



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

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Sydney
Environment
Institute

Environment in Practice: Artmaking through Crisis



Photograph: Dean Sewell 'Terror Australis'

SYDNEY IDEAS: 'Artists have never been more important'

Tuesday 27 March 2018 | 6.00 – 7.30PM

Level 6 Seminar Room, Charles Perkins Centre, University of Sydney

SYMPOSIUM: 'Environment in Practice: Artmaking through Practice'

Wednesday 28 March 2018 | 9.00 - 5.30PM

Level 6 Seminar Room, Charles Perkins Centre, University of Sydney

CONVENORS:

Assoc Prof Ann Elias completed a PhD in art history at the University of Auckland with a thesis that investigates the history of NZ still life and flower painting. She has published on New Zealand's leading historical and contemporary artists including Rata Lovell-Smith, Michael Parekowhai, Peter Peryer and Paul Hartigan. In 1990 she was appointed to Sydney College of the Arts as head of the study area of art history and theory. Since then her research has focused on Australian subjects and her work published internationally in books and journals.

Dr Killian Quigley's dissertation research, which he conducted at Vanderbilt University's Department of English and completed in 2016, attended to relations among literature, aesthetic theory, and natural history in eighteenth-century Britain, Ireland, and France. At SEI, he is elaborating part of that work into a book called *Seascape and the Submarine: Aesthetics and the Eighteenth-Century Ocean*. This project observes the ocean's complex and indeterminate relationships to lastingly influential conventions in Western European poetics and aesthetics, such as the pastoral, the Rococo, the picturesque, and the sublime. The sea repeatedly functions as a limit case, or testing ground, for these conventions, and the resulting experiments and debates are consequential not only for the history of literature and art, but for cultural understandings of the ocean.

Quigley is also in the process of co-editing (with Margaret Cohen) a volume of essays entitled *Senses of the Submarine*. His writings are available in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, on SEI's blog, in the 2017 newsletter of the Australia Coral Reef Society, and in the reviews section of *MAKE* magazine. His work is forthcoming in *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* (Winter 2017), *MAKE's* print issue #17 (Winter 2017), *A Cultural History of the Sea in the Age of Enlightenment* (Bloomsbury Academic), and *Ireland's Imperial Connections, 1775-1947* (Palgrave Macmillan).

Michelle St Anne is the Deputy Director at the Sydney Environment Institute.

SYDNEY IDEAS:

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William L. Fox, Director of the Centre for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, Nevada, whose extensive practice as a curator, writer and commentator crosses the arts and sciences, will address the claim that in this moment of planetary environmental crisis, artists have never been more important. Is it because artists express the inexpressible through story-telling? Leading Australian artist, Janet Laurence, who has long engaged with environment, loss and trauma, and with the meeting of art and science, will respond to Fox's presentation by drawing on her own rich experiences and her many contributions to contemporary art and society.

Respondents:

Janet Laurence, Artist

Assoc Prof. Ian Maxwell, Department of Performance Studies

Chair:

Dr Killian Quigley

Biographies:

William (Bill) L. Fox is Director of the Center for Art and Environment at the Nevada of Museum of Art; a writer whose work is a sustained inquiry into how human cognition transforms land into landscape. He has published poems, articles, reviews, and essays in more than seventy magazines, has had fifteen collections of poetry published in three countries, and has written eleven nonfiction books about the relationships among art, cognition, and landscape.

Janet Laurence, Artist

Janet Laurence is a Sydney-based Australian artist who exhibits nationally and internationally. Her practice examines our physical, cultural and conflicting relationship to the natural world. She creates immersive environments that navigate the interconnections between organic elements and systems of nature. Within the recognised threat to so much of the life world, she explores what it might mean to heal, albeit metaphorically, the natural environment, fusing this with a sense of communal loss and search for connection with powerful life-forces. Her work is included in museum, university, corporate and private collections as well as within architectural and landscaped public places.

Institution/Awards: Laurence has been a recipient of Rockefeller, Churchill and Australia Council fellowships; recipient of the Alumni Award for Arts, UNSW; visiting fellow at the NSW University Art and Design; Australian representative for the COP21/FIAC, Artists 4 Paris Climate 2015 exhibition; visiting fellow of the 2016/2017 Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (HWK) foundation fellowship; and artist in residence at the Australian Museum.

Assoc. Professor Ian Maxwell, Department of Performance Studies

Ian is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts School of Drama, where he majored in Directing, Ian is now Chair of the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies. Subsequent to that training, he embarked upon academic work at the University of Sydney, where he completed his PhD, an ethnography of Hip Hop culture in the suburbs of Sydney in the 1990s in 1997.

