The initiative to establish the Australian Institute of Art History, the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand and the University of Melbourne present:

**ART HISTORY’S HISTORY IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

*Saturday 28th August, 9.45am - 4.00pm*
*and Sunday 29th August, 10.00am – 5.00pm*

The University of Melbourne

Venue: Elisabeth Murdoch lecture theatre, Elisabeth Murdoch Building, The University of Melbourne, Parkville (F20 on the attached campus map).

This is a free public event, and registration for attendance is not required.

Enquires: Professor Jaynie Anderson, t: (+61 3) 8344 5514
Dr Meaghan Wilson-Anastasios, e: mewi@unimelb.edu.au
**Day 1: Saturday 28 August**

9:45 – 10:00
Introduction and Welcome

**SESSION ONE (10:00 am – 12:30 pm)**
Chaired by Professor Richard Woodfield

10:00 - 10:30
Dr Susan Lowish
University of Melbourne
‘Setting the scene: early writing on Australian Aboriginal art’

10:30 – 11:00
Professor Jonathan Mane-Wheoki
Head of School, Elam School of Fine Arts
‘Art’s histories in Aotearoa New Zealand’

Tea Break: 11:00 – 11:30

11:30 – 12:00
Dr Ben Thomas
Dr Joseph Brown AO Fellow, State Library of Victoria
‘No mere collection of interesting curiosities: Lindsay and the appreciation of Australian Indigenous art’

12:00 – 12:30
Dr Donna Leslie
Artist, ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Monash University
‘Indigenous Voice in Australian Art History: Reflections of an Aboriginal Art Historian’

Lunch: 12:30 – 1:30

**SESSION TWO (1:30 pm – 4:00 pm)**
Chaired by Associate Professor Alison Inglis

1:30 – 2:15 Keynote address
Andrew Sayers AM
Director, National Museum of Australia
‘Curators and Australian art history’

2:15 – 2:30 Discussion

Tea Break: 2:30 – 3:00

3:00 – 3:30
Professor Ian McLean
University of Western Australia
‘Australian Art Historiography and Globalization’

3:30 – 4:00
Catherine De Lorenzo, UNSW, Associate Professor Joanna Mendelsohn, UNSW, & Associate Professor Catherine Speck, University of Adelaide
‘Exhibitions as Drivers for Australian Art History’

**Day 2: Sunday 29 August**

**SESSION THREE (11:00 pm – 1:00 pm)**
Chaired by Professor Jaynie Anderson

10:45 – 10:55 Keynote address
Professor Howard Morphy
Director, Research School of Humanities
College of Arts and Social Sciences, ANU
‘Moving the body into the art gallery — knowing about and appreciating aesthetically works of art’

10:55 – 11:00 Discussion

Tea Break: 11:00 – 11:30

11:30 – 12:00
Helen Ennis
Associate Head, Undergraduate
Associate Professor, Art Theory Workshop, ANU School of Art
‘Other histories: photography and Australia’

12:00 – 12:30
Dr Heather Barker and Associate Professor Charles Green
University of Melbourne
‘No Place like Home: Australian Art History and Contemporary Art, 1961-1981’

12:30 – 1:00
Associate Professor Rex Butler (University of Queensland) & Dr A.D.S. Donaldson (National Art School)
‘Cities Within Cities: New Zealand Art History in Australia’

Lunch: 1:00 – 2:00

**SESSION FOUR (2:00 pm – 5:00 pm)**
Chaired by Dr Christopher Marshall

2:00 – 2:30
Professor Peter McNeil
University of Technology Sydney
‘What’s the Matter? The object in Australian visual histories’

2:30 – 3:00
Dr Juliette Peers
RMIT University
‘The Canon and its Discontents: Feminism as cross generational case study in the making and interpretation of Australian visual culture’

Tea Break: 3:00 – 3:30

3:30 – 4:00
Associate Professor Jennifer Milam
University of Sydney
‘Art History and the Rococo Perspectives from Australia’

4:00 – 4:45 Keynote address
Professor Terry Smith
University of Pittsburgh
‘Objects, Topics, Mediums, Subjects: Nationalism, Internationalism and Indigeneity in the Historiography of Australian Art since the 1980s’

4:45 – 5:00 Discussion
Dr Heather Barker and Associate Professor Charles Green
University of Melbourne

‘No Place like Home: Australian Art History and Contemporary Art, 1961-1981’

