

IMAGING IDENTITY

MEDIA, MEMORY
AND VISIONS OF
HUMANITY IN THE
DIGITAL PRESENT

15-17 JULY 2010



IMAGING IDENTITY: MEDIA, MEMORY AND VISIONS OF HUMANITY IN THE DIGITAL PRESENT

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, July 15-17, 2010

ABSTRACTS

THURSDAY JULY 15

SESSION 1: ART, IMAGES AND THE WORK OF THE IMAGINATION

*Chair: Helen Ennis, Associate Professor Art Theory, Associate Head,
School of Art, Australian National University*

Painting pictures for our time and place

Melinda Hinkson, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University

Anthropological scholarship suggests that every society is constituted in and through a people's distinctive forms of image making and interactions with images that take on iconic significance. Images galvanise communities to shared values and understandings, they establish configurations of social order and coherent worldviews, they are centrally involved in anchoring the moral coordinates and social bases of what it is to be a person. So, is it possible to distil the characteristics of a contemporary Australian cultural attitude to images? This paper considers early work in a project that will explore through a series of micro-ethnographic studies the ways in which Australians attend to, experience and differentiate the visual parameters of their world. Drawing on findings from preliminary research undertaken with painters in the ANU School of Art painting program I will trace some of the dimensions of the way these painters comprehend their relationship to the works they produce, and the process of painting more broadly. If we consider painting as a form of social action, what is distinctive about painting in a world where technological mediation increasingly pervades every dimension of life?

Of particular interest to this project is the question of how broad social forces shape people's capacities to be affected by images. If the fleeting digital image and the mode of looking with which it is associated is the dominant image-form of our times, how is the contemporary work of painting influenced by these broader processes of mediation? What is at stake in maintaining a qualitative distinction between differently mediated images?

Melinda Hinkson is a lecturer in social anthropology and convenor of the Visual Culture Research program in the Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University. She has published widely on the anthropology of Aboriginal media practice and intercultural engagement. Melinda is co-editor of three books, the most recent being *Culture Crisis: Anthropology and Politics in Aboriginal Australia* (forthcoming September 2010 UNSW Press). Her current project on the Australian cultural attitude to images builds on a number of essays she has written on the technological mediation of person-picture relations, including the 2008 Bill Henson case and the contemporary politics of recognition in Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relations.

Self-Portraiture and the film and video essay

John Conomos, Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University

In my paper I shall enunciate the unfolding aesthetic, cultural and historical complexities of the modern essay film and video in terms of autobiography and self-portraiture. As someone who for over thirty years has been a "double artist" working in these complex 'in-between' zones of contemporary cultural production, I shall examine the works of certain artists, film- and video-makers like Chantal Akerman, Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker, Robert Cahen, Irit Batsry, the late Thierry Kuntzel, and include, if I may, some of my own works like *Autumn Song* (1997) and *Album Leaves* (1999), in the context of Alexandre Astruc's key concept of 'camera-stylo' cinema.

Essentially this increasingly compelling terrain of essayistic cinema, video and new media is critically indebted to Michel de Montaigne's concept of the literary essay as well as to autobiography and the self-portrait: image-making as a personal, intimate cinema, trembling with experimental risk-taking, crossing generic boundaries without need of a passport (Steve Fagin). What I shall particularly endeavour to do in my illustrated talk is to underscore the intertwined forms of the essay and the self-portrait. This will be done in the more recent currents of contemporary art, film and media theory.

John Conomos is an artist, critic and writer who lectures at the University of Sydney. His videotapes and installations have been extensively shown throughout Australia and overseas, most recently at the Tate Modern, London, where he spoke about his own art practice. He is a prolific contributor to art, film and media journals, conferences and symposia. In 1998 his videotape "Autumn Song" won an award at Berlin's Transmediale Video Festival, and in 2000 he was awarded a Fellowship for New Media by the Australian Council for the Arts. With Brad Buckley he co-edited *Republics of Ideas* (2001) and *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School: The Artist, The PhD and the Academy* (2010) and his solo book of essays *Mutant Media* was published in 2008. He has produced also several radiophonic essay programs for the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Radio National since the 1990s and his most recent piece "The Bells of Toledo" was produced last year. He is currently working on an alphabetical essay memoir called "Milk-bar" and several installation projects for the Queensland University Art Museum and several galleries in the UK.

Humanity in motion: A critical reading of multimedia stories from the Congo

David Campbell, Cultural and Political Geography, Durham University

One of the most common claims of photographers and humanitarian organisations is that complex crises have to be ‘humanised’ by giving issues ‘a face’ through photographic technology. This claim derives its force from both the political purpose of the humanitarian organisation and the humanist tradition of documentary photography, which has relied on images of the individual in order to signify social issues. The resultant images – the close-ups and portraits of distressed bodies and pathetic faces that have historically marked coverage of famines, pandemics and wars – constitute a specific way of being human that Hariman and Lucaites (2007) call the “individuated aggregate.” Although appearing in a photograph as a singular person or persons, the individuated aggregate depicts collective experience metonymically by reducing a general construct to a specific embodiment.

The desire to humanise issues via the ‘face’ has been criticised as a form of effacement that abstracts people from their social and political contexts. While this line of critique is effective as far as it goes, dealing with the limits of representation, this paper wants to extend these arguments by offering a critical reading of how new forms of photographic technology – what photojournalism calls “multimedia,” the combination of audio, still photographs and video designed to show stories across multiple platforms of digital distribution – address complex crises.

This paper will examine recent multimedia work both covering and emerging from the eastern Congo, the site of “Africa’s world war.” As visual stories in digital formats – for example, those produced under the umbrella of Medecins San Frontiere’s “Condition Critical” project (<http://www.condition-critical.org/>), Marcus Bleasdale’s “Rape of a Nation” (<http://mediastorm.org/0022.htm>), and VII’s “Consuming the Congo” project (<http://www.viiphoto.com/contentNewsletter/ConsumingTheCongo/>) -- the images in these accounts seek to provide an account that goes beyond the face by introducing (both literally and conceptually) the voice of the subject. Does this new mode of story telling enable subjects to be human in ways that exceed the limits of the individuated aggregate? Or do the new digital formats suffer from effacement in the same manner as traditional documentary photography?

David Campbell is Professor of Cultural and Political Geography at Durham University, U.K., where he is associated with the Durham Centre for Advanced Photography Studies. David’s interests combine photography, multimedia, and politics. He explores ways in which documentary photography, photojournalism and satellite imaging visually enact our hybrid world, and how multimedia technologies are transforming the capacity of photography to tell stories about it. The author and editor of six books and some 50 academic articles and essays, David has recently made a move from criticism to creative practice and begun working as a multimedia producer and curator, collaborating with photographers Peter Fryer and Sharron Lovell to produce two multimedia pieces on the story of the Yemeni community in South Shields and China’s internal migrant labourers. He also researched and curated three large visual projects: *Atrocity, Memory, Photography, Imaging Famine*; and *The Visual Economy of HIV-AIDS*. His work and his blog can be found at www.david-campbell.org

SESSION 2: IMAGINING THE DIGITAL MUSEUM

*Chair: Martyn Jolly, Head of Photography and Media Arts, School of Art,
Australian National University*

André Malraux, the art museum and the digital *musée imaginaire*

Derek Allan, Australian National University

Certain twentieth century thinkers sought to cast doubt on the role of the art museum. Theodore Adorno wrote that “Museums are the family sepulchres of works of art” housing objects that are “in the process of dying”, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty described the art museum as a “meditative necropolis” that is “not the true milieu of art”.

The view of the French art theorist and Minister for Cultural Affairs, André Malraux (1901-1976), is the very reverse of this. For Malraux, the art museum is the context in which, in contemporary Western culture, works of art come most fully to life. Far from being a necropolis, it is a key part of the dynamic of our modern world of art – the locus of a colloquy of visual images in which new light is thrown on each contribution by the contribution of each of the others. Malraux extends this thinking to the *musée imaginaire* – our ideal collection of those works, whether inside or outside art museums, that we regard as most important to us.

Malraux died before digital reproduction and the Internet began to realise their full potential, but he was a keen advocate of audio-visual media and of the part played by reproductions in familiarising us with works of art. “With photography,” he wrote “visual art invented its printing press”. With digital reproduction and the Internet, he would no doubt have said, this printing press has discovered a means of dissemination with brilliant new possibilities.

This paper would explore these aspects of Malraux’s thought. Basing its analysis on Malraux’s fundamental propositions about the nature of art, it would explain why he ascribes such an important place to the art museum, clarify his (frequently misunderstood) notion of the *musée imaginaire*, and suggest why he would have welcomed the digital age as an important new phase in our encounter with works of art.

The paper would be accompanied by a PowerPoint display consisting of relevant images of visual art and key statements from Malraux’s works such as *The Voices of Silence*.

Derek Allan’s book *Art and the Human Adventure: André Malraux’s Theory of Art* was published by Rodopi, Amsterdam, in November 2009. He has published a number of articles on aspects of Malraux’s works, and on the theory of art and literature. Dr Allan holds a Master of Arts in French Language and Literature and a PhD in Philosophy from the Australian National University where he is currently a Visiting Scholar.

Surface Tension: a curator's perspective on portraiture

Michael Desmond, Senior Curator, National Portrait Gallery

Artists grapple with the notion of how to create a portrait that depicts physical likeness yet also conveys an understanding of the character of the sitter. There are a number of devices that an artist can use to suggest the inner nature of an individual: idealised features, pose and posture, gesture, emblems of rank, clothing and other social signifiers as well as symbolic and allegorical objects can give clues to personality and achievement. The emphasis on mimetic likeness can be countered and complimented through formal means – colour, composition, distortion – and artists can introduce emotional indicators into a portrait. The tension between surface appearance and inner being is the essence of imaging identity.

Michael Desmond is the Senior Curator at the National Portrait Gallery. He worked as the inaugural Manager of the Drill Hall Gallery in Canberra and at the National Gallery of Australia as Senior Curator, International Paintings and Sculpture. Until recently he was the Manager of Collection Development and Research at the Powerhouse Museum. Over the last two decades he has developed many exhibitions was responsible for making a number of significant acquisitions.

Michael is the author of '*Present Tense: an imagined grammar of portraiture in the digital age*', '*Imagining Space: Jacky Redgate 1980–2003*' 2005; '*Leonardo da Vinci : The Codex Leicester*' 2001; '*Love Hotel*' 1997; '*Islands: Contemporary installation from Europe, America, Asia and Australia*' 1996 (exhibition catalogue with Kate Davidson); '*1968*' 1995 (exhibition catalogue with Christine Dixon) and '*European and American Paintings and Sculpture 1870-1970 in the Australian National Gallery*' 1992 (with Michael Lloyd); as well as numerous articles and reviews.

