibitions that distilled colonies into abundant object narratives reinforcing imperial agendas.

On first studying the chest, I was struck by the apparent absence of representations of Awabakal people and material culture despite its makers' engagement with the local community. A discussion with Awabakal Elder, Uncle Shane Frost, prompted me to look beyond the chest's colonial framework. For Frost, "the chest is jam-packed with the presence of Awabakal life." Looking at it is like walking through Country. This paper reflects our collaborative effort to explore the cultural and natural ecologies that traverse its drawers and trays, partitions and panels. While Frost explores the chest as a receptacle of Awabakal Knowledge and Custodianship that contravenes the practices of dispossession and fragmentation embedded in its system of collection and display, I examine the interconnections between its materials, specimens, and landscapes, reconstructing the chest's environmental origins in Mulubinba.

Dr Molly Duggins is a lecturer in the Department of Art History and Theory at the National Art School, Sydney. Her research explores the intersections between colonial art, craft, and environments and has been supported by fellowships from the Yale Center for British Art and the State Library of New South Wales. Recent publications include *The Australian Object: Making Material Histories* (co-edited with Dr Georgina Cole and Dr Mark De Vitis, Bloomsbury Academic, 2025); *Sea Currents in Nineteenth-Century Art, Science, and Culture* (co-edited with Dr. Kathleen Davidson, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023); and 'Sailors' Valentines: Shell Mosaics from Victorian Barbados', *British Art Studies* (Autumn 2023).

PRESENTATION #2 — Conjuring Theresa Walker's seaweed photographs: art history at the crossroads of absence and abundance

Elisa deCourcy, *National Gallery of Australia*

Abstract: During the first half of the 1850s, professional colonial artist, sculptor and natural history colourist, Theresa Walker née Chauncy was making salted paper cameraless photographs of seaweeds where kanamaluka/ the Tamar River meets the Bass Strait in northern lutruwita/Tasmania. None
survive today. The record of Walker's photographic activity comes to us from a letter of the itinerant Irish botanist and phycologist William Henry Harvey (held at Gray Herbarium, Harvard University), who visited Walker and wrote to his sister in January 1855 about the seaweed photographic impressions. This is the first recorded instance of a women working with photographic processes in the Australian colonies. Incidentally, Harvey's work with seaweeds is also cited in the frontispiece of Anna Aiktin's *Photographs of British Algae*. In this paper, I employ the age-old art historical ekphrastic tradition to conjure Walker's photographic seaweeds from Harvey's written text. However, Walker was also an artist of significant repute, being the first resident colonial artist of any gender to show (examples of her sculpted work) at the Royal Academy, London in 1841. In order to conjure a sense of Walker's photographs, this paper interrogates her practice as a low relief wax bust sculptor and natural history hand-colourist, mobilising these various mediums' shared vocabularies with new lens-based technologies to excavated a sense of how her experimentation with photography engaged with a broad pursuit of verisimilitude in form and subject.

Dr Elisa deCourcy (Australian National University/ National Gallery of Australia) is a writer and curator based on Nguannawal and Ngambri Country. Between 2020-2023 she held a prestigious Australian Research Council DECRA Fellowship for the project 'Capturing Foundational Australian Photography in a Globalising World'. Her DECRA project combined archival research, practice-led investigation and consultation with First Nations Communities on heritage collections of colonial photography and colonial art. Elisa has been the recipient of fellowships from the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Austin, Texas (2018); the Australian Academy of the Humanities (2018); the Bibliotheca Hertziana Max Plank Institute of Art History, Rome (2023) and the University of Oxford (2023). She has written about photography and colonial art for the National Portrait Gallery, London, the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris; the National Gallery of Victoria, Naarm/Melbourne and the Powerhouse Museum, Gadigal Nura/Sydney as well as a range of national and international scholarly journals. Her monograph, *Early Photography in Colonial Australia*, will be published by Miegunyah/Melbourne University Press in October 2025.

PRESENTATION #3 — Joseph Lycett's colonial landscape art: abundances, absences and significant unruliness

Catherine Webb, *Australian National University*

Abstract: In 1822, colonial-era pardoned convict, forger, and landscape artist Joseph Lycett (1774-1828) left Australia, and returned to Britain. Two years after his return he produced his well-known book, *Views*

in Australia, or New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land Delineated. In this lavish publication of 48 hand-coloured aquatints and two maps, he included images of Sydney, Parramatta, the Hawkesbury, Newcastle, Hobart and the Tasmanian midlands amongst others. The tidy, heavily stylised – even pretty – aquatints, along with enthusiastic texts, give the appearance of colonial order and prosperity. But contrary to the impression given by the published prints, I argue that Lycett's works are replete with unruliness. In this presentation, I make use of my PhD methodology to investigate the relationships between Lycett as landscape artist, his art, and the land on which that art was made. I reveal contextual complexities in those relationships, and the rich abundances and significant absences that render Lycett's work inherently unruly.

Catherine Webb is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Art History and Art Theory at the Australian National University. Her work investigates depictions of landscape in colonial Australia.

Panel #24

PHYS:[G41] Ross Lecture Theatre

Unruly interventions: artistic and curatorial disruptions in the museum

Session #1: Institutional refusals and curatorial disruptions

Prompted by the exhibition 'First Encounters' at the WA Shipwrecks Museum (28 November 2025 - 1 February 2026), this panel examines artistic and curatorial strategies that disrupt, reframe, or challenge institutional logics of power, possession, and display. Taking place alongside the 2025 AAANZ conference in Perth, First Encounters interrogates the legacies of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) through shipwrecks and maritime debris, reframed by new site-specific commissions.

This panel extends that inquiry by focusing on 'unruly' objects—those that resist categorisation, unsettle dominant narratives, or carry unresolved cultural and historical entanglements. Across three sessions, presenters explore interventions in art, science, and ethnographic collections, drawing on diverse strategies including sound-based responses, relational and speculative curating, feminist reframing, and the ethics of institutional critique. Some papers address colonial and Indigenous histories explicitly; others propose alternative methodologies for activating objects and archives. Together, they raise questions about the capacity of curatorial and artistic practice to move beyond symbolic gestures and open pathways for structural change.

Session #1 focuses on interventions that challenge institutional authority and dominant narratives, engaging with decolonial strategies across ethnographic, art, and science collections.

CONVENOR
Arvi Wattel

Arvi Wattel is an art historian and lecturer in the School of Design at the University of Western Australia. His research explores questions of marginalisation, centre and periphery, and transcultural encounter from the Renaissance onward, with a particular focus on Dutch 17th-century engagements with Asia and Australia. He is currently leading the exhibition 'First Encounters' at the WA Shipwrecks Museum, which examines the afterlives of Dutch East India Company shipwrecks through contemporary artistic interventions. Wattel is a Chief Investigator on the ARC Linkage Project 'Mobilising Dutch East India Company Collections for New Global Stories' and has led collaborative research with the Rijksmuseum, University of Amsterdam, and WA Shipwrecks Museum on VOC silverware and its visualisation. His work brings historical analysis into dialogue with curatorial practice and digital humanities.

PRESENTATION #1 — What you can't hear: developing a sonic response to pseudoscience collection materials at the Powerhouse Museum

Nathan mudyi Sentance, *Powerhouse Museum* **and Lauren Booker,** *University of Technology Sydney*

Abstract: Many museums hold objects entangled with colonial and racial violence, yet scientific framing and institutional documentation can often erase or divorce these objects from their harmful contexts. For many First Nations peoples, the lived harm embedded in these objects persists in body and memory. Responding to this, museums and scholars are increasingly working to foreground these histories.

However, it can sometimes be inadequate to address embodied harm solely through written critical documentation and requires embodied research and embodied interpretation, engaging multiple senses, to respond fully to this history.

Drawing upon their diverse experiences as First Nations researchers, GLAM practitioners and creatives, this co-authored paper will discuss a collaborative research project focusing on creative experimentation as a critical research method for truth telling in object-focused research.

This paper outlines an ongoing audio work 'Sounding numerical violence' which is working to experiment with the sounds produced by two Powerhouse Museum items: a craniometer (86/615) and a set of anthropometric instruments

(86/613). This audio work is a part of Booker's 2025 Powerhouse Museum Research Scholar research which investigates the manufacturing, supply and demand for tools and ephemera of 19th and 20th century pseudoscience and eugenics.

Sounding Numerical Violence breaks these objects into their material components—steel and gutta percha—materials deeply tied to European colonial exploitation and imperial narratives. The work weaves these material histories with the exploitative and dehumanising scientific research enacted by these tools, using experimentation with sound to expose both the violence and pseudoscientific futility embedded within.

Nathan mudyi Sentance is a Wiradjuri librarian and writer who grew up on Darkinjung Country. He is Head of Collections, First Nations at the Powerhouse and a member of the Indigenous Archives Collective. His writing has appeared in The Guardian, History Australia, British Art Studies, and The Archival Decolonist.

Dr Lauren Booker (Garigal) is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Indigenous Archives and Data Stewardship Hub at Jumbunna Research, University of Technology Sydney and a member of the Indigenous Archives Collective. She is currently a Powerhouse Research Scholar for 2025.

PRESENTATION #2 — Can inclusion be decolonising? Considering re-hangs of 'Australian art'

Savannah Smith

Abstract: Developing from the discourses of critical museology and institutional critique, since the turn of the twenty-first century the notion of the re-hang has gained prominence as a revisionist curatorial methodology by art institutions seeking to redress exclusions within the Western art historical canon. Within the settler colonial context of Australia, the re-hang's transhistorical approach and rejection of linear chronology has provided a means to counter the exclusion of Indigenous art from the established colonial paradigm of 'Australian art'. Touted as being decolonising, the effectiveness of the re-hang within this context supposes that if the colonial paradigm of 'Australian art' was predicated upon the trajectory of modernity, which deliberately excluded Indigenous perspectives, then abandoning this linearity should, in theory, enable the deconstruction of this paradigm.

The shift towards an inclusive artistic national narrative has been developing in a piecemeal way in Australia since the 1980s, but in the past decade re-hangs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous art under the heading of 'Australian art' have become increasingly popular across permanent collection displays. This reconstruction of the national narrative suggests that within Australia, a re-hang describes not only a curatorial methodology, but also an ideology.

While the deconstructivist imperative and ideological aims of the re-hang appear to align with those of decolonial theory, the question remains as to whether the paradigm shift enacted by the re-hang is structural, and therefore decolonising, or merely rhetorical. Drawing upon decolonial theory, this paper considers the limitations of the revisionist methodology when enacted in the settler colonial context.

Savannah is an arts worker living in narrm/Melbourne. She works as the collection administrator in the City of Melbourne's Art and Heritage Collection, as well as currently being engaged as curator of the forthcoming City Gallery exhibition 'Viva Gibb: a portrait of North and West Melbourne'. In research and curatorship, she is particularly interested in the representation of liminal and national identities in art, the application of decolonial theory in art institutions, and the histories of feminist, social documentary photographers in the 1970s-80s. Savannah holds an MA in Art Curatorship from the University of Melbourne (2020), and an MA (Hons) in Art History from the University of St Andrews in Scotland (2018).

PRESENTATION #3 — Exhibition, interrupted: decolonial critique in Keith Piper and Morehshin Allahyari's video art commissions

India Urwin, *University of Sydney*

Abstract: This paper focusses on Keith Piper's *Viva Voce* (2024) and Morehshin Allahyari's *Speculations on Capture* (2024), by considering how these video-works perform as decolonial spectacles that disturb the museological systems and spaces that house them. Commissioned by Tate Britain, Piper responds to the divisive mural that adorns the museum's (now-closed) restaurant walls, Rex Whistler's *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats* (1927). A few miles away, Iranian artist Allahyari, commissioned by the Victoria & Albert Museum, investigates the museum's vast collection of astronomical instruments from Iran, responding to increasing demands for repatriation. Both projects are a product of Britain's 'Retain and Explain' policy, which holds that recontextualizations of challenging historical remnants should be favoured over removal or replacement. However, both artists push these boundaries, Piper overloads his audiences with a hyper-historical approach and Allahyari entrances viewers with 3D replicants of museum objects. While video has become a common tool for curators to add supplementary information within exhibitions, Piper and Allahyari alternatively present the medium as the must-see main event, overshadowing the *actual* objects and capturing their troubling extra-discursive properties. This paper highlights how both artists play with the fictional diegetic realm of cinema space, re-presenting the objects/artworks

they are responding to in a shifted state - creating a conscious ontological shift in how audiences and institutions approach and behold these objects going forward.

India Urwin (she/her) is a decolonial art historian, curator and arts writer living and working on Gadigal land. She holds a BA(Hons) and a Master of Art Curating from the University of Sydney. India has held the position of Assistant Curator of the Head On Photo Festival, and Assistant Editor of Interactional Magazine, an online photography magazine. Currently, India is undertaking a PhD thesis entitled *Unsettling: Contemporary Post-Colonial Art and the Promise of Decolonisation* which explores the urgent proposition that for Western artistic institutions to reckon with their colonial histories, it is necessary to re-examine decolonisation as a threatening form of unsettling, rather than a means of colonial reparation. To do this, India seeks to refocus the decolonising conversation on art itself, and how new-media art can phenomenologically recode museum spaces and create spaces that are perpetually at odds with themselves.

Panel #25

GGGL: [107] Woolnough Lecture Theatre

Contemporary art histories

Session #1

Abstract: In Art to Come Terry Smith suggests that contemporary art history might not be a history of contemporary art, but could instead 'revise our understanding of . . . much previous art.' This panel proposes contemporary art history as a description of the new methodologies that have arisen since the rise of contemporary art, methodologies that are rewriting the history of art that is not just contemporary. Contemporary art history has taken the place of the New Art History, with its focus upon the postcolonial, feminist, Marxist (and social), instead describing anachronistic, concentrationary, decolonising, digital, quantitative, Indigenous, intersectional, new materialist, post-national, world, settler-colonial and socially engaged art histories, as well as scholarship around the curatorial, including exhibition histories. Australia's contributions to this multiplicity include the concepts of Aboriginal modernism (part of a global scholarship on multiple modernisms) and the UnAustralian, that have shifted the postcolonial and provincial models of Australian art into new, contemporary terrain. This panel invites papers on ideas, methodologies and syntheses about the discipline that have arisen since the turn of the century, or troubling the periodisation around which this model of contemporary art history is drawn. Criticality and multiplicity should inform papers addressing the theme, while older disciplinary practices may also be the subject of papers, insofar as they offer continuities with the intellectual and activist histories of feminism and Marxism, as well as with foundational scholars including Warburg and Riegl, whose approaches have proved unexpectedly relevant to atypical media, geographies and identities.

CONVENOR

Darren Jorgensen, *University of Western Australia*

Darren Jorgensen lectures in art history in the School of Design at the University of Western Australia. For the AAANZ 2005conference he is co-curator with Tami Xiang of the Wang Qingsong exhibition in the Cullity Gallery in the School of Design building. Xiang and Jorgensen's last show was Beijing Realism at Goolagat up Heathcote in 2023. With Barbara Hale he curated The Strelley Mob that is currently hanging in the Courthouse Gallery in Port Hedland. The Strelley Mob was in 2024 atthe John Curtin Gallery. in spite of this Darren does not think of himself as a curator, because it's way too much work, and he'd rather spend his time writing reviews for Perth's own Dispatch journal. In 2026 he will publish, with Inge Kral, An Illustrated Literature: How the Strelley Mob Storied the Past (UWAP).

PRESENTER

Terry Smith, *University of Pittsburgh*

Where, when, how and why did modern art become contemporary?

Abstract: Art historical research into art made during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has long since rejected the 'mainstream modernism' narrative, one in which developments in the major art centers of Europe and North America, above all Paris and New York, set the agendas for what counts as modern throughout the rest of the world. Since the advent of contemporaneity, it been steadily replaced by a 'multiple modernities' picture of art evolving differentially at various art-producing sites around the world that have varying degrees and kinds of connections with the major centres, that may act as centers in their own region, or act mostly according to their own necessities. This picture is driven by a desire for recognition on the part of the agents active in, or writing on behalf of, places that were, during modern times, provinces, and peripheries—a desire for acknowledgement as having been then what they insist on being now: genuine, coeval contemporaries.

What are the implications of these changes for our understanding of the nature of the worldwide shift from modern to contemporary art, now in its fourth decade? The change is widely acknowledged but everywhere understood differently—not least because it occurred, and is occurring, differently,

everywhere. A few attempts have been made to theorize these developments in a comprehensive way. Among them are Peter Osborne's 'postconceptual art'; my three world currents within the conditions of contemporaneity; David Joselit's *Heritage and Debt*; Alex Alberro's *Interstices*. John Clark's accounts of modern and contemporary art in Asia also suggest more generally applicable models, as do Piotr Piotrowski's 'horizontal art history' and Butler and Donaldson's 'UnAustralian Art'. This paper will assess these approaches as art historical hypotheses and test whether they encompass the vicissitudes of making art in contemporary conditions of global boiling, technofuturism, atomized subjectivities, rampant authoritarianism, small scale resistances and massive protests.

Terry Smith is Andrew W Mellon Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory, University of Pittsburgh; Emeritus Professor of Art History, University of Sydney; Professor at Large, The Africa Institute, Global Studies University, Sharjah; Professor in the Division of Philosophy, Art, and Critical Thought at the European Graduate School, Saas-Fee; and Faculty at Large, Curatorial Program, School of Visual Arts, New York. His books include *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America* (1993), *The Architecture of Aftermath* (2006), *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, edited with Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee (2008),*What is Contemporary Art?* (2009), *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (2012), A*rt to Come: Histories of Contemporary Art* (2019), and *Iconomy: Towards a Political Economy of Images* (2022, 2023. This year, he edited *Okwui Enwezor: Selected Writings*, published by Duke University Press and the Sharjah Art Foundation. He is Slade Professor of Fine Arts, University of Cambridge, 2025-2026.

Panel #26

MATH:[G17] Cheryl Praeger Lecture

Container technologies: on learning, labour, and legacy

Abstract: This panel revisits Dr Zoë Sofoulis' (Zoë Sofia) germinal essay Container Technologies (2000), which challenges technological narratives that privilege tools and machines, typically framed as masculine, active, and heroic, while rendering containers feminised, passive, and overlooked. Sofia calls for a revaluation of containment as an active, relational force that is central to survival, care, and memory. Her concept foregrounds the infrastructural, the mundane, and the often-invisible as critical sites of cultural and technological significance.

Introduced by Professor Hélène Frichot (University of Melbourne), we build on this provocation through Sofoulis' recent essay Containers, Retrospectively (2024), revisiting and expanding on her foundational text in light of this new scholarship. Thepanel explores three archetypal containers: the urn, the book, and the tool, as volatile forms that shape temporal practices of mourning, learning, and labour. Dr Catherine Bell (ACU) examines ritual vessels in funerary contexts, where ephemeral materials and collapsing forms act as witnesses to care and grief. Narelle Desmond (VCA) investigates industrial containers as haunted sites of labour and spectral design, asking how tools might act with unruly agency. Ela Egidy (VCA) examines the book as a palimpsestic surface, porous, haunted, and materially unstable, where acts of inscription entangle mystic text, bodily trace, and typographic gesture.

Together, these contributions ask what it means if the objects we entrust with memory, mourning, and education are not passive supports but active agents of resistance, persistence, and transformation. In attending to the leaky, the overflowing, and the uncontained, the panel explores how containers shape legacies through their ongoing and proactive transmissions.

CONVENORS

Narelle Desmond, *University of Melbourne*

Hélène Frichot, *University of Melbourne*

Narelle Desmond, *VCA, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, University of Melbourne*

Narelle Desmond is a multidisciplinary artist and educator based in Melbourne. Her spatial installations and sculptural works examine the invisible systems that organise and structure everyday environments. Through engagement with mass-produced, and utilitarian objects, Desmond interrogates their symbolic and material functions, in relation to the histories of labour, consumption, and cultural memory. Drawing on critical theory, popular culture, and speculative methodologies, her practice investigates the ways in which material environments mediate and reproduce broader social, economic, and cultural systems.

Desmond teaches design at the Victorian College of the Arts and is currently undertaking a PhD. She is represented by The Renshaws, Magandjin/ Brisbane. Her recent exhibitions include Dozing at Artbank (2024), Default Mode at The Renshaws (2023), On Hold at Gertrude Glasshouse and Autotimer at FURURES (2023).

Hélène Frichot (PhD) is Professor of Architecture and Philosophy, Melbourne School of Design, University of Melbourne, Australia. Previously, she was Professor of Critical Studies and Gender Theory, and Director of Critical Studies in Architecture, KTH Stockholm, Sweden. Drawing on her background in architecture and philosophy, her research fosters

creative practice methodologies and engages in dirty materialism, the environmental humanities, and affect theory. Recent publications include Dirty Theory: Troubling Architecture (AADR 2019) and Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture (Bloomsbury2018). Recent edited collections include: with Adrià Carbonell, Hannes Frykholm, and Sepideh Karami, Infrastructural Love: Caring for our Architectural Support Systems (Birkhauser 2022); with Marko Jobst, Architectural Affects After Deleuze and Guattari (Routledge 2021); with Naomi Stead, Writing Architectures: Ficto-Critical Approaches (Bloomsbury 2020); with Gunnar Sandin and Bettina Schwalm, After Effects: Theories and Methodologies in Architectural Research (Actar 2020); with Isabelle Doucet, Reclaim, Resist, Speculate: Situated perspectives on architecture and the city, Architectural Theory Review(2019). With Emma Cheatle she recently edited a special issue of the Journal of Architecture dedicated to the legacy of Jennifer Bloomer.

OPENING SPEAKER
Zoë Sofoulis, *Western Sydney University*

From Containers to Containment

Abstract: This short introduction to the panel's themes outlines some of the background to the 'Container Technologies' paper—which includes studies of installations and electronic artworks by women—and follows its subsequent travels towards the theme of 'containment' central to the recent book *Containment: Technologies of Holding, Filtering, Leaking*.

Zoë Sofoulis, affiliated with the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University, is a retired interdisciplinary teacher and researcher whose earlier writings focussed on science fiction, cyberculture, and electronic arts, highlighting themes of agentic space and contestable futurity in relation to gender and high technology. She later became known for practical applications of qualitative cultural research and humanities perspectives in fields where technology and engineering predominate, including driver safety and especially urban water management. Her applied humanities papers have helped define a cultural and sociotechnical perspective on metropolitan water and demand management, while householder water diaries that she co-designed have been adapted and used by other researchers. She is currently working on an essay comparing the mythic dimensions of solar and nuclear energies.

PRESENTATION #1 — Uncontainable, that's what you are: how sculpting smell and urns of dust, as a process for remembering and grieving the dead, evolved into leaky, olfactory agents in socially-engaged installations.

Catherine Bell, *Australian Catholic University*

Abstract: This paper explores the evolution of sculpting urns made from recycled florist oasis foam salvaged from hospice wards and cemeteries to containers cast from talcum powder that weigh the same as cremated remains, and family death masks carved from perfumed toiletries, revealing hidden vessels. The precarity and olfactory qualities of these ephemeral materials conflate mortality and memory. Challenging traditional forms of memorialisation, these earlier works emphasise how immateriality functions as an artistic medium for expressing the uncontainable emotion of grief.

Central to this inquiry is *Cul-de-sac* (2022), an interactive installation designed to provoke dialogue about alternative body disposal practices, particularly water cremation. Framed as a collective impact initiative, *Cul-de-sac* reimagines the notion of containment as a socially-engaged, generative process. The leaking, sensory-rich environment becomes a stage for visceral internment rituals, blurring boundaries between audience and artist, object and participant. Referencing Sofoulis (2024), the work conceptualises "the container itself as a kind of networking device" enabling relational connections and shared experiences.

Through its participatory structure, *Cul-de-sac* fosters public engagement, death literacy, and social inclusion. Participants become co-creators, reinforcing the artwork as both an artefact and a conduit for community cohesion. Designed to be restaged and reactivated by the public, Cul-de-sac argues containment as an intersubjective space for navigating collective mourning and transforming cultural attitudes toward death.

Dr Catherine Bell is a multidisciplinary artist, curator and Professor of Visual Art in the Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University. Her socially-engaged art practice explores the role of the artist in healthcare settings, feminist interventions in the archive, neurodiverse/neurotypical art collectives, and explores how modes of care can be communicated through different relational and situational forms of creativity. Since 2009, Bell and Arts Project Australia artist Cathy Staughton (aka The Two Cathies) have collaborated on numerous creative projects, including four, shared artist residencies. The most recent, *Dog Robot Space Star* (2023) involved The Two Cathies partnering with RMIT Health Transformation Lab to be the first Australian artists to work with their Boston Dynamic Robot Dog. Bell has also undertaken two, year-long artist residencies

in the oncology ward at St Vincent's Hospital and Caritas Christi Hospice in Melbourne, designing and facilitating participatory art workshops with staff, patients, and their families to promote healthy discussion and meaningful reflections on death. She is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne.

PRESENTATION #2 — The enchanted mop

Narelle Desmond, *Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne*

Abstract: Through a series of key installations, Narelle Desmond's current research and practice examines the hidden agency of objects by situating them in spaces of in-betweenness: waiting rooms, transit hubs, and corridors. Using a used mop and bucket as a starting point, Desmond casts the repetition of labour as both haunting and uncontrollable, a critique of the capitalist inversion where products dominate producers, rather than the other way around. Central to her research is a recurring talismanic beetle, a figure that moves across these spaces, disrupting human-centred perceptions of time with its evolutionary resilience. The beetle becomes a quiet onlooker, offering an alternative temporal perspective that far exceeds human time scales. These works trace the spectral afterlife of modernity's designed world, where containers, props, and proxies assert unruly temporal, material, and affective presences. They invite us to reimagine the things we make not as a neutral tool of control, but as ghosts of our own making.

PRESENTATION #3 — A palimpsestual surface: porous, haunted and materially unstable

Ela Egidy, *Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne*

This paper explores the reimagining of *Liber gratiae spiritualis* (1558), originally written by Mechthild of Hackeborn, a thirteenth-century visionary, and printed by the Convertite nuns of sixteenth-century Venice, through the cultivation of bacterial cellulose as a printing surface. These women, former sex workers, or women deemed sexually impure, confined to a penitential convent, were among some of the earliest female printers in Italy. Their books reflect a confluence of labour and ritual practice, embedding spiritual discipline into this material form. This project reactivates their work through experimental book making and feminist theory, cultivating bacterial cellulose as both substrate and surface for a new act of typographic containment.

Grown slowly in a sweetened tea inoculated with *Komagataeibacter xylinus* (*K. xylinus*), the material develops into a membranous skin, a pellicle that is translucent, porous, and flesh-like. Once deprived of moisture, it withers and resembles vellum in texture and appearance, but retains the marks of its fermentation and its conditions of growth.

