

ANU School of Art & Design Higher Degree Research Seminar 1/2021

Day 1 Program: Tuesday 1 June 2021

Venue: Room 1.02, Sir Roland Wilson Building (SRWB), 120 McCoy Circuit

Venue: Zoom link:

<https://anu.zoom.us/j/88677005302?pwd=aTBWL1dLM25HVm1TZWgwVXBvVW85QT09>

Meeting ID: 886 7700 5302

Password: 716909

Time	Speaker	Topic
10:00am - 10:05am	Professor Chris McAuliffe, HDR Convenor	Day 1 Welcome & introduction to HDR Seminar
10:05am – 10:10am	Dr Beck Davis	SOA&D Head of School welcome
Key Note Speaker		
10:10am – 11:15am	Dr Kyla McFarlane, Senior Academic Programs Curator, Museums and Collections at the University of Melbourne	Self and Other: Inhabiting the Spaces of Artistic Research
Break 11:15am - 11:30am		
The following are Thesis Proposal Review (TPR) Presentations (20 min talk and 5 min Q&A)		
11:30am – 12:00pm	Marian Drew (remote presentation Brisbane)	Interior Geologies
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Chloe Powell	Rarely Seen and Not Often Heard: Australian Arts and Cultural Policy From the Artists' Perspective
Break 12:30pm - 1:30pm		
The following are Oral Presentations (30 min talk and 10 min Q&A)		
1:30pm – 2:15pm	Alison Reid (remote presentation Mildura)	The Art of Aleks Danko
2:15pm – 3:00 pm	Miho Watanabe	Awareness of Between-Ness: Art-Making Concept
Close of Day 1		

ANU School of Art & Design
Higher Degree Research Seminar 1/2021

Day 2 Program: Wednesday 2 June 2021

Venue: Room 1.02, Sir Roland Wilson Building (SRWB), 120 McCoy Circuit

Venue: Zoom link:

<https://anu.zoom.us/j/81434037446?pwd=dENERTZGVFhRRmRjcFVLR3BmMTIDUT09>

Meeting ID: 814 3403 7446

Password: 197691

Time	Speaker	Topic
10:00am - 10:05am	Professor Chris McAuliffe, HDR Convenor	Day 2 Welcome & introduction
Key Note Speaker		
10:05am – 11:00am	Dr Keren Hammerschlag, Centre for Art History & Art Theory	Colonial Cosmetics: A Case Study in the New 'Critical' Visual Medical Humanities
Break 11:00am – 11:15am		
The following are Thesis Proposal Review (TPR) Presentations (20 min talk and 5 min Q&A)		
11:15am – 11:45am	Lauren Kalman (remote presentation Detroit: AEST -14 hours)	Crafting Bodies and Performing Objects: Subversion through Performative Practice in Adornment and Craft
11:45am – 12:15pm	Catherine Webb	A revaluation of the work of art in colonial Australia: were the colonial artists really 'presenting their surroundings in the guise of an English scene'?
Break 12:15pm - 1:15pm		
The following are Oral Presentations (30 min talk and 10 min Q&A)		
1:15pm – 2:00pm	Tega Brain	Solar Protocol and Other Experiments in Automation and Agency
2:00pm - 2:45pm	Bic Tieu	Objects In-between: Designing a Visual language for Traversing Personal Identity, Migration and Intercultural Spaces
Break 2:45pm- 3:00pm		
Workshop exercise		
3:00pm – 3:45pm	Prof Chris McAuliffe, Centre for Art History & Art Theory	The Thesis and New Knowledge: Declaring Discovery
Close of Day 2		

ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Self and Other: Inhabiting the Spaces of Artistic Research

Dr Kyla McFarlane

In my varied, interconnected, roles as writer, curator and academic programs curator at University museums, I inhabit spaces of thinking, archives, creation, assessment and facilitation. The framework of my own practice and research, and the practice and research of others, is complex. It is a space defined by the boundaries between self and the other, where exchange and dialogue are as important as the assertion of autonomy. These relationships may be views as a series of binaries – interior (self)/exterior(world); individual/institution; art historian/artist; practice/the academy – that then open out to more complex matrices in which we can find productive intersections for our practice and research, as well as paths towards new ways of thinking. I'll examine this through key examples from my own research as a curator, writer and collaborator and through the work of artists I have worked with in the space of creative research.

Dr Kyla McFarlane is Senior Academic Programs Curator in Museums and Collections at the University of Melbourne and an independent writer, art historian and curator from Aotearoa/New Zealand, living and working in Naarm/Melbourne. She has held key curatorial positions at the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; and the Centre for Contemporary Photography and Monash University Museum of Art in Melbourne. Over two decades, Kyla's research, writing and curating has focussed primarily on lens-based, feminist, performative and emerging practices and histories in our region.