He has published extensively on a range of topics, including his 2003 book, “Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes”: Hip Hop Down Under Comin' Upper (Wesleyan), chapters in several collections and a number of journals.

In 2008 he was awarded the Marlis Thiersch Prize for research excellence in an English-language article published anywhere in the world in the broad field of theatre and performance studies for his essay on Victor Turner.

In 2017, Ian directed Prince Bettliegend as part of the Out of the Shadows festival, a cabaret/revue devised and first performed by citizens of the ghetto at Terezin, Czechoslovakia.

Chair:

Dr Killian Quigley's dissertation research, which he conducted at Vanderbilt University's Department of English and completed in 2016, attended to relations among literature, aesthetic theory, and natural history in eighteenth-century Britain, Ireland, and France. At SEI, he is elaborating part of that work into a book called *Seascape and the Submarine: Aesthetics and the Eighteenth-Century Ocean*. This project observes the ocean's complex and indeterminate relationships to lastingly influential conventions in Western European poetics and aesthetics, such as the pastoral, the Rococo, the picturesque, and the sublime. The sea repeatedly functions as a limit case, or testing ground, for these conventions, and the resulting experiments and debates are consequential not only for the history of literature and art, but for cultural understandings of the ocean.

SYMPOSIUM: Environment in Practice: Artmaking through Practice

Wednesday 28 March 2018 | 9.00–5.30PM
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Wireless Internet Access

Guest Username: EnvPractice

Guest Password: 19580499

Twitter: #environmentinpractice @SEI_Sydney

9.00 – 9.15 Welcome Annamarie Jagose, Dean of Faculty of Arts and
Social Sciences

9.15 – 10.30 Session 1: ‘How do images act’

Dean Sewell and David Ritter
in conversation with Ann Elias

10.30 – 11.00 Morning tea

11.00 – 12.15 Session 2: ‘Engaging Extremity’

David Burrows and Philip Samartzis
in conversation with Belinda Smaill

12.30 – 1.45 Session3: ‘Surpassing Humans’

Ceridwen Dovey and Judith Beveridge
in conversation with Iain McCalman

1.45 – 2.30 Lunch

2.30 – 3.45 Session 4: ‘Composing Loss’

Genevieve Campbell and Michelle St Anne
in conversation with Danielle Celermajer

3.45 – 4.15 Afternoon tea

4.15- 5.30 Discussion with Killian Quigley

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

(in order of presentation)

Dean Sewell has made his name as an independent documentary photographer concentrating his gaze on the social implications of the new globalised world economy and the environmental consequences exerted by climate change. Through his acute colour studies Sewell also explores the dichotomy between the urban environment and its human habitation. This sits in stark contrast alongside his more reserved the apocalyptic representations of drought and fire ravaged landscapes.

Sewell was the winner of the 2009 Moran Contemporary Photography Prize for a work borne out of a three year study of the Murray-Darling Basin in Australia. He has been the recipient of the three World Press Photo Awards in 2000, 2002 and 2005 for works covering the transition of East Timor to an independent state, Australian Bushfires and the 2004 Tsunami aftermath in Aceh, respectively. Sewell was awarded Australian Press Photographer of the Year in 1994 and 1998. In 2005 and 2008, Sewell's art practice has seen him awarded artist residencies in the remote gold-mining town of Hill End, NSW which takes its place in Australia's art history as arguably one of the nation's more significant contributions to post-war art.

Sewell is represented by Charles Hewitt Gallery, and has work regularly exhibited in leading Australian International galleries.

He is a founding member of Oculi.

David Ritter is the CEO of Greenpeace Australia Pacific where we are campaigning for a green and peaceful future for all. On this page you can connect with me and find out about what I'm doing in my role as Chief Executive Officer.

In the past, he's worked as a lawyer and an academic, before spending five years with Greenpeace UK. In July 2012 he returned to Australia to head up Greenpeace Australia Pacific, determined to make their campaigns as effective as possible. He often writes and speaks about issues that he cares deeply about. You can also refer to his catalogue at Global Policy, Griffith Review, The Huffington Post and The Drum.

CHAIR Assoc Prof Ann Elias completed a PhD in art history at the University of Auckland with a thesis that investigates the history of NZ still life and flower painting. She has published on New Zealand's leading historical and contemporary artists including Rata Lovell-Smith, Michael Parekowhai, Peter Peryer and Paul Hartigan. In 1990 she was appointed to Sydney College of the Arts as head of the study area of art history and theory. Since then her research has focused on Australian subjects and her work published internationally in books and journals.