Drawing on Zoë Sofia's writing on 'Container technologies' (2000) and containment, as well as my own research into 'Bodies' and 'Surfaces', and the ways these can be read within typographic and bibliographic history, I position this substrate as a speculative interface – one that mediates between historical penitential labour and experimental book making. This paper explores how the bacterial cellulose page becomes a site of entanglement between mystic text, bodily trace, and printed gesture. It proposes a feminist historiography of inscription as an interrelation, a palimpsestual surface that is porous, haunted, and materially unstable.

Ela Egidy is a typographer, designer, and researcher. She works as a Lecturer in Design at the University of Melbourne where she is also a PhD candidate. Her research emphasises critical feminist perspectives to study typography in its varied forms. Her research areas span commodity feminism and the fetishisation of language, design's relationship to control and dissent and sixteenth-century bibliography. Her PhD is a historico-philosophical enquiry into the prototypographic practices of nuns working in early modern Italy. Though her research areas seem disparate, they are all connected by an unyielding fascination with the materialities of language and their socio-political implications.

Panel #27

ARTS: [G60] Arts Lecture Room 4

Leaking, haunting, resisting, redefining: rethinking the parameters and functions of therapeutic objects

Abstract: This panel invites dialogue on art objects produced under, and in response to, institutional conditions, such as the hospital, prison or asylum. We're interested in the ways in which these objects, both historic and contemporary, resist simple classification and continue to act in the present.

This session takes its starting point from Healing: Art and Institutional Care (La Trobe Art Institute, Aug–Nov 2025), which revisits the Art Access Studio (1989–1996), a pioneering artist-led initiative within Melbourne's former Larundel Mental Hospital (1953–1999). Rather than producing work within a diagnostic or clinical framework, artists and patients at Larundel explored art as a collaborative and self-directed process of healing and creative expression. Exhibition co-curators, Wallin and Leong, will open this panel with a brief overview of the exhibition and its curatorial framing.

The panel then turns to artists and researchers working with and in response to other former

sites of care, control and containment, to consider the lingering presence of therapeutic objects and spaces. Kate Moss (UWA) performs Breeze Logged, a voice weather-log linking archival traces, breath and silence at WA's former Heathcote Reception Centre. BrionyGalligan (VCA) and Abbra Kotlarczyk (independent) share queer and neurodivergent practices of care, illness and leakage from sites of toxicity and memory. Shannon Lyons and Lisa Liebetrau (independents) reflect on The beautiful is useful, their exhibition also responding to the Heathcote archive, built environment and share rituals of rest and labour.

Together, these contributions reflect on how institutional objects / spaces and their echoes leak, haunt, resist and reshape contemporary engagements with care, disability justice and institutional critique. A Q&A will follow.

CONVENORS

Amelia Wallin, *La Trobe Art Institute*

Jacina Leong, *RMIT University*

Dr. Jacina Leong 梁玉明 is an artist-curator, educator and researcher whose practice engages with the intersections of community engagement, care ethics and curatorial inquiry. Working across cultural and educational spaces since 2008, her work considers how creative practices and organisations can respond to the converging crises of our time. From 2023 to2024, Jacina was Acting CEO/Director for Next Wave, a leading not-for-profit arts organisation that, since 1984, has played a pivotal role in supporting early-career practitioners working across multiple art forms. During this time, she co-created partnerships with A Climate for Art, CAST (Contemporary Art and Social Transformation) and Composite; secured NextWave's long-term tenancy at Brunswick Mechanics Institute (2025–34); and contributed to shaping the organisation's Strategic Plan 2025–28. Her earlier roles include Co-Chair (2023-2025) and Co-Director of Bus Projects (2021–2022), Public Programs Curator at The Cube (2012–2017) and Ipswich Art Gallery (2009–2011), Gallery Manager at Jan Murphy Gallery (2011–2012),and Creative Producer for the Creative Industries Precinct (2008). In parallel, Jacina also worked as a sessional academic and HDR supervisor at RMIT University and La Trobe University (2020–2023), a mentor for the ACMI CEO Digital Mentoring Program (2022), and co-founded the Guerrilla Knowledge Unit (2017), a collective exploring alternative modes of inquiry and knowledge-sharing. Today, Jacina continues to contribute to the arts and education sectors as Chair of RMIT University's School of Art Industry Advisory Committee, a member of the Darebin Council Art and Heritage Advisory Panel, a guest curator for La Trobe Art Institute, and a research associate on the ARC Linkage Project Museum Digital Social Futures.

Amelia Wallin is Senior Curator at La Trobe Art Institute. Here, she leads the artistic direction, produces residency programs and cares for the Univeristy's collections. Wallin was formerly Director of West Space, where she spearheaded the organisation's relocation and new artistic direction, and initiated innovative cross-organisational programming including Disorganising (with Liquid Architecture and Bus Projects) and The Region (with RMIT, Para Site, Western Front and Enjoy Contemporary). Formerly based in New York, Wallin worked earlier as a Curatorial Fellow at Performa and completed her graduate studies at the Centre for Curatorial Studies, Bard College. She is a Senior Research Associate at the Australian National University on the Australian Research Council funded project 'Difficult Objects: Mediating Controversy in Museums'. Amelia has worked as a teaching associate within the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at Monash University, where she is completing a practice-led PhD.

PRESENTATION #1 — Breezing-Seeping-Cooling: A Reading

Kate Moss, *University of Western Australia*

Looking at the relationship between breeze and silence, sunlight and shadow, *Breeze Logged* was an exhibition thinking with *the breeze* as a verb — an active agent, meeting bodies, architecture and the historical context of Goolugatup Heathcote.

Breeze Logged followed a four month residency at the site of the former Heathcote Reception Centre, a mental health facility active between 1929–1994, located on Goolugatup, a place of continuing significance to Whadjuk Noongar people.

A central part of the exhibition was the voiced text 'Breeze Logged' an extended weather log ruminating on the breeze and silence—architecture and bodies—specifically the body of my great grandmother, Thelma, who was a resident at Heathcote in the 1930s.

"wind on a body between polyester: synthetic seeping adoring secreting"

Centring listening as an active, durational, engaged practice, informing relationships with bodies in place, in this panel, Kate will read the text *Breeze Logged*. This performance will feature the original chairs from Heathcote, and delve further into archival research looking for traces of Thelma and mentions of the effects of the breeze on bodies, in *The Log*, a publication made by the staff and patients of Point Heathcote.

Kate Moss is an artist and writer (Boorloo/Perth). Thinking through sunlight and sea breeze her multidisciplinary work — engaged in the place and natural phenomena — utilises written, spoken and performed language and repurposed materials.

Recent exhibitions include Goolugatup Heathcote, Italienska Palatset, Växjö, Konstepedimin, SE, Kunsthall Olso, NO, Vandalorum, SE, Daine Singer,

Naarm, AU, Växjö konsthall, Alta Artspace, Malmö, SE. Publications include, I work a lot with the sun SPTM! Rotterdam, NL, Wild Thoughts Daine Singer/ Version Editions, Naarm AU and Swedish Light and Other Poems, Somewhat Urgent Series, Vancouver, CA. Writing commissions: Onomatopee, Eindhoven, NL, Cibrián, Donostia- San Sebastián, ES, The Royal Academy, The Hague , NL, Southerly Literary Journal, AU, Bartleby Review, CA.

She is a founder and facilitator of Landing Thoughts, a post academy experimental education platform, developed from an urgency to address and form new conversations. She holds an MFA from the University of British Columbia, Canada, a BFA from the VCA, Naarm/Melbourne, and is a current PhD Candidate in Artistic Research at the UWA, Boorloo/ Perth, AU.

PRESENTATION #2 — vying for attention, sunlight, water: exposures of a queer necropastoral

Briony Galligan, *Victorian College of the Arts*, *University of Melbourne* and Abbra Kotlarcyzk

Abstract: Sites of toxicity, death and seepage are places we write, care and make from—sites that are not necessarily desirable or safe. Through independent and collaborative research and artmaking, including with our children, we investigate lineages of queer theory and praxis that are haunted by illness, contagion and exposure. Deriving from our lived experiences as queer parents who navigate chronic illness and neurodivergence, we are drawn to consider the idea of the pharmakon—a poison that is also a remedy. Here we inhabit a space that troubles binary narratives and easy integration into authoritative, dominant structures.

Briony has been working for the last six months at the AIDS Memorial Garden outside the old Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital (1904–1996), now part of the Melbourne Polytechnic campus. Here she has been making concrete casts from ceramic and latex. She considers the ways responses that came out of the AIDS epidemic have shaped queer communities and queer art practices today, as well as the strength of community-controlled patient centred healthcare.

Abbra has been working with ancestral narratives surrounding institutions of war and concentration. Recently she has turned to a decommissioned NuFarm Factory near to where she lives in Fawkner, where the key ingredient for manufacturing Agent Orange would readily seep into the adjacent Merri Merri Creek. Out of her garden studio she creates charcoal and expanded drawing objects derived from introduced willow trees and local clay bodies.

Together, we have been producing a series of audio essays and shaky, multiple exposure photographs, using the leakage of light and sound to integrate images and dialogue surrounding these sites alongside those of family, trees and the garden.

Briony Galligan was born on palawa Country and has lived in Naarm for most of her life. She makes environments—through drawing, installation and sculpture—that are slippery and suspended, more atmosphere than coherent logic. Briony positions objects as conduits, working with them as tools and appendages to move through states of disequilibrium such as sickness, queerness and invasiveness.

Abbra Kotlarczyk was raised on bundjalung Country in the subtropical ruins of a decommissioned banana plantation. As an artist and a writer, she works with paper as a foundational medium, exploring its potential to hold and express story and interspecies subjectivity. Her work is research-driven and situated through expanded notions of care, labour, queerness, ecology, publication and embodied poetics.

PRESENTATION #3 — The beautiful is useful – an illustrated artist talk

Shannon Lyons and Lisa Liebetrau

Abstract: Goolugatup Heathcote Gallery is located on the grounds of the former Point Heathcote Reception Home (1929–1994) in Applecross, Western Australia. During its time as a hospital, Heathcote was known for its progressive approach to treating patients experiencing mental ill health, as outlined in recent publications and oral histories by former nurses. The buildings were situated to capture panoramic river views of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River), with openings oriented to accept afternoon sea breezes. Ground-breaking therapeutic treatments and novel patient care approaches made Heathcote synonymous with rest and recovery.

In 2023, visual artists Lisa Liebetrau and Shannon Lyons were commissioned to produce new artworks for *The beautiful is useful*, a two-person exhibition curated by Brent Harrison. Through their site-responsive practices, they investigated Heathcote's institutional history by exploring the rich archive of objects, images, and oral histories held in the City of Melville's Heathcote Collection. During a studio residency at Heathcote, they considered how the concept of time differs between nurses and patients, and how the informal ritual of sharing tea provides moments of care, relaxation, and human connection in clinical settings.

This illustrated artist talk will share the research and artworks we created for *The beautiful is useful*, while considering how institutional conditions, systems, and challenges of the past shape labour and care within contemporary healthcare settings. By immersing themselves in the collection and responding to the built environment, the artists imagined the space as it was when functioning as a mental health hospital, creating works that sensitively considered Heathcote's culture alongside the complex relationships between nurses and patients.

Shannon Lyons is an artist and educator living and working in Boorloo (Perth, WA), whose practice explores complex relationships between artistic content and context. She continually adapts and responds to specifically located built environments, producing works that directly reference their site of creation or exhibition. Lyons received a practice-led PhD in Visual Art from Curtin University in 2016 and a Bachelor of Arts (Art) with First Class Honours from Curtin University in 2008. In 2004, she participated in the Fondazione Antonio Ratti Advanced Course in Visual Arts with Professor Jimmie Durham in Como, Italy. She was a visiting scholar at E'cole Nationale Supérieur d'Art de Dijon in 2008 and completed a residency at SOMA in Mexico City in 2012. Notable exhibitions include Wayfind (2018, Next Wave x West Space), Infrastructuralism (2018, La Trobe Art Institute), Dark Kitchen (2019, Heide Museum of Modern Art), Li (2020, Bundoora Homestead), and The beautiful is useful (2023, Goolugatup Heathcote Gallery).

Lisa Liebetrau is an artist and collections officer living and working in Boorloo (Perth, WA) with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from Curtin University. Lisa's practice utilises public and private collections to inform artworks and contextualise the site in which they are exhibited. Liebetrau's solo exhibitions include A Temporary Arrangement (2017) at Smart Casual in Fremantle and Palatial Structure (2019) at Cool Change Contemporary. She presented her residency, This is not a neutral space at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (2021) and was commissioned by Pig Melon to respond to Lawson Flats with her work, Votes for Women (2022). More recently, Liebetrau exhibited alongside Shannon Lyons at Goolugatup Heathcote Gallery for the exhibition, The beautiful is useful (2023).

Panel #28

EZONENTH: [109] Learning Studio

How aesthetic objects reassemble publics: dissensus and things-in-common in socially engaged art

Session #1

Abstract: This double-session, cross-disciplinary panel considers how unruly objects act within socially and politically engaged art practices, by reassembling publics through aesthetic encounters. It builds on the "things-in-common" framework (Wulia 2021; 2024), which extends Star and Griesemer's notion of boundary objects into aesthetics and politics. We explore how objects not only mediate difference, but reconfigure sociopolitical formations through "aesthetic reassembling"—a rearrangement of perceptions and imaginaries provoked by sensory experience.

Resonating with Nancy's "being-in-common," things-in-common highlight the tenuous, evolving nature of community. As in Latour's Dingpolitik and Dewey's publics formed around issues rather than identities, contributors contemplate how objects aesthetically reassemble relations without presuming consensus. Through diverse case studies, contributors identify micro-mechanisms of aesthetic reassembling, showing the ways objects generate Rancière's dissensus, redistributing the sensible.

The first session discusses everyday objects as aesthetic and political agents. Art historian Tara Heffernan analyses how orb-shaped everyday forms, framed within gallery contexts, become sites of tactile disruption and communal play. Artist Elia Nurvista examines rice as a volatile aesthetic object mobilising publics around shared urgencies. Anthropologist Roy Thaniago traces how gold gathers a multi-ethnic public through the ambivalent aesthetics of situated everyday exchange in a Makassar market, Indonesia.

This situatedness continues to the second session, where aesthetic reassembling is placed in relation to Australia's settler-colonial structures. Artist Bianca Hester and curator Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris analyse two place-based projects to propose strategies that link embodied reckonings with expanded more-than-human entanglements. Museum director Angela Goddard examines how acquiring Waanyi artist Judy Watson's evolving digital artwork reassembles publics through aesthetic engagement with suppressed histories. Artist Ryan Presley reframes colonial monetary forms of early New South Wales as aesthetic agents—sensory and unstable—that unsettle colonial authority, sparking new, resistant imaginaries. Together, these presentations reveal how unruly objects aesthetically reassemble publics, provoking new ways of sensing, resisting, and commoning.

CONVENOR

Tintin Wulia, *University of Gothenburg*

Tintin Wulia has been exploring aesthetics' role in society and politics as an artist for over 25 years, focusing on borders and state security. She began her academic appointment at the University of Gothenburg in 2018 as an interdepartmental Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre on Global Migration, and became a Senior Researcher at the Artistic Faculty in 2021. She is also Visiting Senior Fellow at the School of Art, RMIT University (2025-27), and Visiting Research Fellow at the Department of International History, London School of Economics and Political Science/LSE (2024-25). Her previous fellowships include the Australia Council for the Arts' Creative Australia Fellowship (2014–16), Honorary Senior Research Fellowship

at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL (2022–23), and Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship at the Walter Reed Biosystematics Unit (2018). She has contributed to over 200 exhibitions and publications, including Istanbul Biennial (2005), Moscow Biennale (2011), Asia Pacific Triennial (2012), Venice Biennale (representing Indonesia, 2017), and Chicago Architecture Biennial (2021). Her works are held in collections such as He Xiangning Art Museum (Shenzhen) and Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven). She served on the editorial board of the American Association of Geographers/AAG journal *GeoHumanities* (2015-22); her recent writings appear in *Migrating Minds*, an award-winning volume on cultural cosmopolitanism (Routledge, 2022), and *Journal of Political Power* (2023). Wulia led her Swedish Research Council-funded *Protocols of Killings* (2021-24), is the sole collaborator on the SSHRC-funded *Rethinking Declassification* (2024-30), and Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded *Things for Politics' Sake: Aesthetic Objects and Social Change* (THINGSTIGATE, 2023-28). A retrospective exhibition, *Tintin Wulia: Things-in-Common*, tracing a concept developed in THINGSTIGATE, was presented at the Hiroshima Museum of Contemporary Art (2024-25).

DISCUSSANT

Patricia Spyer, *Geneva Graduate Institute*

PRESENTATION #1 — Digital objects as things-in-common: how new media art reassembles publics in the University Art Museum

Angela Goddard, *Griffith University and University of New South Wales*

Abstract: This paper examines how digital art objects might function as "things-in-common" within university art museum contexts, using the acquisition of Judy Watson's "the names of places" (2016-ongoing) by Griffith University Art Museum as a case study. Drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of being-in-common and extending Susan L. Star and James R. Griesemer's boundary objects, I argue that Watson's evolving web-based project demonstrates how digital artworks can reassemble publics through participatory engagement with suppressed histories.

Watson, a Waanyi artist, has created a research-based mapping of Aboriginal massacre sites across Australia that invites public contribution to an evolving database and website. The acquisition of the website by Griffith University challenges traditional museum acquisition models by acquiring not a fixed object but a living digital ecosystem that continues to grow through community participation. The project operates through what Jacques Rancière terms redistributing the sensible by making visible previously concealed histories while creating spaces for productive disagreement about historical authority, Indigenous knowledge, and public memory.

The acquisition of such a participatory digital work by a university art museum raises critical questions about ownership, authorship, and institutional responsibility. Unlike static digital files, "the names of places" requires ongoing maintenance, community engagement, and ethical stewardship of contributed knowledge. The university art museum context provides unique conditions for supporting such experimental digital practices due to research infrastructure and academic freedom,yet also creates tensions around how institutions can "collect" ongoing collaborative processes.

This research contributes to understanding how this work functions as boundary object, creating new forms of public engagement that resist both colonial silencing and institutional containment while fostering what Nancy describes as "being-exposed-to" others in community formation through shared acts of witnessing and remembering. At the same time, this work is also a powerful aesthetic object, reassembling the 1814 Matthew Flinders map of colonial Australia by marking it with massacre sites linked to testimonies, and layered with evocative details of Watson's works and washes of delicate colour.

Angela Goddard is a director, curator, writer and editor. In 2015 she was appointed Director of Griffith University Art Museum, and she is also a board member of The Sheila Foundation for Women in Visual Art, and a former curator of Australian art at QAGOMA. Recent exhibitions include 'Duty of Care' co-curated with Stephanie Berlangieri and Robert Leonard, IMA and GUAM, 2024, *r e a: NATIVE*, GUAM, 2024, 'Taring Padi: Tanah Tumpah Darah' co-curated with Alexander Supartono, GUAM, 2024, and 'Rebecca Belmore: Turbulent Water' co-curated with Wanda Nanibush, GUAM, 2021 and Buxton Contemporary, 2021-2022. Recent publications include 'Gordon Bennett: Selected Writings', 2020 (co-edited with Tim Riley Walsh). She is a current PhD student at University of New South Wales Art & Design.

PRESENTATION #2 — Culture shock: currency as an unruly object in the settler colony

Ryan Presley, *Independent Artist-Researcher*

Abstract: This paper explores how monetary forms—including rum, coinage, ration systems, and imposed barter—functioned as unruly aesthetic objects in the colonial settler project of early New South Wales. Far from being neutral instruments of commerce, these objects were active participants in the violent restructuring of social relations on the frontier. Focusing on the introduction of the Holey Dollar by Governor Macquarie and the informal rum-based economy controlled by the NSW Corps, the paper considers how colonial currency systems

attempted to stabilise a settler public—only to reveal contradictions that unsettled their authority.

Framing these monetary forms as *things-in-common* (Wulia 2021, 2024), the paper shows how they mediated relations not through consensus, but through what Rancière terms *dissensus*—material sites of disagreement, redistribution, and refusal. This becomes most visible in the resistance of Bembulwoyan (Pemulwuy), whose strategic use of fire, ritual, and land rendered the colonists' monetary logics incomplete and ungovernable.

By tracing how these currency objects circulated, broke down, and reassembled publics—both settler and Indigenous—this study foregrounds the objecthood of money as sensory, contested, and unstable. Coins, rum, and rations became not just instruments of value, but aesthetic agents that provoked new imaginaries and antagonisms.

In aligning with the panel's focus, the paper offers a re-reading of colonial economic artefacts as dissensual assemblages—objects that, rather than bridging cultures, illuminate fracture, resistance, and unresolved political claims in Australia's settler-colonial project.

> Dr Ryan Presley (b. 1987, Mparntwe/Alice Springs) is a Marri Ngarr artist-researcher currently based on Yugambeh Country (Logan City, QLD). His practice spans painting, printmaking, sculpture, video, installation, and writing, and is marked by a deep engagement with the visual economies of power, memory, and resistance.
>
> Presley's work critically reconfigures national narratives, foregrounding Indigenous sovereignty and challenging colonial modes of representation. Known for combining technical precision with conceptual rigor, his projects interrogate the symbolic and material legacies of settler-colonialism—particularly through the lens of currency, ritual, and state authority.
>
> He exhibits internationally, including at Gadigal/Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales (2023), Artspace (2019), Eindhoven's Van Abbemuseum (2018), and Vienna's Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste (2021). His major solo exhibition *Fresh Hell* (2022, 2023) was co-commissioned by Adelaide Contemporary Experimental and Gertrude Contemporary. Presley is represented by Milani Gallery and holds a PhD in Art Theory (Griffith University, 2016).

PRESENTATION #3 — Unruly appearances: aesthetic reassembling and the object genealogy of people's justice

Tintin Wulia, *University of Gothenburg*

Abstract: How did Taring Padi's *People's Justice* (2002) become an unruly object at documenta fifteen, reassembling publics through the dissensus its appearance unexpectedly generated? I address this by foregrounding the banner's counter-anaesthetic agency, largely overlooked amid debates on iconography, institutional crisis, or decontextualisation. Within my framework of "things-in-common", I approach the banner as a "conduit", carrying traces of the political infrastructures of its production across circulation. To articulate the modes of intelligibility shaping its contested visibility, I draw on Rancière's ethical, representative, and aesthetic regimes—coexisting within an appearance, with the aesthetic regime interrupting the others' logics, as I elaborate in recent work on aesthetic reassembling.

Produced within Indonesian political culture through collective drawing, *People's Justice* incorporates imagery shaped by ethical and representative regimes that are normalised locally. Years after its initial presentation at Adelaide Art Festival, ruangrupa's trajectory through Dutch postcolonial cultural infrastructures brought the banner into a highly visible mise-en-scène of documenta fifteen, its appearance reframed in a different political world—becoming, in Karen Strassler's term, an image-event. With Patricia Spyer's "work on/of appearances", I develop an object genealogy that treats the controversy as a symptomatology of colliding political infrastructures becoming visible, as Indonesian normalised visual forms encountered Germany's memory politics.

Rancière's regimes illuminate the conditions rendering the banner's reappearance dissensual, while Spyer's approach clarifies how such moments make political atmosphere sensible at the surface of the image. The things-in-common framework then tracks the micro-mechanisms through which counter-anaesthetics reassembled relations. Together, these lenses show how People's Justice made colliding political infrastructures perceptible.

Panel #29

EZONENTH: [111] Learning Studio

Unruly materialities and counter-geographies

Peformance - lectures

Abstract: This panel brings together artists Hannan Jones, Alexandra Peters, Tina Stefanou, Azza Zein and curator Miriam La Rosa. How do material insertions operate as smuggling strategies that question dominant narratives around the economy? In Alexandra Peters' installation, 'a subversive language against a speedy economy concretises. Neither can you sit on these pipes, nor can you trust punching them, nor can you use them to transfer oil, gas or water.' In Hannan Jones' work 'as micronations contest the idea of internationally recognised borders, the collaged stamp holds a

critical approach against the notion of a state. In Tina Stefanou's installation, 'the hoof and its decoration is the 'Trojan' insertion.' Whether it is Stefanou's horses and exhaustion pipes, Peters' vinyl sheets and obstructed pipelines, Jones' collaged stamps and psychogeography sounds, or Zein's use of dryer's lint, bentonite or hair—each practice mobilises materiality to challenge legibility, power, and movement. Curator Miriam La Rosa brings a psychogeography curatorial lens to the dialogue, through spatial re-orientation of how unruliness of objects opens up alternative wanderings and counter-geographies. Each panellist will present a short, performative provocation that activates one object or material from their practice

CONVENOR

Azza Zein

Azza Zein is an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose work spans painting, sculpture, and video art, often pushing the boundaries of traditional painting through unconventional installations. Her installations and writing explore the dematerialisation of the economy, the invisibility of labour and counter-geography with diverse methodologies including ficto-critical writing, materiality, socially engaged events, and archival research. She is particularly interested in revaluing the decorative act and examining migrant materials through the lens of modernity's iconoclastic aesthetics and the violence of displacement.

Her work has been exhibited in Australia and internationally, with residencies in Argentina, India, Mparntwe/Alice Springs, and the Santa Fe Art Institute (NM, USA). She has been a finalist in numerous awards like the Incinerator Gallery Art for Social Change Award (2020) and the Australian Muslim Artist Award (2019).

She has published in journals like Art + Australia, Kohl Journal for Body and Gender Research, and un Extended. She has contributed an essay to the Care Ethics and Art anthology (Routledge) and catalogue essays to ACCA publications.

In 2025, she is un Projects guest-editor for issue19.2. She was a member of un Projects editorial committee (2021-2024) and the Women's Art Register committee (2021-2023). As a sessional academic, she has taught studio art and theory at several universities, including the American University of Beirut, La Trobe University and the Victorian College of the Arts.

http://azzazein.com

PRESENTERS

Hannan Jones, *Glasgow School of Art*

Alexandra Peters

Tina Stefanou, *Victorian College of the Arts*

Miriam La Rosa, *Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre, City of Greater Dandenong*

Azza Zein

Hannan Jones is an artist of Algerian and Welsh origin raised on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. Research-led and process driven, she practices at the intersections of moving-image, installation and sound.

Jones deep-dives into concepts of hybridity, language, and rhythms that are associated with cultural and social migration, and psychogeographic locatedness. Sonically, Jones' approach is rooted in improvisation, electronics, music concrète, and analogue recordings. Using samples and layering of audio material to create alternate possibilities, reclaim parallel histories, and reimagine connections between them.

She received her Bachelor degree with Honours in Sculpture and Environmental Art department from Glasgow School of Art, and from 2020-2021 she was an Associate Artist of Open School East. In 2023, she became a recipient of the Oram Awards, a platform to elevate the work and voices of women and gender non-conforming artists innovating in sound, music and related technology.

