

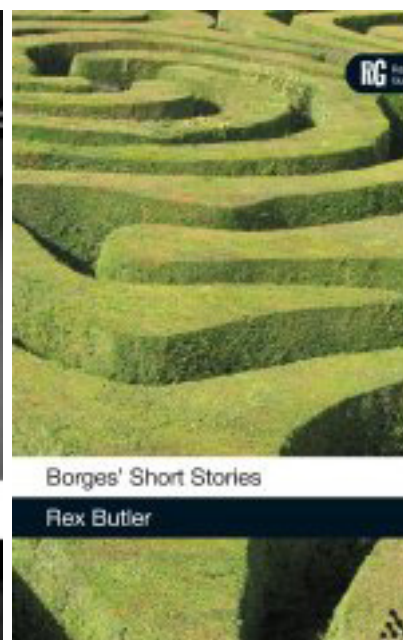
School of Art

Sir William Dobell

ANNUAL LECTURE

Hosted by the Centre for Art History and Art Theory

6pm Wednesday 30 September, School of Art Lecture Theatre



Professor Rex Butler

UnAustralian Painting in 1970

Rex Butler and A.D.S. Donaldson

The year 1970 was an important turning point in Australian art. Bernard Smith in the second, updated edition of *Australian Painting* moved on from the unacknowledged 'Antipodean Manifesto' that concluded the 1962 edition and admitted in the three new chapters he added that Australian art was now abstract and international. At the same time, however, Ian Burn and Terry Smith in effect repeat the gesture of 'Antipodean Manifesto' in defending or lamenting the "provincialism" of Australian art. The truth is that Australian art had never been simply provincial – even the idea was possible only during the period of self-conscious artistic modernism, which runs from about 1920 until 1960, which is not coincidentally the period during which the dominant histories of Australian art are written. We might say that the idea of an "Australian" art is at once modernist and provincialist. But it is from the 1970s on that another vision of Australian art becomes clear, as it did for Bernard Smith: non-national, international, not medium-specific, not any longer a history of "Australian Painting".

In this paper, we will look at the emerging "UnAustralian" tendencies of the 1970s and at the "UnAustralian" histories that start to be written during this period.

Rex Butler is an art historian, writer and Professor of Art History at Monash University. He received his PhD from the University of Sydney. His research interests include contemporary Australian art and art criticism, post-war American art, and postmodernism. Professor Butler is currently editing a collection entitled *Radical Revisionism* on Australian post-colonial art and two volumes of Slavoj Žižek's selected writings. He is the author six books including *What is Appropriation?* (1996), *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real* (1999), *A Secret History of Australian Art* (2002), and *Borges's Short Stories: A Reader's Guide* (2010). He is currently working on a history of UnAustralian art with ADS Donaldson and has recently completed a book on Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?*

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