David Burrows is a Melbourne based visual artist who's practice is concentrated on photographic media. Principally concerned with exploring spatial perception, his interest extends to both the physiological means by which we sense volume as well as the psychological ways we read place. His work has involved extensive research into the phenomena of stereoscopic vision and techniques of stereo-photography. In 2010 David was awarded the Australian Antarctic Division's Arts Fellowship which granted him a 2 month residency at Casey Station principally to create a stereoscopic installation *The Mirage Project* [iceberg] for public/outdoor spaces. Originally commissioned by Melbourne's Federation Square in 2012 this work has also been shown on the dusty salt pans around Mildura (2013) as part of the biannual Palimpsest Festival. Various manifestations of *The Mirage Project* series have been commissioned and exhibited in France and Australia beginning with the LUX de

Valence commissioning Nullarbor (2006), Linden Gallery in St Kilda commissioning Belleville (2010), L'Ososphere in Strasbourg commissioning Forest (2012).

David is the recipient of numerous grants and residencies including the Cité International Paris through the French Ministry of Culture (2007-09), Bundanon Trust (2010) Nillumbik Shires' Laughing Waters (2010) La Trobe University VAC Bendigo (2010) and Bogong Center for Sound Culture (2014). David was trained at the Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts in the North of France where he was mentored by both Ryoji Ikeda and Chantal Akerman.

Assoc Prof Philip Samartzis researches in the areas of sound art, acoustic ecology and spatial sound practices, with a specific focus on sound, art and the environment. His PhD, *Surround Sound in Installation Art*, examined the place of sound in contemporary art practice through a range of site determined sound art projects.

In 2009 Philip was awarded fellowships by the Australia Council for the Arts, and the Australian Antarctic Division to document the effects of extreme climate and weather events on the human condition at Davis Station in Eastern Antarctica, and Macquarie Island.

In 2010 he undertook a three-year study of indigenous settlements in The Kimberley region of Western Australia through TURA's remote regional residency program in order to document the social and environmental conditions of remote communities.

In 2012 Philip established the Bogong Centre for Sound Culture with Madelynne Cornish at Bogong Village to facilitate cultural initiatives investigating the history and ecology of the Australian Alps.

CHAIR Belinda Smail is an Associate Professor in Film and Screen Studies at Monash University. She is the author of *The Documentary: Politics, Emotion, Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) and co-author of *Transnational Australian Cinema: Ethics in the Asian Diasporas* (Lexington Books, 2013). Her new book, *Regarding Life: Animals and the Documentary Moving Image* was published in 2016 with SUNY Press.

Ceridwen Dovey was born in South Africa and grew up between South Africa and Australia. She studied social anthropology at Harvard and New York University before returning to Sydney, where she lives with her husband and two young sons.

Her debut novel, *Blood Kin*, was published in 15 countries, shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Award, and selected for the US National Book Foundation's prestigious '5 Under 35' honours list. The Wall Street Journal named her as one of their 'artists to watch.' Her second book, *Only the Animals*, won the inaugural 2014 Readings New Australian Writing Award.

Her new novel, *In the Garden of the Fugitives*, will be published in 2018.

Judith Beveridge has been writing poetry since 1974 and has published six books of poetry. *The Domesticity of Giraffes*, published by Black Lightning Press in 1987, received the Dame Mary Gilmore Award, the NSW Premier's Poetry prize and the Victorian Premier's Poetry prize. Poems from that volume were subsequently put on the HSC curriculum. In 1995 she edited with Jill Jones and Louise Wakeling, *A Parachute of Blue*, an anthology of Australian poetry. She has also worked on the literary magazines *Hobo* and *Kalimat* and is the current poetry editor of *Meanjin*. She published her second volume, *Accidental Grace*, with UQP in 1996, and it won the Wesley Michel Wright Award and was short-listed for other awards. In 1999 she

attended the International Poetry Festival in Medellin in Colombia, and in 2003 was one of ten poets invited to Berlin to participate in the poetry translation project. In 2003 she published her third volume of poetry, *Wolf Notes*, with Giramondo Publishing. In 2004 it won the Judith Wright Calanthe Award for Poetry and the Victorian Premier's Poetry Prize. In 2005 she was awarded the Philip Hodgins Memorial Medal for excellence in literature. In 2009 she published *Storm and Honey* with Giramondo publishing. It was awarded the Grace Levin Prize. Her most recent volumes are *Devadatta's Poems, 2014*, (Giramondo) and *Hook and Eye: a selection of poems* published by George Braziller for the US market. In 2013 she was awarded the Christopher Brennan for outstanding contribution to Australian Poetry.