Jones' work has been featured in numerous presentations and screenings, such as London Short Film Festival; Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival, MENA Film Festival in Vancouver; Videoclub - The Selected 13 UK tour at Nottingham Contemporary, Contemporary Centre for Arts, Glasgow, Fabrica, Brighton, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, Royal College of Art, London; Archive Sites at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; Triangle - Astérides, Marseille; Artes Mundi and the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales; Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridgeshire, The Common Guild, Glasgow; Cafe Oto, London; Counterflows Festival, Glasgow; Edinburgh Art Festival; New Radicalisms, Rotterdam; Tate Lates, Tate Modern, London and REWIRE, The Hague, La Chunky, Glasgow and Goolugatup Heathcote, Western Australia.

At present she is a visiting lecturer at Glasgow School of Art, and is part of a two year artist residency at Wysing Arts Centre, UK.

www.hannanjones.com (website)

@hannannannanananannnn (instagram)

Alexandra Peters is a painter and sculptor situated within the field of expanded painting through the interrogation of support structures and framing devices. Peters completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) at Monash University, Melbourne in 2022, where she was the recipient of the Monash University Museum of Art Award and the Megalo Print Award. She has undertaken several residencies including Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, 2023, Megalo Print Studio, Canberra, 2023 and AqTushetii, Tusheti, Georgia, 2018 and is currently a Gertrude Studio artist (2025-2027).

Peters' recent solo exhibitions include *Blowback*, Asbestos, Melbourne, 2024. Recent group exhibitions include *Primavera*, MCA, Sydney 2025, *Future Remains: The 2024 Macfarlane Commissions*, Australian Centre of Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2024; *And This Time the Well Is Alive*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne 2024; *Mildura Atrocity Exhibition*, NAP Contemporary, Mildura, 2023; *Hatched: National Graduate Show*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth, 2023; *CC: All*, Cool Change Contemporary, Perth, 2023; *Menagerie*, Asbestos, Melbourne, 2023; *MADANow*, Honours Graduate Exhibition, Monash University, Melbourne, 2022; *A Strange World is Afoot Here Already*, Propaganda Network, *Tbilisi*, 2020 and *100 Years of Pirosmani*, Niko Pirosmani State Museum, Mirzaani, Georgia, 2019.

Dr. Miriam La Rosa is a curator, researcher, and award-winning writer with over a decade of experience in the arts. Born in Sicily and now based in Naarm/Melbourne, her work explores residencies, alternative histories, and experimental artistic practices—challenging conventional curatorial frameworks and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

Since 2024, she has led the curatorial program at Greater Dandenong City Council as Arts Curator, overseeing exhibitions and events across the city's cultural precinct, with a focus on the historic Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre.

Miriam completed her PhD at the University of Melbourne in 2023, researching gift exchange and host–guest dynamics in art residencies. This included a 2019 cross-cultural exchange between Sicily, Gippsland, and Peppimenarti, and a digital iteration of the Marrgu Residency Program in 2020, supporting an Indigenous-led initiative by Durrmu Arts.

From 2022 to 2024, she was Art Projects & Research Manager at Agency Projects, an Aboriginal- and Torres Strait Islander-governed nonprofit supporting Indigenous-led arts, culture, and environmental initiatives. She also taught in Contemporary Art and Biennial Studies at the University of Melbourne, was a Graduate Fellow at the Centre of Visual Arts, and served as Treasurer of AICA Australia.

In 2020 she co-founded the Art Residency Research Collective (ARRC), a global network of curators, artists, and scholars studying residencies' shifting practices. Her writing is widely published, and in 2021 she won First Prize in the AICA Incentive Award for Young Art Critics.

Before moving to Australia, Miriam worked in London as Senior Researcher for Montabonel & Partners and co-founded the digital publishing platform *Curating the Contemporary*. She collaborated on projects at Whitechapel Gallery, the Stedelijk Museum, and the Van Abbemuseum.

She holds an MA in Curating the Contemporary (London Metropolitan University), a Master of Museology (Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam), and a BA (Hons) in Art History (Università Cattolica, Brescia).

https://www.miriamlarosa.com/

Tina Stefanou is an undisciplined artist with a background in music and voice. She experiments with vocality as both performative and cinematic devices within visual art, working across fields to create immersive environments, live actions, tactile and sonic sculptures, and filmic traces. Her practice emerges as multispecies performance, collective sonic experiences, and ephemeral events. Tina's work has been presented in cinemas, horse sanctuaries, monocrop farmland, experimental music venues, and public sites such as zoos, galleries, and museums. She explores vocal taxonomies, histories, and affect in an expanded field, encompassing long-term collaborations and spontaneous compositional strategies that generate fugitive responses to an era in crisis. Tina has show work at major institutions including ACCA, NGV, Adelaide Biennial, AGWA, PICA, AGSA, Gertrude Contemporary, e-flux (NYC), Salt Museum (Istanbul), Kadist (Paris), and Le Pavé d'Orsay (Paris). Her writing appears in *Art + Australia*, *Artist Profile*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Disclaimer*, *Journal of Sonic Studies*, and *Kunstlicht Journal for Visual Culture*. Tina is a PhD candidate and seasonal academic in Fine Art at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne.

https://www.tinastefanou.com/

Panel #30

ARTS:[G61] Arts Lecture Room 5

Open Session #3

CONVENOR

Brett Mitchell

Brett Mitchell works across projects in architecture, photography, writing, curation, and academia. He is interested in the intent and affect of ideas—and the act of noticing.

RESPONDENT

Oron Catts

Associate Professor Oron Catts is the Academic Lead/Director of The Institute of Advanced Studies, The University of Western Australia and Head, SymbioticA, hosted by The Art Gallery of Western Australia. He is an artist, researcher, designer and curator whose pioneering work with the Tissue Culture and Art Project which he established in 1996 is considered a leading biological art project. In 2000 he co-founded SymbioticA, a biological art research centre at The University of Western Australia. Under Catts' leadership SymbioticA has gone on to win the

inaugural Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Hybrid Art (2007) the WA Premier Science Award (2008) and became a Centre for Excellence in 2008. In 2009 Catts was recognised by Thames & Hudson's "60 Innovators Shaping our Creative Future" book in the category "Beyond Design", and by Icon Magazine (UK) as one of the top 20 Designers, "making the future and transforming the way we work". Catts interest is Life; more specifically the shifting relations and perceptions of life in the light of new knowledge and it applications. Often working in collaboration with other artists (mainly Dr. Ionat Zurr) and scientists, Catts have developed a body of work that speaks volumes about the need for new cultural articulation of evolving concepts of life. Catts was a Research Fellow in Harvard Medical School, a visiting Scholar at the Department of Art and Art History, Stanford University, and a Visiting Professor of Design Interaction (2009-2012), and a Professor at Large in Contestable Design (2015-2017) at the Royal College of Arts, London. In 2012-2013 he set up a biological art lab called Biofilia - Base for Biological Art and Design, at the School of Art, Design and Architecture, Aalto University, Helsinki, where he was a Visiting Professor. Catts' ideas and projects reach beyond the confines of art; his work is often cited as inspiration to diverse areas such as new materials, textiles, design, architecture, ethics, fiction, and food. Catts curated nine exhibitions, developed numerous artistic projects and performances. His work was exhibited and collected by museums such as MoMA NY, Mori art Museum, NGV, GoMA, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, Ars Electronica, National Art Museum of China and more.His work was covered by The NY Times, Washington Post, Wired, New Scientist, Time, Newsweek and other TV, radio, print and online media

PRESENTATION #1 — The rule and the unruly: error, erring, and authorship

Beth George, *University of Western Australia*

Abstract: This paper will contrast two residencies where artefacts were produced by vastly different physical and mechanical processes, examining how the rule and the unruly relate in their making. The first involves the design of drawing machines whose components and mechanisms were intentionally light—so light as to allow them to be animated by sonic vibration. Designed in anticipation of certain pictorial results, the process of working with these instruments was instead largely governed by the instruments themselves, who tended to dance, become immobilised, or walk off their drawing surfaces entirely. The second, in contrast, engages with letterpress machines—the same technology that produced Galileo's Siderus Nuncius in 1610—which by their nature require extreme precision. This work involves setting out and tightly locking characters only a few millimetres long, with sprung quoins, into robust frames on heavy benches: each part leaden or iron-cast. Once assembled, clam mechanisms, corkscrew mechanisms, rolling mechanisms with perfectly flat beds impress the composition. Despite each contributor to this choreography being tuned to micrometres of exactitude, the capacity for failure is multiplied across them. Myriad contingencies can produce a misprint. Contextualised by two historical paintings, both bodies of work are examined for their tendency—perceivably their will—toward misbehaviour. The paper invites rumination on the productivity of anxiety, error and erring. Traces of the unwieldy admit us into the world and duration of an artefact's creation. A provocation emerges: perhaps a perfectly executed work reveals just that—the work—but one that errs reveals its author.

Beth George is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Western Australia. She is an educator and practitioner in architecture, with a focus on urbanism, design, and drawing. Beth has a PhD from RMIT in urban curation and cartography. She researches through book chapters, journal articles and papers, competitions, and exhibitions. Her drawing practice focuses on the double-meaning of drawing: to pull (as one draws blood) and to push (to deposit or mark-make) – a process entailing memory, analysis, and speculation. Her works combine analogue and digital media, two- and three-dimensional components, and techniques from mapping to life-drawing. Beth is a registered architect who has directed diverse practices in architecture and urban activation. She has received prizes and commendations for both her teaching and architecture projects.

PRESENTATION #2 — Katagraphics: gilded scars, unruly objects

Cami Mancilla, *University of Nebraska–Lincoln*

Abstract: How does a single cut turn architecture into an object that exceeds containment? A 1.33- metre incision I traced across a plasterboard wall, later sutured with gold leaf, became a gilded scar: shimmering, disobedient. Dust drifted, light ricocheted, bodies rerouted. I call the method katagraphics—kata (down/against) + graphein (to write)—a writing-through- cutting where drawing becomes incision and incision, drawing. Rather than subtracting matter, katagraphics summons a surplus of edges, shadows, and debris; the line refuses the page and erupts into three-dimensional life. The paper places this small-scale breach beside Gordon Matta-Clark's final intervention Circus or The Caribbean Orange (MCA Chicago, 1978), whose spiralling voids peeled a townhouse like an architectural orange, suspending floors in mid-air and staging a Piranesian Wonderland of impossible perspectives. Across these scales, subtraction— handled with surgical precision—emerges as a radical mode of making: each cut produces excessive, performative, indeterminate object-spaces that resist

stable representation. Post-photographic collages recomposed from rubble re-suture the breach only to unsettle it again, multiplying what Georges Didi-Huberman calls the image-wound. Grounding the argument in Tim Ingold's materials-in-process and Marie-Laure Ryan's immersive interactivity, I propose katagraphics as both design strategy and curatorial lens. The technique has entered the classroom, where students wield blades as speculative instruments, exposing hidden poché and provoking new readings of space-as-object. Ultimately, the paper contends that precise incisions do not simply wound; they release an unruly surplus that makes the invisible visible and compels architecture to reveal its own interior life. These findings invite curators to cut as deliberately as architects.

Camila Mancilla is a Chilean architect, artist, researcher and Assistant Professor of Architectural History and Theory at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She holds a PhD in Architecture and Design Research from Virginia Tech, where her dissertation, SCISSION: The Architectural Collage and Gordon Matta-Clark's Circus or The Caribbean Orange, theorizes cutting as a critical methodology of representation. Mancilla's practice spans site-specific interventions, speculative drawings, and paper-based models centered on subtraction, residue, and collage. She directs an independent art space with a punk ethos, staging performances and exhibitions that test how bodies, images, and buildings bruise one another. Her current projects—Katagraphics, a pedagogical framework for "designing by cutting," and Homesickness, a series of gold-sealed wall incisions—recast space as object and drawing. Mancilla publishes and exhibits in Chile and the United States, and actively builds transnational academic and curatorial networks across Latin America and beyond.

Panel #31

ARTS:[G62] Arts Lecture Room 6

Open Session #4 — Collection case studies: power, patron and tactility

PRESENTATION #1 — Captain's pick

Maurice O'Riordan, *Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education*

Abstract: This paper examines a small selection of Aboriginal art objects which were formerly part of the NT Administrator's Collection. The objects comprise paintings (on bark and canvas), painted coolamons, boomerangs and a message stick. Bequeathed to the Art Collection of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education around 2001, they may on many levels be considered unruly objects. Strangely (or not), most of these 13 objects came into the Institute's collection with scant provenance details—by 'artists unknown', undated, from unknown Country. Some of the life of these objects has been given due research and context under the Institute's care yet their journeys of discovery raise intriguing questions. Why these objects at that time as gifts from the NT's highest seat of colonial authority? Why the lack of provenance details and how in their relocation to an Indigenous institution collection do these objects mediate a poetics of power?

Maurice O'Riordan is a writer, curator and publisher based in Darwin. He is a former editor of Art Monthly Australia (Australasia) and former director of the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA). He is currently Manager, Batchelor Press at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education where he has also served as curator of the Institute's Art Collection. In 2022 he founded dishevel books, an independent publisher of visual art-related titles. His latest book is candid enigma, the artful adventures of Andrew Hau Ewing (dishevel books, 2025).

PRESENTATION #2 — Irises and five heists: the (con-)artistry of Alan Bond

Loren Adams, *University of Melbourne*

Abstract: In 1989, when British-born Australian businessman Alan Bond (1938-2015) first paraded his newly acquired Irises alongside five other French impressionist paintings in a public tour of five Australian museums, he expected to be met with praise and accolades. He was instead met with protesters decrying his investment in Pinochet's Chilean Telecommunications Company. By August, Bond Corporation's Irises and Five Masterpieces arrived at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) to a blockade of union workers—including members of local feminist artist-activist group ARTEMIS and their allies. "THE BLOOD OF CHILE STAINS BOND'S ART," ARTEMIS co-founder Jo Darbyshire declared in a letter to the editor of The West Australian, after conspiring to dye the AGWA fountain blood-red. In response, Bondy took out a full-page advertisement in every major newspaper to lament his poor treatment by the Australian public. Still, rumours that Irises was sort of stolen, probably overpriced, and maybe a forgery only bolstered its infamy. Bondy had anonymously won the bid for Irises in a Sotheby's auction two years prior, in the immediate aftermath of the 1987 stockmarket crash and his beloved mother's death, but had bought the painting with loans he later refused to repay. Irises would eventually be repossessed by Sotheby's and sold to The J. Paul Getty Collection for an undisclosed amount, where it has since been on display in The Getty Center Museum in Los Angeles. Ultimately, Bondy's attachment to Irises would lead

to one of his two fraud convictions. While briefly imprisoned, Bondy would paint portraits of himself and other infamous criminals. In this research, I take seriously Bondy's contribution to art history in two ways: first, by classifying Bondy as both (con-)artist and art collector, and second, by classifying Bondy's acquisition of Irises as an art heist. Here, I think-with Bondy and his ill-gotten(-ish) Irises alongside Herman Melville's fictional confidence man (1857) and Galen Watts' neoliberal subject (2021) to reassert the slippery figure of the entrepreneur heisting artworks across markets throughout history. Using archival data and ficto-critical retelling of enduring artworld rumours, I use Irises here as an empirical, methodological, and conceptual object to unpack Bondy's legacy of long cons and short grifts. In doing so, I offer the art heist as more than merely smash-and-grab burglary but as a fundamental characteristic of entrepreneurship under capitalism.

Loren Adams is a disciplinary-promiscuous-feminist-architect(ish)-roboticist-and- computational-dominatrix from Mandjoogoordap, Binjareb Noongar boodja, Western Australia. Trained in architecture, public policy, and teaching for higher education, she is currently completing her PhD at The University of Melbourne Centre for Cities. In her research, Loren thinks-with heists, hacks, hijacks, hoaxes, and other socio-spatial exploits to better understand the murky ethics of planetary ownership, power, and capital in urban situations. Along the way, she is mentored and tormented by historic exploit events, artists, and con artists. Since beginning her PhD, Loren has been in a scholarly situationship with the ghost of notorious Western Australian businessman Alan Bond. For this research, Loren was awarded the 2022 SAHANZ David Saunders Grant. Previously, Loren led the Computational Design team at Grimshaw Architects and was the inaugural Coordinator of the Melbourne School of Design Robotics Lab. She began her career working as a ghost artist in Los Angeles.

PRESENTATION #3 — a curious temporality: analysing decolonial display practices within the state gallery

Emily Whelan, *University of Melbourne*

Shae Legall

Abstract: This paper examines the display practices in the Australian Art hang at the National Gallery of Victoria in Federation Square on Wurundjeri Country. It discusses the works of art; 'The collected' by Yhonnie Scarce, Battleground (Always was never will be) and Battleground (Civil lies) by Jason Wing, and Baba (Mother), possum skin cloak by Mitch Mahoney, and examines these works in the context of colonial temporality. It will explore how public art galleries play a role in shaping colonial history and limit discourse around non colonial art as having a place outside of colonial temporalities. Does the positioning of these works within a linear colonial temporality continue ideological mythmaking of settler nationhood that reinforces colonial legitimacy, one that is seemingly incommensurable with the First Nations self-determination? What story of Australian art is being told in the NGV through the presentation of the permanent display? How do colonial institutions balance national narratives with First Nations sovereignty? Ultimately, this paper argues that the 'ruly' display of these works within the Australian Art hang does not atone for, nor does it challenge, the inherent/systemic/structural coloniality of these institutions.

Emily Whelan has recently completed a Bachelor of Arts in Politics at the University of Melbourne. Next year, she will complete her honours thesis in politics, focusing on recognition within state confines. Emily has interests in Australian art and politics that 'unsettle the settler', particularly focusing on the de- and anti- colonial. She has recently completed a research project on the evolution of the Aboriginal flag's usage within Australia.

Shae le Gall has just completed her Bachelor of Arts, double majoring in art history and linguistics at the University of Melbourne. She intends on completing her honours project next year focusing on materiality and curatorial display. She has a keen interest in Australian art, contemporary First Nations art and languages, and museum studies.

Panel #32

LWAG: First Nations led programmes

Trace — Indigenous printmaking practices

CONVENOR

Andy Quilty

Andy Quilty is an artist, independent arts worker and Lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of Western Australia. He works across the state facilitating creative development workshops in Aboriginal art centres, schools, community organisations, not-for-profits and prisons. Quilty's practice identifies a creative visual language located in outer suburbia incorporating material and psychological expressions, markings and gestures, positioned as inventive expressions of outer suburban experience. He has a Bachelor of Arts (Art) from Curtin University and a Master of Fine Arts (Research) from the University of Western Australia.

PRESENTERS

Brett Nannup

Karen Mills

Zena Cumpston

Zena Cumpston is a Barkandji woman who works as a storyteller, manifesting in engagements as an artist, writer, educator, curator and consultant.

Her multidisciplinary practice is centred around protecting and celebrating Country. She is particularly interested in Indigenous plant knowledge, food sovereignty and working to empower young and emerging First Nations people.

Zena strives to democratise research, creating projects that invite a wide audience and provide platforms and meaningful opportunities for her community and intergenerational learning. She has a healthy disrespect for colonial institutional practices and boundless energy for critiquing and disrupting the ongoing harms of colonisation.

Zena is a widely published writer and in 2025 delivered Artlink Indigenous 'Trace' as guest editor with Dr Jessyca Hutchens, showcasing lesser-known histories of printmaking in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, also making dedicated space within this special issue for emerging and first-time writers. Zena is a member of the Birrarung Council, and part of the 2024/25 Creative Australia Leadership cohort. In 2025 Zena worked with master printer Basil Hall to extend her skill base. She was recently invited to participate as an artist in the Aknumusti‡is: Ecological Engagement Through the Seasons 2025 Residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Canada. In 2025 Zena was also invited to take part in gatherings in Victoria, British Columbia and Sápmi, connecting with and exploring art-making, knowledge exchange and custodial responsibility across international First Nations communities and contexts. Zena Cumpston and Nici Cumpston co-curated the Bunjil Place Gallery exhibition *ngaratya (together, us group, all in together)*, touring with NETS Victoria, 2023-2025. In 2026 Zena's art practice will feature as part of an exciting exhibition at Heide Museum of Modern Art, featuring artists who have participated in engagements and residencies at the InPlace cultural precinct in Narrm/Melbourne.

Karen Mills is a Garramilla/Darwin, Northern Territory, based visual artist. She is a descendant of the Balanggarra people, of the Oombulgurri and Forrest River Aboriginal Reserve, in the East Kimberley, Western Australia. Her practice investigates identity, connection and disconnection with her Aboriginal heritage and the timeless relationship Aboriginal peoples maintain with their ancestral country despite recent histories of dispossession and displacement. Her abstract paintings and prints are inspired by experiences and memories. Mills is currently a participating artist in the Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi major exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia. Mills work also featured in the Tarnanthi exhibitions in 2015, and again in 2021. Mills was a participating artist in the inaugural edition of The National: New Australian Art, at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Carriageworks and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, in 2017. In 2024 Mills was invited to undertake an artist residency at the Kluge-Ruhe

Aboriginal Art Collection, at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, as part of the program for the *Shifting Ground* exhibition, which featured work by twenty two artists who had produced prints with Basil Hall Editions.

Brett Nannup is a printmaker with cultural connections to the Binjareb and Wilman peoples. His practice explores identity—navigating the intersection of his Noongar heritage and the contemporary world. Grounded in cultural storytelling, his work is recognised for its refined use of line, shade, and texture. Brett has collaborated with master printmaker Michael Kempson at Cicada Press, and with Thames Side Print Studios in London, expanding his practice into new forms, approaches, and conversations. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, and was selected for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in both 2024 and 2025. His work has been shown at the Mohawk Territory Cultural Centre in Montreal, and at the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection at the University of Virginia. In 2024, he was one of twelve First Nations artists and curators invited to participate in the Indigenous Printmaking Curatorial Workshop supported by the Getty Paper Project.

Panel #33

ARTS: [G59] Fox Lecture Hall

Unruly bodies

Session #2 — Bodies out of order: feminist, neurodivergent, and queer interventions. Bodies that "do not function properly" by normative standards — reclaiming value, visibility, and agency

Centring bodies marked as dysfunctional, deviant, or deficient, this panel foregrounds practices that reframe those very conditions as sources of resistance and creativity. From the politics of infertility and neurodivergent pedagogy to queer and trans interventions in fashion, these works challenge the regimes that police bodily possibility.

1. *The Motherhood That Wasn't* – menstrual blood, infertility, and resistance to abjection.

2. *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Autist?* – neurodivergent body-minds disrupting compliance-driven pedagogies.

3. *Confronting Clothing, Unruly Fashion* – performance and fashion challenging normative body ideals and platforming queer and trans bodies.

CONVENOR

Angela Viora, *Monash University*

PRESENTATION #1 — the motherhood that wasn't

Cecilia Sordi Campos, *RMIT University*

Abstract: *The motherhood that wasn't* is a critically engaged, practice-led visual project grounded in the complexities of my lived experiences of infertility caused by severe endometriosis and adenomyosis, and subsequent hysterectomy. My experience as a woman of colour who is unable to give birth leads me to a continuing preoccupation of what this signifies in sociocultural, sociohistorical and socioeconomic contexts. The project takes the form of imagery, artefacts and creative writing that focuses on uncovering ways in which the use of menstrual blood in the creation of artworks can be used as an aesthetic, political expression of catharsis as well as a resistance to abjection. The project seeks to function as a reparative strategy by softening social and collective shame of infertility, and to contribute to public discourses by shedding light on inequalities in the experiences of infertility, chronic illness and pain. At its core, the research aims to illustrate what fertility can become outside of traditional paradigms of birthing and mothering, and is guided by the questions: how might the artistic expression of lived experiences of infertility caused by endometriosis contribute to mitigating the stigma associated with, and expanding the public discourse, on infertility? And how can a personal account of chronic illness and infertility challenge the sociocultural, governing fictions of womanhood and female identity?

Cecilia Sordi Campos is a Brazilian-born, Australia-based visual artist, writer and researcher. Her artistic practice is positioned at the intersection of autofiction, socially engaged art and expanded documentary, and her research is situated within the nexus of Practice-led research, Autoethnography and Sensory Ethnography. Cecilia is interested in the possibilities of language, and her practice is grounded in ongoing investigations of complex experiences of marginalisation, migration and cultural identities, as well as representations of gender and the body. Her projects are often informed by her experience as a Brazilian migrant from Afro-Brazilian and European ancestry, together with her experience as an infertile woman of colour with its attendant signifiers in sociocultural, sociohistorical and socioeconomic contexts.

PRESENTATION #2 — Who's afraid of the big bad autist? How policing neurodivergent body(minds) keeps our pedagogies toothless

Sioban Unwin, *Curtin University*
Madeleine Dobson, *Curtin University*

Abstract: This presentation engages the figure of the neurodivergent body(mind) as an unruly object, at once hyper-visible and invisible, the focus of discipline yet persistently misunderstood. We explore dominant constructs of neurodivergence and disability, recognising both their validities and their limits. Rather than rejecting these models outright, we suggest they are incomplete, developed for neurodivergent people rather than with them. Adopting a neurodiversity paradigm, we centre our exploration on the pursuit of testimonial justice: being heard and understood on our own terms.

Classrooms function as sites of regulation and erasure. The tools used to manage large groups often disproportionately impact neurodivergent students. Behaviours are framed as disruptive, disobedient, purposeless, or threatening. Consequently, these 'big bad wolves', the students who don't quite fit within the bounds of what is deemed 'acceptable', are frequently silenced or pathologised: their rights diminished, their needs unmet. We draw connections to the ways queer and colonised communities have historically been managed, surveilled, and rendered deviant in education settings and beyond. In this context, we introduce Neuro-queering curriculum: What might it mean to teach with, through, and alongside unruly body(minds)? What knowledge becomes possible when we centre neurodivergent ways of knowing, relating, and being? And what might classrooms become if we stopped demanding compliance, or cure, but instead endeavoured to enact a meaningful sense of care?

We challenge what inclusion can mean, and invite you to fundamentally reimagine educational spaces.

Siobhan Unwin is a doctoral researcher and Associate Lecturer at Curtin University, whose work critically engages with the intersections of neurodivergence, queerness, and curriculum theory. Grounded in lived experience and informed by interdisciplinary scholarship, her research challenges normative frameworks in education and advocates for transformative, inclusive pedagogies. Siobhan's teaching and academic practice reflect a commitment to equity and complexity in learning environments, with a focus on reimagining curriculum through a lens of social justice. Her current research explores how neuro-queer perspectives can reshape educational theory and practice.

Dr. Madeleine Dobson is an Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education & Care at Curtin University. She is a member of the Curtin Gender Research Network, an Associate Investigator for the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, and an Associate Editor for *Early Child Development & Care*. Madeleine's research encompasses children's rights, social justice in early childhood and beyond, ethical approaches to engaging with children and families, and the transformation of caring professions through the meaningful integration of trauma-informed principles and practices. Recent projects

have explored trauma-informed pedagogies to best support all children and families, innovative ways of sparking and sustaining children's connectedness to nature and natural settings, and creative approaches to eliciting and amplifying the voices of children and young people.