In this paper we consider an emergent Australian art history’s dramatically changing impact on contemporary art criticism and, indeed, on contemporary art in Australia between the early 1960s and the early 1980s. The change in Australian art history was particularly evident in the development of modes of professional competence modelled on formalism and neo-Marxism, already existing strands in international art history as a discipline. But, during the period, seminal Australian art historian Bernard Smith’s battle against what he saw as American cultural imperialism was well and truly lost. Young art historians writing on contemporary art from the late 1960s on, including art historians, Patrick McCaughey and Terry Smith, were convinced that the centre of world art was now New York. This idea of world art did not, however, diminish the Australian preoccupation with nation and national identity. Rather, it was to result in key writings, from Terry Smith’s articles on provincialism to Paul Taylor’s postmodern polemics in Art and Text, all of which above all sought to locate Australian art in relation to international (which largely remained American) art.

This was true even of the art history department at the University of Sydney that emerged, during the 1970s, as the prime centre for postmodern theory in Australia, within which the field of art criticism was widened so much that its contemporary objects, and the history of Australian art in general, were supplanted by a dramatically cosmopolitan embrace of theory and the study of visual culture rather than the history of art as it had been conceived. That university department was to play a far more important role than any other in Australia in the postmodern take-over of art and screen criticism, even though Terry Smith’s predecessor, Bernard Smith, had attempted to set its course in a more traditional disciplinary direction. Our argument will be that writing on art by scholars of the emergent discipline of Australian art was often as significant as art itself in contemporary art’s innovations. Yet the false consciousness of nation (which is to say that the idea of Australia was reified and phantasmic, dependent on circular definitions of self) remained central within Australian art history even as the apparent exception of cosmopolitan postmodernism began to emerge by the later 1970s. But even this was marked by Cold War neo-colonialism. Emergent generations of young art writers and art historians could not participate in the establishment of a sustainable and sustained discourse on contemporary art without participating, within the context of Cold War politics from Kennedy to Reagan, in a reification of the category of ‘Australian’, no matter how hard they tried.

BIOS:
Dr Heather Barker is an independent writer; she completed her PhD in the Art History program at the University of Melbourne in 2007. Dr Charles Green is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. He is an artist, art critic and art historian specializing in the history of international and Australian art after 1960, with a particular focus on photography, post-object and post-studio art. He supervises theses on international and Australian contemporary art, and on art after the 1960s. He teaches courses on international and Australian art since the 1970s, and has taught cinema subjects on vampires and on artists in film. He is specifically interested in helping students to develop research on art history (international and Australian art made after 1960) that is both theoretically-informed and involves close primary research. Charles and Heather are co-writing a book “No Place Like Home: Australian Contemporary Art and Art Writing, 1960-1988”.

Associate Professor Rex Butler (University of Queensland) and Dr A.D.S. Donaldson (National Art School)

‘Cities Within Cities: New Zealand Art History in Australia’

What might be the new, post-national art history appropriate to the 21st century? It would not be a mere universalism involving the erasure of location and identity. Rather, it would be more like an endless mosaic, an almost infinite series of different world art histories written from an almost infinitely different series of places. The authors have attempted to write one such history: an “UnAustralian” art history, seeking to trace – against the predominant nationalist accounts that were written throughout the 20th century – a history of Australian art not as apart from but as part of that of the rest of the world. It is a story of Australian immigration and emigration, of how Australian art history is crossed by that of other countries, just as “Australian” artists are or should be part of the art histories of other countries. In this paper, we pull out just one thread from this densely interwoven fabric: the story of New Zealand art in Australia. Paradoxically, because of the two countries’ cultural and geographical proximity, the ongoing presence of New Zealand artists in Australia is almost invisible, but our argument is that so-called Australian art history cannot be written outside that of New Zealand.

BIOS:
Associate Professor Rex Butler’s research interests include Australian art and art criticism and contemporary art. He is the author of Slavoj Zizek: Live Theory (2005), A Secret History of Australian Art (2002), Jean Baudrillard: Defence of the Real (1999), and An Uncertain Smile (1996), as well as editing several books including The Universal Exception (2006) (with Scott Stephens), a selection of essays by Slavoj Zizek, Radical Revisonism (2005) and What is Appropriation? (1996). His current research includes working on a history of "UnAustralian" art and the life and work of Colin McCahon.