SESSION 3: THE ART OF SELF-MAKING

Chair: Michael Desmond, Senior Curator, National Portrait Gallery

Your privacy is important to us: Autoscopic collaboration in post-convergent media

Justin Clemens & Adam Nash, University of Melbourne and RMIT University

Today, human life is dominated by the post-convergent media exemplified by Web 2.0, a radically new development, an entirely technical global system, linked in real-time. The Web has become the global Unconscious. What does this mean for 'identity'? It means that our identity is now clearly established, delivered, maintained, and transformed by an entirely unnatural, inhuman, and constantly mutating technological system without centre or periphery, lacking any aim or end, beyond the control of any single agency. We are now to spend our lives in a permanent and accelerated state of terminal re-education, become the pure operators of punctual technical systems. It's not that we play online with our identities, becoming something other than we are in a space of freedom; it's that we *cannot not* play online with identity, and in such a way that this constrained play, subject to technical laws and programmatic routines, renders our identities inconsistent. The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan famously declared that 'the unconscious is structured like a language.' What he meant was that, rather than the unconscious being a matter of individual psychic drives, the unconscious was out there in the world, an unimaginably complex, shared symbolic network comprised of sounds, words, images, inscriptions, gestures. The unconscious is literally a medium, *is media*. For Lacan, a human being is defined by the relationship between its individual consciousness ('wants,' 'needs,' 'practices') and the public media-systems which it requires to communicate — but whose real import its consciousness constitutionally refuses to accept. This also means that human being cannot be reduced to biology; it also always has a specific communicational component, which differs historically depending on the dominant media-systems of the moment. How do we image such a situation in the age of the post-convergent Web Unconscious? We have attempted to do so through the virtual artwork *Autoscapia* <<http://www.portrait.gov.au/exhibit/doppelganger/>>; this paper details the thinking behind such an attempt.

Justin Clemens has published extensively on psychoanalysis, contemporary European philosophy, and Australian art. His recent books include the poetry collection *Villain* (Hunter Publishing 2009) and the novella *Black River* (re.press 2007), illustrated by Helen Johnson. With Christopher Dodds and Adam Nash, he is the creator of several multimedia art-works, notably *Autoscapia* (2009) and *Babelswarm* (2008). He is currently editing *The Jacqueline Rose Reader* (Duke UP, forthcoming) with Ben Naparstek, and *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts* (Acumen, forthcoming) with A.J. Bartlett. He is also the co-editor of major collections on Jacques Lacan and Giorgio Agamben. He is Secretary of the Lacan Circle of Melbourne, and teaches at the University of Melbourne.

Adam Nash is a media artist, composer, programmer, performer and writer. He is widely recognized as one of the most innovative artists working in virtual environments, mixed-reality and realtime 3D spaces, exploring them as nonlinear audiovisual performance spaces, sites for data/motion capture and generative audiovisual environments. His work has been presented in Australia, Europe, Asia and The Americas, at SIGGRAPH, ISEA, ZERO1SJ and the Venice Biennale, among others. He received the inaugural Australia Council Second Life Artist in Residence grant with Chris Dodds and Justin Clemens. He was awarded an Ars Electronica FutureLab residency in 2010 and an Australia Council Connections Residency in 2009, for which he founded SquareTangle with colleague John McCormick. He was shortlisted for the National Art Award in New Media at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art in 2008. He is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Animation and Interactive Media at RMIT University, Melbourne.

Facial Velocities

Martyn Jolly, School of Art, Australian National University

The great Victorian beauty, actress and courtesan Lillie Langtry was perhaps the first person to notice the impact that the accelerating circulation of portrait photographs was having on her own sense of her self. Writing in her memoirs about the period in the 1880s when she became Britain's biggest celebrity she said:

'Photography was now making great strides, and pictures of well-known people had begun to be exhibited for sale. The photographers, one and all, besought me to sit. Presently, my portraits were in every shop-window, with trying results, for they made the public so familiar with my features that wherever I went — to theatres, picture galleries, shops — I was actually mobbed. Thus the photographs gave fresh stimulus to a condition which I had unconsciously created. One night... at a large reception at Lady Jersey's, many of the guests stood on chairs to obtain a better view of me, and I could not help but hear their audible comments on my appearance as I passed down the drawing-room. Itinerant vendors sold cards about the streets with my portrait ingeniously concealed, shouting 'The Jersey Lily, the puzzle is to find her.' *The Days I Knew, Lillie Langtry, 1925, p40.*

Since then, of course, this feedback loop has only grown in scale, speed and brutality, and celebrity culture now pervades all our lives, just as cameras perpetually inhabit all of the places and spaces we move through. How has this changed the way we regard our own facial features? Perhaps it has hardened them, such that they are now not so much a portal to the inner self, or a species of physiognomic autobiography, as a rebus of identity, or perhaps a corporate logo for the persona. If this is true, then these changes have also pushed the face towards the very centre of the other debates that are currently raging around copyright, privacy, libel and freedom of expression. I will explore these pressures on the face using recent examples where celebrities, both major and minor, as well as ordinary members of the public, have been caught up in these circulating facial velocities. These examples may include the nocturnal indiscretions of footballers caught on CCTV, 'innocent' bystanders caught up in art photographs, or the constant battles between paparazzi and celebrity for control over that hottest of properties — the familiar features of well-known people.

Martyn Jolly is Head of Photography and Media Arts at the ANU School of Art. His book *Faces of the Living Dead: The Belief in Spirit Photography* was published in 2006. Since then, as well as continuing to research spirit photography, he has written on the new politics of the photograph, most notably 'Panic and Paranoia: Photography and the Law' (with Katherine Giles, then of the Arts Law Centre) in *Photofile 80*. In 2008 he curated an exhibition of portraiture for the *Vivid National Photography Festival* called *Parade: Manufacturing Selves in Photography* at the ANU School of Art Gallery. He also worked directly with community snapshots, incorporating 300 of them into the ACT Bushfire Memorial which was opened in 2006.

The mutable face: Capturing expression, identity and ideals through scientific imaging technologies

Michele Barker and Anna Munster, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

The human face is often seen, both culturally and analytically, as the primary site for the expression of emotion and character, thereby imaging and fixing identity. Yet identity is a complex and fickle phenomenon to capture, relying not simply upon historical norms but equally upon technical developments, the rise of particular scientific paradigms and the relation of these to modes of visual perception. During periods of accelerated technical and scientific change, what the face 'expresses' – and hence what kind of identity resides on or behind it – can be open to a number of co-existing conceptions. This paper focuses upon the ways in which genetics and the neurosciences, their imaging technologies and their associated images of identity, comprise a complex visual field of 'faciality'. The talk will use the work of the artists, Michele Barker and Anna Munster, who look at the ways in which the face and scientific imaging combine to create this shifting field.

The artists explore the temporal links between the early natural and medical sciences of the seventeenth and nineteenth century and contemporary obsessions with facial symmetry (designer genetics) and genuine facial expression (neuropsychology and neural marketing). The paper will draw upon the artists' installation, 'The Love Machine' (1998-2010), which developed from rethinking a photographic booth found throughout Asia. These booths use software to capture portraits of individual sitters and then output a 'baby' image combining the features of the original two images with racial and gender presets. The installation questions ideals of identity that conflate genetics and digital imaging technologies. The artists will compare this with the history of facial expression as it works its way through the early medical photographic images of hysterics' faces in Charles Darwin's "The Expression of Emotions in Man and the Animals". Ideas about the face as a site for the expression of genuine and staged emotion germinating in early neuroscience have now become part of the analysis of phenomena such as the American Presidential campaign. The artists will show video from their recent installation 'Duchenne's smile' (2009), that makes these historical and contemporary links to emerging paradigms of how we image identity.

Michele Barker and Anna Munster have collaborated extensively since 1995. Their work integrates photographic, video and interactive installation practices and has addressed issues relating to processes of perception, embodiment and scientific/medical visualization. Their work has been shown nationally and internationally, including in the US, China and throughout Europe.

Michele Barker is a senior lecturer at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney Australia. Anna Munster is an Associate Professor, the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney Australia. She has published the book *Materializing New Media* (2006) on new media, embodiment and art.

SESSION 4: IMAGING THE CHILD, THE DEAD

Chair: Gordon Bull, Head, School of Art, Australian National University

Vernacular resistance? Death, dying and digital photography

Helen Ennis, School of Art, Australian National University

This paper has at its heart a number of paradoxes. It is concerned with the visual, with very recent digital photographs of the dying and dead, but the images in question cannot be shown. They have been produced by those closest to their subjects and are circulated – if at all – within an extremely limited circle. While the images are photographic they rarely take the form of photographic prints, existing only as digital files. They bear some relation to historical tradition and yet are enabled by the latest digital technologies.

How might we account for the production of these images in an increasingly globalised and mediated culture where it is assumed that everything is subject to surveillance, to scrutiny, to view? Are these last portraits anachronistic or subversive? How might we speak of what is most private, perhaps even secret, in the lives of others?

The images I discuss are mainly those of which I have become aware since curating *Reveries: photography and mortality* for the National Portrait Gallery in 2006.

Helen Ennis is an independent curator and writer on Australian photography whose research interests also include biography and museology. Recent exhibitions she has curated are *Reveries: Photography & Mortality* (National Portrait Gallery, 2007) and *A Modern Vision: Charles Bayliss, Photographer, 1850-1897* (National Library, 2008).

Her biography *Margaret Michaelis: Love, loss and photography* was awarded the non-fiction prize in the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and the prize for Best Book by the Power Institute of Fine Arts in 2006. Her book *Photography and Australia* was published by Reaktion Press, London in 2007. Helen was Curator of Photography at the National Gallery, 1985-1992. She is currently Associate Head, Undergraduate, and Associate Professor, Art Theory, at The Australian National University School of Art.

The troubling aspects of truthfulness: Awful and awesome children in contemporary photography

Denise Ferris, School of Art, Australian National University

This paper examines contemporary representations of childhood in fine art photography. These portraits depict children as demons, as well as impossibly perfect, digitised angels, the protagonists of ironic and idyllic childhoods. Examining representations at both ends of this spectrum, I discuss the reductive perspectives of childhood these offer and suggest this affects how childhood may be commonly imagined.

Fresh interpretations of the human subject by contemporary practitioners skirt mainstream sentiment in children's portrayals. These new visions are matched by an increasingly cynical response from viewers, who mistrust and question any halcyon past or benign present. Mirroring society's obsession with the 'awful aspects of truthfulness', these photographs, models of veracity, suggest dysfunction, appearing to lay bare disturbing revelations about the 'truths' we have become accustomed to seeing and hearing.

Signs of our overwrought confusion over childhood's apparent opposites, these depictions expose a social state of mind, rather than the actual state of childhood. In *What is A Child?* Patricia Holland argues that absorbing visual concepts, we constrain the 'idea of childhood'. Photographs of childhood contribute to social narratives, constructing stories and maintaining collective memory, or as Holland (2004) says "cultural competence".

I question what is actually revealed in these photographs, suggesting these artists conjure fictions. I consider how photography's inherent characteristics, fuelled by its *reality effect* influences representation, creating uncertainties in viewer's attitudes. I explain how these representations, contributing to our shared narratives of childhood, apparently confirm suspicions of nasty truths. Additionally they excite a fascination with unattainable childhood perfection. Finally I propose that these extreme examples provide an imaginative space, offering an opportunity for 'appropriate voyeurism', allowing vicarious contemplation for the viewers of these projected identities.