PRESENTATION #3 — Confronting clothing, unruly fashion

Simeran Maxwell, *National Gallery of Australia*

Abstract: This paper examines the 'unruly' practice of two Australian-born artists, Leigh Bowery and Michaela Stark, and the fashion designers Nicol and Ford. Pushing against the cultural strictures of today's Western societal body norms, they have triumphantly created garments that both contain and overflow a variety of human forms. Leigh Bowery, who began his career as a London club kid, used his body as a canvas, 'shocking' audiences with his highly discomforting performances. Described as 'unique … (o)ver six feet tall, fleshy and pale' (Storer and Carsley, 2003), Bowery emphasised and distorted his already distinctive figure through handmade clothing, towering heels, make-up and prosthetics.

Similarly, Michaela Stark subverts the feminine ideal with her transgressive corsetry and binding straps. Emphasising the bulging flesh and asymmetrical breasts that women are trained to hide, Stark's highly polished work forms a beautiful dichotomy with the predominantly patriarchal narrative normalised in fashion magazines and Kardashian Instagram feeds. Queer design duo Lilian and Katie-Louise Nicol-Ford from demi-couture fashion house Nicol and Ford approach each years' collections with a radical 'body first' approach. Consistently platforming the queer community, the designers select their models/bodies before creating the garments they will showcase on the runway. Each look is the result of the partnership with the 'performer': enhancing, disclosing and highlighting in accordance with each model's self-reflexive view of their body. Nicol and Ford's latest collection, Parrhesia, exclusively worked with arguably today's most highly politicised and policed bodies: the transgender community.

Simeran Maxwell is Associate Curator, Australian Art at the National Gallery of Australia where she has worked in various curatorial roles since 2007. She has a particular interest in international and Australian fashion, textiles, theatre arts and design. Her most recent exhibitions include *Know My Name: Kee, Jackson and Delaunay* (2025–26); *Australian Fashion Innovators* (2024–25); *A Century of Quilts* (2024). Her current curatorial projects include Australian and First Nations contemporary fashion, historical quilts, and queer artist, designer and jeweller Peter Tully.

Panel #34

ARTS: [159] Austin Lecture Hall

Absence and abundance in nineteenth-century art history

Session #2

CONVENORS

Emily Eastgate Brink, *University of Western Australia*

Elisa deCourcy, *Australian National University*

PRESENTATION #1 — Imported anatomies: dissecting wax bodies in colonial Australia

Emily Eastgate Brink, *University of Western Australia*

Abstract: At the end of the nineteenth century, the Medical School at the University of Melbourne began an active campaign to acquire anatomical wax models from France. Correspondence between La Maison Vasseur-Tramond, France's leading wax modeller, and the University of Melbourne's Professor of Anatomy, Harry Brookes Allen, reveals a mutual desire to prioritise wax specimens produced in Paris for the Antipodean study of anatomy and disease. The Vasseur-Tramond waxes became foundational to Melbourne's teaching collection and established wax as a viable alternative to the study of human flesh in Australia. This paper will situate the acquisition of these anatomical waxes within a larger context of waxworks in late nineteenth-century France and Australia, with an emphasis on the role of wax in medical education. At once spectacle and specimen, the wax models at the University of Melbourne simulate flesh for the purposes of close inspection and this paper will consider the material specificity of wax as a transmutable and inherently tactile medium. Impervious to water, wax resists, but also responds and remembers, and the Melbourne models advertise the relationship between wax and touch. By considering the poetic and pedagogical potential of wax, this paper will explore how the imported anatomies of Vasseur-Tramond shaped medical knowledge in Australia at the turn of to the twentieth century

Dr. Emily Eastgate Brink is an Associate Professor of Art History and Curatorial Studies at the University of Western Australia, where she focuses on the art and visual culture of the global eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her scholarship explores the European engagement with alterity in the later nineteenth century, with an emphasis on Asian 'otherness,' monstrosity, and the invisible threat of disease. As an affiliate with the Humanities for Health and Medicine at UWA, Dr. Brink also lectures on the history of medicine and art, with

an emphasis on medical portraiture, the normative body, and representations of illness. Brink's work has broad applications to the visual study of science, the history of material economies, as well as the construction of identity in the modern period. Her work has appeared in a variety of peer-reviewed journals, including *Ésprit Créateur*, *Word and Image*, and the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* and has received support from the Australian Institute of Art History, the National Library of Australia, the Mellon Foundation, and the Stanford University Humanities Center.

PRESENTATION #2 — James McNeill Whistler and the Valparaíso notebook: Mmdernity, Japonisme and anti-narrative perspectives

Miguel Gaete, *University of Melbourne*

Abstract: The *Valparaíso Notebook*, created by James McNeill Whistler during his enigmatic 1866 journey to South America, remains strikingly overlooked and an *unruly* object in Whistler scholarship despite its rich artistic and conceptual value. This presentation offers a close visual and textual analysis of the notebook, re-evaluating its place within the artist's broader body of work. It approaches the object from three angles: the influence of Japonisme and its aesthetics of fullness and emptiness; its formal and conceptual relationship to Whistler's Nocturnes; and its significance within evolving 19th-century ideas ideas about art, travel, and representation.

A core argument of this presentation is that, rather than functioning as a straightforward travelogue, the Valparaíso Notebook weaves together abstraction, a repetition of codes and fragmented impressions that can be read as abundance, resulting in an absence of narrative. These qualities reflect Whistler's growing interest in mood and suggestion over narrative coherence and realism, placing the notebook closer to an aesthetic experiment with visual and textual forms than a conventional sketchbook, marking the end of the "era of curiosity."

Drawing on research conducted at the Whistler Archive at the University of Glasgow, I argue that the *Valparaíso Notebook* should be recognised as more than a marginal or curious travel item. Instead, this unruly item offers an early example of anti-narrative travel expression, shaped by non-Western visual languages and Whistler's evolving commitment to artistic autonomy. In this way, it opens up broader questions about the entanglements of image, text, mobility and absence and abundance in 19th-century visual culture.

Dr Miguel Gaete is a Lecturer in Art History and Curatorship at the University of Melbourne. He holds a PhD in Aesthetics from the Autonomous University of Madrid and a second PhD in History of Art from the University of York. His research focuses on European Romanticism and Modern Art, with particular interest in the intersections of science, race, and colonialism in visual representations of Latin America from the 19th century to the present.

He is the author of the award-winning *Cultural Exchanges and Colonial Legacies in Latin America: German Romanticism in Chile, 1800–1899* (Cambria Press, 2023). His work has been supported by institutions including Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Herzog August Bibliothek, the Paul Mellon Centre, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, and the Leverhulme Trust.

In 2023, he received the Klaus Heyne Award for Research in German Romanticism, and in 2024, the Rethinking German History Prize.

PRESENTATION #3 — Unruly Una: the hidden histories of George Frederic Watts' painting *Una and the Red Cross Knight* at The Art Gallery of Western Australia

Karl Sagrabb, *The Art Gallery of Western Australia*

Abstract: Developed in conjunction with a forthcoming exhibition at The Art Gallery of Western Australia, this paper focuses on the painting by G F Watts *Una and the Red Cross Knight*. The work is abundant with narrative elements, yet key narratives are absent in the painting's interpretation that are highly significant for the piece's home in The State Art Collection.

This is a Victorian English painting, pre-Raphaelite in treatment, that depicts a scene from Edmund Spenser's allegorical tale *The Faerie Queene*. The work chooses not a moment of high drama from the story but one of quiet repose and solemnity. The work is simple on its face, yet complex in its narrative arc. Spenser's tale was an allegory in praise of Elizabeth I. In G F Watts' depiction, the work espouses duty and self-sacrifice, painted at the time of heightened Victorian moralising. In both Spenser's text and Watts' representation, the morals of duty and honour are espoused, core tenets of the "chivalric code." This paper looks at how the chivalric code operated in feudal England and later informed Victorian Britain's sense of national identity.

Beyond *Una's* layers of self-conception, contained within are unresolved colonial entanglements and an unexpected Australian connection that are absent from the work's initial presentation.

In this painting, purchased for AGWA by Kenneth Clark, despite the surface level abundance of the allegorical narrative, we can see a tangled, unruly web of connections—absent from initial reading—between this example of late Victorian painting and its home here in the State Art Collection in Western Australia.

Karl Sagrabb is Associate Curator Historical Art at The Art Gallery of Western Australia. He has a Master of Art Curatorship from the University of Melbourne and received his undergraduate degree in the History of Art (Honours) at The University of Western Australia.

Panel #35

PHYS: [G41] Ross Lecture Theatre

Unruly interventions: artistic and curatorial disruptions in the museum

Session #2 — Embodied and material interventions

Papers in this session explore the affective, personal, and material dimensions of intervention—through creative, Indigenous, or reparative strategies of return, reanimation, and reimagining.

CONVENOR

Arvi Wattel, *University of Western Australia*

PRESENTATION #4 — Unsettling the space

Michelle Broun, *La Trobe University*

Abstract: My master's thesis explores the Forrest Collection, a historical collection of WA Aboriginal cultural materials, currently held at the Museum of Victoria with some Noongar items on loan to Boola Bardip until 2032. Sold by John Forrest to the Museum of Victoria in 1890, it is entangled in multiple histories and cultures and represents the complexity of the colonial story and the legacy of empire. The thesis itself looks at the complexity of the return of these objects, originally 'collected' by 33 Constables commissioned by Forrest, to communities of origin. The process of return includes opportunities for interventions and reinterpretations by artists and revival of cultural practices and re-awakening of cultural knowledges. The selection of objects for this purpose is also value based, and outcomes of this engagement are possibly far from those originally intended. My paper will focus on three of the Pilbara items of the Forrest Collection and propose ways that I as an artist, might reimagine and reconnect with them with the intention of bringing them closer, including some of the risks this work could bring.

Michelle Broun is a proud Yindjibarndi woman living and working on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. She is a curator, creative producer and cultural planner.

PRESENTATION #5 — Curating the un-curate-able: interventions into the problematic

Gretchen Stolte, *University of Western Australia*

Abstract: In 2017, art historian and artist Nigel Lendon gifted me two bark paintings that he thought I would not only enjoy having but enjoy researching. A legacy from Queensland Aboriginal Creations, the two bark paintings are by every definition unruly, disruptive, and complicated but they are also surprisingly significant. The paintings were made by unidentified Queensland Aboriginal artists in the 1980s but contain cultural stories from Aboriginal groups in the Northern Territory. They are direct copies, and they are violations of the cultural copyrights we know exist today. They are two examples of the thousands of bark paintings made during QAC's tenure (1950s-1990) that exist in museums and collections. These bark paintings raise several questions. What do researchers do with these works? Do curators include them in exhibitions and if so, how should they be curated?

This paper will explore curatorial interventions around two problematic bark paintings and their historical and social context. Ideas around these paintings will poke at the idea of the un-curate-able by interrogating their possibilities. Where is value located in bark paintings like these? How can one write about artworks based on a violation of cultural protocols? How should curators and art historians intervene on behalf of these problematic paintings? Using case studies that show how these works have been curated in exhibitions, this paper argues that their very unruliness and complicated nature is exactly the point. Through these works, Indigenous agency and survivance is shown to endure while under the ongoing colonial project.

Dr Stolte is a Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) Native American and is currently the discipline lead of anthropology and convenor of the anthropology major and honours program. She has degrees in art history and anthropology focusing on the material culture of First Nations peoples both on Turtle Island (North America) and so-called Australia. Dr Stolte's research areas focus on the relationship between cultural objects and identity and has published extensively about practice-based research, cultural protocols, the responsibility of western institutions in Indigenous cultural spaces and critically unpacking the ongoing colonial project. Dr Stolte's teaching specialises in research design, the ethics of research, the history of anthropology and colonialism, material culture research and First Nations Studies and is also a practicing bead artist, weaver and ribbon-skirt maker.

PRESENTATION #6 — Personal interventions in the institution: Phuong Ngo and Newell Harry

Lizzie Riek, *University of Queensland*

Abstract: My current research examines contemporary Australian artists who engage with collecting institutions through strategies of mimicry and subversion, rather than direct intervention. Instead of using existing catalogued material, these artists borrow the functions and visual languages of collecting institutions – vitrines, analogue materials, cataloguing systems, and text – to display found and

personal material and tell familial histories missing from the public record. In doing so, these artists insert themselves into the institution and confuse our understandings of value and truth as belonging only to histories and materials held by institutional collections.

As examples, this paper examines the practices of two artists – Phuong Ngo and Newell Harry. Ngo and Harry both tell personal stories that highlight the complexities and interconnectedness of migration, colonialism, identity, and memory. Their works are underpinned by photographs, diary entries, and nostalgic objects, yet are presented as objective, authoritative archives that could be (or should be) included in our dominant narratives.

As with other interventions into collections, there is still a paradox at play, as these artists simultaneously critique and rely on these institutional structures to tell their own stories. Yet, by using the institution's own strategies of collecting and narrative building, these artists are also able to reveal our own role in upholding assumptions of authority and historical value.

Lizzie Riek is a PhD student at the University of Queensland, researching contemporary Australian artists who are treating the archive as a symbolic entity. Lizzie has a master's degree in Museum Studies from the University of Queensland and currently works at Griffith University Art Museum.

Panel #36

GGGL: [107] Woolnough Lecture Theatre

Practitioners of Contemporary Art Histories

Session #2

Abstract: In talks on contemporary art history, Terry Smith suggests that contemporary art historians contribute to contemporary art just as contemporary artists and curators contribute to contemporary art history. After modernism, the separation of artist and critic, curator and artist, practitioner and scholar, has collapsed. This is nowhere more evident than the university, where research led practice has brought about an intimacy of artists and curators with the academic environment, just as art historians have flourished while working alongside artist scholars and curator academics. It is in this spirit that papers in this session contribute to a sense of an expanded art historical practice, as artists and curators present on their work and on the ways that these practices contribute to an expanded field of art scholarship.

CONVENOR

Darren Jorgensen, *University of Western Australia*

PRESENTATION #1

Jon Tarry, *GZA Runway*

Abstract: GZA Runway opened 24/11/1998 linking GAZA to the world through airspace until operations ceased in 2001. Today the remnant runways and terminal is still visible however its fragmentation gave way to market gardens and rural cultivation. Once buzzing with arrivals and departures, now the remains offer shelter for pastoral creatures, domestic and wild. With the outline of the airport runway still visible, the tarmac has given way to cultivated gardens. Adaptive reuse is common as seen in this abandoned transit zone. Airports are not that different to galleries and museums, although the carry on and self-loading cargo in airports within these contested lands is rapidly changing. A lone sheep Lifting the gaze from the head up from the graze as the creature moves tentatively over rubble to the arrival lounge past the conveyor belt to the pick up zone pausing for a moment in the shadows. This is not a gallery or a collection but a point of collection and exchange. Gassan Hage wrote extensively a critique of these modes of Alter-Politics. Being expelled for daring to discuss the region in anyway. Universities of Thought in the West have raised this filtering of messaging to a new level. In this paper I will discuss the history of this runway, its changing forms of sculpture, film and graphic in my art practice to becoming an "unruly object". The subject is one that has been drawn, made into sculptures in metal and timber, written about in an Artist book of poems 26 runways and reviewed by an art critic in the Jordanian Times. This runway will be placed next to a neighboring runway Ben Gurion which was the subject of censorship that is now housed in the collections including; the Art Gallery of Western Australia. This artworks status is currently unknown and possibly unruly given recent historical events.

Jon Tarry affiliations Honorary Research Fellow UWA, Honorary Fellow RMIT Teaching UWA, CUT CUHK UA. Born in the UK raised in Australia, Jon Tarry is an artist with an international profile spanning nearly four decades in sculpture and sonic arts. Current sculpture works expand primary elemental forces on form and structures, water, air, light shapes the environment we inhabit. The artist works between art and architecture, connecting people with each other and with the country. With experience in the delivery complex large scale environmental art projects such as; 'Waterlines', Yagan Sq 200 metre water shapes stone, working with SWALSC 2017- Sonic Broome, 100 metre light and sound art screen, working with school groups and Yawuru and Djugen People of the Kimberley 2018, Naturescape an experiential playscape Masterplan with PlanE and Dept of Education, Kings Park 2012, Valletta Gateway, Malta, historical interventions AP and Renzo Piano Workshop 2014.

Exhibiting including; 'Reasonable Dreams' - Paris, 2014 'Cadence' - Los Angeles Centre for Digital Arts, 2019, Mobility of Mind, Venice Biennale Italian Pavilion 2021. www.jontarry.com The artist has an overview of four decades of creative practice in the visual and sonic arts. Focused primarily on sculptural expression through exhibitions and site specific urban and regional inspired installations. Discuss ideas of 'how people live as one', to coexist in societies of difference. Presenting the series, Mobility of Mind, from the Venice Architecture Biennale Italian Pavilion curated by Tom Kovac and Alesandro Melis. The film and sound track features Walmajarri Elder Annette Kogolo speaking in language. A second work from the series features a sound track by Jon Tarry and Dom Mariani, who album cover features a photograph taken in Ho Chi Min City. The talk comes full circle by presenting a film and sound work in progress about connections between Vietnam and Australia. Sculpture, Film, Sound reveal processes of thinking through making.

PRESENTATION #2 — The uses of Life in relations to Industry of Man

Oron Catts, *University of Western Australia*

Abstract: This paper will discuss *The uses of Life in relations to Industry of Man*, an artwork presented in 2024 at *Emergence*: Art from Life, at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center as part of Getty's PST ART: Art & Science Collide. The work starting points are two 19th century books by E. Lankester, an English surgeon and naturalist. The first titled "*On Food. Being lectures delivered at the South Kensington Museum*" (published in 1864) this book explores food and health. It curiously includes chapters on alcohol and tobacco alongside chapters titled "*On Heat-Giving Food*", "*On Flesh Forming Food*" and "*On Animal Food*" (meaning food from animals' sources). In the second book, published in 1876, titled "*The Uses of Animals in Relations to Industry of Man, being a Course of Lectures Delivered at the South Kensington Museum*" Lankester outlines the use of animal parts and secretions for non-food related products. In both books Lankester relationships to the non-human is explicitly instrumental. Animals are discussed as a resource from which to extract valuable commodities. There is no discussion about suffering, ethics or animal welfare.

The uses of Life in relations to Industry of Man artwork contrasts some of Lankester's examples with contemporary attempts to artificially manufacture animal products without the animal. Ranging from margarine, synthetic musk and soap-free soaps to fledgeling areas such as *Cellular Agriculture* and *Biofabricated* products, which are the main concerns of the work.

Cellular Agriculture and Biofabrication promise a future of abundance without consequences, through the manufacturing of animal and plant products without the whole organism. Beside the promise to reduce and in some cases even reverse adverse environmental impact, these new approaches also promise to eliminate ethical concerns regarding the use of animals, by the removal of sentiency at the source. Hance, providing means for guilt free consumption. It would be argued that to do this, they rely on practices of neutralization and containment that have their origins in mythological thinking. These practices, and the form of thinking that underpins them, can be seen elsewhere in the consumer market. Products such as decaffeinated coffee, sugar free sweeteners and cowless (non-dairy) milk, share a common characteristic: they are built of the premise that we can remove and replace nature from our means of production. In other words, their manufacture neutralises the processes of natural extraction and exploitation from which their reference products are derived; they are all evacuated of the very feature that defines them. Thinkers such as Zizek have diagnosed this phenomenon as a consensual illusion of late capitalism. When it comes to the removal of sentiency, this proposition stirs a range of ontological and philosophical questions and conundrums regarding relationship to the concepts of nature and life itself. *The uses of Life in relations to Industry of Man* aims to open this conversation.

Associate Professor Oron Catts is the Academic Lead/Director of The Institute of Advanced Studies, The University of Western Australia and Head, SymbioticA, hosted by The Art Gallery of Western Australia. He is an artist, researcher, designer and curator whose pioneering work with the Tissue Culture and Art Project which he established in 1996 is considered a leading biological art project. In 2000 he co-founded SymbioticA, a biological art research centre at The University of Western Australia. Under Catts' leadership SymbioticA has gone on to win the inaugural Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Hybrid Art (2007) the WA Premier Science Award (2008) and became a Centre for Excellence in 2008. In 2009 Catts was recognised by Thames & Hudson's "60 Innovators Shaping our Creative Future" book in the category "Beyond Design", and by Icon Magazine (UK) as one of the top 20 Designers, "making the future and transforming the way we work". Catts interest is Life; more specifically the shifting relations and perceptions of life in the light of new knowledge and it applications. Often working in collaboration with other artists (mainly Dr. Ionat Zurr) and scientists, Catts have developed a body of work that speaks volumes about the need for new cultural articulation of evolving concepts of life. Catts was a Research Fellow in Harvard Medical School, a visiting Scholar at the Department of Art and Art History, Stanford University, and a Visiting Professor of Design Interaction (2009-2012), and a Professor at Large in Contestable Design (2015-2017) at the Royal

College of Arts, London. In 2012-2013 he set up a biological art lab called Biofilia - Base for Biological Art and Design, at the School of Art, Design and Architecture, Aalto University, Helsinki, where he was a Visiting Professor. Catts' ideas and projects reach beyond the confines of art; his work is often cited as inspiration to diverse areas such as new materials, textiles, design, architecture, ethics, fiction, and food. Catts curated nine exhibitions, developed numerous artistic projects and performances. His work was exhibited and collected by museums such as MoMA NY, Mori art Museum, NGV, GoMA, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, Ars Electronica, National Art Museum of China and more.His work was covered by The NY Times, Washington Post, Wired, New Scientist, Time, Newsweek and other TV, radio, print and online media

PRESENTATION #3 — Exhibiting unruly objects

Lizzie Muller, *University of New South Wales*

Abstract: In this paper I explore the history of unruly objects in my curatorial practice. I trace a journey from speculative objects (in the science fiction show *Awfully Wonderful* at Carriageworks in 2011 https://lizziemuller.com/projects/10/), to lively objects (in the eponymous 2015 Museum of Vancouver exhibition https://museumofvancouver.ca/lively-objects), to working models in the touring exhibition *A Working Model of the World* (2017) https://www.galleries.unsw.edu.au/exhibition/working-model-world. Each of these exhibitions responds to what Caroline Langill and I describe in our 2022 book *Curating Lively Objects* as "the deep sense that curators collaborate in a tangible, passionate, and reciprocal way with things". In the talk I discuss the distinct affordances of speculative, lively and working objects – including their capacity to generate stories, open imaginative portals to different worlds, and to disrupt disciplinary boundaries between different forms of knowledge. I reflect on my use of exhibition-making to create conversations between diverse kinds of unruly object, and the implications for curatorial thinking.

Lizzie Muller is Director of Research in the School of Art & Design. She is a curator and researcher specialising in audience experience and interdisciplinary collaboration. She researches the future of museums as sites of knowledge production. Her recent book Curating Lively Objects: Exhibitions Beyond Disciplines (co-authored with Caroline Seck-Langill) demonstrates how curating drives museum innovation. Lizzie is an elected Councillor of the Sydney Culture Network , and co-founder with Keir Winesmith of the bi-monthly Sydney Culture Data Salon. Lizzie's research draws together curatorial practice with theories and methods from participatory design and interaction design. She has developed audience-centred

curatorial methodologies and innovative approaches to audience research. Her work with audience experience extends to the fields of preservation and archiving, particularly experiential documentation and oral histories of media art.

Panel #37

MATH: [G17] Cheryl Praeger Lecture

Fathoming the unfathomable

Abstract: A hyper object is an object which we know to be real yet is spatiotemporally too vast and multifaceted for us to apprehend in its entirety. The 'hyper object' concept was developed in Timothy Morton's book of the same name to describe the enormity of global warming, observable only via its consequences such as extreme weather events, impending extinctions and permanently altered landscapes. In a resolutely globalised world, much of how we interact with one another also depends on our interfacing with a different set of hyper objects: things including, but not limited to, wireless telecommunication infrastructure, the internet, flight routes, and capital itself. It is through these hyper objects that we understand and witness how the political decisions in one part of the world can have direct consequences for people's experiences in another. This panel seeks to consider hyper objects as its point of departure, and especially seeks to separate the idea from its roots in object-oriented ontology and revisit it from a subjective and humanist perspective.

From this point of departure, this panel invites artists and theorists to ask: what might it mean for us to experience, engage with, or reckon with objects and systems that are too vast to apprehend? This proposition can be explored in a variety of ways—from artistic practices that contend with modes of circulation, to dialogues between the local and the global, or from the human experiences of climate change, to affective overstimulation online. Additionally, this panel welcomes contributors working with related ideas, such as distance, temporality, and scale, and welcomes contributors who might approach the same terrain from different theoretical contexts.

CONVENOR

Paul Sutherland, *Curtin University*

Paul Sutherland is a PhD researcher and casual academic at the School of Media, Creative Arts, and Social Inquiry. He has taught units in photography and media art, emphasising post-photographic, digitally native, and experimental approaches to art practice and visual culture. Additionally, Sutherland has lectured in extremism studies, specialising in media ecosystems and the aesthetics of extremism

and presented a public lecture on AI and digital subjectivity. Sutherland's writing has appeared in Do Not Research, and he has presented at numerous conferences locally, interstate, and internationally, including APSA in Perth and Melbourne, and TTT in Ljubljana. Sutherland's PhD research investigates the aesthetic and ideological vectors of the post-truth era, with specific interests in radical online political spaces and the emergent art movement known as 'internet cinema.' His broader theoretical interests include phenomenology, affect theory, and media theory.

PRESENTERS

Inga Fillary, *University of Auckland*

Inga Fillary is an early-career, practice-led researcher whose work engages with speculative philosophies that acknowledge the contingency of reality. A central aim is to evoke a sense of uncertainty in the viewer, often by rendering the familiar unfamiliar. Fillary transforms domestic objects by casting them in entropic and waste materials, disrupting their original identity. Through increasingly saturated and unstable solutions, she relinquishes control over the process, allowing the materials to dictate the outcome. The resulting objects are aberrant forms in which structure yields to material in unpredictable ways. Fillary hold a Master of Fine Arts with First Class Honours and is currently a Doctoral Candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Auckland. Her recent exhibitions include Uncertain Objects, Project Space (2025); Onepū, Shifting Sands, Franklin Arts Centre (2025); Confessions, Scott Lawrie/Silo Gallery (2024); Suburbia, mother mother at Northart (2023); and Matermater, Silo Gallery, Auckland (2022).