A. D. S. Donaldson is a Lecturer in the Painting Department at the National Art School. He studied at the University of Sydney, the Kunstkademie Düsseldorf, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen and the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He is an artist, art historian and curator specializing in the history of Australian art in the 20th century. His current research includes working on a history of "UnAustralian" art, and the cultural interrelationship between Australia and France since 1900.
Catherine De Lorenzo (UNSW) Associate Professor Joanna Mendelsssohn (UNSW) & Associate Professor Catherine Speck (University of Adelaide)

‘Exhibitions as Drivers for Australian Art History’

Art history, whether understood as traditional with a focus on iconographic analysis, period and style, or as ‘new’ with an interest in class, gender and race, has left little room for analysing the impact of exhibitions on shaping the discipline. This international model holds true within Australia. Since the rapid take-up of the new art history in the 1980s, there has been little analysis of the public face of art history in the form of art being publicly displayed in exhibitions, and this major aspect of art historiography has been overlooked.

Exhibitions are significant within art’s history as they reflect another and very robust side to the discipline. This is because they require an analysis of institutional judgments behind the selection, research and display of the work of artists, and the reception of such work by the public and professionals, including art critics and art historians.

This paper will focus on selected exhibitions of Australian art since 1972 to show how the exhibitions and accompanying exhibition catalogues from those exhibitions are our major form of contemporary Australian art historiography.

BIOS:
Catherine De Lorenzo is an art historian and senior lecturer in the Architecture Program of the Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW, Sydney. Having majored in Fine Arts at the University of Sydney, she later returned to her alma mater to complete doctoral research into photographic representations of Aboriginal Australians. This research enabled her to co-examine both art historical and visual anthropological modes of analyzing and understanding the visual image. Both her doctoral thesis and much of her subsequent research, whether in photographic history or public art or architecture, has been cross disciplinary, as evidenced by the wide range of disciplinary journals in which her articles have been published. Within photographic history, her interests include the representation of people and place, the politics of picturing and the use of the photograph in cross cultural exchange. Since 2001 she has worked with Dr van der Plaat (now U. Queensland) on an extensive study of cross cultural photographic exchange between Australia and France, a study that begins in the late 1870s and continues to recent projects such as the integration of Michael Riley’s cloud images into the architecture of Jean Nouvel’s Musée du quai Branly, Paris (2006). Her public art research is often framed by cultural and environmental questions. Much of what drives her research into both photography and public art and architecture is to examine the extent to which modalities of representation and expression are responsive to cross cultural exchange. She currently serves as a Contributing Editor to History of Photography, an Associate Editor of Visual Studies, and is on the Editorial Board of DAAO (Dictionary of Australian Artists Online). She currently serves on the FBE Research Committee, is an active participant in the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand, and has served on the juries of various public art awards and competitions. In 2009 she was appointed to the Cultural Advisory Committee of Randwick City Council.

Dr Catherine Speck is the coordinator of the innovative Art History Program offered jointly by the University of Adelaide and the Art Gallery of South Australia. Prior to taking up her current post, she was coordinator of the Art History and Theory Department and Research Degrees Coordinator at the SA School of Art, University of South Australia. In 1999 she was a Robert J. Hawke Research Fellow in the Hawke Institute, and in 1992-3 held a John Treloar Grant (Australian War Memorial). Other research grants include an ARC Spirt Grant, The Samstag Legacy (with Professor Ian North and Assoc. Professor Rhonda Sharp) in 1999-2001; and an ATN Grant, Defining Nations: Women as War Artists in Britain, Canada, the USA, New Zealand and Australia in 2001-3; and an ARC Small Grant, Significant women artists in the SA School of Art, (with Kay Lawrence) in 1996-9. Her research areas include modern Australian art; landscape theory and representation; Australian art and Indigeneity; gender and the representation of war; and contemporary art criticism. She publishes in both scholarly and arts industry journals including The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art, Art and Australia, Australian Feminist Studies, the Journal of Australian Studies, Object, Art Monthly On-line and Artlink. She is also currently Chair of Nexus Multicultural Arts Centre, serves on the SSABSA Visual Arts committee and is a member of the Adelaide Critics Circle.

Associate Professor Helen Ennis
Associate Head, Undergraduate
Associate Professor, Art Theory Workshop, ANU School of Art

‘Other histories: photography and Australia’

Photography has its own histories, which were begun relatively late. The first, Jack Cato’s The Story of the Camera in Australia was published more than 110 years after photography began to be used in the colonies. Histories of Australian photography are still few in number, amounting to a total of four (Cato; Gael Newton; Anne-Marie Willis and Helen Ennis). Photography has another doubled history relating to its inclusion in broader histories of Australian art (Christopher Allen, Art in Australia, 1997; Andrew Sayers, Australian Art, 2001; John McDonald, Art of Australia, 2008). This phenomenon too is recent. As a medium and as a set of practices photography has presented various difficulties to art historians. In this paper I will consider some of these and argue for new ways of thinking about photography and history.