Colonial Cosmetics: A Case Study in the New 'Critical' Visual Medical Humanities

Dr Keren Hammerschlag

The late Victorian and Edwardian beauty industry produced a wealth of visual material that promoted lily-white complexions as a privileged indicator of beauty, youth, health and hygiene. This was especially the case in advertisements for British and American skin lightening, skin whitening and skin bleaching products. Aimed primarily at white women, advertisements for these often-toxic products used a series of visual and linguistic devices that promised to restore blemished, tanned and freckled complexions to a natural state of whiteness. Skin lightening products were aggressively marketed to white women living in Australia, revealing particular fears associated with the darkening and reddening effects of the southern sun on fair complexions. Building on recent innovations in what has been termed the 'critical' medical humanities, I ask: what might the use and abuse of skin-lightening cosmetics by white Australian women reveal about the relationship between aesthetics, medicine and commerce (and gender, race and class) in Federation Australia?

Dr Hammerschlag's areas of research specialisation include Victorian and Edwardian art and visual culture, and the many intersections and frictions among art, visual culture, medicine and science during the modern period. She received her MA and PhD in Art History from the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, before undertaking a three-year Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Centre for Humanities and Health at King's College London. From 2013-2018 she taught in Art History and Women's and Gender Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. In 2015 she published her first monograph, *Frederic Leighton: Death, Mortality, Resurrection*, (Ashgate / Routledge) which offers a macabre counter-biography of the President of the Victorian Royal Academy, Frederic Lord Leighton. She has also published numerous peer-review articles on Victorian neoclassicism, medical portraiture, and medical and artistic looking. Her current book project, entitled 'The Colour of Empire: Representing Race in Victorian Painting,' considers the ways in which Victorian painters both reaffirmed and challenged racial boundaries through the creative use of pigment. As part of this book she will be examining the depiction of racial difference and racial hybridity in Victorian anatomical atlases.

THESIS PROPOSAL REVIEW (TPR)

Interior Geologies

Marian Drew

This practice-led research project began as an inquiry into the phenomena of geology as a starting point for thinking and making work that reflects the animate forces of the geological in the context of traditional anthropocentric frames. These frames focus on representational strategies of photography and the excavation of my own historical practice. The scientific and in some cases the cultural premise of the inseparability and the instability that exists between the human life and the animated forces of non-living substances drives this research.¹ The Anthropocene reminds us that there is no 'out there', but always 'with' and 'in here'.² How can photographs assist the contemplation of estrangement and connection between human and non-human, life and nonlife?

Crafting Bodies and Performing Objects: Subversion through Performative Practice in Adornment and Craft

Lauren Kalman

Crafting Bodies and Performing Objects is a practice led research project that straddles disciplines including studio practice, curation, and pedagogy. This talk will focus primarily on studio and curation practices. My studio practice combines jewellery and metalsmithing, ceramics, sculpture, performance, video, and photography. Through this project I am interested in combining and advancing the use of performance in the jewellery field specifically, and a craft framework more broadly. This combination of craft objects and performance as a potential gap to explore in my research.

In this talk I will frame my work within the jewellery and craft disciplines. I will discuss my current craft-based studio objects and performance videos in *Flourish*, which use my body as the tool for object production and as the site for performance. I will also discuss my current co-curatorial project *Desire Paths*, that looks into the use of craft-based performance and performative objects to produce new bodily possibilities. Through my work this year I am interested in the social and cultural biases that might be attached to media and their associated forms, and how media are then associated with bodies. Using crafts connection to the body, I will explore how my work might be in line with Feminist traditions that used craft media within a hybrid fine art/craft practices to explore identity and power structures.

Rarely seen and not often heard: Australian arts and cultural policy from the artists' perspective

Chloe Powell

This research examines how professional visual and craft artists in Australia define 'success' in creating a sustainable practice. Professional artists operate in a policy context informed by particular assumptions of how they work, their role in the creative economy, and accessible 'career pathways'. These assumptions shape policies and programs aimed at supporting artists and the arts at all levels of government, with grant programs being a prominent example. The value of arts and culture in Australia is largely defined and measured by outcomes for the public rather than for artists: that art should be inclusive and audience-focused, foster a unified national identity, generate a sense of social cohesion, and contribute to the sustainability of the sector itself. However, none of these priority areas specifically consider the artists' experience. Likewise, much of the research and evaluation in this area focuses on outcomes for government and their constituents but not the artists they are said to serve. There is also a broader sense in which artists are rarely seen and not often heard in policymaking, creating a practice informed by policy or top-down approach, rather than a policy informed by practice model. This research compares Australian artists' experience of available opportunities, societal attitudes and policy settings with those of their peers in New Zealand and the Netherlands. Through semi-structured interviews with artists at all stages of practice, this research examines the realities that artists face when navigating the existing policy and funding environments as compared to the assumptions they contain, and looks for practical ways to improve this experience. Led by the position that 'decisions are best made by the people affected by them'

¹ (Yusoff 2013, 2015, Povinelli 2016, Grusin, 2015, Bennett, 2010)

² Cudworth, E., Hobden, S., 2013. Complexity, ecologism, and posthuman politics. Rev.