Luke Smythe's main areas of research include West German art, abstraction across media and regions, and the passage of analogue art media into the digital era. His articles and essays addressing these and related concerns have appeared in many journals and catalogues, including Art History, October, Modernism/modernity, the Art Journal (U.S.), and Oxford Art Journal. As a curator, Smythe has worked on exhibitions at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX; Yale University Art Gallery; and the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich. He is the author of two books: Gerhard Richter, Individualism, and Belonging in West Germany (Routledge, 2022), and Gretchen Albrecht: Between Gesture and Geometry (Massey University Press, 2019/2024).A manuscript on Polke, from which his proposed talk is drawn, is currently under review at Chicago University Press.

Samuel Beilby is an artist and researcher based in Boorloo. He is interested in processes of extraction, labour, noise, paranoia and entropic exchanges between these things. His art often uses diagrammatics and amplification to explore unsure tensions between industrial endeavours, sociocultural circumstances and ecological

organisation. As of 2025, he has participated in exhibitions, residencies, artist talks, academic conferences and performances in Taiwan, Japan, France, Singapore, Greece and Australia. His writing has appeared in Dispatch Review, Leonardo, Un Magazine and various conference proceedings, exhibition catalogues and independent publications. Samuel currently occupies a committee member role at Cool Change Contemporary, is co-founder/ co-director at _____.gs (pronounced "underscore"), Gallery Associate at AVA, a sessional teacher at the University of Western Australia's Fine Art Department and is a PhD candidate at the same university with research focus on post-COVID noise art. He is also a member of the experimental art collective, mg.

Panel #38

ARTS: [G60] Arts Lecture Room 4

Women, art, architecture and the avant-garde to neo-avant-garde

Abstract: Thinking beyond simply the agency of objects, we turn specifically to their disruptive and ungovernable aspects – whether they be leaking out of unwieldy collections, unexhibitable or unthinkable, fugitive or lost, or brimming with vitality, power, or ancestral subjectivity. We are interested in unruly objects not simply as passive bearers of meaning or extensions of artistic intent, but as active, resistant presences that defy containment and linear narratives. These are objects that trouble conventional museological, archival, and historiographic frameworks: objects that resist categorisation, refuse display, disrupt chronology, or carry haunted, contested, or politicised histories. Such unruliness may manifest materially–in decay, fragmentation, or tactility–or conceptually, as objects imbued with embodied memory, affective force, or situated knowledge.

In the context of avant-garde and neo-avant-garde women's practices, unruly objects can be especially potent: they may stand in for occluded labour, suppressed genealogies, or speculative futures. They may be wielded as tools of resistance, carriers of feminist knowledge, or mediators of spatial and political disobedience. We are particularly interested in papers that question genealogies, propose alternative historiographies, or examine the socio-political and aesthetic strategies employed by women working within (or against) these movements.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Women's contributions to Dada, Constructivism, Bauhaus, Surrealism, and other avant-garde formations through to the neo-avant-garde "paper architecture"

- Feminist re-readings of modernist and avant-garde art and architecture
- Transnational and decolonial perspectives on women's avant-garde practices
- The disruptive agency and unruliness of objects and materials within women's practices

We encourage submissions that challenge Euro-American-centric frameworks.

CONVENORS

Joanne Drayton

Annabel Pretty, *Unitec School of Architecture*

Dr Joanne Drayton is an acclaimed New Zealand author whose output is globally recognized. Her latest book, a memoir titled *The Queen's Wife*, was released by Penguin in January 2023. As part of this book project, she has carved a post-colonial chess set in response to the Lewis pieces in the British Museum and her spouse's Māori whakapapa.

Her book *Hudson & Halls: The Food of Love* was the winner of the Royal Society Te Aparangi Award for General Non-Fiction at the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards in May 2019, and was a cover story for the *NZ Listener* in October 2018.

Dr Annabel Pretty is Discipline Leader for the Master of Architecture (Professional) (MArch[Prof]) and Senior Lecturer at Unitec Te Pūkenga's School of Architecture. Supervision of Master's theses includes topics in art, architecture, and representation. Co-leader of the School of Architecture's Art & Representation research group.

Research explores intersections of architecture, photographic representation, and generative AI, with a focus on mediation, reproduction, and cultural reception. The PhD thesis, Sublime Follies: Unveiling the Realm of Multiple-Reality Architecture, examined hyperreal photomontage in architectural speculation.

Cumulus Fellow since 2016 and member of PhotoForum Aotearoa New Zealand. Visual work is available on Instagram (@annabelpretty, @sublime_follies), with writing shared via @unreliable_landscapes.

PRESENTATION #1 — Pedagogical magic: improvisation, refusal, and the feminist Avant-Garde as learning praxis

Kirsten Hudson, *Curtin University*

Abstract: This paper explores a pedagogical approach that is unruly, improvised, relational, and alive. Rather than reinforcing institutional scripts, this way of teaching refuses to behave. It unsettles assumptions about what learning is, how it begins, as well as where and when it might spill, resist, or re-form. It grows from flickers, misfires, and ruptures that escape rubrics, timetables, and strategic plans, yet leaves everything changed.

Borrowing the concept of magic from quantum theory, not as metaphor, but as a condition in which determinism fails and relational potential floods in, I frame this kind of pedagogical field not as content delivery, but as a live, entangled system. It doesn't just resemble a quantum system. It is one: volatile, co-emergent, and generatively uncontainable. This is pedagogy as research-creation: a speculative, material practice where knowledge is not transmitted but composed in motion, with and through others.

Across two decades of transdisciplinary teaching in experimental film, performance, photomedia, and cultural studies, I've come to understand this pedagogy as an enactment of feminist avant-garde praxis that operates in the bleed: through hesitation, seepage, excess, domestic debris, and gestures historically excluded from dominant discourse. It doesn't ask permission. It listens. It survives. It insists.

In dialogue with Manning's (2016) concept of the "minor gesture", this paper foregrounds subtle, unruly shifts that redirect relation and unsettle what counts as learning. Here, learning is closer to what Moten and Harney (2013) call "study": a mode of shared, improvisational thinking and being together that refuses governance. These pedagogical acts are not strategic reforms. They are refusals. They move beside institutions, across their margins, through their silences. And it is in this improvisation, this danger, this trespass, that pedagogical magic enacts its force as a fugitive, co-composed feminist praxis that refuses containment and insists on mattering.

Kirsten Hudson is a transdisciplinary artist-scholar of colonial settler heritage, living and working on Whadjuk Noongar boodja, Western Australia. For over 25 years, her research-creation practice has moved across film, photography, performance, sculpture, and bio-art to explore life, loss, transformation, and human/non-human kinship, alongside speculative fiction, and feminist pedagogies of collaboration and transdisciplinarity.

Her work has received national and international recognition, including the 2024 Silver Prize for Best Experimental Film: Portland Festival of Cinema, Animation & Technology, the 2023 Abstract Award: Experimental Film Odyssey, and the 2022 Overall Animation Award: Nature Without Borders International Film Festival.

Hudson holds a PhD in Art and Cultural Studies and has taught across Fine Arts, Screen Arts, Cultural Studies, and Photography at Curtin University for more than two decades. She is currently academic-in-residence for Curtin's Regional Changemakers Program, which integrates material thinking, creative experimentation, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems to co-create regenerative futures through collective journey storytelling.

PRESENTATION #2 — Unruly assemblage in the feminine milieu: photocollage as spatial practice, from the proto-avant-garde to neo-avant-garde

Annabel Pretty, *Unitec School of Architecture*

Georgina Downey, *University of Adelaide*

Abstract: The Madame B Album (c. 1870), an extraordinary private compilation of photocollages by Marie Blanche Hennelle Fournier—and similarly that of Mary Georgiana Caroline Cecil Filmer, Lady Filmer, Album (c1860)—reveals an overlooked proto-modernist visual and spatial practice embedded within the domestic feminine milieu. While not intended for public viewing, its material refinement and conceptual sophistication suggest a deliberate act of image-making that exceeds mere pastime. Victorian women engaged within the broader field of photography through intimate, material rituals—inscribing, exchanging, arranging—but photocollage enacted a more transgressive logic: treating the photograph not as a sacred object but as a raw, cuttable element in spatial play.

These works operate not only visually but architecturally, constructing improbable interiors, perspectival illusions, and bodily-temporal juxtapositions that echo contemporary concerns with space, inhabitation, and photo-montage. The collages anticipate later neo-avant-garde practices—such as the Smithsons' Golden Lane Housing montage (1952), where celebrity bodies were inserted into speculative urban views—and can be read through a Deleuzian lens of assemblage (agencement): heterogeneous fragments organised not by hierarchy but affect, desire, and connective force. The collage becomes a machinic assemblage of bodies, rooms, paper, text, and memory, and possibility.

Positioning these works as "unruly objects"—not as passive feminine artefacts, but resistant, fugitive agents that disrupt narrative coherence and object containment. Their spatial logic is affective and embodied, resisting linearity in favour of dreamlike, associative architectures. These photocollages thus occupies a critical hinge between private Victorian image culture and the later radical traditions of montage, feminist authorship, and spatial experimentation.

Dr Annabel Pretty is Discipline Leader for the Master of Architecture (Professional) (MArch[Prof]) and Senior Lecturer at Unitec Te Pūkenga's School of Architecture. Supervision of Master's theses includes topics in art, architecture, and representation. Co-leader of the School of Architecture's Art & Representation research group.

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Cumulus Fellow since 2016 and member of PhotoForum Aotearoa New Zealand. Visual work is available on Instagram (@annabelpretty, @sublime_follies), with writing shared via @unreliable_landscapes.

PRESENTATION #3 — A dress can't change anything!' Nostalgia and women's agency in two recent Australian period fashion films

Abstract: Recently, a swathe of streaming television and feature films have purposefully evoked nostalgia for the post war boom years. Our attraction to artfully recreated mid-last century clothing and mis-en-scene underscores our pleasure in everything from 'Mad Men', 'Call the Midwife', 'Carol', and 'Don't Worry Darling' to 'Phantom Thread' and 'Mrs Harris Goes to Paris'.

What might explain our 'ever increasing thirst and longing for the recovery of earlier, yet still modern periods at an ever accelerating rate'? In this paper I'm going to read two recent Australian films, Jocelyn Moorhouse's The Dressmaker (2015), and Bruce Beresford's 'Ladies in Black' (2018) against each other through the lens of nostalgia theory. The main question will be 'in what ways do these nostalgic representations serve the present day?

I'm going to use a melded concept of costume and architectural interior settings working together as aesthetic historic constructs, wherein which the respective female protagonists, Tilly Dunnage and Lisa Miles disrupt societal expectations and norms in unruly ways, in and through a dress or series of outfits.

Both films present dresses as objects 'brimming with power', that allow Tilly and Lisa to refuse the restrictive positions they've been put in societally. Moreover, the 'dressing' of the interior sets here function to authenticate, amplify and highlight the power of the clothing and helps them impose their meaning.

Dr Georgina Downey is a Visiting Research Fellow in Art History at the University of Adelaide. Her PhD (2005), undertaken in the School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia, focussed on the work of expatriate Australian woman artists in Paris in the modern period. She has published widely on the domestic interior in art, in pursuit of which she has received an Australian Academy of the Humanities Travel Grant (2006) and University of Adelaide research grants. Her most recent books are; Domestic Interiors: Representing Home from the Victorians to the Moderns, (2013), which won the AAANZ Anthology of the Year Award 2014, and Designing the French Interior: The Modern Home and Mass Media (2015) with Anca Lasc and

Mark Taylor. She is a member of the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand, Museums Australia, and the networks of the Centre for Studies of Home, and Edwardian Culture.

Panel #39

EZONENTH: [109] Learning Studio

Dusting off: the Peter Mudie archives

Roundtable

Abstract: In 1993, the late Peter Mudie curated *Dusting off the Other*: a program of experimental films (1922- 1984). Sixteen millimetres film prints were loaned from archives around the world and screened at the Film and Television Institute. Over three months, the weekly screenings were attended by the local film art community and university students. We were amongst the student groups taught by Mudie.

Mudie introduced experimental film practice to our undergraduate curriculum at UWA. The viewing of past works was combined with discussions of the film medium, and the social, cultural, and political contexts of their making. Students were provided the equipment, facilities, and time to experiment with materials. Physical participation and social interactions in film workshops create deeply connections.

This roundtable discussion focuses on the research, teaching, and legacies of Peter Mudie, asking:

- how can practitioners transmit the elusive and ungovernable tacit knowledge via the research-teaching nexus?
- can there be a legacy of experimental film – a *sui generis* thing, an undisciplined object?
- what vitality, excesses and subjectivities emerge from the tension between the labour of the archivist and the archives?

The cinema as a social space has been critical for dialogic exchanges and embodied interactions that occur across generations. When physical workshops and screening venues are no longer the primary places of gathering, how do we keep alive the experimental *scene* with all its *excesses* of the haptic and social dimensions?

CONVENOR

Jo Law, *University of Wollongong*

A/Pro Jo Law investigates the transformative potential of art, science, and technology in response to changing sociocultural and political environments. Her current research focuses on the development of agential citizenship through aesthetic resilience. Jo publishes in a wide range of journals, most recently: "The Question of Hong Kong: Experimental Media Arts in a Space of Disappearance' for *Architecture and Culture*, and is a Chief Investigator of ARC Linkage Project 'Empowering Australia's Visual Arts via Creative Blockchain Opportunities.' Jo is the Head of the School of the Arts, English and Media, University of Wollongong, Australia.

PRESENTERS

Lucas Ihlein, *University of Wollongong*

Louise Curham, *Curtin University*

Eleanor Suess, *Deakin University*

Paul Boye, *University of Western Australia*

Kate Gregory, *State Library of WA / State Records Office*

Lee Kinsella, *Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery*

Louise Curham, *Curtin University*

A/Pro Lucas Ihlein is an artist-researcher focusing on regenerative agriculture and the social and cultural dimensions of environmental management. He also collaborates with Dr Louise Curham as Teaching and Learning Cinema, re-enacting and documenting 1970s expanded cinema as an experimental method of intangible cultural heritage preservation. He teaches Contemporary Art at University of Wollongong, Australia.

Louise Curham is an archivist, film artist and researcher. She has taught in Libraries, Archives, Records and Information Science discipline at Curtin University of Technology and Charles Sturt University. Louise has held policy and project-based roles at the National Archives of Australia and the Australian National Maritime Museum. Louise has PhD from the University of Canberra that investigates how to care for heritage items that elude digitisation. As an archivist and an artist, Louise is interested in themes that flow from old media, ranging from digitisation to the impact of algorithm-based technology on citizens.

Prof Eleanor Suess is an architect, artist, and educator and is Professor and Head of Architecture at Deakin University, Australia. She studied fine art and architecture in Perth, Australia, then London, completing her doctoral studies at Central Saint Martins. Eleanor has over twenty years' experience teaching and leading architecture courses and academic teams, drawing upon a decade's experience in architectural practice. Her research responds to her dual-disciplinary grounding and involves critical practice and writing in the field of architectural representation, with a focus on the temporal and experiential. Eleanor's writing and the artefacts of her practice have been published and exhibited widely.

Dr Paul Boyé is a writer and curator living in Boorloo (Perth, WA). They have recently completed a PhD at the UWA School of Design, researching contemporary artistic and philosophical responses to emergent social technologies. Paul is on the directorial committee of Cool Change (an artist-

run organisation based in Boorloo), and has recently worked at un Projects (Online Editor) and John Curtin Gallery (Assistant Curator). As an independent writer, artist and researcher, and often in collaboration, they make work about pathos, vibe, private experience and requitedness.

Panel #40

EZONENTH: [111] Learning Studio

Surrealist objects and uncanny affect in contemporary visual culture

Session #1

Abstract: Continuing within the modernist tradition, contemporary surrealist-inspired art often incorporates found objects and popular readymades, strategically arranged and activated in ways to invite new interpretations. Addressing the body as both subject and object, through fragmented, uncanny or erotic renderings, likewise appears as an ongoing artistic strategy to evoke unexpected emotional responses. Such practice blurs the line between imagination and reality, engaging audiences in provocative and unfamiliar ways.

This double-panel session brings together six papers exploring how contemporary artists employ surrealist aesthetic frameworks and methods to propel familiar objects into newly imagined—and often disruptive—realms. Presenters, including artists reflecting on their own practices, will examine how practitioners engage with a range of objects: from consumer and domestic goods to sculptural assemblages, and representations of the female body as symbolic form. Speaking to these objects' creatively activated reconfigurations, presenters will address how meaning becomes recontextualised, inviting alternative and often more compelling interpretations.

As potent aesthetic forces, these artistically mediated objects further work to evoke a range of feelings, leaving a transformative impression on viewers. Rather than passive entities conforming to expectations, such objects generate disruptive insights that provoke emotions ranging from humour, a sense of seduction, disorientation, to uncanny wonder and critical reflection. Focusing on these affective encounters, speakers will highlight the emotionally charged nature of these objects, from triggering unconscious associations to fostering political resonance and suggesting talismanic significance.

CONVENORS

Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*

Vick Souliman, *University of Sydney*

Mimi Kelly is a Lecturer in Art History and Curatorship in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Her research sits at the intersection of art, popular culture and feminism. She has a particular interest in performance art and photomedia, having studied a Bachelor of Visual Arts, First Class Honours, at the University of South Australia, majoring in photography. Prior to her academic employment, she worked for 14 years in the arts sector. Her publications include book chapters, journal and magazine articles, and catalogue essays. Her most recent journal article (with Dr Victoria Souliman) is "Bodily Illness and Care in Charlotte Abramow's Surrealistic Self-Curated Publication 'Maurice: tristesse et rigolade'", Australian Society of French Studies journal special issue, in press. She completed her PhD through Sydney College of the Arts, the University of Sydney, in 2019. Her art website is: mimikelly.com

Dr Victoria Souliman, University of Sydney, victoria. souliman@sydney.edu.au

Victoria Souliman is Lecturer in French and Francophone Studies at the University of Sydney. She completed her PhD in Art History at the University of Sydney and Université Paris Cité in 2019. Her doctoral research focused on issues of national identity, expatriatism and women's agency in the artistic exchanges between Australia and Britain in the early 20th century. Her more recent research interests focus on the representation of female subjectivity and the legacy of surrealism in contemporary visual culture. Her latest journal article (co-authored with Dr Mimi Kelly) is "Bodily Illness and Care in Charlotte Abramow's Surrealistic Maurice: tristesse et rigolade" in the special issue "Bodies, Motion, Space" of the Australian Journal of French Studies 62.3 (2025).

PRESENTATION #1 — Anxious objects or the leaf blower made Me cry ...

Anna Hoyle, *University of Melbourne*

Abstract: In this paper, I present my creative practice that humorously plays with everyday objects and their associated words. I am attracted to object aesthetics, but also the surrealist / dada trope of twinning the quotidian with the absurd or subversive that might lie within. Commodified social media feeds, or junkmail catalogues serve as a potent source of objects as repositories of desire and anxious aspiration. A surreal-fantastic language also joins in via a chorus of indelible branded mantras, logos and quippy wordplay that animates the objects that I'm seduced by. I will refer to 3 significant categories of objects (mostly pertaining to self improvement) that I have drawn from. I

also identify these objects as sites of aspirational anxiety: gym equipment; leaf-blowers / whipper snippers; wellness tools (pool noodles, activewear, etc). Such objects set out to tame, tidy, and tighten minds, bodies or environments. A pulsing ab-curl bench press might invoke an arachnid fear yet also speak to an obsessive or narcissistic urge to worship muscular perfection. A petro-plastic leaf blower or whipper-snipper turns time into money, becomes anthropomorphic, invasive, phallic ... or begets magical, flighty or cheeky animation. The taught pull of lycra leggings with sleek slits might stretch our desire for infallible bodies whilst distort and suppress body image and identity anxieties. A child's plastic Clam Shell Pool carries the weighty Calm Hell Poo crap of plastic landfill conundrums that come shopping with me regularly. Tampering with aesthetics subverts an object's function affording a necessary re-read whilst leaching the darker aspects of its social context and aberrant beauty that taunt us, worry us or make us laugh.

I am a Naarm / Melbourne artist with a background in painting and printmaking. I am a continuing lecturer in Graphic Design at VCA University of Melbourne where I exhibited my PhD creative project in February 2025 and recently submitted my dissertation. I completed a BFA Honours, with First Class Honours at VCA in 1999, and Master of Fine Art at Monash University in 2008. I won the prestigious National Works on Paper at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery 2022, The Robert Jacks Prize for Drawing 2004, Bendigo Gallery, The Darebin La Trobe Acquisitive Art Award in 2010, The Kedumba Art Award NSW, in 2009. My practice uses words and objects inspired by suburban gadgets, self–help, wellness often drawn from junk mail / internet shopping. My work is humorous and playful but provokes questioning of our glut of stuff and commodified behaviour in consumer culture. @annahoyleactivatedart My similar 'fake book cover' painting practice is @annahoyleart www.annahoyle.com

PRESENTATION #2 — Living things: sensing the present mundane

Nazarinna Marie Macalintal, *Curtin University*

Abstract: The experience of share housing unveils our intimate relationships with domestic objects, from the single use to the regularly maintained. The cycles of hygiene and consumption imbue them with the presence of an unknown other that undermines the comforts associated with home and "dwelling." Living Things is a practice-led creative research project that explores these presences through the attentive practices of still life painting. Drawing on theories about the aesthetics of the uncanny, I engage with contemporary approaches to space, materiality, and colour to examine how objects are transformed by human activity, inheriting qualities that challenge visual assumptions about routines and living habits. I reflect on the spectral nature of these objects and its potential to be revealed in painting, where materiality and representation can manifest visceral human experiences. What emerges is a methodology grounded on image-making as an uncanny act unto itself, from developing visual references to executing painting practice. Besides spectrality, the resulting body of work evokes bodily sensations in everyday things within a shared living space. They convey the micro-anxieties rooted in the animalistic apprehension of strangers in spaces and things that serve as extensions of personal safety and identity.

Nazarinna Marie Macalintal is an international postgraduate student taking a Masters in Art, major in Fine Art, currently specialising in still life painting. My recent research involves capturing human relationships with objects both disposable and reusable, as well as with things that represent domesticity, identity, and pop culture. I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in both Graphic Design and Psychology, and I have five to ten years of experience with research writing, editing, and communication.

PRESENTATION #3 — Disruption of the serious: surreal objects as influencers of adult playfulness and wonder in live immersive installation experiences

Penelope Bartlau, *RMIT University*

Abstract: In live immersive installation experiences (LIIE), what is the role of objects – animate and inanimate in the evocation of the surreal? How does this inspire adult playfulness and wonder?

This paper discusses the findings of a practice-led research project that investigates the affects of inanimate and animate objects, including puppets, on adult behaviours in a live immersive installation experience (LIIE). The question that initiated the research project is, "When provided with the same materials and circumstances, why do children playfully leap where adults fear to tread?" This question stems from 35 years of experience working with children and adult audiences and is informed by observations of their distinct behaviours.

Across 2025, the research project has involved two diverse and experimental LIIE sites, each populated with surreal object assemblages and uncanny performative experiences that blur the lines between the familiar and the unfamiliar by leaning into the weird and eerie, liminal and unheimlich. Adult audiences have been invited to explore, investigate, rearrange, interact and play with objects and performance. Through remote ethnographic observation, post-LIIE surveys, and long-form interviews, the research has provided evidence on how, why, and when adults will playfully engage. With a focus on the role of surreal encounters,

object assemblages, and engagement with both the animate and the inanimate, this paper discusses the findings of adult playfulness and wonder and the intersection of these affects in the context of the uncanny.

Penelope Bartlau is an established multidisciplinary artist who generates live immersive installation experiences, visual performance, and a variety of creative writing. She is an interpretation specialist in the Museums and Galleries sector, with 15 years of experience creating a variety of events for a broad range of visitors/audiences across the industry. Penelope works hand-in-hand with Museum and Gallery educators, developing and presenting workshops and public programs. She presents professional development workshops to Museum and Gallery staff, enabling and inspiring creative skills and approaches across various art forms. Penelope is a PhD candidate at RMIT's School of Design and Social Practice. Her practice-based research focus is adult playfulness and wonder in live immersive installation experiences. Penelope lives and works across the lands of Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples in Colac Otway Shire and Narrm, Melbourne.

Panel #41

ARTS: [G61] Arts Lecture Room 5

Open Session #5 — Body Fugitive

PRESENTATION #1 — River Bloom-jewellery for the body of a river

Deb Fisher, *RMIT University*

Abstract: Birrarung, the river erroneously named the Yarra, has a complex colonial history of use, abuse, and modification. Although much has changed since the illegal squatter camp was established on the riverbanks in 1835, colonisation continues. As recently as 1923 Birrarung was classified as a main drain by Melbourne's Metropolitan Board of Works, given a number and treated as such. River Bloom explores this ongoing human disregard and indifference to the river through the creation and outing of an artwork made from over 3000 tennis balls. Resembling giant river pearls the tennis balls have been tinted and etched by Birrarung, collected, graded and strung by the artist to form a giant piece of jewellery. Like an algae bloom, the tennis balls are ever expanding flowing through Naarm's stormwater drains, along creeks, into Birrarung. In contrast to the glorious yellow blossom that adorns Birrarung's edges and reaches when the wattle blooms, the balls are single use non degradable human manufactured and discarded objects. In my presentation I will discuss these outings, how my intention to use the tennis balls to highlight the human interventions in the river were lost to the joy of witnessing

Birrarung's playful wearing of the jewellery and how Birrarung is an active participant in the art making process. The presentation will provide a brief theoretical framework and historical background to the work and will include images and videos of the four different outings of River Bloom.

Deb is an artist with a background in architecture, jewellery and sculpture currently undertaking a practice led PhD in Art at RMIT University in the gold and silversmithing studio. She has returned to Naarm after practicing architecture in Alice Springs and Cairns, shifting creative focus to a smaller scale works constructed on the body rather than for the body. Her time away opened her eyes to the significance of landscape, the consequences of colonisation on First Nations peoples and the silences embedded in her education. Page 3 | 3 Her current research, titled Against nature, a material re-telling of a colonised river, explores if objects for the body can draw attention to the ongoing colonisation of the environment with a focus on Birrarung as a place of her own connection. Deb looks to Birrarung's body, the water, stone and sediments—together with abandoned human objects found in their flow— to investigate how materials can hold toxic memories of past and current human disregard.

PRESENTATION #2 — Unruly jewellery – the fugitive lives of urban objects worn on the body

Susan Buchanan, *RMIT University*

Abstract: Unruliness is the concept that has framed my PhD research and thesis for the past four years. I describe the urban environment as being understood as an arena of rules – rules to keep us safe and orderly in our shared spaces, and so familiar and culturally absorbed that we barely notice them. I have focussed on two objects that are recognised signs within this matrix of rules – cornercube reflectors and black-and-yellow safety tape – and I engage their presence and materiality by co-opting them into jewellery. In doing so, I argue they have become un-rule-y – in subverting their intended utilitarian purpose to uphold rules - and unruly in their new form as body adornment, claiming centre stage and an enhanced sense of importance or preciousness. Migrating from the anonymous realm of public space to the intimate space of the body, their message has shifted from keep clear or beware to an invitation to come close and inspect, to handle and wear. In making this jewellery, I am creating compressed signs encoded with the observations and materiality of the streets I inhabit, my place. Enabling the reflectors and safety tape to be unruly expands rather than reduces the contemplation of our urban environment and encourages a relational thought process about not just this place, but self in place, and then our place in the universe, in the

scheme of things. I am wearing the city, just as the city wears me.