Denise Ferris has an art practice and lectures in Photography at the School of Art, ANU. Current research examines a 'maternal genealogy' of mothers photographing their children and the consumption of these photographs, made for both private remembrance and public viewing. Her exegesis *Spoilt Milk: Photography, Recollection and Constructing The Maternal* investigated representations of the maternal relationship including her own, which articulate maternal ambivalence using photographic print innovations with milk emulsion. Ferris' work is in Australian public collections as well as overseas institutions, such as District Six Museum, Cape Town and Nara City, Japan.

Problems in rendering childhood thought and experience

David MacDougall, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University

The visual anthropology of childhood is developing alongside growing anthropological interest in children's lives more generally. Children's worlds differ from adults' because they have different experiences, are in a different developmental state, and occupy different roles in society. Children constitute a major part of humanity and deserve to be better understood in their own right, but also for what they can teach us about human diversity and potential. Visual media offer us one way to explore how children think and act, but we still lack sufficient models for doing so. One approach is to record children's views more seriously and systematically, something that has tended to be discouraged by regarding children simply as inadequate adults. Another is to enlist children in the research process itself, not as the objects of research but as active investigators. In this brief talk I will present examples of the first approach, mention some of the problems of cognitive and social research among children, and describe plans for a collaborative research project that will commence later this year.

David MacDougall is a documentary filmmaker and writer on cinema. He was educated at Harvard University and the University of California at Los Angeles. His first feature-length film, *To Live With Herds*, filmed in Uganda, won the Grand Prix Venezia Genti at the Venice Film Festival in 1972. Soon after this, he and his wife Judith MacDougall produced the Turkana Conversations trilogy of films on semi-nomadic camel herders of northwestern Kenya. Of these, *Lorang's Way* won the prize of Cinéma du Réel in Paris in 1979, and *The Wedding Camels* the Film Prize of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1980. With Judith MacDougall, he then co-directed a number of films on indigenous communities in Australia and, in 1991, a film on photographic practices in an Indian hill town, *Photo Wallahs*. In 1993 he made *Tempus de Baristas*, on goat herders in the mountains of Sardinia, winner of the 1995 Earthwatch Film Award. In 1997 he began conducting a film study of the Doon School in northern India. This led to the making of five films: *Doon School Chronicles* (2000), *With Morning Hearts* (2001), *Karam in Jaipur* (2001), *The New Boys* (2003), and *The Age of Reason* (2004). Recent projects include filming at a progressive, co-educational boarding school in South India. Of the resulting films, his experimental *SchoolScapes* (2007) won the Basil Wright Film Prize at the 2007 RAI International Festival of Ethnographic Film. His latest film, *Gandhi's Children* (2008), was made at a shelter for homeless children in New Delhi. It was nominated for Best Documentary Feature Film at the 2009 Asia Pacific Film Awards and received the Grand Prix of the 2009 Astra Film Festival. MacDougall writes regularly on documentary and ethnographic cinema and is the author of *Transcultural Cinema* (Princeton University Press, 1998) and *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (Princeton, 2006). He is presently the 2009-10 Robert E. Fulton III Fellow in Nonfiction Film at the Harvard University Film Study Center and Adjunct Professor at the Research School of the Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University, Canberra.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS #1: Thursday July 15, 6.00pm

Migration, law, and the image: Beyond the veil of ignorance

*W.J.T. Mitchell, Gaylord Donnelly Distinguished Service Professor of English & Art History,
University of Chicago*

This lecture aims at the convergence of three disciplines: 1) the law, with its entire edifice of judicial practice and political philosophy; 2) migration, as the movement and settlement of living things, especially (but not exclusively) human beings, across the boundaries between distinct habitats; 3) iconology, the theory of images across the media, including verbal and visual images, metaphors and figures of speech as well as visual representations. Examining a range of examples from science fiction narratives of alien species, to stories of conquest, colonization, and ethnic cleansing, to the development of contemporary practices of detention and border policing, the lecture will argue that immigration in our time has ceased to be a merely transitional phase in human life, and threatens to become a permanent condition for growing numbers of people. This poses a radical challenge to liberal notions of universal human equality which depend, paradoxically, on philosophies of exclusion and the policing of borders to protect actually existing liberal polities. The "veil of ignorance" about particular human identities (race, class, gender, ethnicity) that philosopher John Rawls regarded as foundational to liberal notions of justice and equality comes under new kinds of stress in a time when the borders between peoples have become zones of increasing violence and despair.

W. J. T. Mitchell is Gaylord Donnelly Distinguished Service Professor of English and Art History at the University of Chicago. He served as Chair of the English Department from 1988 to 1991, and has been the editor of *Critical Inquiry* since 1978.

Professor Mitchell has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Philosophical Society, as well as research conference grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Exxon Educational Foundation. In the winter of 1993 he was awarded a research residency as the Fairchild Distinguished Scholar at the California Institute of Technology. During his editorship, *Critical Inquiry* has thrice been recognized for the "Outstanding Special Issue of a Scholarly Journal" (1981, 1988, 1998) and for outstanding design (for its special issue, *Art and the Public Sphere*) by the Conference of Editors of Learned Journals. *Critical Inquiry* also won the American Publisher's Association award for an outstanding special issue in 1998. Professor Mitchell chaired the planning committee for the Chicago Humanities Institute in 1991 (now the Franke Institute), and has served on the governing boards of the Smart Gallery of Art, the Highgate Art Trust, the Benton Fellowship Program, the Franke Institute, and the University of Chicago Press, where he has served as Chairman of Board. In 1996, his book *Picture Theory* was awarded the College Art Association's Charles Rufus Morey Prize for "an especially distinguished book in the history of art." In 1997, *Picture Theory* received the Gordon E. Laing Prize for the book by a faculty author that has brought the most distinction to the University of Chicago Press. His most recent work, *The Last Dinosaur Book: The Life and Times of a Cultural Icon* (1998) was selected as one of the top 100 books of 1999 by the Toronto Globe & Mail. It was also nominated for the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, and won the Award of Excellence and the Juror's Choice for design at the 1998/99 Chicago Book Clinic Show.

Professor Mitchell's articles have appeared in numerous journals, including *Art in America*, *October*, *Art Bulletin*, *London Review of Books*, *Boston Review*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Artforum*, *Cahiers de l'art moderne*, *Krisis*, *Representations*, *Raritan Review*, *AfterImage*, *Salmagundi*, *Works & Days*, *New Literary History*, *ELH*, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *Studies in Romanticism*, *Eighteenth Century Studies*, *Interfaces*, *Transition*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Translations of his writings have appeared in French, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Chinese, and Japanese. His work is primarily focused on the interplay of vision and language in art, literature, and media, and the subjects of his articles range from general problems in the theory of representation, to specific issues in cultural politics and political culture. He has edited six collections of essays, all published by University of Chicago Press: *The Language of Images* (1980), *On Narrative* (1981), *The Politics of Interpretation* (1983), *Against Theory* (1985), *Art and the Public Sphere* (1993), *Landscape and Power* (1994) and most recently, *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (with Mark Hansen).

Mitchell's sole authored books include *Blake's Composite Art* (Princeton, 1977), *Iconology* (Chicago, 1986), *Picture Theory* (Chicago, 1994), *The Last Dinosaur Book* (Chicago, 1998), *What Do Pictures Want?* (Chicago, 2005), His *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9-11 to the Present*, will be published in November.

FRIDAY JULY 16

SESSION 5: PERFORMING SELVES DIGITALLY

*Chair: Anna Munster, Deputy Director, Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics,
University of New South Wales*

Face to Face: Portraiture in a digital age

Kathy Cleland, Digital Cultures Program, University of Sydney

This paper discusses new trends in portraiture with reference to the exhibition *Face to Face: portraiture in a digital age*, a national touring exhibition curated by Kathy Cleland and produced by d/Lux/MediaArts.

Digital technologies have revolutionised the genre of portraiture enabling new forms of representation, distribution and audience interaction. From digital prints to single channel digital video and interactive installations the artists in *Face to Face* show us new ways of seeing and thinking about portraiture and the human face. These artworks hold up a mirror to contemporary culture and society showing us a portrait of ourselves in the 21st century. In these portraits we see our contemporary narcissistic obsession with celebrity, youth and beauty, the astounding fluidity of digital image manipulation and transformation, our fascination with the power of science and digital technologies to analyse and transform the human image, and an emerging predilection for the creation of digital alter egos and fantasy identities.

Artists in *Face to Face*: Michele Barker & Anna Munster, Denis Beaubois, Daniel Crooks, Anna Davis & Jason Gee, Emil Goh, Angelica Mesiti, Adam Nash & Mami Yamanaka, David Rosetzky, Rachel Scott, Stelarc and John Tonkin. www.dlux.org.au/face2face/index.htm

Kathy Cleland is a curator, writer and lecturer specialising in new media art and digital culture. She is Director of the Digital Cultures Program at The University of Sydney. Her curatorial projects include the Cyber Cultures exhibition series which toured to over 20 venues in Australia and New Zealand from 2000 – 2003, the Mirror States exhibition (2008) at MIC Toi Rerehiko, Auckland, NZ and Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, and Face to Face: portraiture in a digital age for d/Lux/MediaArts, a digital portraiture touring exhibition in Australia (2008-2011). www.kathycleland.com

Here/there I am: Imaging 'you' in video games

Gwyneth Peaty, School of Social and Cultural Studies, University of Western Australia

Video games are dedicated to creating a notion of 'you' within a virtual environment. They invite the projection of identity into the three-dimensional image, a process that allows the player to experience agency and presence as part of a world of representations. Significantly, the First Person Shooter genre offers its unique concept of identity via the absence of the face. Instead, the individual is represented by questing hands: reaching; grasping; shooting; taking things apart and putting them together. This 'you' manifests in the relationship between human and computer, forming a dynamic vision of mediated selfhood. In this way, games offer a new kind of portraiture, one dedicated to movement as opposed to capturing the suspended moment. It is not how one looks, but what one does that takes precedence in this medium. In this paper I will argue that video games' manner of imaging identity reflects wider contemporary anxieties regarding the efficacy of human action and the ontological collapse of the individual. This form of media works to reconstruct the individual as a figure beyond the game, a person whose capable hands extend 'into' the image and take control. By performing a ritual disassembly of the in-game body, 'real' humanity is reformulated outside of the game as a meaningful, bounded entity.

Gwyneth Peaty is a third year PhD student from the University of Western Australia. Her research is concerned with representations of 'the grotesque' in popular media and visual culture, looking specifically at how they intersect with issues of race, gender, identity and the body. She has presented papers at a number of events, including the International Gothic Association's 'Monstrous Media/Spectral Subjects' conference at Lancaster University in 2009. In April of this year, she travelled to America to speak at Virginia Tech's 'Gender, Bodies and Technology' conference.