(Steinem 2015: 39), this project aims to prioritise the artists' voice in conceiving a constructive and relevant path forward for Australian arts and cultural policy.

A revaluation of the work of art in colonial Australia: Were the colonial artists really “presenting their surroundings in the guise of an English scene”

Catherine Webb

One reading of colonial-era Australian art claims it overly resembles the art of England and Europe. The explanation given for this is that the artists were mired in those traditions in which they were trained and were unable to adapt to the new environments in which they found themselves. I argue that this reading overlooks two key elements. The first of these is the training and motivation of artists whose primary reason for being in Australia was to serve the needs of the Empire through documenting Enlightenment science and exploration. The second is the possibility that colonial artists were painting places that were being managed by Aboriginal peoples using traditions extending back in time for tens of thousands of years. That management resulted in more open, grassy and 'park-like' landscapes, which changed when active management ceased. The answer to this question lies in a deep visual analysis of key works and is centred in art history but draws in additional material that is interdisciplinary in nature. I will use a case study approach to investigate the relationships between artist, landscape, historical and archival records and Indigenous knowledge?

ORAL PRESENTATION (OP)

Solar Protocol and Other Experiments in Automation and Agency

Tega Brain

My practice led research project consists of four artworks, *Deep Swamp* (2018), *Asunder* (2019), *Solar Protocol* (2021) and *Synthetic Messenger* (2021), which together, explore how contemporary computational methods like artificial intelligence shape ways of perceiving, conceptualizing and thereby managing our ecology and environment. This presentation will overview each work, but will focus on the recently launched *Solar Protocol*, a participatory work that takes the form of an experimental web platform hosted across a network of solar powered servers. The servers are installed and maintained by volunteers in different locations around the world and the web platform is then served from whichever location is enjoying the most sunshine at the time. By routing internet traffic according to the logic of the sun, *Solar Protocol* explores automation by means of natural rather than artificial intelligence.

The Art of Aleks Danko

Alison Reid,

The Art of Aleks Danko, is an examination of Danko's development and participation in the global collective known as fluxus.

Aleks Danko has been active in the Australian art scene since the late 1960s, and his artistic practice spans a diverse range of media such as sculpture, performance, installation, and artists' books. Danko has presented alternative ideas and visual strategies to engage with the political, social, and cultural landscapes in Australia, which confront, challenge, and disrupt the underlying power structures and hidden ideologies.

In the critical discourse of his practice, Danko has been positioned as a conceptual artist, and identified as a 'conceptual clown'. However, a major influence on the development of Danko's art was fluxus, which was not well known nor understood in Australia.

Danko's strategies of intermedia, event scores, rear-garde, and art amusement, has provided insight into this global collective. My research contends that Danko's fluxus attitude has provided another reading of his artistic oeuvre, that is experimental, avant-garde, and an immersive experience of art and the human condition. Danko's participation in the fluxus global collective has provided a unique case study in the canon of contemporary Australian art.

Objects In-between: Designing a Visual language for Traversing Personal Identity, Migration and Intercultural Spaces

Bic Tieu

My PhD project draws on the material culture around contemporary design and craft traditions to articulate identity from an intercultural context. These ideas are framed within the intercultural context of place, home and object. Personal collections of objects are analysed through taxonomy as a way to synthesise interdisciplinary studio investigations combining graphic animations with contemporary jewellery and object processes to develop a visual system that examines cross cultural translations. Central to the research is the notion of hybridity as a third space identity informed by my personal narratives and identity as a migrant living in Sydney, Australia. I connect the research to broader theory of third space identity by writings of diaspora intellectuals: Ien Ang, Homi Bhabha, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Nikos Papastergiadis. My final series of object-based works create a tangible experience in understanding cultural hybridity from my experience as a Southeast Asian Australian woman and further represent a perspective of Australia's unique complex cultural realities.

Awareness of Between-ness: Art-making concept

Watanabe Miho

My practice-led research focus is 'Awareness of Between-ness', a concept I defined to name my perspective as a Japanese-Australian diaspora artist, visualising this seemingly invisible subject as a new art form: between-ness art. Between-ness is in between a subject, camera, and myself. I propose that 'between-ness art' is philosophical; it includes both the subjective and the objective, finds subtlety in between the material and immaterial, and realises the visual in between the real and the non-real. 'Between-ness' can be explained by the Japanese word 'Ma' which is an important aspect of Japanese aesthetics as well as my art making. 'Ma' can be translated as "a conceptualization of both space and time". However, the theorisation of my art-making concept 'Awareness of Between-ness' borrows from two Japanese philosophical ideas in the area of human existence. My between-ness art practice explores my views as a Japanese diaspora artist, reconnecting my heritage and culture as well as Japanese aesthetics and philosophy. The aim of this research to investigate the role and significance of theorising and conceptualising my practice, "Awareness of Between-ness", and how can this concept deepen and support my practice, which visualises the invisible, the subject of "between-ness" and "between-ness art".