Using traditional tools alongside modern technologies, Susan's jewellery outcomes express an attitude and a way of thinking about how we both engage with our urban surrounds and consider the future. Her PhD project, Urban Jewels, offers wearable artifacts of belonging to the city. She typically works with mass-produced plastics and steel – often found objects or re-used material – and subverts their industrial production through making by hand. Susan has exhibited internationally – most recently in Bangkok and Munich – as well as locally and was recently awarded a prize in the National Contemporary Jewellery Award 2024. She also has a collaborative practice with Eli Giannini as SUPERPLEASED presenting work in several sculpture shows including finalists in the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2017. As part of Radiant Pavilion 2024 they presented a participatory event, 'Taking up space'. Susan lives and works on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boonwurrung lands.

PRESENTATION #3 — The sensuous body-object-space

Vivien Bedwell, *Queensland College of Arts and Design*

Abstract: The human body has formed an alliance with technological devices where function, process and communication are fast and instant. Recent literature by art historian Clare Bishop, Disordered Attention (2024) has highlighted that the battle to own our attention has caused information overload. I argue that the attention spent on technology is disrupting the atmosphere of the body by taking focus away from the conscious and embodied experience. I propose balance and awareness is required for the body, the senses and the abilities. My practice led research examines body activation and considers the sensuous as a form awareness to the body-object-space. I utilize the unique wearable traits of contemporary jewellery to explore the body-object-space. This is done by limiting or extending body spaces that may be overlooked to question whether the body contains latent capabilities that remain undiscovered. Gernot Bohme developed the term atmosphere as a new aesthetic where the experience of the present body is part of art. Contemporary jewellery naturally has an affiliation to the atmosphere of the human being. It can be worn or not worn, placed at the periphery of the body and usually invested with meaning or purpose. The objects are made for a lived experience. This paper includes research that has led to my current interest in atmospheric elements. Specifically, the impact of intimate and public spaces, our body functions and the ensuing decisions we make. A significant part of my research considers movement which potentially creates an output of frequency or sound

to oscillate in space. A feature of my work is the use of metal primarily as a visual and sound component to understand the vibrational effects on the body-object-space to achieve atmospheric status. The result I aim for is to highlight a lived experience.

Vivien Bedwell is a jewellery artist and Doctor of Visual Arts candidate at Queensland College of Arts and Design, Griffith University. Vivien's research focuses on unnoticed spaces of the body to highlight body-object-space relationships. The dynamics of this space is achieved by creating wearable objects that limit or extend sensory aspects of the body, motivated by movement and sound. The materials used to create the wearable objects include precious and non precious materials ranging from large to small scale in size, exhibited nationally and internationally.

Panel #42

ARTS: [G62] Arts Lecture Room 6

Towards a civic economy of the unruly

Abstract: Papers in this session will report on practices using community-driven dialogue, knowledge formation and decision-making to address the unruly in galleries and museums. Presenters will discuss how research, interpretation and curating using cultural mediation and deliberative democracy can model civic values and social cohesion within and around the unruly. The unruly is not approached as an affront to which the community reacts, or as a difficulty provoking a legitimation crisis within civic institutions. Instead, we explore the ways in which communities engage with the unruly, consider its purpose and assess its effects in relation to shared understandings of community history and identity.

Within the ARC Linkage project 'Difficult Objects', researchers from ANU, Federation University, Art Gallery of Ballarat and the Eureka Centre have explored community responses to the unruly. Ballarat encounters the unruly in multiple and complex ways: it has a history of colonisation, environmental disruption, goldfields insurgency, labour agitation, violence and trauma. The unruly is embedded in the cherished legacy of the Eureka uprising, the persistent scars of upside-down country, the slow-healing wounds. At the University of Queensland Art Museum, cultural mediation challenges the traditional "top-down" model of museum engagement and emphasises the value and diversity of visitor experiences and perspectives. After more than five years of practice, the team are rethinking both the conceptual frameworks and modes of delivery of this work, with attentiveness to the ongoing colonial contexts of the places where we work, and with artists and community front of mind.

This session will combine researchers' reporting on community- and museum-based practices, along with a round table discussion.

CONVENORS

Fred Cahir, *Federation University*

Chris McAuliffe, *Australian National University*

Amelia Wallin, *Australian National University*

Professor Fred Cahir, *Institute of Education, Arts & Community, Federation University*

Fred Cahir is an award-winning teacher and prolific researcher in the field of Australian History, with numerous citations for excellence in teaching and community engagement. Since 2012, he has produced over 60 research publications including books, chapters and journal articles. His book Black Gold: Aboriginal People on the Goldfields of Victoria, 1850-1870 (ANU,2012) achieved over 120,000 downloads. His collaborative research projects focusing on Australian Colonial Shared History are at the forefront of this field of research. Prominent examples of this are his appointments to the Academic Panels tasked with advancing global recognition of Australia's Central Victorian Goldfields nomination to the World Heritage List (2021-3). He was executive producer of the documentary The Missing (2019), which was awarded Best Short Film from the Archives at the British Short Film Awards 2022 and Best Short Documentary, Inspirational Film Festival 2023.) In 2023 Fred was elected to the position of Council Member at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is a founding member of the Koala History and Sustainability Research Cluster (KHSRC) and a research team member of the Future Regions Research Centre at Federation University. He is currently a Chief Investigator in the ARC Linkage project, 'Dialogue with Difficult Objects: Mediating Controversy in Museums', in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ballarat and the Eureka Centre.

Emeritus Prof Chris McAuliffe is an art historian, art critic, curator and museum professional. He has taught art history and theory at the University of Melbourne (1988-2000), Harvard University (2011-12) and the Australian National University (2020-22). From2000-13 Dr McAuliffe was director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne. He has served on numerous boards and committees within the arts and museum sectors, including the Council of the National Gallery of Victoria, board of the Samstag Museum (UniSA), board of the Castlemaine Art Museum, selection panel for the Australian pavilion of the Venice Biennale, Chair of the program funding committee for Arts Victoria and the Vic Urban public art review panel. He is currently a Chief Investigator in the ARC Linkage project, 'Dialogue with Difficult Objects: Mediating Controversy in Museums', partnership with the Art Gallery of Ballarat and the Eureka Centre.

Amelia Wallin leads the artistic direction, produces residency programs and cares for the University's collections at the LaTrobe Art Institute, Bendigo. She was formerly Director of West Space, where she spearheaded the organisation's relocation and new artistic direction, and initiated innovative cross-organisational programming including Disorganising (with Liquid Architecture and Bus Projects) and The Region (with RMIT, Para Site, Western Front and Enjoy Contemporary). Formerly based in New York, Wallin worked earlier as a Curatorial Fellow at Performa and completed her graduate studies at the Centre for Curatorial Studies, Bard College. She is a Senior Research Associate at the Australian National University on the Australian Research Council funded project 'Difficult Objects: Mediating Controversy in Museums'. Amelia has worked as a teaching associate within the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at Monash University, where she is completing a practice-led PhD.

PRESENTATION #1 — No audiences without artists: a regionally specific theory of engagement within the art museum

Jacqueline Chlanda, *University of Queensland Art Museum*

Anna Hickey, *University of Queensland Art Museum*

Peta Rake, *University of Queensland Art Museum*

Abstract: For the last 18-months at UQ Art Museum we have been working to problematise and adapt our audience engagement strategy, known as cultural mediation. Emerging in France in the 1980s, we've been offering cultural mediation since 2020. This strategy invites visitors to converse with trained museum staff ('cultural mediators') about artworks and exhibitions, indicating a collaborative approach to knowledge production. While recognising its potential to disrupt knowledge hierarchies, our research and practice of cultural mediation has led us to larger institutional questions of representation, responsibility and context. Specifically, a context in which the legacies and ongoing impacts of colonization are present, and in an institution where we often present work by artists from First Nations and culturally diverse backgrounds. The core concern for us here is: how do we meet our obligations to art and artist/s as we, alongside the broader sector, advance the interests of audiences?

In this paper we set out two strands of this work: first, a regionally specific theory of audience engagement derived from cultural mediation; second, an adaptable framework for institutional practice. We propose an understanding of audience engagement appropriate to our situated institutional position, drawing on articulations of 'storying' by First Nations thinkers Tracy Bunda (Ngugi/Wakka Wakka) and Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem (Sto:lo) to emphasise the values of relationality and community,

alongside Homi K Bhaba's notion of a 'third cultural space' to conceptualise the social and discursive mode of meaning-making we look to support. We then set out a new, in-progress approach to the training of cultural mediation, elaborating on practice-based frameworks for the delivery of this mode of audience engagement.

Dr Jacqueline Chlanda, Senior Education Manager, University of Queensland Art Museum

Jacqueline Chlanda received her PhD in Art History, English Literature and Philosophy from the University of Queensland (UQ) in 2019. She joined the UQ Art Museum as Director of Education in 2021. She has worked at the National Gallery of Australia in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, and Australian Painting and Sculpture. She has taught art theory at Griffith University Art Museum and art history at the University of Queensland.

Dr Anna Hickey, Engagement Producer, University of Queensland Art Museum

Anna Hickey has worked as Director of Public Programs of The Stitchery Collective, public programs for QAGOMA (2022-2023) and UQAM (2023 - current). She completed a PhD at QUT in 2019 and has published on gender queer models and fashion lecture performances.

Peta Rake, Director, University of Queensland Art Museum.

Peta Rake was appointed Director of the UQ Art Museum in 2023. Her previous roles have included Acting Director and Senior Curator (UQAM), Co-Director of Creative Residencies, Visual + Digital Art Department and Curator of Walter Phillips Gallery/Banff International Curatorial Institute (BICI). She has also held roles at CCA (Ohlone/San Francisco) and Institute of Modern Art. She has developed projects at ISCP (Lenape/ New York), Oakland Museum of California (Huichin/ Oakland), CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art (Ohlone/San Francisco), Art Gallery of Alberta (Amiskwaciy Waskahikan/Edmonton), Luggage Store Gallery (Ohlone/San Francisco), and Esker Foundation (Mohkinstsis/Calgary).

PRESENTATION #2 — Difficulty and dissonance as platforms for community engagement and knowledge formation

Fred Cahir, *Federation University*

Chris McAuliffe, *Australian National University*

Amelia Wallin, *Australian National University*

3 x 10 minute presentations on cultural mediation around dissonant heritage

Abstract Fred Cahir: The unruly topic of Aboriginal associations with Chinese people in colonial Australia is rarely discussed. Their shared history, both positive and derogatory, has been in the main ignored or poorly understood. The difficulty and sensitivity surrounding this topic is exemplified in many ways by the edginess surrounding a painting in the Art Gallery of Ballarat's collection by Joseph Johnson (ca. 1867) titled: 'Euchre in the Bush'.

Some historical accounts suggest Joseph Johnson's painting 'Euchre in the Bush' portrays a scene of racial tolerance in the back blocks of Victoria. It is believed to have been painted after the 16 year old Johnson left Geelong for the bush, probably Ballarat, in 1864. It shows men of three races intently playing a card game that was enormously popular during the gold rush era.

Others have interpreted Johnson's painting as inherently racist, striving to demonstrate that the Chinese were a threat and that Aboriginal people were a doomed inferior race. To complicate the matter further some historians have revealed that Victorian Aboriginal people during the colonial period generally viewed Chinese people in a very disparaging or disconcerting light. This view is tempered by pictorial and other textual accounts that indicate mutually amicable relationships also existed.

Arguably, Johnson's painting offers the Gallery an opportunity, by 'deep diving' into pictorial and written texts, to unpack an edgier elucidation of the past so that contemporary Ballaratians can interpret, define and understand ethnocentrism and racism which existed in 19th century Australia. By doing so it contributes to the broadening of Ballarat's and Australia's cultural cartography by including Chinese and their intersections with Aboriginal people - and subsequently is both an end-product, and a point of departure for new and different perspectives.

Abstract Chris McAuliffe: Thirty years ago, artist Ken Searle received an Australia Council-funded commission to paint a panorama of the regional Victorian city of Ballarat. The kaleidoscopic *Ballarat*, 1998, was developed out of weeks spent walking city streets, observing urbanism, architecture and topography. Since then, Ballarat has changed and grown; its demographics, economies and environment are different. Significantly, like many Australian towns, indicators of social cohesion show concerns about identity, belonging and well-being. Our project has used cultural mediation workshops, centred on Sealre's painting, to develop community knowledge around the work and hold conversations about contemporary perceptions of community. These invest memory, lived experience and narrative into a contemporary artwork-become-historical-artefact. The unruliness of individual lives, memories, aspirations and values becomes an unofficial and extra-institutional knowledge shaping people's history of a regional city. How does the painting become a platform for identifying and responding to concerns over social cohesion? How can contemporary citizens use a painting to give voice to contemporary aspirations for, and demands of, community?

Abstract Amelia Wallin: Ballarat is one point of the so-called Golden Triangle, which denotes the colony of Victoria's central goldmining region. Ballarat is a community with a history of dissent and a contemporary culture of protest. Issues and groups ranging from Anti vaxx, violence against women, neo-nazi, free Palestine and extinction rebellion have taken place in recent years, and continue today. Some of these protest themes are reflected in the city's art and heritage collections at the Eureka Centre and Art Gallery of Ballarat. Over several months we led cultural mediation workshops with Ballarat community members to reveal community attitudes to themes of protest in their city. These workshops negotiated questions such as the il/legitimacy of vandalism, artefacts of protest as museum objects, the appetite for museums to tackle contemporary issues, and the museum itself as a site of protest. These workshops revealed community tolerance for engaging in the unruly, when it achieves a specific aim. Significantly, our research indicates a clear community expectation that museums be pro-active centres for civic debate and dissent.

Panel #43

LWAG: First Nations led programmes

Boorloo/Walyalup art and cultural histories

CONVENOR

Brenda L Croft

Brenda L Croft is from the Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra Peoples, Victoria River region of the Northern Territory of Australia, and has Anglo-Australian/Chinese/German/Irish/Scottish heritage. For over three decades Brenda has worked closely with her patrilineal family & community, with Australian First communities nationally, & international First Nations/Indigenous/People-of-Colour colleagues. As an academic, artist, curator & project manager Brenda's work with Australian and international First Nations/Indigenous communities spans more than four decades. These connections grew from her father, Joseph Croft's cultural work in the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs & Aboriginal Development Commission in the 1970s – 80s, & ongoing independent cultural work & First Nations/Indigenous advocacy until his death in 1996. In 2024 Brenda was the Gough Whitlam & Malcolm Fraser Visiting Chair of Australian Studies, Harvard University, being the inaugural First Nations female academic to be selected for this prestigious program, initiated in 1976, living & working on the Ancestral Homelands of the Massachusett for the year. Brenda is Professor of Indigenous Art History & Curatorship at the Australian National University, privileged to live and work on unceded sovereign Kamberri/Ngambri/Ngunawal/Walgalu homelands.

PRESENTERS

Michelle Broun

Brenda L Croft

Tjalaminu Mia

Richard Walley OAM

Michelle Broun is a proud Yindjibarndi woman living and working on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar. She is a curator, creative producer and researcher with a background in textiles and design. In 1995, she co-curated Women's Work Land and Spirit which toured to Beijing and Australia. After many years working in in the arts, she became lead curator of Ngalang Koort Boodja Wirn, (Our Heart, Country, Spirit), WA Museum Boola Bardip. As First Nations Curator at John Curtin Gallery, she curated Tracing the Art of a Stolen Generation- the child artists of Carrolup, touring to Manchester and Glasgow in 2022. In 2024, she curated Wadjemup Wirin Bidi (Rottnest Island Spiritual Journey) Exhibition at the Wadjemup Museum. She has a Masters' Degree in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies, Deakin University. She is currently a Research Fellow role with LaTrobe University on the Ngura Ninti project and a board member of Disability and the Arts (DADAA).

Tjalaminu Mia, now known as Aunty Tj, is a proud Menang, Goreng, Wadjarri Noongar woman Elder – her connection to country is south-west Western Australia. Aunty Tj is known for her work in supporting and advocating social justice and human rights for Aboriginal people for nearly five decades and has achieved on many fronts within the domains of education, health and mental health, culture and the arts, suicide prevention and cultural social and emotional wellbeing. Aunty Tj worked for 13 years as an Indigenous Research Fellow/Oral Historian at the School of Indigenous Studies at UWA and co-authored a range of oral history publications and several children's early reader books – WAARDA series with Fremantle Press, as well as co-authored Speaking from the Heart and Heart Sick for Country with Sally Morgan and Blaze Kwaymullina published again by Fremantle Press. Whilst in her position at the school, she curated a wide range of art exhibitions at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, focusing on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as several exhibitions inclusive of international cultural exchanges with other First Nations people. Aunty Tj has also staged numerous local and international social justice forums, art exhibitions and cultural exchanges on cultural knowledge, land care issues, cultural healing and sharing the Voices of the Stolen Generations. Further to her work in aiding her people, she was the first Aboriginal woman to work in a men's maximum security prison in WA – Fremantle Prison in 1980 and also the first Aboriginal curator to work at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (1993-1997), where she curated for the Perth International Arts Festival 'Daughters of

the Dreaming: Sisters Together Strong', 1997. Due to her hard work, she was awarded the WA NAIDOC Community Person of the Year in 2012 and is a Stolen Generations Survivor. Though Aunty Tj has now retired, for the last 17 years of her working life, she was the Founder CEO of the Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation where she, with her team of SK Homees and their descendants/younger generations worked tirelessly to secure the Bush Block adjacent to the old Sister Kate's Children's Home, in Queens Park, to build a Place of Healing where due to health issues, retired her position in 2023. Though Aunty Tj is in retirement, she still offers to share her knowledge and lived experiences in consultancy work for City Councils, Colleges and Universities as well as being published sharing some parts of her life story through a number of publishing agencies.

Dr Richard Walley OAM is a Nyoongar-Yamatji man of the Western Australian southwest region. In 1978, Richard, along with three other Aboriginal men, formed the 'Middar Aboriginal Theatre Group'. Middar, in its lifetime took Aboriginal culture to every continent around the globe. Richard has been awarded an Order of Australia Medal and two honorary doctorates for his contribution to the promotion of Nyoongar Culture and the Arts. In 2010, Richard received the 'Citizen of the Year Award 'in the 'Indigenous Leadership' category of the Celebrate WA Awards. In 2021 Richard was awarded the *Senior West Australian of the Year for Western Australia Award*. A fluent speaker of the Nyoongar language, Richard continues to push boundaries, whilst always focussing on the bigger '*community*' picture of Culture, Education, Arts and Environment.

Panel #44

ARTS: [G59] Fox Lecture Hall

Unruly bodies

Session #3

Unruly aesthetics: memory, performance, and archival disruption. Reframing memory and history through performance, post-crisis embodiment, and feminist archival practice

This panel explores how performance, visual art, and archives can reanimate marginalised histories and reconfigure collective memory. From post-pandemic feminist self-portraiture to the activist strategies of Frances Phoenix, these works disrupt dominant narratives and affirm the body as both witness and agent of change.

1. *Use Soft Aggression* – Frances Phoenix's feminist protest art and archival activism.

2. *Embodied Memory and Feminist Performance Photography in the Wake of COVID-19* – the female body as a site of memory and resilience.

CONVENOR

Angela Viora, *Monash University*

PRESENTATION #1 — "Use soft aggression": Frances Phoenix's archive as a case for the unruly body in protest

Emma Round, *National Gallery of Australia*

Abstract: In the 1976 issue of Lip Magazine Frances (Budden) Phoenix (1950 – 2017) wrote, "use your culture in your own defence: use soft aggression", suggesting a non-violent proclamation for women to use their resources in defiance. Phoenix was a key figure in Australia's feminist and lesbian art histories, most known for her doily artworks embracing materials associated with domestic femininity. As a pioneer of 'central core imagery', Phoenix often deployed these feminist artworks as objects of protest within the art institution, aiming to reclaim the female body and experience in the male-dominated industry. In 2024, the National Gallery of Australia acquired Phoenix's archive revealing rarely seen photographs of her grassroot involvement in political rallies and social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Phoenix used her 'culture' in her defence by collecting with other women in public space to protest peacefully against masculine cultures of violence - on gender, homosexuality and war. Her activism was often incorporated with artistic processes, such as the creation and use of banners in the Pine Gap Project in 1983, which saw hundreds of women protesting against the US military base in favour of peace and Aboriginal land rights. This paper will discuss this little-known aspect of Phoenix's feminist ethos in nexus with her artistic practice, as she used her body as a tool of disruption and as an instrument for women's liberation.

Emma Round is an early career researcher currently working at the National Gallery of Australia as the Archives Project Assistant based in Kamberri/ Canberra. She has a multidisciplinary background having completed studies in Fine Art, Politics, Philosophy and Economics, and has previously worked in consulting completing research on environmental policy.

PRESENTATION #2 — Embodied memory and feminist performance photography in the wake of COVID-19

Xusha (Sasha) Chen, *Massey University*

Abstract: This paper explores how feminist performance photography can serve as an

embodied method for expressing trauma and personal memory in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a female artist navigating the pandemic in China and abroad, I use staged photography and video to respond to emotional rupture, isolation, and the haunting presence of absence. Through an art-based research approach,

my work visualizes how the female body can become a site of memory—a space where loss, fear, and resilience converge. Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, I approach the body not as a passive object but as a structure of possible actions, a starting point for re-engaging with the world. The gestures of curling, stillness, and inward gazes in my images mark attempts to materialize the unspeakable. This study also references Susannah Radstone's theories on the gendered nature of trauma and temporal disruption, along with Derrida's and Mark Fisher's concepts of hauntology" to reflect on memory as an unresolved and affective force. To contextualize my practice, I examine works by Hannah Wilke and Gillian Wearing, both of whom challenge fixed identity and reclaim the female body as a dynamic site of self-performance and resistance. Their influence informs my own strategies of self-representation. This paper argues that feminist photographic practices not only document personal histories but offer critical tools for reconfiguring memory and identity in post-crisis times.

Xusha Chen (b. 1998, Beijing) is a lens-based artist and PhD candidate at Massey University, New Zealand. Her work uses performance photography to explore autobiographical memory, trauma, and the body, often drawing from East Asian cultural frameworks and feminist theory. Blending staged self-portraiture with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of embodiment, she visualizes the emotional aftermath of personal loss, surgery, and familial pressures—especially in the wake of COVID-19. Her practice reflects a dialogue between camera, body, and memory, creating quiet yet powerful narratives of vulnerability and survival.

Panel #45

ARTS: [159] Austin Lecture Hall

Shadows of their former selves: researching puppets as unruly objects

Abstract: Old puppets are unruly objects. Silent and motionless, we can only infer how they once danced and spoke. Is it wise to reanimate them?

This panel features researchers who have encountered puppets as objects of art history, performance, or as challenges to a status quo. Whose voices are amplified when a puppet is the intermediary? What happens if we study the work of puppeteers through material culture or historical texts alone? What can we learn from fragmentary puppets, or the disjecta membra of preserved stories that might once have belonged to puppeteers?

These questions originate in the study of khayal al-zill as Egyptian medieval shadow puppetry. We are interested in speculative histories and the roles of translation in creative practice and performance-centred research. We invite others to cast a light on global and regional practices in shadow theatre, within and beyond karagözi and wayang kulit, or consider the unruliness of other forms of puppetry in contemporary and historical settings. We are sharing new work by researchers who are willing to pull loose strings and see where they lead.

CONVENOR

Sam Bowker, *Charles Sturt University*

A/Prof Sam Bowker's teaching and research are focussed on globally regional practices within art history and visual culture, including object-centred research and collaborative methodologies. His exhibitions and publications focus on Egyptian spectacular and vernacular arts from tentmaker applique (*khayamiya*) to medieval practices of shadow theatre (*khayal al-zill*), including creative practice research through the Green Beetle Company, telling stories long forgotten which have not yet been told.

PRESENTATION #1 — Mr Squiggle and friends - exploring embodied and virtual methods for transmitting intangible knowledge through the Norman Hetherington Collection

Andrew Yip, *University of New South Wales*

Abstract: The Norman Hetherington Collection of puppets at the National Museum of Australia is a unique resource for researchers, currently showcased through the exhibition "Mr Squiggle and Friends: The Creative World of Norman Hetherington" (until 13 October 2025). This presentation introduces a series of motion capture and performance-informed experiments, designed to investigate how intangible and embodied cultural heritage (puppetry performance) can be transmitted across generations and also from puppeteer to puppet to audience. Through these experiments an interactive puppetry exhibition installation was developed, based on physics-based reconstructions of the puppet mechanisms, in consultation with puppeteers and the objects themselves, with the aim of publishing a series of future multi-modal interactive interfaces for engaging with cultures of puppetry.

Dr Yip's research practice is based at the iCinema Centre for Interactive Cinema Research where he is the resident 3D artist, overseeing visual and interactive content for immersive applications. He is also director of the Ultra High Resolution Scanning Lab, which is part of the cross-faculty Design Next initiative. His 2018 exhibition *Henry VR* at the AGNSW was the Gallery's first virtual reality and conservation science exhibition, which used VR technologies to communicate complicated scientific data to large audiences while enabling conservators

to analyse and interpret cultural material in new ways. His 2017 exhibition *Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly Unmasked: Virtual Reality* allowed Heide Museum of Modern Art to communicate the social history of the Heide site and the significance of Nolan's practice to Australian identity and mythology through the experimental installation.

PRESENTATION #2 — 19th-century automata gone awry

Nicole Anae, *Central Queensland University*

Abstract: In May, 2025, reports on various news feeds and social media outlets reported the case of a "humanoid robot" going "on 'attack'" in a "chilling" video (Schmidbauer 2025) that quickly went viral. The automata appeared to knock to the floor a computer monitor, among other objects, during what various social media post have dubiously billed as "the first robot rebellion in human history" (Schmidbauer 2025). Press reports further anthropomorphised the automata's display as "angry" (Cost 2025), "crazy" (Ngo 2025), and "berserk" (Kalil 2025), interpreting its actions as "seemingly turning hostile" and reportedly attacking its human overseers (Alas 2025). The clip garnered 12 million views on X under a by-line reading "Out-of-control robot steals show in unsettling viral video."

Unruly automata are both compelling and ironic. Questions of "automata gone awry" may represent one of the more pressing issues in the creative industries today, but historically, this conundrum dates back to the late 18th and early 19th century. While questions of robotics and humanoid automation are rooted in theories of technology, in the early 1840s, if not before, the concept of humanoid mechanical replication pointed to concepts of aesthetics, entertainment, and art.