Crossing space-time-action: Self and performance in motion capture imagery

Jenna Ng, Umeå University, Sweden

This paper examines how motion capture (“mocap”) affects the issue of personhood in the context of performance in the moving image.

Performance is typically an interconnection of three elements, namely a particular gesturality in a particular space and a particular time. In this trinomial nexus, performance is unrepeatable and thereby non-reproductive. The recording technologies of cinema thus document performance only to the extent of inscription on film or video in a single space-time-action matrix. As Caveh Zahedi expounds in Richard Linklater’s film, *Waking Life*, “it’s about that guy, at that moment, in that space”.

However, I argue that mocap changes these aspects of the image, enabling the performance of an actor in a specific space and time to be transposed onto a different actor in a different spatio-temporal framework. Hence, mocap imagery is not merely the record of a performance entrenched in a single space-time-action matrix, but creates hybrid performances of actions across different spaces and temporalities, “repeating” a performance not as a document but as integral to another performance, whereby the same gesturality may be applied to two different spatio-temporal matrices. Mocap imagery thus changes the concept of selfhood as a specificity in one particular space-time-matrix in recorded imagery—that-guy-that-moment-that-space—to a paradigm of multiplicity registering performances of one gesturality straddling variant space-time dimensions. Regarding (and re-girding) mocap images with these space-time-action multiplicities thus herald not only a new conception of personhood and identity in terms of situating the being in a particular time and space, but also changes our definitions of and receptions to cinema, revising the concepts of performance and documentation in cinema recordings as motion capture amalgamates a repeated gesturality in conflated spatio-temporal matrices.

Jenna Ng completed her PhD in Film Studies at University College London (UCL) in 2009 with a dissertation on the conceptualisations of time in digital cinema. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the digital humanities at HUMlab, Umeå University, Sweden (dually affiliated with the Department of Culture and Media), researching a project on selfhood and digital media technologies. Her work has been published in *Cinema Journal*, 16:9 and *Rouge*, as well as various essay anthologies.

SESSION 6: INTERCULTURAL IMAGES AND THE SOUND OF MEMORY

*Chair: Howard Morphy, Director, Research School of Humanities and the Arts,
Australian National University*

Bark-TV: Portrait of an Innovator

Jennifer Deger, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

For Yolngu from the community of Gapuwiyak in northeast Arnhem Land, culturally specific notions about the power of images — their capacity to generate relations and to transmit something of the potency of a place or person into new contexts — make the stakes around image making (and image display) very high. This paper explores the charged personal and political dynamics that gave rise to the multi-media art work *Djalkiri #1*, a work that mixes bark, acrylic painting and video to create a unique portrait of a deceased Yolngu community leader.

Rather than bringing us face to face with its subject in any conventional sense — the actual ‘subject’ of this portrait is only glimpsed briefly at the end of the video — this collaborative art work refracts relations between the individual and the clan, the living and the dead, the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’, Yolngu and Balanda (non-Aboriginal) in ways that simultaneously claim the singularity of a remarkable individual and the encompassing significances of ancestral identities.

Dubbed the ‘bark-TV’ when first unveiled in the Gapuwiyak community art centre late last year, this work not only makes relationships between a specific person and ancestral actions manifestly visible—it claims them as the ground of being and the foundation of creativity. In both form and content, *Djalkiri #1* displays the inherently relational nature of Yolngu cultural identities; it offers a glimpse of a synaesthetic poetic cultural imagination that recognises digital technologies as offering possibilities for amplifying and refracting these relations in new ways; it claims the possibilities of technological appropriation and cultural innovation as inherent to the Yolngu repertoire.

Jennifer Deger is a visual anthropologist currently working on a three-year ARC Discovery project, ‘Digital Technologies, Mediated Futures: Envisaging Culture in Arnhem Land’ at the Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics, COFA, UNSW. For the past fifteen years, Deger has been developing relationships with Yolngu from Gapuwiyak as an ethnographer and collaborative media-maker and trainer. With a focus on collaboration and experimentation, Deger’s practice-based research reveals the dynamic and generative relationships between vision, creativity and power in an Aboriginal community in northern Australia and explores the potential of media to mediate, and indeed refigure, the spaces of the intercultural.

Images of identity and memory in Dhalwangu Song

Peter G. Toner, Department of Anthropology, St. Thomas University

The vitality of images in the understanding of self and other transcends the visual medium. In the song traditions of the Dhalwangu people of northeast Arnhem Land, the notion of “painting a picture” of ancestrally-significant places is the single most important spiritual, social, and aesthetic goal of any singer. Like imagist poems, Dhalwangu song texts reveal a similar “hardness of outline, clarity of image, brevity, suggestiveness, freedom from metrical laws” (Hughes, 1931), relying upon images (often, but not always, visual images) of things—animals, plants, material objects, people—juxtaposed with names of places and people to create concise and elliptical 20- to 30-second-long individual song performances. These short song items combine over three- or four-hour-long performances to produce intricately-detailed “landscapes” of Dhalwangu places and the people who lived there in the ancestral past. When done effectively, this poetic and musical evocation of place cultivates a deep feeling of nostalgia in listeners and may even move them to tears. Evocative and nostalgic images are found not only in the performance of Dhalwangu songs, but also in the act of listening to archival performances of previous generations of singers. The digital era allows Dhalwangu people to confront their memories of their ancestors through the medium of digitized audio recordings of performances recorded as long ago as the 1920s. In so doing, Dhalwangu people draw upon evocative images of their fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers, in a kind of discursive “portraiture” of individual singers in relation to archival song performances. In this paper, I will explore the various ways in which Dhalwangu people use the images associated with songs and singers to mediate their own sense of social identity and their relations with others, through an analysis of imagery in a non-visual medium.

Peter G. Toner is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, Canada. A social anthropologist and ethnomusicologist, his doctoral research with Yolngu musicians in Gapuwiyak, N.T. focused on the role of ritual music in the construction of social identity, while his postdoctoral research examined the social life of digitized archival audio recordings of Yolngu music when repatriated back to their communities of origin. While maintaining his interest in Yolngu music, he has recently undertaken a new research project on folk music and Irish cultural identity in the Canadian province of New Brunswick.

Photographing your own people: Collaborative photography projects, ethics and fictions in insider representation

Maya Haviland, School of Art, Australian National University

This paper explores some of the creative strategies being used by 'insider' photographers to deal with the politics, ethics and tensions of photographic representation of ones own community, experience, or people. Around the world participatory photography projects have emerged to support insider representations of cultures, communities, and human experiences, and the images that result from these projects are often received as 'authentic' representations of marginalised peoples. What can and can't be shown by 'insider' photographers? What negotiations go on in the making of such images? How are strategies, such as fictionalisation, utilised by 'insider' image-makers in response to such negotiations?

Based on research into the practices, relationships and creative products emerging from collaborative and participatory photography projects in the Kimberley, Western Australia and Chiapas, Mexico, this paper will look at the relational ethics at play in the making and sharing of images in participatory photography projects. I will explore the rise of 'fictionalised documentary' as it relates to insider representation, looking at examples of visual strategies used to reveal stories, communities and people, while still protecting privacy, intimacy and trust.

Maya Haviland is a practicing photographer and doctoral candidate at the ANU School of Art, Photomedia. She has recently completed fieldwork with participatory indigenous photography projects in Southern Mexico, and the Kimberley region of Western Australia. She is Principal Consultant of Side by Side Community Project Consulting, and has professional background in community cultural development and participatory social research.

SESSION 7: IMAGING CONFLICT AND DISLOCATION

*Chair: Caroline Turner, Senior Research Fellow, Research School of Humanities and the Arts,
Australian National University*

Portraiture and Diaspora

Gali Weiss, Visual artist and independent scholar

This paper presents a diaspora perspective on identity and portraiture, drawing on notions of difference, being, becoming and absence expressed through a body of artwork that incorporates the photograph, the (photo)copy, and the drawing. By positioning portraiture alongside diaspora, this project explores notions that arise from common experiences of globalisation and dispersion. It asks how contemporary portraiture reflects a diasporic understanding of the world, and, in particular, how diasporic portraiture ‘thinks through’ identity and subjectivity.

While diasporic identity can be understood in terms of ‘double consciousness’—as a tension in belonging to past and present—it may also be rethought in terms of an indeterminate future. Explorations of diasporic visual culture can enter such a discussion not only through representations of diaspora, but through a ‘diasporic’ approach to representation. This approach allows for an authentic portrayal of presence in a ‘still’ representation, where the idea of presence incorporates change or *becomings*, as well as the simultaneity of difference and sameness. The re-visioning and rethinking of the relationship between portraiture, diaspora and subjectivity shifts the function of the portrait from a referential to a performative role, finding significance not in the fixed identity of a sitter/subject, but in the relational and collective subjectivities forged between artist, subject and viewer. Portraiture, then, can be understood not so much as a genre within the borders of a territory that includes or excludes, but rather as a cultural site that contextualises the desire for, in Avtar Brah’s words, a ‘politics of identification’ as opposed to a ‘politics of identity.’

Gali Weiss is a visual artist who completed a creative practice-based PhD at Victoria University, Melbourne in 2009. Her thesis, *The Anonymous Portrait: A Creative and Critical Investigation of Diaspora, Portraiture, Subjectivity* was awarded a Vice-Chancellor’s Citation for Excellence in Research, 2009. Her work has been exhibited in Australia, Israel, and England, and is found in private and public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, the Israel Museum, the State Library of Victoria, and the State Library of Queensland.

Identity and place in conflict: the war art of Shaun Gladwell and collaborative artists Lyndell Brown and Charles Green

Warwick Heywood, Australian War Memorial

In 2007 Lyndell Brown and Charles Green travelled through Iraq and Afghanistan as the Australian War Memorial's official war artists. Brown and Green's paintings and photographs of global conflict represent huge American bases as strange dissipated environments that are alien to all cultures and inhabitants. Shaun Gladwell was the Memorial's official war artist in Afghanistan in 2009. As part of his commission Gladwell has created video portraits of Australian male soldiers. These portraits suggest that the soldiers are both hyperaware of, and adaptable to, different physical environments. Yet they are also dislocated from their surroundings because of their military training, rituals and field operations.

The artists view these conflicts as playing a significant role in global culture and as a highly charged hub of technology, cultural exchange and memory. This paper explores how their images reveal an abstracted and complex interplay between person and place, where individual and national identity is reassembled by globalised military systems; frontier mythologies; histories of colonisation and conflict; and digital media networks.

An exhibition of Brown and Green's paintings and photographs, *Framing Conflict: Iraq and Afghanistan*, will be on display at the Australian War Memorial from 20 May – 18 August

Warwick Heywood is an art curator at the Australian War Memorial. Warwick curated an exhibition of Brown and Green's works, *Framing Conflict*, which is travelling Australia until late 2010. He is currently managing Shaun Gladwell's commission as an official war artist in Afghanistan.