CHAIR Professor Iain Duncan McCalman AO, FRHistS, FASSA, FAHA, FRNSW, was born in Nyasaland (Malawi), Africa, was schooled in Zimbabwe, and earned his BA, MA and PhD in Canberra and Melbourne, Australia. He was awarded the Inaugural Vice Chancellor's Prize for Teaching Excellence at the Australian National University in 1994, and was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2007 for services to history and the humanities. He is a Fellow of four Learned Academies and is a former President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. He was Director of the Humanities Research Centre, ANU, from 1995-2002.

Iain has written numerous books, including *The Last Alchemist: Count Cagliostro, Master of Magic in the Age of Reason* (Harper Collins, New York, 2003), which was translated into twelve languages and *Darwin's Armada: how four voyagers to Australasia won the battle for evolution and changed the world*, which was published in separate editions in the USA, UK and Australia, won three book prizes, and was the basis of a TV Series (ABC, Canada, Germany, NZ) and an exhibition at the Australian National Maritime Museum.

Iain, a former Federation Fellow, is currently a Research Professor in history at the University of Sydney and co-Director of the Sydney Environment Institute. His award-winning book, *The Reef – A Passionate History, from Captain Cook to Climate Change* (2014, 2016), was published by Penguin in Australia and by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux/Scientific American in the USA.

Genevieve Campbell has been a professional orchestral Horn player for 30 years, working in a variety of ensembles across a broad spectrum. She has played in most of the major Music Theatre shows including *Les Misérables*, *Phantom*, and *West Side Story* as well as everything from *Musica Viva* to *Australian Idol*, *Opera Australia* to the Wangarratta Jazz Festival, and Australasian tours for Anthony Warlow, Barbra Streisand, Michael Crawford and (her favourite) Shirley Bassey.

In 2007, Campbell instigated *Ngarukuruwala – We Sing Songs*, a collaborative music project between a group of Tiwi strong women and jazz musicians from Sydney. This project has created new opportunities for the blending of Tiwi and non-Tiwi musical styles, in live performance and recording projects. Her professional interest in Tiwi music in the context of contemporary performance and the desire to be part of the rediscovery and preservation of old Tiwi songs led her to facilitate the repatriation to the Tiwi community of previously unheard ethnographic recordings of song and ceremony dating back to 1912. Working with Tiwi elders, Campbell has been involved with a number of song-based projects aimed at re-engaging Tiwi children with their language and culture and - importantly with their grandmothers – by learning traditional Tiwi song. Central to their work together is acknowledging the impact of the loss of song culture on social, mental, physical health and the fact that song is

recognized as a strong conduit for pride, intergenerational connection and personal health.

Michelle St Anne is a theatrical artist and founding member of The Living Room Theatre. Since 2000 she has created and performed in 19 original works. These works sits in the framework of 'Composed Theatre' – a philosophical lens used to view the fragments of images, sounds, text that organises and reorganises, to evoke a circuitous environment where the viewer enters a constructed reality.

Obsessed with the state of suffering, her recent body of work has led her to examine the degradation of the environment and society's responses to it.

In her spare time she is the Deputy Director of the Sydney Environment Institute, which feeds her fascination with the Public lecture.

CHAIR Professor Danielle Celermajer's professional life has been characterised by moving between organisations whose principal focus is human rights policy, advocacy and scholarship, and seeking a greater integration between these dimensions of human rights work. Since joining the University of Sydney in 2005, Celermajer has had the privilege of establishing two postgraduate human rights programs aimed at forging precisely this type of integration between the best of scholarship and effective human rights practice. The second, the Masters of Human Rights and Democratisation (Asia Pacific Program) was established with a 1.5 million euro grant from the European Commission and is now in its sixth year with ongoing funding from the European Union and now forming part of the Global Campus of Human Rights programs.

Since 2012, Celermajer has been leading a multi-disciplinary international team seeking to identify and test new approaches to preventing torture in organisations where it is systematic and entrenched. Our team has sought to better understand the root causes of torture, particularly those residing in the cultures and processes of security organisations themselves. This project, also funded by the European Union has been working with police and police and military in Sri Lanka and Nepal in partnership with universities in those two countries.

Through these two programs and a range of others in the field of human rights, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has now built a highly innovative human rights program seeking to strengthen and deepen the contribution that humanities and social science scholars can make in the field of human rights.

Prior to joining the academy, she worked as a policy advisor and speechwriter to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and the Race Discrimination Commissioner in the Australian Human rights Commission.