This presentation will examine the intersection of 19th century automata as a kind of "kinetic sculpture," to coin Philip Auslander (2003). My interests lie in exploring automata as early expressions of artificial intelligence and the spectacle of these dynamic sculptures as imitations of life seen through an artistic lens. I will ask: How do mechanised performative objects come to be in this period, and how could bringing art to life be replicated and controlled through automata? As exported art objects in entertainment, what function did automata play in blurring the boundaries between life and imitation among Australian colonial audiences? Where do questions of art and imitation turn when attempts to control and replicate automata go awry?

Nicole Anae graduated from Charles Sturt University with a BEd and DipT before earning her PhD through the Faculty of English, Journalism and European Languages at the University of Tasmania. Her research interests include creative writing, English literatures, Shakespeare, theatre history, Australian colonial and postcolonial writing, and the interplay between literature, performance, and identity. She is a senior lecturer in literary and cultural studies and Head of Course (Master of Creative Writing) at Central Queensland University, Australia. Her published work appears in a variety of refereed journals and edited collections.

PRESENTATION #3 — Shapeshifting shadows: researching and performing materiality and memory with slippery participants

Lynne Kent, *UNIMA Australia*

Abstract: Shadows are by their very nature, unruly. They are shapeshifters- appearing, then disappearing, only to surprise as another shape stretched along a different surface. Shadows are tricky and downright confounding. They need the light, yet they are an absence of light. The puppets themselves are both a representation and an illusion. To play as a Western puppeteer in this dark world of shadows is to subvert or disrupt the historical notion deeply embedded in the Western psyche, of the shadow as essentially sinister or primitive. With the ability to use space as a tool in contemporary shadow puppetry, this kind of theatre is both immaterial and material, both seen on the screen and unseen behind the screen (s) in a deft display of the uncanny and the unruly.

In 2024 and January 2025, I led an intensive program in collaboration with interdisciplinary Masters students at the Centre of Innovation and the Arts, University of Grenoble Alpes, France, exploring the intersection of materiality and memory through performance creation. Using books, paper, and words as mediums, the project delved into the emotional and historical resonance of objects. In particular, the performance used contemporary shadow imagery to access the memory of discarded library books. This research practice acted as both a creative and academic exploration of how materials shape our understanding of the past. This paper describes the generation of material performance as research using these shapeshifting, contradictory, and ever slippery participants.

Dr. Lynne Kent is a scholar and practitioner with a focus on shadow theatre, specifically in the areas of objects, images and materiality in performance, and intercultural collaborations. Her academic and creative contributions seek to bridge gaps between cultures, mediums, and traditions, whether by exploring digital shadow puppetry in the age of COVID-19 or analyzing the materiality of puppets in performance. Her creative practice includes performances with The Victorian Opera, Terrapin Puppet Theatre and creative research at the University of Grenoble Alpes France, Centre for Innovation and the Arts. In 2025, Kent was selected as participating artist in the creative exchange program Jenju Cultural Foundation, ArtPlay and the City of Melbourne.

PRESENTATION #4 — Unruly and uncontainable: *wayang kulit* from the MAGNT Collection

Emily Collins, *Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory*

Abstract: In 2023 the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) received a generous and substantial donation of superb Central Javanese shadow puppets (*wayang kulit*) initially attributed to one maker. Closer curatorial inspection revealed the set to be an encyclopaedic assemblage reflecting a 100-year history of diverse artistic creation, collecting and performance use.

To investigate the collection's complex provenance, MAGNT undertook a collaborative research project with two *wayang kulit* experts from the Indonesian Institute of Arts in Yogyakarta, both esteemed *dalang* (puppeteers) descended from lineages of seven and five generations respectively. Their assessment combined close visual analysis with extensive field research across Central Java, involving consultation with craftsmen, *dalang* and their descendants.

This yielded valuable insights into the approximate dates and villages of creation, revealing that most *wayang* had led many lives prior to entering the MAGNT collection. Simultaneously objects of commerce and celebrated action stars of the shadow screen, these *wayang* were shaped by many puppet carvers (*penatah*), painters (*penyungging*), and the hands of different puppet masters. Their unruliness on stage during performances was matched by their resistance to being contained within a single collection box.

The project illuminated the eclectic nature of a typical Javanese *wayang kulit* collection. A significant outcome of this cross-cultural research collaboration was the design of a Javanese valuation schema for *wayang* which may have applications across the broader Australian museum sector, potentially leading to greater equity of source communities in valuations and conservation assessments.

Emily Collins is Curator of Southeast Asian Art and Material Culture at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin. Before joining MAGNT she worked as an independent curator, implementing curatorial and collection projects for institutions including the South Australian Maritime Museum and Museum of Economic Botany. Prior to her curatorial career she did research and taught in the tertiary education sector. Emily undertook ethnomusicology study at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta (Java) and holds a Master of Museums and Collections from The Australian National University in Canberra.

PHYS: [G41] Ross Lecture Theatre

Unruly interventions: artistic and curatorial disruptions in the museum

Session #3 — Relational practices and critical reframing

This session considers experimental, collaborative, and relational curatorial approaches—across feminist, speculative, and collection-based practices—that reframe historical collections and unsettle linear narratives.

CONVENOR

Arvi Wattel, *University of Western Australia*

PRESENTATION #1 — Feminist Intervention at the Pitt Rivers Museum

Karen Blennerhassett, *University of Auckland*

This paper examines Mrs Cook's Kete – a creative and disruptive artistic intervention by Maureen Lander (Ngāpuhi) and Christine Hellyar, two artists from Aotearoa New Zealand. Installed at Oxford University's Pitt Rivers Museum from November 2002 to April 2003 - one of the world's most historically significant anthropological and archaeological institutions – Mrs Cook's Kete inserted a distinctly female perspective into a collection long shaped by a patriarchal and colonial worldview.

Mrs Cook's Kete can be read as an early expression of what Saidiya Hartman has termed "critical fabulation": a mode of storytelling that enriches historical research with imaginative speculation to counter silences and omissions in colonial histories. Grounded in a fictional premise, the project imagined what Elizabeth Cook, the wife of Captain James Cook, might have valued and collected had she accompanied her husband to the Pacific.

Leveraging primary research including an interview with the artists, this paper explores how, rather than mounting a direct critique, the intervention cleverly co-opted the museum's own visual language and display conventions to reframe and recontextualise its Pacific voyage collections. It examines how, as a form of curatorial activism, Mrs Cook's Kete offered a fresh lens through which to reconsider the Cook voyages and their legacy. It also reflects on the impact of this site-specific subversive intervention – both then and now.

Karen Blennerhassett is a PhD student in Art History at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau. Her research investigates the artistic motivations and strategic intentions of contemporary visual artists from Aotearoa and Australia whose works reference

or respond to Captain James Cook and the so-called 'voyages of discovery' in the eighteenth century. Informed by decolonial theory, her study highlights the myriad ways artists challenge the hegemony of Western historical discourse and argues that insights from visual responses provide another important way to consider Cook and the legacy of colonisation which followed his explorations.

PRESENTATION #2 — Permutations and the poetics of repetition: curatorial experiments in randomness and reprise

Isabel Baker, *State Library Victoria*

Mia Palmer-Verevis, *Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts*

Abstract: Maura Reilley argues that by looking beyond linear timelines, themes or coherent theses, relational curating can challenge cultural hegemonies. Through an embrace of multiplicity, dissolving hierarchies and biases, the relational approach becomes "interested not in a monologue of sameness, but in a multitude or cacophony of voices speaking simultaneously" – an idea that is echoed by Deleuze's theory of repetition, in which difference is bred through repeated action.

In the curatorial residency project Permutations: 18 x 4, Isabel Baker, Mia Palmer-Verevis and Georgina Loughnan applied an experimental curatorial framework to 18 artworks randomly selected from the University of Melbourne Student Union Art Collection at the George Paton Gallery. Using repetition as its engine, this project enacted an accelerated curatorial program, seeing the objects re-presented across the span of 4 weeks and through 4 distinct curatorial premises. With repetition and randomisation working hand-in-hand, Permutations activated the unfixed meanings of these artworks, in turn challenging curatorial biases and constructed aesthetic hierarchies. These works were inevitably discordant, crossing form, aesthetic and 3 decades of student practice.

At small or unconventional collecting institutions, like a student gallery, objects are often subjected to the same model of display, left dormant or forgotten, and held apart from their unwieldy potential. Not only a way of animating the 'unruly' potential of individual artworks, Permutations sought to reawaken this overlooked collection. By imagining repetition as a relational curatorial strategy, this paper tracks the unfolding of Permutations and evaluates the possibilities of future applications of this methodology on other marginal collections.

Mia Palmer-Verevis (Hatched Curatorial Associate, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts) and Isabel Baker (Graduate Curatorial Assistant, State Library Victoria) are early-career curators with an interest in repetition as a subversive curatorial methodology. Mia and Isabel are regular collaborators, having co-curated exhibitions at the George Paton Gallery and Linden New Art. As well as their curatorial practice, Mia and Isabel have written independently for a range of local and international arts publications.

PRESENTATION #3 — Water connects worlds: a relational approach to curating the sea

Isabel Di Lollo, *University of Western Australia*

Abstract: In 2024, Atlantic View II opened at the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam. The temporary exhibition displayed works by visual artist Kevin Osepa which focused on migration, its historical links to colonialism, and the role of the sea as an active participant in memory-making. The intervention aimed to unsettle conventional narratives associated with the Dutch relationship to the sea present within the museum's permanent displays. Dutch colonial-era maritime history has traditionally been presented within museums as a period of national greatness and commercial success. Significantly, many of these stories take place at sea. Tales of perilous voyages, great battles, discovery, mutiny and murder characterise the sea as an unpredictable entity and reinforce a perception of the Netherlands as a capable and efficient seafaring nation. This Eurocentric approach has been criticised for masking the colonial violence inherent in 17th century maritime systems. Colonisation is positioned as a terrestrial phenomenon, occurring onshore on lands far from the Netherlands. However, Mikki Stedler suggests that the sea has the potential to "undermine Eurocentric narrations of the past" if used to highlight alternate readings of colonial history that resist segmentation on a geographical or temporal basis (Stedler, 2024). This paper examines the use of the exhibition Atlantic View as a museum intervention and considers how polyvocal approaches to curating the sea can disrupt colonial maritime imaginaries.

Isabel Di Lollo is a PhD candidate and academic tutor in art history and curatorial studies at UWA. Her research explores the curation and exhibition of Dutch East India Company collections and the general presentation of colonial maritime history in museums. Her doctoral project is attached to the ARC Linkage Project Mobilising Dutch East India Company collections for new global stories.

Panel #47

GGGL: [107] Woolnough Lecture Theatre

Populism, exhibition politics, and the aesthetics of mass appeal

Abstract: Populism is often invoked to signal reactionary, authoritarian politics—those that reject pluralism, scapegoat marginalised communities, and deploy nostalgic nationalism. Yet this framing flattens populism's contradictory nature. As political theorists like Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau have argued, populism can also name emancipatory political energies: horizontal forms of organising that demand equality, autonomy, and popular sovereignty. In cultural contexts, this ambivalence is palpable: populism can both erode and enliven democratic engagement.

This panel considers the role of populism in the politics of exhibition-making and artistic address, exploring how institutions and artists respond to, resist, or embrace populist strategies. Through case studies ranging from Occupy Wall Street, the Whitney Biennial to Cologne's gallery scene, the papers examine how populist logics manifest in contemporary and late-20th-century art contexts—whether through spectacular display, testimonial legibility, or politicised collectivity.

Questions the panel will consider include: What defines populist aesthetics in artistic and exhibition practice today? Can spectacular, widely attended exhibitions be understood as forms of cultural populism? Do they dilute criticality, or create broader inclusion? If populism operates less as a fixed ideology than a contested tactic, who are "the people" imagined by institutions—and how is inclusion staged or withheld? What kinds of subjects are centred or obscured in populist aesthetic formations—be they indebted, working, or marginalised? And how do artists and curators negotiate competency, legibility, or opacity in relation to these figures?

CONVENOR

Chelsea Hopper, *Monash University*

Chelsea Hopper is a writer and curator based in Naarm/Melbourne. She is a founding editor of *Memo Review* and the art director and senior editor of *Memo Magazine*. She recently completed a PhD in Curatorial Practice at Monash University, where her research focused on the intersection of populism, contemporary art, and political theory. In 2022, she served as director of 99%, a populist independent gallery housed in the Nicholas Building. Since 2013, she has curated numerous projects across Australia. She currently teaches art history and curatorial practice at Monash University.

PRESENTATION #1 — Defining populism: between political theory and aesthetic address

Chelsea Hopper, *Monash University*

Abstract: This paper revisits the conceptual foundations of populism to clarify how its competing definitions shape artistic and exhibition-making practices. Political theorists have proposed four major frameworks for understanding populism: the ideational (a moralised worldview dividing "the pure people" from "the corrupt elite"); the strategic (a mode of political mobilisation); the performative (an affective and stylistic repertoire); and the discursive (a logic of articulation through which "the people" is constructed).

Bringing these models into dialogue with contemporary art and curatorial practice, the paper argues that populism is not only a subject of artistic representation but also a method through which artists and institutions negotiate their relations with publics. I consider Richard Bell's community-oriented activism and Joseph Beuys's social sculpture through the strategic lens of populism, alongside other examples of participatory, institutional, and spectacle-based practices. These cases demonstrate how populist logics function as curatorial and aesthetic tactics, mobilising inclusion and collectivity while exposing the tensions between critique and complicity, autonomy and accessibility.

PRESENTATION #2 — Debtpop: art, occupy, and the collapse of work

Emeline Robinson-Shaw, *Monash University*

Abstract: Focusing on the rise of "debtpop" during the Occupy Movement, this paper explores how the recurrences of avant-gardist art practices, in tandem with populist left-wing movements, have redefined the universal political subject of the "worker" – tracing a lineage between the New Left's "social worker" and Occupy's "indebted" subject.

Fifty years ago, Peter Bürger famously deemed the avant-garde "historical," claiming its recursions only recalled its transformative strategies within the institution. Since then, cultural production not only continues to appear without an economic outside, but traditional labour relations now resemble the flexible and immaterial working conditions historically reserved for artists. The subject of the worker – once heralded as "the agent of history" – has eroded in its categorical distinction, while the allied role of artists has become a less marginal position to leverage against a dominant social order.

Throwing the critical collapse between "artist" and "worker" into relief, Occupy's "99%" slogan provided a catch-all for an indebted class composed of students, artists, the unemployed, and wage labourers alike. Many artists produced collective, socially engaged work that sidelined the critical task of reimagining

the social organisation of art and labour, in favour of offering material relief from their shared conditions. Adopting avant-gardist strategies of extra-institutional intervention – while jettisoning the associations of an elite and self-referential "historical" mode – these artists represented a new critical front caught between democratic utopianism and political realism: putting the "pop" in left-wing populism.

Looking beyond Occupy, this paper speculates on the universality of political subjects centred by more recent movements, and the material mobility they afford to a critical art tradition.

Emeline Robinson-Shaw is an early-career art historian, arts worker, and curator. She is currently completing her Masters by Research in Art History and Theory at Monash University and is also a board director at Blindside. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Art History from the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on the relationship between labour, finance, and art production.

PRESENTATION #3 — Populism and competency in Cologne and at the Whitney

Douglas Maxted

Abstract: This paper proposes a set of theses that examine populism through the framework of competency across two concurrent artistic sites: the 1993 Whitney Biennial and a cohort of Cologne-based artistic practices from the early to mid-1990s. These sites critically engage the populist binary of the "pure people" versus the "corrupt elite," focusing on uneven competencies in the reception, interpretation, and distribution of art.

At the Whitney Biennial, institutional imperatives for visual-material legibility and overt testimonial supplements brought identity politics to the fore, sparking debates around populist logics and institutional consumption. In a now-infamous *October* roundtable, Rosalind Krauss critiques this drive toward legibility as a "rush to the signified," suggesting that institutional frameworks 'conscript' artists—particularly those from marginalised groups—into articulating identity positions with clarity. In response, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh counters that aesthetic experiences are always already shaped by race, class, and gender, and that new forms of empowerment require models of communication that privilege transparency over a liberal pluralism of meaning.

In contrast, the Cologne scene—epitomised by Michael Krebber, Kai Althoff, and Cosima von Bonin—rejects populist clarity through strategies of performative opacity, anti-productivity, and socially restricted, context-specific interactions, especially within the commercial gallery circuit. Here, interpretive ambiguity and resistance to institutional readability challenge populist expectations, exposing tensions between transparency and socially encoded competencies.

By juxtaposing these two cases, this paper situates artistic production within broader cultural debates on populism, identity, and the contestation of competency at the end of the 20th century.

Douglas Maxted is an art historian in training who lives and works in Naarm/Melbourne. He has guest-lectured at the Victorian College of the Arts and worked as a research assistant to Dr Helen Hughes at Monash University. He has published through *Memo Review* and *un Projects*, and in 2025 served as an associate editor for *Memo Magazine.* He holds a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) from Monash University and is presently studying a Graduate Diploma in Arts (Art History) at the University of Melbourne.

Panel #48

MATH: [G17] Cheryl Praeger Lecture

Objects in flight: fragments of home(s) and fugitive domesticities

Abstract: This panel investigates domestic and personal objects in flight—those displaced through forced migration, exile or fugitive escape. Objects in flight are here defined as those physically and symbolically dislocated: left behind, carried in urgency, or moving across space and time through acts of memory and ritual. These objects resist containment, lose context, and accrue new - often monumental meanings as they move.

We are particularly interested in the entanglement of these objects with the loss of home, but also importantly with the concept of 'home making'. These can be interpreted widely – considering how objects are carried across borders, held in exile, or invoked in rituals. The main idea is to think how objects in flight act as anchors to lost homes, while also generating improvised sites of survival and belonging.

Drawing on scenographic and spatial theory, material culture, and performativity of objects, this panel asks: how do such objects embody and perform grief, rupture, and loss, while also enabling repair, resilience and re-inhabitation?

The panel invites proposals that look at:

- Diasporic memory and the performance of loss and/or survival,
- Improvised domesticities in contexts of shelter or displacement,
- Objects as scenographic agents in ritual, installation, or archive,
- The absence or fugitivity of objects in institutional collections.

We welcome proposals from scholars, artists, curators, and practitioners exploring the 'objects in

flight' through 10-15 min research presentations and round table discussions.

CONVENOR

Nevena Mrdjenovic, *University of Technology, Sydney*

Dr Nevena Mrdjenovic is a lecturer in Interior Architecture at UTS, and a researcher in spatial design and scenography. Her work explores the poetic and performative dimensions of space, with a focus on memory, identity, and domestic loss. Nevena positions scenography as a cross-disciplinary spatial practice rooted in narrativity and mise en scène. She presents her research internationally and contributes to global scenography networks. Her creative background spans theatre, film, installation, and pedagogy across Australia and Europe.

PRESENTATION #1 — Textile, migration and soft architectures: diasporic Indian home-making practices in South Africa

Amina Kasar, *University of Sydney*

Abstract: Migrants often create soft architectures—temporary, interscalar spaces that resist exclusionary systems. These architectures are embodied in the objects and knowledge migrants carry with them, shaping homes through micro-transactions and community practices that foster cultural and social production. Within the South African Indian diaspora, this is especially tangible through textiles—nomadic, socially dynamic materials that reflect the cultural spaces they inhabit.

This research reconstructs the material histories of South African textiles to consolidate vernacular and modern knowledge of diasporic homemaking. The interplay between textiles and domestic environments reveals the soft spatialities through which diasporic communities reclaim material agency. Textiles carry transnational memories and heritage, woven into the everyday rituals and social life. This is explored through two case studies—the Ark and Carmel Buildings—which trace textile narratives from Apartheid to the present, revealing how South African Indian women have shaped and sustained cultural identity through their relationships textile. Textiles mark key life moments—birth, initiation, marriage, and death—and play a

vital role in gendered domestic practices and market typologies. Through acts of reusing, reinscribing, and reembodying soft materials, migrants forge new connections to place, time, and collective identity—easing displacement and cultivating comfort.

Significantly, this work challenges traditional forms of architectural drawing by proposing a new visual language that reflects the less visible cartographies of Afro-Asian textile narratives. It shifts the portrayal of ethnic objects from ornamental to active agents of migrant cultural identity, economic value, spatial

practice, and lived heritage in the Indian Ocean world.

Dr Amina Kaskar is a South African architect and Rothwell Chair Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Sydney. She is currently working with the concept of the Urban–Rural Commons—developed by Japanese architects Atelier Bow Wow—to explore how embodied, multispecies, and collective spatial practices can prefigure more attentive and ecologically interdependent approaches to architecture. Her research explores soft architecture, migration, gender, and cultural identity through everyday materials and rituals. She was awarded the Global Minds to complete her PhD at KU Leuven entitled "Soft Architecture: Afro-Indian Spatial Practices under Hard Migrations". This research employs visual ethnographic methods to explore how collective identities within the South African Indian diaspora are reflected through plants, food, and textiles. She co founded, Counterspace (2014-2020), a collaborative architectural studio dedicated to architectural projects, exhibition design, art installations, public events curation, and urban design.

PRESENTATION #2 — Linda Sok and Sancintya Mohihi Simpson: tracing loss and lineage through objects

Gabrielle Bergaman, *Museum of Brisbane*

This paper will examine the work of two contemporary artists, Linda Sok and Sancintya Mohini Simpson, whose practices explore the emotional and symbolic weight of domestic and personal objects in the contexts of forced migration, colonisation, and exile. Through a comparative reading of their installations and material engagements, I will investigate how objects in flight— textiles, vessels, rituals, family archives, or their absent traces—function as agents of grief, memory, and cultural resilience.

Linda Sok draws on her Cambodian heritage to reflect on histories of colonialism and cultural erasure. This paper will focus on two key works: *Fièvre des bois* (2025), which uses wooden trellises and jars of fermented rice wine to examine Cambodia's colonial past (1850s–1950s), and *Deities in Temples* (2023–2025), which reinterprets the tradition of Pidan silk weaving in response to the loss and devastation that resulted during matrilineal the Cambodian Genocide.

Sancintya Mohini Simpson traces her maternal lineage as a descendant of Indian women sent to South Africa under British indenture. This paper will consider artworks *An ocean* (2023) and *Vessel/Vessel* (2020), both of which use clay lotas to confront the intergenerational trauma of indentured labour, migration, and oceanic histories.

Drawing on theories of material culture, spatial memory, and the performativity of objects, I will

explore how Sok and Simpson use domestic and familial objects to make visible the ruptures of displacement, the experience of forced exile and the commitment to ancestral memory and survival.

Gabrielle Bergman is an Assistant Curator at the Museum of Brisbane, where she supports the development and delivery of the Museum's exhibition and Artist in Residence programs. She has previously held roles as Curatorial Intern at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Assistant Gallery Manager at Fox Galleries, and Gallery Consultant at Studio Gallery Group in both Brisbane and Melbourne. Her experience also includes internships at VAULT Art Magazine and the University of Melbourne's Old Quad Museum.

An active arts writer, Gabrielle has contributed to a range of national and international publications, including Artlink, ArtAsia Pacific, VAULT, un Magazine, Lemonade: Letters to Art, Artlines, Memo Art Magazine and Arts Hub. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Queensland, a Bachelor of Arts (Art History) from the University of Melbourne, and a Bachelor of Interior Design (Honours) from RMIT.

PRESENTATION #3 — The Mohar in flight: currency, kinship and the inheritance of the Girmitiya Exile

Sherita Sharma

The mohar is a coveted relic of the Girmitiya identity. During the British-led Girmit (forced exodus of Indian indentured labourers), the mohar accompanied the exiled across the kala pani (black waters) to distant colonies like Fiji, as a symbol in flight. Worn by Girmitya women as jewelry, the mohar was a visible reminder of what was once "home". It has since been passed down secretly by women from generation to generation, now somewhat forgotten, still hidden. In this paper, I intend to look at the journey and evolution of the mohar – from a form of security and authority, to a tangible symbol of identity, heritage and ownership, and how it represents the resilience of the Girmitiya and their descendants. I explore the mohar as an unruly object through a multifaceted lens. I examine its role in Girmit and post-Girmit society as trading currency, and how it was perceived, lost or taken. I present it as a disruptive identity marker of displaced peoples who created their own culture by reclaiming a colonial object as their own, as an accessory symbolizing status and wealth. I further argue that the mohar is an inherited investment, with its value entrenched in history, family, sentimentality, religion, and availability, despite lacking formal revaluation in Fiji's macroeconomy. I explore in detail how the mohar has been curated, distributed and maintained across space and time, as a disruptive Girmitiya artifact that is worth much more than its weight in gold.

Sherita Sharma is a Pasifika development communications specialist with a deep commitment to amplifying Indigenous and Girmitiya voices of Oceania. She weaves her heritage into her work by centering her-storical narratives: stories often overlooked, yet are foundational to collective memory. Through literary research, and a practice of oral storytelling traditions, Sharma documents the lived experiences of Pacific communities, drawing her strength from ancestral wisdoms and intergenerational resilience. Her work bridges the past and the present to empower the future with stories that refuse to be forgotten. She is a proud third-generation descendant of Fiji's Girmit legacy.

PRESENTATION #4 — Transforming objects: the process of expressive conservation on the practice of bereavement

Karen Sorensen

Abstract: Everyone at some point in their life will experience the death of a loved one. The bereaved will often be tasked with the disbursement of the deceased's objects.

In my PhD research I am asking the question. *How can working creatively with objects of the deceased reconfigure personal memory and connections to the past?* Between art-based practice and research, this creative PhD, *Transforming Objects: The Practice of Expressive Conservation in the Process of Bereavement*, explores ways to facilitate ongoing connections and meaning-making for the bereaved.

This systematic art-based creative research will be conducted as a series of experiments, where each artifact created represents a different relationship. The artifacts will be made using an object that has belonged to a family member who has died. Some of the objects have been handed down through generations and are infused with family stories and traditions, while others represent contemporary experiences and memory. Considering the objects as 'mnemonic triggers' and 'temporal conduits,' my research will explore how inherited objects allow us to spend time with the dead, and to reconnect and recall times and events shared with our deceased loved ones. Objects that have belonged to the deceased offer an avenue to explore the past. The creative embellishment provides an opportunity to bring the objects to life and offer a connection to the future.

In this presentation I will discuss my research methodologies including the practice of expressive conservation which can enable the transformation of the deceased's object into an art piece.

ARTS: [G60] Arts Lecture Room 4

'Signs leave the desert of codes': no topic against the historicists

Abstract: But still, what's the The Topic? It'd just be really helpful to know because then we can address our PRAYERS to the right CODE to please-please grant us the gift of alighting the right teleological train so we can arrive at the exact right station where you'll be standing (and all along, U PREDESTINATOR!) waiting for us right little bruiser busters all ready to right shine our GOD JR. BABY HALOES in right glory of your NAME-OF-THE.