Environmental conflicts, global norms and local identity

Kumi Kato, Wakayama University, Japan and The University of Queensland, Australia

The recent incident in the southern ocean – the collision between the anti-whaling organisation Sea Shepherd's craft *Ady Gil* and the Japanese whaling ship *Shonan-maru No. 2* made yet another major headline in Australia, Japan and globally (6 Jan, 2010). Images of such confrontations around whaling have become almost an annual media event during the southern whaling season. Images of conflict, cruelty of killing and hostility expressed by both sides in reports, documentaries and films have defined the identity of the two opposites – those who kill and those who (attempt to) save the great whales - and the politics played by them. Images today play a major role in shaping public knowledge, perceptions, opinions and thus norms on numerous issues, including the environment, in which conflicting cases are particularly welcomed and used strategically by media and activism ("Image politics" DeLuca, 1999)". Problem arises when "them & us - environmental good & bad" images are created, without including or intentionally excluding local communities and those who do not speak the language - whalers/fishers in Japan are of this kind, who are also shadowed under the central government's nationalism banner. This paper examines, specifically in the case of whaling both historically and currently, how images create environmental norms, how the perception of the images differ cross-culturally and how they as a consequence generate conflict rather than empathy. The ethics of activism and media is questioned.

Kumi Kato, PhD is a professor in environmental studies at Wakayama University, Japan and research associate at the University of Queensland. Her particular interest is in the construction of "global norms" in environmental issues and their in/compatibility with the local perspectives. She believes in the power of creativity and has worked on soundscape, sound art and public art as part of research (eg "Waiting for the tide", ABC Radio National Radio Eye, a CD Isobue (<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/radioeye/stories/2007/1957039.htm>)). Her recently completed projects include a Sound Garden in Roma St Parkland and "150 important sounds we want to pass onto the future" She regards herself as an environmental activist who endeavours to instigate positive changes through education and art. She is a founder of a research network "Creative Conservation" (<http://eccocreative.blogspot.com>) and a NPO *ecco: exchanging culture for conservation* www.ecco.org.au (<http://eccoart.blogspot.com>). Part of the research for this paper was conducted during the SARS (Scholars and Artist in Residence) fellowship at National Film & Sound Archive, Canberra. The author gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the NFSA.

SESSION 8: PORTRAYING INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Chair: Nicolas Peterson, Professor of Anthropology, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University

Photography, native title and Aboriginal identity

Michael Aird, Independent scholar

When looking at photographs of Aborigines taken over 100 years ago the viewer often considers the huge changes to Aboriginal society and the landscape, especially when looking at photographs that were taken in areas that are now highly urbanized cities such as Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Regardless of the change that has occurred to the landscape and to Aboriginal culture, historical images have played an important role in enabling Aboriginal people to assert their connection to community and country. But in some cases photographs have also been used to exclude Aboriginal people from their history and identity.

My presentation will talk about how some images of Aborigines have been reproduced and promoted time and time again with overtly political intentions. Some photographs have been used to promote inaccurate versions of Aboriginal history that fit in with the stereotypical expectations of tourists, the mainstream media and government officials. In-accurate histories have promoted mythical tribes that in turn have elevated the status of a few individual Aborigines or one family group. With an ever increasing involvement of Aboriginal people in documenting our own histories and continued Native Title research, we will gain a much more accurate understanding of the people featured in these old photographs and their exact connections to country and future generations of their descendants.

Michael Aird has worked full time in the area of Aboriginal cultural heritage since 1985, graduating in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Queensland. His main interest is urban Aboriginal photographic history, curating several exhibitions as well as being author of several books and articles. In 1996 he established Keeaira Press an independent publishing house. For five years Michael was the Curator of Aboriginal Studies at the Queensland Museum and continues to work as a freelance curator and anthropologist.

Contemporary Indigenous portraiture: Trauma and testimony embodied

Kryisia Kitch, National Portrait Gallery

Contemporary Indigenous artists such as Julie Dowling, Ricky Maynard and Vernon Ah Kee use the genre of portraiture to bear witness to the trauma of past and present Australian Indigenous experience. Traditional tools of portraiture such as pose, gaze, biography, likeness and presence are used with finesse to convey the affect of removal of children, dispossession, displacement and disavowal of presence. Through their sensitive portrayal of the human body they create a perception of one to one encounter. The intensity of this interaction is then built upon through the development of portrait series. Expressing a variety of experience, the series act as cumulative testimony which accrues a sense of proof. The embodied presence of portraiture allows emotional affect of past trauma to be expressed.

This paper will explore how application of ideas from trauma theory and narrative therapy enables a rich reading of contemporary Indigenous portraiture, which does not simply create a new archive, showing a different history, but demonstrates the affect of the past in the present. Acutely aware that their audience is predominantly white and refuting the status of victim, these artists request us to examine our way of being in relation to theirs; in what way do we contribute to the existing Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationship. Their art practice thus contributes to both personal and national discussions of identity.

After many years interest in the visual arts **Kryisia Kitch** recently formalised her knowledge, receiving First Class honours from the Australian National University in a Bachelor of Arts, Art History and Curatorship in 2009. This paper will be loosely based on her Honours thesis *Contemporary Indigenous Portraiture: Trauma and Testimony Embodied Julie Dowling, Ricky Maynard Vernon Ah Kee*

Kryisia currently works in Education and Public Programs at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Together with Kristie Mack, she presented a workshop *History People Places* at the History Teachers of Australia Association annual National Conference 2009.

Putting a face to Indigenous history: The art of Julie Dowling

Anna Edmundson, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University

'There is something that happens to a person in a quiet gallery just observing a likeness and understanding more about that person — and, hopefully, bridges are crossed in people's minds about my Grandmother's people.' Julie Dowling 2008.

Julie Dowling is the only Indigenous Australian painter to work exclusively in the genre of portraiture. She was drawn to the medium because of its unique ability to recover and reinstate its subjects for a wider audience. Her portraits represent a deliberate attempt to draw non-Indigenous audiences into a personal and empathetic relationship with her Indigenous subjects; members of her extended Badimaya family as well as other Indigenous Australians whose life stories and viewpoints are generally absent from mainstream historical accounts.

This paper examines Dowling's portraits as consciously constructed sites of empathy. Through her work Dowling constantly strives to overcome the critical distance between (white) viewer and (black) subject; between dispassionate historical accounts of the European settlement of Australia and the real and ongoing pain experienced by Aboriginal people as a result of stolen country, stolen children, loss of language and cultural dispossession. While Dowling's work is highly political, she is in some ways an unusual activist. Her work quietly draws the audience into a direct personal encounter with Aboriginal people within the safety of the gallery space. By putting a face to Indigenous history, Dowling leads her audience to a more personal understanding of Aboriginal political concerns and in doing so challenges them not to walk away untouched by their lives.

Anna Edmundson is a curator and arts writer with extensive experience in the field of Indigenous art and cultural heritage. She first met the artist Julie Dowling while working as a curator at the Western Australian Museum in Perth. During this time Anna created and curated the *Katta Djinoong* changing exhibitions program (2000-2003), designed to showcase emerging Indigenous artists from around the state. She curated exhibitions on WA Indigenous artists for the 2001 and 2002 Perth International Arts Festival (PIAF). Other relevant positions include Curator at the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney; Director of the MuseumLink program at the WA Museum; and, most recently, Senior Curator in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program at the National Museum of Australia.

SESSION 9: POLITICS, PROTEST, SPECTACLE

*Chair: David Williams, Emeritus Professor, Research School of Humanities and the Arts,
Australian National University*

Memory in self portraits

Jackie Menzies, Head curator, Asian Collections, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Memory in self portraits in an increasingly global, transnational world, where people move, voluntarily or not, from one location to another and from one culture to another, conveying one's identity, history and persona is a multi-faceted challenge. Sometimes an individual's national as well as personal history is complex: it may be culturally unfamiliar to the community in which s/he now resides. For these reasons and because of porous borders (physical as well as social), and the lack of shared memories, the language of a self portrait needs increasingly sophisticated translation. For the artists of Asia, there are issues related to emotional, political and traumatic topics such as colonial pasts, religions, displacement, and authoritarian restrictions that are unfamiliar to the broader global community. Because of the enormity and diversity of some Asian societies, the local that is intrinsic to the defining of self has limited reference outside a specific community. So too with history, and sometimes religion. Thus for artists to create self portraits that resonate with all viewers is a challenge; to create self portraits that convey, even critique, one's situation and heritage with clarity and potency is a further challenge. To do so, artists resort to new devices: the manipulated image, the moving image, sometimes suites of images. To demonstrate the last device, this paper will present series of photographs by two contemporary artists. One artist is the South Indian Pushpamala N. the other is the Tibetan expatriate Gonkar Gyatso. The use of memory within their images is important and exemplifies the difficulties in conveying historical legacies. For example, Pushpamala worked with British photographer Clare Arni in a performative work that ironically comments on the colonial obsession with classification by drawing on theatrical conventions, tableau settings, and past visual traditions. Gonkar Gyatso depicts himself in a series of interiors shaped by the cultures in which he has lived: Tibet, China, and London. For these artists, memories of locations, religion, religious leaders, iconic gods still form part of their identity which they bring to their contemporary worlds. For the viewer some of the iconography needs to be de-coded to fully appreciate the subtlety of the portrait on show. The adoption of 'persona' - for fun, disguise, conformity - is an effective conceit for many artists seeking to re-define the language of self-portraits.

Jackie Menzies, a graduate of the University of Sydney, has been responsible for the development of the Asian collections at the Art Gallery of New South Wales since her appointment in 1980. She has been responsible for many publications relating to the collections, and overseen two expansions of the Asian galleries (one in 1990; then most recently the upstairs Asian 'pavilion' in 2003). The 352 page book 'The Asian Collections' (2003), edited by her, was awarded 'Best Book of the Year' 2003 by the Power Institute and the Association of Art Historians of Australia and New Zealand. Ms Menzies has been the recipient of many grants, including two Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grants: one with the University of Sydney, another with the University of Western Sydney, and an AMCAI (Art Museum Collections Accessibility Initiative) grant from the Ian Potter Foundation (2001-2003) to research audience development. Ms Menzies has curated/organised many exhibitions and edited/ contributed to many catalogues. Selected major Asian exhibitions include 'Imperial China' (1992), 'Sacred Images of Sri Lanka' (1994), 'INDIA: Dancing to the Flute' (1997), 'MODERN BOY, MODERN GIRL, Modernity in Japanese Art 1910-1935' (1998), 'BUDDHA, Radiant Awakening' (2001), and 'GODDESS, Divine Energy' (2006). The catalogue for GODDESS was awarded the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand (AAANZ) 2007 prize for best large catalogue with citation (in part) '*...this catalogue, and the exhibition that accompanied it, are outstanding examples of global scholarly endeavour of the highest international standard*'. She has been a Director of VisAsia (the Australian Institute of Asian Art and Culture) since 2000, and was President of The Asian Arts Society of Australia (TAASA) 1993-2000 (Vice-President 1991-93). She was a recipient of a Centenary Medal of the Commonwealth of Australia in 2003, and in 2008 was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for 'the study, preservation and promotion of Asian art in Australia.'

