



Image 'Sydney Harbour without water 2017' sourced via Quora.

‘Enlarging the Harbour View’ Workshop

Tuesday 4 December 2018 | 9.30 – 5.00PM

Location: Sutherland Room, Holme Building

In partnership with the Power Institute

A day devoted to discussions about current research, exhibitions, collections, and ideas relating to the underwater of Sydney Harbour.



The Agenda

9.15 – 9.30	COFFEE/TEA ON ARRIVAL
9.30 – 10.00	Welcome - Aims and overview of the workshop Iain McCalman and Ann Elias
10.00 – 11.00	<u>Session 1</u> Iain McCalman, Sydney Environment Institute <i>'Sydney Harbour, one specimen at a time'</i> Jude Philp, Macleay Museum
11.00 – 11.30	MORNING TEA
11.30 – 12.30	<u>Session 2</u> <i>'Upstairs / downstairs: Sydney Harbour seen through the eyes of a library'</i> Richard Neville, State Library of NSW <i>'Visualising the Invisible: Tracing the Hidden Narratives across the Floor of Sydney Harbour'</i> Brett Morgan, Sydney Environment Institute
12.30 – 1.30	<u>Session 3</u> <i>'Cruising the waterline: encountering queer history, geosubjectivity and the Anthropocene at Elizabeth Bay'</i> . Denis Byrne, Western Sydney University <i>'The harbourside mansion and the harbour's floor'</i> Jennifer Hamilton, University of New England
1.30 – 2.30	LUNCH

The Agenda

2.30 – 3.30

Session 4

'Fairies at the Bottom of the Harbour? Beneath-The-Surface Reflections of Sydney Life'

Anita Callaway, Department of Art History

'Frank Hurley, Diving, and the Floor of Sydney Harbour'

Ann Elias, Department of Art History

3.30 – 4.00

AFTERNOON TEA

4.00 – 5.00

Session 5

Brigitte Sommer, School of Life Sciences

'A fish out of the water (colour)'

Frederico Camara, Independent artist and researcher

Abstracts and Biographies (in order of appearance)

Sydney Harbour, one specimen at a time

Jude Philp, Macleay Museum

From the 1870s William John Macleay and his various collectors dredged, fished and walked the edges of the harbour searching out novel specimens. At the time such collections were grouped separately according to their Familial relationships and Orders. Today bringing this material together can create a different view, one that sparkles with the species that flourished in waters yet to be fully polluted by industrialisation.

Jude Philp is senior curator for the Macleay Museum, one of the three University Museums moving to the new Chau Chak Wing Museum (opening 2020). As an anthropologist she works on historic engagements between Pacific and European peoples seen through collections formed in the 19th century.

Upstairs / downstairs: Sydney Harbour seen through the eyes of a library

Richard Neville, State Library of NSW

The Harbour is a central motif within the Library's collections. It has a complex history of representation, which obviously sits above the waterline in paintings, prints, photographs and literature. Beneath the waterline things become much murkier: how do library collections represent what is under the water.

Richard Neville is the Mitchell Librarian and Director of Education & Scholarship at the State Library of NSW. With a research background and expertise in nineteenth Australian art and culture, he has published widely on colonial art and society, and curated numerous exhibitions focusing on these areas.

Visualising the Invisible: Tracing the Hidden Narratives across the Floor of Sydney Harbour

Brett Morgan, Sydney Environment Institute

The picturesque Sydney Harbour has a long and complex history that is told through a variety of media, spanning thousands of years. However, the floor of the Harbour remains relatively invisible to us, and may reveal a vastly different—and potentially more complex—set of narratives. How, then, are we to uncover such narratives? Could the resources within the State Library of New South Wales begin telling these hidden stories?

Brett Morgan is a Research Assistant with the Sydney Environment Institute, and is currently working on 'The Floor of Sydney Harbour' research project. He is passionate about environmental activism, environmental pedagogy, climate justice, sustainable materialisms, and animal ethics, and his research interests are reflected in these passions.

[‘Cruising the waterline: encountering queer history, geosubjectivity and the Anthropocene at Elizabeth Bay’](#).

Denis Byrne, Western Sydney University

Coastal reclamations may represent humanity’s overreaching lust for land, but from where I stand in 2015 on the beach below the reclamation at Elizabeth Bay on Sydney Harbour, gazing at the sandstone seawall, what compels my attention is the way this reclamation is incrementally giving up its substance to the sea. As the geological time of the wall engages with the rhythmic time of the harbour waters, my own geosubjectivity comes momentarily into view. Recollection of the reclamation park of the 1980s as a gay cruising site sparks a consideration of how open minds and touching bodies in that decade form a background conducive to closer human-nonhuman relations in the present decade.

Denis Byrne is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. He is an archaeologist whose work has mostly been in the fields of Indigenous heritage, the materiality of popular religion in Southeast Asia and China, and in the archaeology of the contemporary past. He is currently studying coastal reclamations in the Asia-Pacific as elements of Anthropocene heritage. His books *Surface Collection* and *Counterheritage* challenge western-derived heritage practices in Asia and explore new approaches to the writing of archaeology and heritage.