But still, how else to re-debut as a panel of cross little Nietzsches pitching and preaching a cluster of Inquiries, Reflections and Imprecise Absolutes about the ways in which we've attempted to live in a nether-space (and not a HETEROTOPIA either) outside HISTORY and the ways THE TOPIC extorts/kills attuned topicality?

But still, in attempt to elide even this huffy non-topic Patrice Sharkey will articulate a dual voiced explication of what it is to be living/working in the looping-wake of recreated histories through an engagement with the Lisa Radford curated, third chapter of Gertrude Contemporary's *Past as Prologue* sequence; Rachel Ciesla will haunt the anti-periodicity of vapourwave in relation to exhibition-as-platform making; Robert Cook will do this whole dumb death drive thing as a way of occupying the kinks of locality and the kinks of an affective entropic aesthetics.

CONVENOR

Robert Cook, *Art Gallery of Western Australia*

Robert Cook is a Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Solo shows for AGWA include those on Mari Funaki, Roger Ballen, Henry Roy, Agatha Gothe-Snape, Ryan Trecartin, Yoshitomo Nara, Mariko Mori, Brent Harris, and Paola Pivi; two person shows include Death Metal Summer: Deanna and Ed Templeton, Under God's Hammer: David Shrigley and William Blake and Speech Patterns: Nadia Hernandez and Jon Campbell.

PRESENTATION #1 — Art history died before we were born: of stadiums and construction sites (Ne change rien pour que tout soit différent) as case study

Patrice Sharkey

Abstract: Asking artists to reshow, remake, redo that which they left being 20 years ago comes with baggage. Work is missing. Work is destroyed. Work is in collections of people artists might not know. Work is subject to life.

Of Stadiums and Construction Sites (Ne change rien pour que tout soit différent) was presented at Gertrude Contemporary, Naarm / Melbourne, 21 June - 9 August 2025, as chapter 3 of Past is Prologue; a year-spanning program charting the history of Gertrude as a contemporary arts organisation and its community. Conceived by artist Lisa Radford, the exhibition served as a response to the socio-political events that precede and unfold during the decade from 2005 to 2015. Using this exhibition project as a case study, this presentation responds to the question: can looking at a very specific specificity of a context mean the parochial can be examined in a manner that might alleviate it of its own burden, shedding light on its paradoxes and pertinences?

Patrice Sharkey is an independent curator and writer based on Wurundjeri Land in Naarm/Melbourne. She has held leadership positions at two of Australia's leading small-to-medium organisations—as Artistic Director of Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (2019–23) and Director of West Space, Melbourne (2015–18). Other professional positions include Head of Exhibitions and Programs, TarraWarra Museum of Art (2024–25) and Assistant Curator, Monash University Museum of Art (2011–15). Her curatorial research is grounded in revisionist art histories and a commitment to amplifying marginalised narratives within Australian contemporary art.

PRESENTATION #2 — Curatorial haunting or the ghost in the machine: the anti-periodicity of vapour wave in relation to exhibition-as-platform making

Rachel Ciesla, *Art Gallery of Western Australia*

Abstract: This paper proposes 'curatorial haunting' as a contemporary mode of exhibition making shaped by vaporwave aesthetics and internet culture. The ambivalent and melancholic atmospheres of vaporwave have often been inaccurately dismissed as politically inert—no critique just vibes. Such assessments rest on an inaccurate set of binary assumptions that separate floating signifiers from their political potential. Thereby falsely framing curatorial presence as either authoritative thesis or conceptual failure.

Rachel Ciesla is the Curator for The Art Gallery of Western Australia's Simon Lee Foundation Institute of Contemporary Asian Art in Boorloo (Perth). She has curated solo exhibitions and projects by Farah Al Qasimi, Özgür Kar, Ayoung Kim, Daisuke Kosugi, Anna Park, Stanislava Pinchuk, Leyla Stevens, Taring Padi, Hale Tenger, Wong Ping, Kawita Vatanajyankur and Zheng Bo; and published on the work of Salman Toor, Anna Park, Farah Al Qasimi, Jack Ball, Stanislava Pinchuk and Leyla Stevens.

PRESENTATION #3 — Must we mean what we don't say? (and other entropic non-topicalities)

Robert Cook, *Art Gallery of Western Australia*

Abstract: *Must we mean what we don't say?* will link some episodes in Western Australian cultural production – from novelist Peter Cowan, early 2000s photography and installation, late 1980s-to-nowish painters, along with some recent sound things – that offer evidence of a recurring artistic 'low-pressure system' that critically performs the 'repressed manifestation' of a kind of agitated entropy. As they skirt, often so closely as to function as near parody, a generic or 'mid' aesthetic it is possible to also glean from their example a specific complication of ideas of oppositionality and complicity, the division of which has more usually been taken for granted. Coordinates to 'view' these near-imperceptible phenomena will be assembled from Olivier Assayas's 2002 film Demon Lover that offers a generalised interpretative aesthetic of the duped/non-duped relation; Stanley Cavell's 1958 essay 'Must We Mean What We Say'; Collette Soller's take on Lacanian affect and Richard Boothby's 1991 re-explication of the death drive.

Panel #50

EZONENTH: [109] Learning Studio

Surrealist objects and uncanny affect in contemporary visual culture

Session #2

CONVENORS

Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*

Vick Souliman, *University of Sydney*

PRESENTATION #4 — Disruptive objects and the maternal image in the work of Lucile Boiron and Yvonne Todd

Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*

Vick Souliman, *University of Sydney*

Abstract: This paper examines how contemporary photomedia artists Lucile Boiron (France) and Yvonne Todd (Aotearoa New Zealand) use surrealist strategies, particularly the transformation of seemingly mundane imagery through disruptive objects, to challenge normative representations of motherhood and femininity. In her recent photographic series *Bouche* (2024), Boiron draws on Jacques-André Boiffard's surrealist language of fragmentation and close cropping, while also combining bodily imagery with melted glass. These hybrid objects intensify the process of defamiliarisation, evoking the visceral and internalised transformations associated with matrescence. Todd, by contrast, is known for her meticulously staged studio portraits, which incorporate costumes, props, and stylised settings to construct uncanny tableaux that interrogate palatable images of motherhood. Works from her *Barnacles* series (2016), for instance, expose the artificiality and commodification underlying maternal representation. Although culturally and aesthetically distinct, both artists reimagine motherhood as a subject and object of surreal encounter, one that provokes complex affective responses ranging from humour and unease to estrangement. This paper will demonstrate how, through their use of disruptive materials and strategies of displacement, Boiron and Todd invite viewers into spaces of transformation and ambiguity around maternal subjectivity, a topic often overlooked in contemporary art, offering a nuanced response to expressions of corporeal selfhood, gender, sexuality and identity.

PRESENTATION #5 — Jane Burton: uneasy eroticism

Mimi Kelly, *University of Melbourne*

This paper critiques the photography of Australian artist Jane Burton, whose surrealist-inflected depictions of female eroticism serve as subtle social disruptions. In her analogue, predominantly black-and-white works, the naked female body often appears fragmented, doubled, and uncannily rendered—ambiguous in time and space, embedded in naturescapes, abandoned buildings, or empty interiors. These dreamlike, sometimes ominous settings blend sensuality with strangeness, evoking the avant-garde concept of *Eros noir*—a darker, more taboo-inflected eroticism. For modern Surrealists, eroticism signified both personal freedom and political defiance, and notably for women artists, a challenge to gender norms. Today, surrealism continues to inform artists' exploration of the unconscious and its role in shaping our fears and desires. Burton's photographic tableaux foreground the personal nature of fantasy, linking emotional-psychic states with bodily senses. Drawing on art historical readings of surrealist tropes and the work of Georges Bataille, Susan Sontag, and Kelly Dennis—who affirm the intellectual and emotional value of erotic expression—this paper reads Burton's photography as ideologically provocative. Like her modernist predecessors, her art explores the liberation of the unconscious and the complexity of female desire, including its unsettling aspects. Her female-centred eroticism challenges patriarchal norms and non-reproductive sexual ideals, and certain feminist anxieties around objectification. By embracing beauty's affective power, Burton's photographs additionally resist critiques of beauty—including the body beautiful—as conceptually

shallow. Articulating her critical agency, this paper argues that Burton's work offers a rich framework for engaging with the paradoxes of female eroticism through the enduring subversive force of surrealism.

Panel #51

EZONENTH :[111] Learning Studio

Open Session #6

PRESENTATION #1 — Scanimalia: a tentacular method for oceanic care

Amanda Morgan, *Victorian College of the Arts*

Abstract: Scanimalia proposes an eco-poetic, image-making methodology that repurposes the flatbed scanner as a "tentacular stage" to animate encounters between humans and marine animals. This speculative artistic practice explores how touch, tactility and obsolete imaging technologies might help to poetically frame new forms of multispecies care at a time of oceanic crisis. Developed through a daily swimming practice combined with studio-based flatbed scanning, the research embraces what is called a tentacular method: a six-armed conceptual model comprising performance, hallucination, mutability, intimacy, diffraction and proximity. Inspired by cephalopods and informed by ecofeminist theory, the scanner becomes a luminous tactile interface between humanimals and marine life. Through processes of stop-frame photography, C-Type prints and performative scanning, Scanimalia disrupts dominant modes of lens-based representation and fosters intimate material relations. The project draws on the work of Haraway, Le Guin, Bolt, and Godfrey-Smith to develop a fluid, caring and more-than-human practice of visual storytelling through and with marine ecologies.

Artist and academic Amanda Morgan is a PhD candidate at the Victorian College of the Arts and the University of Melbourne. Her Dissertation and exhibition, Scanimalia is for Oceanic Care, and proposes vibrant ecologies led by underwater handlings, entangled fluidity, and more-than-human aquatic beings and their lively and touchy-feely senses. The flatbed is a stage to animate "nature-cultures" and animals' curious qualities, alerting to the differences between lens-based photography and emergent digital image culture. The flatbed's camera-less film re-purposes technology and disrupts the expected. It results in consideration of what it is to be a human animal, touching on the multifaceted sensory phenomenon of the underwater realms. The act of pressing down against the flatbed glass lens and the haptic arranging and placing of objects onto the screen is used to analyse marine animals and their properties. Amanda Morgan has held various leadership roles, including lecturer and co-coordinator of the Graphic Design course in the Bachelor of Design at the Victorian College of the Arts and the University of Melbourne (2017-2025) and lecturer and coordinator of Sculpture in the second year, Bachelor of Fine Arts School of Art, VCA University of Melbourne (2000-2004). She has exhibited Morgan's moving image, installation and projected film work internationally and has authored numerous large-scale public works. Current VCA FFAM PhD candidate, she is exploring human-animal relationships and response-ability for oceanic care, where her swimming methodology uses scanning to investigate tangible recuperation in pressing ecocide times that seeks to animate stories of making and caring well while staying with a strong present tense.

PRESENTATION #2

Felicity Andrews, *University of Queensland Art Museum*

Abstract: In 2024, Restor(y)ing Oceania opened in Venice's Ocean Space. Curated by Nakas Bouganvillian artist and curator, Taloi Havini, the exhibition featured two site-specific works by Tongan artist, Latai Taumoepeau, and artist and architect, Elisipeta Hinemoa Heta (Ngātiwai, Ngāpuhi, Waikato Tainui, Sāmoan, Tokelauan), raising a rallying cry against the environmental impact of colonialism on Oceanic communities caused by the exploitation and extraction of their natural resources. The artworks are activated by the coming together of bodies. In Taumoepeau's Deep communion sung in minor (ArchipelaGO, THIS IS NOT A DRILL (2024), its choral score is awakened through the use of standing paddle machines; a ceremonial labour presenting an offering of bodily salt, sweat and tears that recalls the song-and-dance of Me'etu'upaki. In Heta's work, The Body of Wainuiātea (2024) serves as an architectural meeting place for exchange and sharing through story and song. This paper examines Restor(y)ing Oceania through a re-envisioning of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics, positioning Indigenous Knowledges and ceremonial practices at its core, extending art beyond static objecthood to knowledge activated through practice. The exhibition becomes a porous space where audience members are implicated as embodied participants, and asked "Who is willing to do the labour in this exercise of ecological responsibility?" Exploring relationality as an artistic methodology for navigating the entanglement between climate crisis and colonialism, I ask what futures may emerge should we emphasise reciprocity, exchange and accountability. Through implicating audience-participants in dialogue and choreography, Restor(y)ing Oceania becomes a discursive and generative Third Space that unsettles existing colonial hierarchies.

Felicity Andrews is an emerging arts worker and writer based on Yugerra/Turrbal Land, Meanjin. She holds a Masters of Museum Studies, a Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies, and is currently undertaking a PhD in Art History at the University of Queensland, with an interested in relationality as a decolonial curatorial methodology. She currently works as a cultural mediator at the University of Queensland Art Museum Relational Aesthetics in Restor(y)ing Oceania: Embodied participation as a methodology for ecological responsibility in the Great Ocean

PRESENTATION #3 — Unruly style

Maayan Amir, *Ben-Gurion University of the Negev*

Abstract: Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) models present acute challenges to existing copyright law, particularly in relation to the elusive category of artistic style. Grounded in the 19thcentury distinction between content and form, U.S. copyright law, designed to prevent excessive monopolies on expression, oJers virtually no protection for artistic styles, allowing AI systems to replicate them freely. This paper positions style as an unruly object: formally unprotected, aesthetically potent, and resistant to ownership. By drawing a conceptual parallel between two historical domains meant to remain outside proprietary control: the freedom of the sea and the conceptual power of art, this paper interrogates how certain expressive forms function as commons that defy enclosure. In doing so, it considers whether style, as both a legal remainder and a creative excess, might offer a productive site for rethinking authorship, ownership, and the public domain in the context of generative AI's expanding capacities.

Maayan Amir is an Associate Professor in the Department of the Arts at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU), where she leads the Art Practice Division, directs and curates the university's galleries, and chairs the Humphrey Institute for Social and Cultural Research. Her career bridges academic and artistic fields, with works exhibited internationally in leading institutions such as the New Museum (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London), Jeu de Paume (Paris), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), and Minsheng Art Museum (Shanghai), combined with curatorial projects and scholarly publications. In 2009 she initiated together with Ruti Sela the longterm art project Exterritory, for which both artists won a Young Artists Award from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, 2011).

ARTS: [G61] Arts Lecture Room 5

How aesthetic objects reassemble publics: dissensus and things-in-common in socially engaged art

Session #2

CONVENOR

Tintin Wulia, *University of Gothenburg*

DISCUSSANT

Patricia Spyer, *Geneva Graduate Institute*

PRESENTATION #4 — The egg, the fruit, the orb: tactile forms of communal play and possibilities of dissensus in the practices of Piero Manzoni, Joyce Ho, and Sam Petersen

Tara Heffernan, *University of Melbourne*

Abstract: For Rancière, *dissensus* is not about establishing consensus or governing well, but refers to the disruption of the given order—when those who traditionally have little or no influence (the excluded subjects) assert their place and voice within the cultural sphere and its often problematically homogenised communities. Much contemporary analysis of art and culture promotes idealistic or utopian revisions, or disassembling, of our highly flawed present. While these projects are well-intentioned—and perhaps necessary—I am more invested in the potential of humble incursions and generative ruptures in our public/s and collective imagination/s.

In this paper, I analyse three artworks that employ orb-like forms as relational or symbolically generative objects: Piero Manzoni's *Consumption of Art by the Art-Devouring Public* (1960), a performance in which gallery-goers consumed hard-boiled eggs marked with the artist's thumbprint; Joyce Ho's *Overexposed Memory* (2015), a clinical yet affective video of the consumption of fruit; and Sam Petersen's *Resting* (2022), a plasticine orb shaped by the artist and set atop a chunk of gnarled pinewood. Each work is forged through direct bodily interaction and implicates or entices the public, while incorporating a typically overlooked or banal found or ready-made object.

Though separated by time and geography, the work of these artists—united in spirit—transcends the propagandistic commentary or didactic critique often associated with socially engaged or "relational" art. Instead, Manzoni, Ho, and Petersen employ everyday motifs in simple yet subversive ways—playfully disrupting their conventional roles

and producing works that retain potent poetic and symbolic resonance well beyond the moment of their enactment.

Tara Heffernan is a vision impaired art historian and critic. She is completing a PhD at the University of Melbourne on postwar Italian artist Piero Manzoni. Her work concerns modernism and the avant-gardes, conceptual art and the lineage/s of the New Left. She is a regular contributor to Melbourne's *Memo Review* and has written for national and international publications such as *Artlink Magazine*, *Third Text Online*, *Eyeline* and *Overland*. In 2024, she was a judge for the Darling Portrait Prize at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Heffernan was also the guest editor of *Un Magazine* issue 18.1 (2024).

PRESENTATION #5 — Of rice, rules, and resistance

Elia Nurvista, *Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut*

Abstract: Beginning with rice as both object and symbol: relief, ration, and spectacle, this presentation examines two participatory projects, *Hunger, Inc.* (2015-) and *Hunger Tales* (2021), that mobilize object-based roleplay to reconfigure relations around food, class, and complicity.

Hunger, Inc. was developed with residents of an informal settlement bordering a biennale venue. Together, we staged a reenactment of chaotic rice distribution scenes familiar from crisis media in Jogja Biennale 2015. Drawing from Paulo Freire pedagogy, the performance blurs between actor and lived experience, confronting elite art audiences with a raw, unresolved proximity to poverty. The rice operated as a volatile object, shared but contested, provoking discomfort, critique, and rupture. Some viewers criticized it as exploitative, questioning ethics of the artist, while for participants, the act became a channel for expressive release and reclaiming visibility.

In contrast, *Hunger Tales* consists of pedagogical board games co-designed with professional game developers and communities. Players navigate fictional yet recognizable food systems, negotiating scarcity, trade-offs, and structural injustice. Here, cards, tokens, and boards act as things-in-common: not to unify around consensus, but to hold differences in common. Dissensus emerges among players through debate and speculation, making visible the politics of food and power.

Both projects activate aesthetic objects as sites of friction rather than resolution, gathering publics around shared urgencies and inviting collective inquiry into the systems we live through, perform within, and attempt to reshape.

Elia Nurvista is an artist whose practice critically engages with food politics to examine power structures, social hierarchies, and economic inequalities. Through a diverse range of mediums—including workshops, study groups, publications, site-specific works, performances, video, board games and installations—she explores the social and political implications of food systems, addressing broader issues such as ecology, gender, class, and geopolitics.

In 2015, she co-founded Bakudapan Food Study Group, a collective grounded in principles of complementarity and solidarity. With Bakudapan, she has conducted cross-referential research at the intersection of food, art, pedagogy, and activism. In 2023, she was awarded the Artistic Chair and research fellowship at the Nantes Institute for Advanced Study, France. She is currently a fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut.

PRESENTATION #6 — Things-in-common, things-in-tension: gold and the fragile assemblage of coexistence

Roy Thaniago, *Geneva Graduate Institute*

How do people live together amid histories of violence that never fully recede? In Makassar's Somba Opu gold market, coexistence is not given—it is laboriously crafted, styled, and performed through everyday aesthetic work, an aesthetic that is socially engaged. Here, economic actors from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds—marked by broader histories of antagonism—form complex, interdependent relationships. This paper explores how gold becomes both a medium for and an actor in this fragile assemblage of cohabitation: a matter of concern (Latour 2004) and a thing-in-common (Wulia 2024), a shared object around which people gather out of necessity, not in spite of, but alongside their differences.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with gold shopkeepers, street traders, smiths, and recyclers, I trace how gold's material presence activates layered, ambivalent feelings: trust but also doubt, intimacy laced with caution, ethnicity entangled with economy. Gold intensifies risk and suspicion, heightens awareness of difference, and demands careful calibration of relational surfaces. Trust must be made to appear; distrust must be masked; economic transactions must be gift-wrapped. Gold thus acts as a vernacular object of anti-anaesthetics that draws people into intensified awareness rather than dulling their sensitivities.

In doing so, gold reassembles a multi-ethnic public, not through consensus, but through a fragile, pragmatic co-functioning that is always on the edge of collapse. Rather than resolving antagonism, these material and sensory interventions sustain a shared space of negotiation. It is in these tense, everyday encounters that community is situationally engineered by gold itself.

Roy Thaniago is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Geneva Graduate Institute in Switzerland and a visiting researcher at INMIX, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. His doctoral research, tentatively titled *The Labour of Living Together*, explores how interethnic coexistence is materially and affectively sustained in an urban gold-trading street in Makassar, Indonesia. By following the everyday transactions, tensions, and trust practices in this marketplace, his work examines how objects like gold mediate social difference, economic risk, and the fragile work of being-with across histories of violence. Before beginning his doctoral studies, Roy served as the founding director of Remotivi, a Jakarta-based centre for media research and advocacy (2010-2020).

Keynote #3

PHYS: [G41] Ross Lecture Theatre

Brenda L Croft — Abs. Trakd: Unruly Objects

I returned to my childhood home, the house built by my father and mother, the place which sheltered the residue of my earliest memories. I returned to Perth, in Western Australia, on a journey which not only covered a huge distance in terms of geography, but also time, both in the immediate sense of turning back to clock from Eastern Standard Time, to the more ethereal notion of retracing shadows. Perth seemed to be a city of shadows. The light seemed to seep into my heart, under my skin, through my eyes, as I looked and looked, above, and around me, down at my feet. I searched for that which had long since vanished, not only my own family, but also the original peoples before me.

The ground seemed to bleed before my eyes. It bled and bled, seeping up through the bitumen and concrete, the grass, saturating the brickwork, the telegraph poles, the roadway, even the plants and trees. The trees bled and wept, as if in remembrance of all those who had suffered, been killed, maimed, stolen from their rightful place. Things appeared to kaleidoscope in on themselves - memories of a crow visiting and calling me outside just days before my brother's death, coupled with the sweeping, endless sky above the country where his life left him, to the crispness in the air, and brightness of the stars, the night my father breathed his last, in a little hospice in the inner-west of Sydney.

So, I went back, back to my old house, pedalling along the paths and roadways on my borrowed bicycle, back to my mother's garden. It was just as I remembered it, and it was with a child's delight that I saw that the garden was exactly as my parents had planted it, only bigger, more lush, in bloom. They had moved there, newlywed, full of promise, all those years ago, having no inkling of what lay ahead. The

scent of those roses filled me, buffeted me, enfolded me. In my mind's eye I was back on the green verandah, with my little mop, playing grown-ups, whilst in reality I was an adult wanting to be a child. (Croft, from the series In My Mother's Garden, 1998).
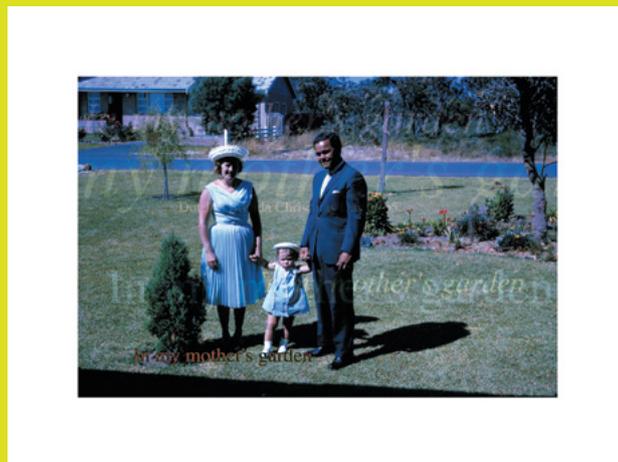

Image: (C) Brenda L Croft, 'In my mother's garden', 1998

Brenda L Croft is from the Gurindji/Malngin/ Mudburra Peoples, Victoria River region of the Northern Territory of Australia, and has Anglo-Australian/Chinese/German/Irish/Scottish heritage. For four decades Brenda has undertaken a leading role in national & international First Nations & broader contemporary arts/cultural sectors as a multi-disciplinary creative practitioner (academic, administrator, artist, curator, educator, researcher, scholar). Brenda's creative-led research encompasses Critical Indigenous Performative Collaborative Autoethnography & Storywork methodologies & theoretical frameworks. For over three decades Brenda has worked closely with her patrilineal family & community, with Australian First communities nationally, & international First Nations/Indigenous/ People-of-Colour colleagues.

As an academic, artist, curator & project manager Brenda's work with Australian and international First Nations/Indigenous communities spans more than four decades. These connections grew from her father, Joseph Croft's cultural work in the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs & Aboriginal Development Commission in the 1970s – 80s, & ongoing independent cultural work & First Nations/ Indigenous advocacy until his death in 1996.

In 2024 Brenda was the Gough Whitlam & Malcolm Fraser Visiting Chair of Australian Studies, Harvard University, being the inaugural First Nations female academic to be selected for this prestigious program, initiated in 1976, living & working on the Ancestral Homelands of the Massachusett for the year. Brenda is Professor of Indigenous Art History & Curatorship at the Australian National University, privileged to live and work on unceded sovereign Kamberri/Ngambri/ Ngunawal/Walgalu homelands.

6.30 - 8.00pm

Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA)

Welcome drinks and exhibition tour Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA)

RSVP: pica.org.au/kambarang-birak-exhibitions-tour/

Getting there from UWA to PICA: 15-minute travel by car (drop off on William Street near Alex Hotel). Or 950/950X bus route: catch on Stirling Hwy outside UniHall, ride through to Museum stop on Beaufort Street. There is some disruption to useful access to PICA, but if taking the bus, we recommend walking through the Picabar entry (there is ample way finding in the area).

Reception and tour of the final exhibition season of 2025 – Kambarang-Birak, for AAANZ delegates. During this season, PICA presents three urgent and deeply resonant exhibitions that speak to themes of home, place and belonging. Second Generation Collective's *Vádyé Eshgh* وادی عشق *(Valley of Love)* is a major new commission developed with mentorship from artist Abdul-Rahman Abdullah. Inspired by the spiritual text The Seven Valleys, this multi-disciplinary work explores grief, memory and the enduring power of love. Curated by Jasmin Stephens, *A Deceptively Simple Need* by Alana Hunt considers the realities of daily life on unceded land, encouraging reflection on the universal need for a home. In *SETTLED*, Joel Sherwood Spring critically examines how new technologies are altering human ways of seeing and being, alongside the continued capitalist exploitation of Aboriginal culture.

6.00 pm to late

_____gs (Shop 13, 375 William Street, Northbridge)

'Metalux' Exhibition Opening

Getting from PICA to _____gs is a ten-minute walk from PICA, down William Street away from the CBD.

Metalux, curated by Jo Law and Redmond Bridgeman, and facilitated by Paul Boyé, is a program of cameraless films and experimental video from 1990's Western Australia. These works represent a scene of filmic experimentation with materialist methodologies, influenced by the late Peter Mudie. The program considers perception construction, identity formation, and structures of consciousness through an investigation of the material of film. *Metalux* was screened at Film and Television Institute, Fremantle and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.