Cai Guo Qiang: Portrait of Our Times

Caroline Turner, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University

This paper will address several critical questions posed by the Conference, including 'what an image for our times might look like', issues of cross-cultural communication and of 'empathy and conflict'. Cai Guo Qiang was born and educated in China, made his reputation in Japan in the early 1990s, and moved to the US in 1995. He is, nevertheless, most often described as a 'Chinese' artist. Now a global superstar he has created art works across the world. His fireworks for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics made him a household name. Introducing his retrospective at the Guggenheim Bilbao in 2009 Thomas Krens wrote: 'Cai Guo-Qiang has literally exploded the accepted parameters of art making in our time... He draws freely from ancient mythology, military history, Taoist cosmology, Maoist revolutionary tactics, Buddhist philosophy, pyrotechnic technology, Chinese medicine, and contemporary global conflict.' This paper is based on my having worked closely with the artist on major projects in Australia and on many interviews I have conducted with him over the last decade. I explore what Alexandra Munroe has described as his 'parody' of the new 'Orientalism' and his focus on key issues of our times including 'identity', history, the ecological fate of the planet, the threat of nuclear war and recent twenty-first century wars. I look at his engagement with Aboriginal communities in Brisbane for the work 'Dragon or Rainbow Serpent' which brought to the surface strong negative responses. I focus not only on the visual spectacle of his work but its cross-cultural and 'image-making' dimensions. While in one sense there is a temporality about his gunpowder explosions, their capture through digital technology, including You Tube, gives them the power to reach global audiences beyond the museum. Above all I argue his work engages with 'what it is to be human'.

Caroline Turner is a Senior Research Fellow in the Research School of Humanities. She was Deputy Director of the Humanities Research Centre from 2000-2006. Prior to taking up this appointment in January 2000 she spent 20 years as a senior art museum professional. As Deputy Director of the Queensland Art Gallery she played a key role in developing the Gallery's international programmes and organised and curated many international exhibitions and was co-founder and Project Director for nearly ten years for the Asia-Pacific Triennial Project

Portraiture as protest: Images against apartheid

Elizabeth Rankin, Art History, Auckland University

Representational art came to South Africa largely as a European import. Denied formal training in art schools, black artists none the less discovered its uses through mission schools, community centres and the like, and adapted it to their needs as a way of recording and affirming African lives under apartheid – usually in the modest media of wood carving and printmaking available to those with limited resources. This includes portraiture, although that genre was relatively rare – and hence of particular interest since its scarcity implies a deliberated choice. Specific individuals are not often identifiable in scenes that portray the deprivations of African life under apartheid, but occasionally add to the poignancy of scenes like *Our Madala* [*respectful title for an old man*] by Nhlanhla Nsusha. When portraiture is used as a genre, it tends to carry a more assertive message, such as self portraits that celebrate the identity of the artist in prints by Dan Rakgoathe and Bongane Shanghi (the former tellingly titled *Prophet*), or in the more conventional carved self-portraits by mission-trained Michael Zondi and Job Kekana.

Portraiture can also be used to carry political meaning. This is most obvious in Kekana's commissions to represent leaders of the new South Africa, such as Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. (It is fascinating to compare these with portraits of black leaders by white artists, such as Nelson Mandela by Cyril Coetzee. Or one might look at John Muafangejo's etching of a rather corrupt-looking *Bishop* against the celebratory *Archbishop Tutu* by Hayden Proud). But it is in less conventional forms that portraiture can be the most potent. In a mission context, Biblical subjects can be adapted to political purpose. Zondi portrayed his grandfather as Moses, endowing him with qualities of leadership. Kekana's portrait of a young African herder as David could carry a message of resistance, which is made overt in the treatment of the same subject by Azaria Mbatha: his linocut portrays a black David victorious over a white Goliath – not a portrait in this case but affirmed by the artist as a covert statement of Zulu defiance. It is also a matter of speculation whether Bongiwe Dhlomo's *Female Crucifixion* might refer to herself, to capture the suffering of black women; Charles Nkosi's linocut series *Pain on the Cross* (1976) certainly referred to the victimization of black people and seemed prophetic of the death of Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko, who was to die in detention the next year. In more straightforward portrait form, Tony Nkotsi creates a monumental print portrait of the late Biko, while Sam Nhlengethwa shows the leader in detention in the form of a collage. Again an interesting comparison can be drawn with a white artist's interpretation – Paul Stopforth's charcoal drawings of Biko as martyr.

While the focus of the paper will be on the obvious victims of apartheid, it will conclude with some images that suggest white psychological 'bondage' under the system. Works by William Kentridge and Diane Victor deploy their own images in narrative and symbolic works suggests the dilemmas of white South African liberals who might have benefited from but are also trapped within the apartheid situation.

Elizabeth Rankin is Professor of Art History at the University of Auckland. Previously a professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, she has published for many years on the work of black artists under apartheid, paying particular attention to sculpture and printmaking. Her research on these media also extends to include the work of white South African and, more recently, New Zealand artists.

SESSION 10: IMAGES FROM THE STREET

Chair: Ian Maclean, Professor of Art Theory, University of Western Australia

Bautanah street gallery – Bringing an archipelago to Jakarta

Refi Mascot, Bautanah street gallery

In the slick modern city of Jakarta, the wealthy have access to a myriad of new media, international art galleries and the ability to travel and experience different cultures and places. For the majority of Jakarta's almost 9 million people; however, the only media they experience is tabloid television and newspapers. Not surprisingly, stereotyping of other Indonesians based on their ethnic group is rife, and most people have little knowledge of the many indigenous groups still living in isolated forest communities.

A group of young Jakarta-based photographers led by Refi Mascot set out in 2005 to challenge these stereotypes and to teach ordinary people about indigenous Indonesians by creating a street gallery in the heart of Jakarta – Galeri Bautanah. The gallery is located at the bustling Cikini train station and has been home to exhibitions of post-tsunami Aceh, indigenous forest communities, and a celebration of Jakarta in its heyday. The main focus is on the plight of indigenous communities in Indonesia that are fighting loggers and developers for the use of their traditional lands.

Photographs are supplied by the artists themselves, up to 100 photographers participating in any given exhibition. Because of its location on a public street, the gallery attracts people of all walks of life, from ancient street vendors to groups of school children. It also attracts other artists, with musicians and poets visiting and “donating” their songs and poems to passersby.

Bautanah itself has now expanded to become a community of artists that provides free photography workshops, helps young photographers to host their own exhibitions and provides support for the plight of indigenous communities.

Going forward, it is hoped that Bautanah can expand beyond Jakarta and find ways to help indigenous communities participate more in the discussion of their own culture, traditions and future.

Refi Mascot was born in Jakarta in 1979. He is the youngest of seven children. His family is not well-off and couldn't afford luxuries like cameras or photography school, so when he decided he wanted to become a photographer, he had to teach himself and rely on borrowed cameras to learn. Refi's passion for photography began because he wanted to tell others of the different cultures he saw in his travels, but felt limited by words. *“I can't write well, so I decided to learn photography to tell of my experiences”.*

Refi's main passion is for teaching people (particularly young people) about the diversity of Indonesian cultures through his photography. To this end, in 2005 he established the Bautanah street gallery at the Cikini station, to exhibit his and other photographers work to the public. Refi moved to Canberra in 2008 but continues to coordinate the Bautanah community's activities through media such as Facebook, and returns to Indonesia regularly to organize new exhibitions.

Archiving the tattoo

Helen Mitchell, School of Fine Arts, Massey University

For the past five years lecturer and photographer Helen Mitchell has been photographing and interviewing tattooed subjects and tattooists in New Zealand. The proposed paper provides an analysis of visual representations of the tattooed subject through traditional and contemporary photographic portraiture. Traditional representations of the European tattoo subject has tended to be anonymous, decontextualised and presenting the subjects as 'product of the tattooists'.

Tattoos appear to function as objects of transformation for the contemporary wearer. As well as contributing to the construction of a more complex (and interesting) adopted identity, they also provide the wearers with a context for cultural exchange. In this context, cultural exchange can be defined as the appropriation of disparate visual symbols from one culture and their attachment to another culture without necessarily conveying the original symbolic meaning. The increasing popularity of tattooing in contemporary society also raises questions about the relationship between tattooing and more traditional aspects of adornment.

This project engages with the Tattoo community within a New Zealand context and looks at Pakeha tattooing within a contemporary, rather than an historical, framework. Photographic exploration and documentation of a variety of contemporary tattoo examples on the bodies of both men and women has resulted in a contemporary visual archive of cultural symbols. The project combines large format (4 x 5 inch) colour studio portraits of subjects displaying their tattoos. The subjects have also been interviewed about the acquisition of their tattoos and the meanings behind them, contributing to the underpinning narrative examining the transition of tattooing from sub-culture to popular culture.

Helen Mitchell's photographic practise covers a number of distinct areas. Initially examining the discursive relationships between nature and culture, within the context of world heritage sites, such as Tongariro National Park. Mitchell's early work engaged with issues around conservation and the commodification of the landscape. Mitchell's more recent landscape projects focus on the contrivance to establish a sense of human presence, either fleetingly or permanently within the contexts of high-altitude environments.

Mitchell's current research practice in photography focuses on documenting the 'tattoo renaissance' within contemporary New Zealand society, her images engage with questions around the construction of personal identity and cultural exchange. This image exploration combines studio portraits with documentary photography and interviews with tattooed subjects. Mitchell explores how the customized body functions to transform or reinforce a sense of individuality and provide a record of personal experience. She is a lecturer in photography at Massey University, Wellington.

Objects of suspicion: Images and imaginings of criminal identity

Susanne Davies, Legal Studies, La Trobe University

This paper will explore the role and significance of images and imaginings in the modern construction of 'criminal identity'. It will be argued that the quest of nineteenth century scientists to visually 'capture' the criminal was not only instrumental to the development of criminal justice systems and processes but continues to reverberate today in contemporary social, legal and political debates concerning crime, conflict and social disintegration. The veracity and meaningfulness of images of criminality will be examined through consideration of their relationship to context and temporality. It will be suggested that by the late twentieth century a fundamental tension had emerged between the 'desire to see' and recognition that 'what is seen is not necessarily what is'. It will be suggested that in relation to criminality, this tension has been overcome by the mobilization of collective imaginings that are based upon pre-existing conceptions of 'otherness' and by the emergence and deployment of a new and speculative 'logic of risk'.

Susanne Davies is the Convener of Legal Studies in the School of Social Sciences at La Trobe University. An historian by training, her teaching, research and writing interests span socio-legal history, critical and cultural criminologies, and punishment and penalty.