[‘The harbourside mansion and the harbour’s floor’](#)

Jennifer Mae Hamilton, University of New England

The ecology of the harbour’s floor is troubled and steps to remediate it do not fully grapple with the materiality of the logics and flows that contribute to the problem. Under the rubric of ‘enlarging the harbour’, this paper considers the relationship between iconic harbourside dwellings—mansions—and the harbour’s floor, via the figure of the drain. What kinds of lives and styles might need to be deconstructed in order to remediate the harbour’s floor? In asking this question one cannot attend to the discrete deposits of microplastics or algal blooms, but one is impelled to follow the stormwater outfalls back upstream (or pipe) to the gutters and roadways nearby. What washes from the lives of those on the streets above the harbour? How could they change? Beginning with literary representations of luxury harbourside living as a way into these particular questions, my close reading of these texts will then follow the logic of these dwellings down the drain to the harbour’s underwater world.

Jennifer Mae Hamilton is a feminist environmental humanities scholar with formal training in literary studies from UNSW. Between 2016-2018 she held linked Postdoctoral fellowships in Gender and Cultural Studies at University of Sydney and in the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney, funded by The Seed Box at Linköping University in Sweden, during this time she also taught ecocriticism at NYU Sydney. Her first book, *This Contentious Storm: An Ecocritical and Performance History of King Lear* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017) investigates the dynamic role of the storm in this iconic play. Her current research and writing continues this interest in weather, bodies, emotions and the politics of representation. Her most recent sole-authored

publications are in *Shakespeare Bulletin* (36.3) and *JASAL* (18.1), and co-authoring with Astrida Neimanis, you can find work in *Environmental Humanities* (10.2), *Feminist Review* (118.1) and *The Goose* (17.1). She is currently a lecturer in English literary studies at the University of New England in Armidale.

'Fairies at the Bottom of the Harbour? Beneath-The-Surface Reflections of Sydney Life'

Anita Callaway, Department of Art History

May Gibbs, who tamed the Antipodes for generations of Australian children by populating her miniaturised landscape with mini-me Gumnuts, reminisced in the year before her death: "I used to look into the clear water from the boats ... and one day I thought how lovely it would be to have a little town under the water." Gibbs and fellow artists living on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour fantasised about its unknowable (even unfathomable) nature, fashioning a back-to-front world that reflected and satirised Sydney's lifestyle. However, just as Lewis Carroll had discovered on sending Alice through the looking-glass, the apparent mirror image was not restricted to the water's surface, but instead extended far into the harbour's depths, where the make-believe social reversal of its creatures became at times amusingly perverse.

Anita Callaway is the Nelson Meers Foundation Lecturer in Australian Art in the Department of Art History at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include the role of non-elitist visual imagery in the cultural development of both peripheral and metropolitan societies.

Frank Hurley, Diving, and the Floor of Sydney Harbour

Ann Elias, Department of Art History

In 1921, the Australian explorer, cinematographer and photographer, Frank Hurley (1885–1962), wrote in the popular press how he had dived to the floor of Sydney Harbour with a movie camera. He described the scene that met his eyes as a fantastic vision of rocky bowers, fish, and aquatic plants all bathed in 'sunbeam radiance dancing like playing rays from a cinema projector' (*Sun*, 25 September 1921, 13). Hurley was enchanted by the cinematic potential of the underwater, and the idea that beneath the surface lay a realm as yet unexplored.

This paper expands our understandings of the socio-ecological dimension of Sydney by reframing understandings of its urban space by including the Harbour's underwater realm and by combining both human and non-human ecologies. It discusses the lure that the underwater zone held for Hurley, and for the Australian public, including a fascination in the early decades of the Twentieth Century with the figure of the deep sea diver. It embraces the impact of nineteenth century writers, including Jules Verne, on perceptions of the Harbour floor as a frontier. It addresses questions that were common in Sydney in the early Twentieth Century: What is it like to walk under Sydney Harbour? What can a human see on the floor of the Harbour? What does a fish see when it looks at a human in water? How does a dress diver feel when he descends to the floor?

Ann Elias is Associate Professor of the History and Theory of Contemporary Global Art at the University of Sydney, author of *Camouflage Australia: Art, Nature, Science, and War* and *Useless Beauty: Flowers and Australian Art*, and coeditor of *Camouflage Cultures: Beyond the Art of Disappearance*. A forthcoming book with Duke University Press, *Coral Empire*, investigates Frank Hurley's mission to turn the underwater of the Great Barrier Reef into a modern media spectacle.

A fish out of the water (colour)

Frederico Câmara, Independent artist and researcher

Is it possible to reimagine the works of the First Fleet artists taking into consideration contemporary issues such as consumerism, environmental crises, and the extinction of animal species?

The drawings and paintings of George Raper, Thomas Watling, and the Port Jackson painter describe the natural history, ethnography, topography and history of the first Australian colony located in Sydney Harbour, and that of the places they visited on their voyage through Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia, on their way to Australia.

Postcolonial discourse usually concentrates on the effects of European colonisation on the non-European and indigenous peoples of the world, with less attention given to non-human living beings (such as plants and animals) and the natural environment.

This presentation looks into the representations of animals, humans and landscapes created by those artists during colonial times to discuss past and contemporary manifestations of colonialism, aiming at a reinterpretation, and ultimately, a reinvention of those views into a decolonized version of natural history.

Frederico Câmara is artist and researcher in Art and Design with interdisciplinary research interests reaching into the fields of the Environmental Humanities, Cultural and Visual Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Architecture, and Museum and Heritage Studies. They include the human perceptions and representations of natural and cultural landscapes, photography and travel as research methods, migrations and their influence in the definitions of identity, the practices of collecting and archiving in Art, and oral history. His projects are realised in photography, video, drawing, text, and artist's books.

He has completed his PhD in Fine Art at the University of Sydney, in Australia, under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr Ann Elias. He studied for his MA in Fine Art at the University of the Arts London, UK, and for his BFA in Printmaking at the UFMG Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.