SESSION 11: COMMERCE AND COLONIALISM

Chair:

Picturing ‘model minorities’: Power, photography, and economy in Chinese ethnic tourism

Jenny Chio, China Research Centre, University of Technology, Sydney

This paper presents an ethnography of the visual through a case study of women who pose for souvenir photographs with tourists at sightseeing spots in China. I explore how a group of young women negotiates, refutes, and reaffirms dominant, national tropes of ethnic beauty, rural underdevelopment, and romantic village livelihoods in their work as “model minorities” in Ping’an village, Guangxi. To keep their business and their salaries intact, these women must elicit and maintain tourists’ fascination with the otherness of China’s ethnic minorities. The fulcrum for these exchanges between tourists and models is photography – whether taken with the tourists’ own cameras or the shopowner’s digital point-and-shoot (for sale as a laminated souvenir photograph), the models expect to be paid for the capture of their image. Their work involves not only visual presentation of ethnicity by wearing stylized costumes, but also negotiations of status and power between tourists and models as the women confront common tourist expectations of photography as inherently “free”.

In exploring the balance between payment and photography, I demonstrate how the relationship between the tourist and the model pivots around acknowledged inequalities: between the boss and the girl, between the ethnic minority and Chinese mainstream, and between the rich tourist and poor villager. I argue, furthermore, that this tourist-model relationship rests on an understanding of the photographic encounter as both duplicitous and complicit. The models’ technique of commoditizing ethnicity and rurality by capitalizing on touristic desires for image-based souvenirs situates photography as an act of strategic, cultural intervention in processes of identity construction. Through a sharp focus on the efficacy of images in forging (and even forcing) social relations, my approach centers on a politics of appearance, rather than representation, as a key node for analyzing the interface of power, photography and economy.

Jenny Chio is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the China Research Centre, University of Technology, Sydney, where she is beginning a project on rural, ethnic media southwest China. She received a PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley in May 2009. Jenny also holds a Masters degree in Visual Anthropology from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Her research interests include documentary image studies, contemporary Chinese visual culture, and critical approaches to theorizing mobility. She serves as an elected Board Member of the Society for Visual Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association.

Photography and renown: Maori women, colonial photography and post-colonial critique

*Elizabeth Cory-Pearce, Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas,
University of East Anglia*

My paper responds to growing critique of the racially and sexually objectifying nature of colonial images of Polynesian women. Such critiques have been articulated by scholars and artists alike, including indigenous artists. Combining archival and collections research with the personal memorabilia and recollections of Maori women living and working in Rotorua, Aotearoa/New Zealand, I explore the role commercial imagery played in establishing renown during the late nineteenth and twentieth century. I demonstrate how, by the early twentieth century, renown had become key to ensuring success in the region's guiding industry, a time when colonial authorities were obtaining increasing control over Maori tourism ventures. Renown was facilitated by the application of portraits and other photographs to a range of domestic consumable goods, such as souvenir chinaware. Such objects have similarly been held up as negative instances of colonial appropriation. My findings instead reveal the positive role they played for communities experiencing sudden and extreme marginalisation. This point leads me to stress the value of combining ethnography with collections research. Critical readings based on the interpretation of images alone risk producing what Carlo Ginzburg terms 'physiognomic circularity', whereby in taking meaning to be self-evident we impute to an image that which we have learned by other means.

Elizabeth Cory-Pearce is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the University of East Anglia in Britain. She is currently writing up research on Maori ceremonial exchanges with British aristocracy in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand. These reveal the politics of colonial encounter and shed light on the ways in which Maori deployed new ideas, materials and practices to pursue particular ends. Analysis of these and other exchanges occurring in Rotorua as a result of the region's tourism industry forms the crux of her research. Based on fieldwork and the analysis of collections, Elizabeth is working on a monograph and articles that uncover the dynamics of cross-cultural appropriation in New Zealand, in comparison with similar settler-colonial milieu. Case studies include clothing, photography and art. Elizabeth has held lecturing posts at the University of Sussex, the University of Oxford and University College London where she lectured on Anthropology; Ethnographic Film; Anthropology of Art; Material Anthropology; and Museum Studies. Her publications include essays in the Association of Social Anthropology's Monograph *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (Berg 2007); *The Art of Clothing* (UCL Press 2005); and the *Journal of Museum Ethnography* (2007).

KEYNOTE ADDRESS #2: Friday July 16, 6.00pm

'Who am I? Reflections on the power of art

David Elliott, Artistic Director, 17th Biennale of Sydney

The word “we” seems to be an innocent enough pronoun yet it often used to cloak the exclusive collective identities of power. This militant, almost Darwinian, form of “we”, which we all sometimes unconsciously use, may cover a multitude of belongings, aspirations, groups, particularities, cultures, classes, religions, genders, sexualities, political parties and nations and is often defined ideologically either out of the solidarity of presumed “natural” superiority or, conversely, as a reaction to such aggression. Yet “we” need not be like this. It may refer to nothing other than our capacity for empathy as one species among many, or perhaps, by extension, to the universal, but not universally recognised, realisation that we have a responsibility to both ourselves and to others to make good things, or at least to do things better.

Looking at contemporary art through the prism of the 17th Biennale of Sydney “The Beauty of Distance; Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age” and other large exhibitions, the paradoxes within the multiple identities of power as seen by artists gradually begin to emerge. In the field of art who, indeed are “we”? What values do we hold in common? Through its creative individuality art, if it is any good, raises such questions.

Art represents, and is sometimes about representation, and therefore inevitably touches on the conflictual field of politics as well as on the more consensual interests of aesthetics. This realisation has been heightened by the paradox that our different perceptions and structures of knowledge about the world have been composed out of different taxonomies that are tools and products of particular times and places – representations themselves, rather than immutable facts. Within such multi-layered, often inconsistent, systems of representation and knowledge art operates like a virus burrowing into its structures sometimes to challenge or subvert, sometimes to modify them. In demagogic societies art has, and sometimes still is, denounced as a source of corruption or disease because its disinterestedness remains unaffected or unimpressed by the conventions of power.

In the face of unparalleled threats of mass obliteration and environmental despoliation, accompanied by a proliferation of data and images through mass media, traditional images of identity and power are being challenged by more insidious, unaccountable realities. What power has art to question or challenge dominant forms of power, the true natures of which may not yet be apparent? Is such power “for” us or “against” us?

David Elliott is a curator, writer, broadcaster and museum director primarily concerned with modern and contemporary art. Elliott was Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, England from 1976–96, Director of Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden from 1996–2001, the founding Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan from 2001–2006 and, in 2007 the first Director of Istanbul Modern, Turkey. From 1998–2004, he was President of CIMAM (the International Committee of ICOM for Museums and Collections of Modern Art) and in 2008, he was the Rudolf Arnheim Guest Professor of Art History at Humboldt University, Berlin.

Elliott is a cultural historian whose main interests concern contemporary art, Russian avant-garde and the visual cultures of central and Eastern Europe, Asia and the non-western world from the late nineteenth century. Beginning in the early 1980s, he formulated a series of pioneering exhibitions in one of the first programs to integrate non-western culture with contemporary art. He has published a large number of books, articles and catalogues on these subjects and has curated many exhibitions. He has also written extensively about the present-day role and function of museums and contemporary art.

Exhibitions he has conceived or worked on include: 'Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930–1945' (1995); 'Wounds: Between Democracy and Redemption in Contemporary Art' (1998); 'After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe' (1999); 'Organising Freedom: Nordic Art of the '90s' (2000); 'Young Video Artists' Initiative' (2002); 'Absences' (2002); 'Happiness: A Survival Guide for Art and Life' (2003); 'Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent' (2004); 'Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Where is Our Place?' (2004); 'Follow Me! Chinese Art at the Threshold of the New Millennium' (2005); 'Hiroshi Sugimoto' (2005); 'Tokyo-Berlin/Berlin-Tokyo' (2005); 'Bill Viola: Hatsu-Yume [First Dream]' (2006); 'From Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic' (2007); 'Time Present, Time Past: Highlights from 20 Years of the International Istanbul Biennial' (2007); and 'The Quick and the Dead: Rites of Passage in Art, Spirit and Life' (2009).

SATURDAY JULY 17

SESSION 12: MOVING PORTRAITS

Chair: Sara Wills, Director, Australian Centre, University of Melbourne

How far an image can go? The story of Neda

Mammad Aidani, Australian Centre, University of Melbourne

The images of Neda Agha- Soltan (1982- 2009) have attracted international attention, after she was killed during the 2009 Iranian election in Tehran. Her tragic death was filmed on video by bystanders in a demonstration on the street of Tehran and immediately was broadcasted over the Internet. The footage on the video and the last seconds of her life have turned Neda into an icon for the struggle of Iranians against oppression in Iran and the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahamadinejad. This image and Neda's death have been used as powerful reminders to millions of Iranians in Iran and the international community about the oppression in that country. In my presentation I will analyze the essence of these identifications and explain the collective solidarity and struggle amongst Iranians both inside and abroad against oppression in Iran as a result of this video and the death of Neda. I will discuss how this video has become a rallying point for the millions of Iranians and also greatly influenced the world's opinion about the political situation in Iran. I will further discuss how the image of Neda has become an inspirational symbol for Iran's prodemocracy movement demanding the restoration of human rights and democracy in their country.

Mammad Aidani is an interdisciplinary scholar based in the School of Historical Studies, Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne. His research on suffering, trauma and narratives of refugees and migrants interfuses with disciplines of philosophy, social psychology, social history, social theory, and anthropology. Mammad examines the cultural meanings attached to suffering and considers its meanings with the types of identities and modes of belonging that are emerging and shaping the local world of Iranian and Middle-Eastern Diasporas. Mammad is also a theatre maker and playwright and his latest short plays *if as...* and *the stranger in the corridor* will be staged at La mama Theatre in September this year. He is currently working as Researcher and teacher at the School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne.

**'Stella' through the drifting portrait:
Susan Howe's poetic recovery of the marginal identity**

Jessica Wilkinson, Literature and Creative Writing, University of Melbourne

Susan Howe's long poems and essays exemplify her keen interest in the marginalized, oppressed, and thus 'absent' voices in literary history. She is careful not to 'rewrite' these gaps in representation, but proffers a *new kind of text* through which we may attempt to recover these identities.

The most prominent "character" in Howe's 'The Liberties' is Hester "Stella" Johnson, the close acquaintance and supposed secret lover of poet, satirist and Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Jonathan Swift. Not much is known of Stella, whose letters and poems have mostly disappeared, and as Howe states in an introduction to this work, '[n]o authentic portrait exists.' Stella thus stands as an emblem of all that has been lost, ignored, covered over, or forgotten in time by patriarchal histories—an emblem of the silenced feminine.

This paper explores how poetic rewritings of the past can challenge and transcend the limits of historical texts and portraits—physically, theoretically and metaphorically. I will focus on what I term Howe's "drifting portrait" of Stella—her attempt to shape an understanding of Stella's identity when there are very few visual or textual traces of her available to us. In 'The Liberties,' Howe's poetic "recovery" of Stella sends us along seemingly competing trajectories—towards Howe's personal, subjective recollections of her own Irish ancestors and her relationship to her Irish past; and also towards a recognition of the broader, more publicly shared experience of the Irish Diaspora and the marginalized feminine. This portrait is therefore not stable or fixed, but "drifts" as various traces are drawn together by both poet and reader. I will therefore elaborate some of the ways in which Howe's textual practice in 'The Liberties' contributes to her rewriting of the marginal feminine narrative. I will conclude the paper with an overview of the implications and consequences that this work has for the idea of a new kind of biographical "portrait" more relevant to the acknowledged plurivocality of lives, some of which are only now being brought to light in contemporary times.

Jessica Wilkinson is completing a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing at The University of Melbourne, Australia. Her writing and poetry have appeared in several Australian and international journals including *Cultural Studies Review*, *Overland*, *HOW2*, *UNUSUAL Work* and *Southerly*. She is currently editing a collection of essays and poems on the subject of 'Refashioning Myth: Poetic Transformations and Metamorphoses.' In early 2010 she spent three weeks at Varuna under a Residency Fellowship, during which she continued to write her poetic biography on Percy Grainger.

SESSION 13: IMAGING CROSS-CULTURAL ECOLOGIES

Chair: Pamela Clelland Gray, Manager, Education and Visitor Services,
National Portrait Gallery

The anti-portrait: New models of subjectivity in Imants Tillers' *The nine shots*

Ian McLean, Art Theory, University of Western Australia

Imants Tillers' post-conceptual practice was conceived in what he called 'ecological' terms. He sought to replace the autonomous ego or subject of the artist with holistic open-ended self-generating systems that, like a living organism, responded to and fed back into the local ecology—a culturally diverse *habitus* that mirrored the interactive diversity of the natural world. In direct opposition to the conventional idea that art was an expression of the artist's subjectivity, ego or genius—a sort of self-portrait—Tillers proposed an alternative Darwinian methodology (which he had learned from conceptual art) that processed existing information from multiple sources, displacing it into new patterns according to changing situations. This methodology, which he called appropriation, is an ethics. It should be interpreted in this Darwinian light, as a system that, like nature, processes information through replication or copying, thus decentring any original including the self.

Tillers' ecological approach negated the hierarchical discourses of subjectivity that had dominated European art since the Renaissance. However, certain parallels between his aspirations and traditional Aboriginal art intrigued him. Aboriginal art processes existing information within a self-sustaining system—called the Dreaming—that closely echoes the ecology of the place. Like Tillers, Aboriginal artists are faithful copyists. Their art is always in quotation. With this mind, this paper reads Tillers' *The nine shots* (1985) as a radical anti-self-portrait in the light of the two paintings it appropriated: Michael Nelson Tjakamarra's *Five stories* (1984) and Georg Baselitz's *Forward Wind* (1966).

Ian McLean lectures at the University of Western Australia. He has published extensively on Australian art and particularly on the cultural intersections between Indigenous and European Australian cultures. His books include *The Art of Gordon Bennett* (with a chapter by Gordon Bennett) and *White Aborigines Identity Politics in Australian Art*, and an edited anthology of writing on Aboriginal art since 1980, titled *How the Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art*, to be published in 2010.

Understanding art from Utopia cross-culturally

Chrischona Schmidt, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, Australian National University

The aim of this paper is to highlight how and on which grounds in both situations the artworks could be the bridge to a cross-cultural understanding. In the first instance how the artworks almost transformed into the language connecting artists from both cultures and creating the common ground on which a collaborative exhibition and a deep exchange was possible. And in the second example I analyze how familiar art forms might influence the perception of an unknown artist and her works.

With 15 years experience in creating batiks ten artists from Utopia endeavored on a trip to Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 1994 in order to participate in a workshop with some of the finest batik artists from Indonesia. During that trip both groups engaged in a vivid exchange. In the following year some of the Indonesian artists visited Utopia in return. The result of this cross-cultural encounter was portrayed in the 'Hot Wax' exhibition in 1995 at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin. Until today both groups of artists speak enthusiastically of the collaboration. Did batik become a means of communication? And if so, how did it influence the works created during the workshops, how do they reflect the cross-cultural understanding.

The other event took place last year in Japan. For the first time a solo exhibition of an Indigenous Australian artist, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, was held in Tokyo and Osaka. The response was overwhelming and the show broke all visitor records for a contemporary art show. A number of visitors to the show were interviewed by Ronin Films. Although the reactions were quite varied it was clear that the audience was moved by the artworks and that they spoke to them. Might it be that the Japanese audience was moved and understood the artworks through their own background in calligraphy that resembles in some ways Kngwarreye's works?

In a close analysis of both events I will outline the ways in which the image transcends cultural barriers and creates empathy for the 'other'.

Chrischona Schmidt is a PhD candidate at the Research School of Humanities and the Arts. Her research 'Emily Kame Kngwarreye and her fellow artists from Utopia' traces and examines the history of the Utopia art movement from various angles. Prior to joining the Research School in 2008 Chrischona studied in Freiburg, Paris and Sydney art history, French studies and social anthropology.

Rhizomes – A proposition

Jan Hogan, School of Art, Australian National University

My paper investigates how a sense of place can be developed and communicated across different cultural backgrounds and how these could possibly allow difference to occupy the same space. I will examine works of art that incorporate a rhizome model, either in the image or in a way of thinking. It is an extension of my PhD thesis, *The Affective Ground*, which explored how drawing may be used as a model to have a cross-cultural dialogue about space, place and spirituality between artists in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Is it possible to have a cross-cultural dialogue through the Visual Arts? Can an understanding of place be developed and communicated through a visual language? The art of Indigenous Australians has revealed a different way of looking at the land we live in. Ancestors animate the land and the history of people and place are continuously interwoven. The imaging processes and materials reveal a particular way of occupying place. Settler Australians can learn through these images a new way of being in the land.

Through images and processes that follow a rhizome model I will discuss the possibility of a cross-cultural dialogue through the visual arts that could enable difference to occupy the same space. I will discuss the process and development of my research on the site of Gundaroo Common and how it responds to propositions seen in the work of artists from Utopia and Fitzroy Crossing. I propose that the materiality and visual understanding of these artists develops in the viewer empathy for place alongside an acknowledgement of the displacements that have occurred in contemporary Australian society. I argue that this is an invitation to others to develop a new and more sensitive relationship to place, that acknowledges Indigenous presence and creates a commitment and responsibility to the place we live in.

Jan Hogan is the convener of the Introductory Art Theory Program at the Canberra School of Art, ANU. She completed her PhD in 2009 at the School of Art, ANU through the Printmedia and Drawing Department. Jan is a practicing artist who regularly exhibits in solo and group exhibitions. She has had an appointment at the School of Fine Arts, Charles Darwin University, NT and worked at many of the Art Schools in Sydney. Her research in Gundaroo is investigating the possibilities of a dialogue between place and people with the hope of activating a degraded plot of land through art. This research continues.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS #3: Saturday July 17, 2.00pm

Rembrandt, or the portrait as encounter

Didier Maleuvre, University of California, Santa Barbara

'A good painter,' says Leonardo da Vinci, 'is to paint two main things, namely man and the workings of man's mind. The first is easy, the second difficult.' As portraiture came into its own, during in the Renaissance, it became an accepted fact that a good likeness alone doesn't make the portrait. The able painter must convey, besides mood and affect, a sense of who the sitter is: his personality, and deeper still, the sense of what it is like to exist as this person. In other words, portraiture is a matter of, not just aesthetic proficiency, but also moral and psychological attunement. But how does the painter step into the sitter's subjectivity? How does he paint acknowledgment? It seems the artist here must depart from the familiar province of seeming and enter the unmarked domain of being—a puzzling transition if we consider that art traditionally pairs with imagination and make-believe.

In this presentation, I wish to argue that imagination isn't an impediment to moral perception. In fact, imaginative depiction plays a crucial role in apprehending others as persons. I want to develop this line of argument by reflecting on a key feature of portraiture: likeness. Likeness is casually understood to be a property of someone's appearance; but it is also clear that, by definition, likeness refers to a model of comparison beyond the appearance proper. A person doesn't look like herself—this is a tautology; she looks like the image of herself we mentally draw for her. At first blush, a portrait presents the likeness of a person; on consideration, this likeness cannot pre-exist the portrait. Thus portraiture is essential to having a likeness, of looking like oneself.

Of interest here is that likeness shifts from the singular to the plural, from the personal to the interpersonal. My likeness relies on other persons' creative witnessing and act of portrayal.

How does the inter-subjective nature of likeness inform portrait painting? How in particular does the painter represent his commitment to offering the gift of likeness (which is ultimately the gift of personhood) to his sitter? I want to examine this question through a selective discussion of portrait paintings (Rembrandt, Titian, Vermeer, Sargent, etc.), paying special attention to those instances where likeness breaks down for the sake of, paradoxically, preserving the uniqueness of the represented person (Rembrandt in particular).

Didier Maleuvre was born and grew up in France, and received his doctorate in the United States (Yale University, 1993). He teaches literature and the history of ideas at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of three books and numerous articles ranging over literature, philosophy, culture, morality, and the history of ideas. His overarching concern is how to talk about representations while preserving the ingredient of wonder, of the exceptional, of the transcendent that first attaches us to works of art and literature.

Culture isn't a closed system — even in a secular age. It is in dialogue with its hither side — with the incomprehensible. How to talk about this transcendent without neutralizing or trivializing its force — this is the overarching theme of Maleuvre's wide-ranging books and essays. His first book, *Museum Memories: Art, History, Technology*, investigates whether we can safely assert that museums always uproot artworks from their native contexts and relocate them to the foreign, culturally sterilized exhibition space of modern museums. The question is bound up with the nature of artworks. Is an artwork an organic offshoot of a culture? Or is it a reflective step, an act of distancing from culture? Maleuvre argues that it is the latter. On this principle museums really do not uproot artworks at all; they give them the reflective space which any artwork worth its salt clears around itself.

Maleuvre's second book *The Religion of Reality: Inquiry into the Self, Art, and Transcendence* takes to task this common assumption according to which the modern intellect always and everywhere shuns the transcendental dimension. The book first argues that religious feeling persists in the secular western mind; that it has taken refuge in the unlikeliest of camps: the rationalist existential individual — the deity that anchors our morals, politics, and society. Maleuvre argues two points: first that the philosophic primacy of the self rests on a leap of faith; and second that its religious centrality cannot ultimately satisfy the transcendental thirst that it kindles. The book constructively inquires into the artistic paths that lead away from this anthropocentrism. The book is not an attempt to resuscitate the religion of art; rather it is a demonstration of the religious in art.

In the forthcoming *The Horizon: A History of our Infinite Longing* (2010), Maleuvre looks at sightings of the horizon over the course of Western history. What is a horizon? A line where land meets sky? It is the end of the world and the beginning of imagination. From ancient Egypt to the Apollo Missions, Maleuvre journeys to the outer reaches of human experience and probes philosophy, religion, and art to understand our struggle and fascination with limits — of life, knowledge, existence, and death. If, as Aristotle said, philosophy begins in wonder, this book shows us how wonder — the urge to live beyond the conceivable — is itself the engine of culture.

NATIONAL
PORTRAIT
GALLERY



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Face of Brewarrina 2009 Facing Australia. Courtesy of the artists