BIO:
Helen Ennis is Associate Head, Undergraduate and Associate Professor, Art Theory at the Australian National University School of Art. She is an independent photography curator and writer specializing in the area of Australian photographic practice. Her recent publications include Reversions: Photography & Mortality (National Portrait Gallery, 2007) and Photography and Australia (Reaktion Press London, 2007). In 2006 her biography Margaret Michaelis: love, loss and photography (National Gallery of Australia) was awarded the Nettie Palmer Prize for Non-Fiction in the Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards and the prize for Best Book by the Power Institute of Fine Arts and the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand. She is currently working on a book on Wolfgang Sievers’s photography and a biography on photographer Olive Cotton.
Dr Donna Leslie
Artist, ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Monash University

‘Indigenous Voice in Australian Art History: Reflections of an Aboriginal Art Historian’

The challenge made by the Australian historian William Stanner, in his 1968 Boyer lecture, ‘The Great Australian Silence’, brought to light the lack of an Aboriginal presence in Australian historiography. Fortunately since the late 1960s, there have been a significant number of Australian historians who have contributed to the acknowledgment of Indigenous histories in Australia, but there is still room for more contributions; particularly in regards to the need for writings on Indigenous histories by Indigenous peoples themselves. Today, in the field of Australian art history the voices of Indigenous Australians are relatively rare in published writings, particularly when compared with the high numbers of Indigenous practitioners working in the visual arts in Australia. Indigenous Australian contributions in Indigenous art histories in Australia are vital, especially in light of the fact that Indigenous art has such a central role in the art of Australia. This paper explores some of the issues and histories relevant to this topic, and is delivered from the perspective and reflections of an art historian and artist of the Gamilaroi (Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi) people of north-west New South Wales.

BIO:
Dr Donna Leslie is an artist and an art historian who specializes in Australian Indigenous and contemporary art. Donna undertook doctoral studies in Art History at the University of Melbourne. Her thesis Aboriginal Art: Creative Responses to Assimilation (2003) included a study of the historiography of Aboriginal art in Australia, with reference to the former Australian Government policy of assimilation and ways in which Aboriginal artists have sought to reaffirm their own cultural heritage in the light of this historical legacy. Donna also has a postgraduate qualification in Art Curatorial Studies, a teaching qualification in Art/Craft, and an undergraduate degree in Fine Art. She is an ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies in the Faculty of Arts at Monash University, who is currently preparing two books supported by the Australian Research Council: Spiritual Journeying and Cross-culturalism: The Art of Tim Johnson, and Sacred Ground: New Dimensions in Australian Art. Donna’s book, Aboriginal Art: Creativity and Assimilation, was published by Macmillan Art Publishing in 2008, and includes reproductions of her recent paintings. She is a painter of the Gamilaroi (Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi) people of north-west New South Wales.

Dr Susan Lowish
University of Melbourne

‘Setting the scene: early writing on Australian Aboriginal art’

The term ‘Aboriginal art’ can be traced back through a number of different genres of published literature in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In surveying the journals of early explorers, the field reports of naturalists, geologists and ethnologists, and the major contributions to Australian anthropology in the years 1802-1929, an historical account of the beginnings of a particular notion of Aboriginal art can be formed. When this literature is viewed en masse, certain topics predominate such as originality, authenticity and imitation. This paper provides an outline of the earliest historiography of ‘Aboriginal art’ in the nineteenth century and discusses the ways in which these writings helped shape the earliest European perceptions of ‘Aboriginal art’.

BIO:
Susan has a background in Fine Arts, with a photography/printmaking major. Her postgraduate study was in critical theory and cultural studies culminating in a PhD in Art History supervised by Dr Leigh Astbury. In 2005, Susan was appointed full time to the Art History Department at the University of Melbourne. She teaches Australian art history and co-ordinates subjects on contemporary Aboriginal art. An early career researcher, Susan is involved in a number of active research projects including a history and theory of exhibiting Aboriginal art in Australia - a study she hopes to expand to cover international exhibitions as well. Her most recent publications have been Recognising Indigenous Aesthetics, for the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and a critical essay on the intersection of Aboriginal and Australian art histories. The latter topic was developed into a symposium with Judith Ryan and held at the NGV mid-2006. In early 2009, Susan was a Visiting Fellow at the Research School of Humanities, Australian National University.

Professor Jonathan Mane-Wheoki
Head of School, Elam School of Fine Arts

‘Art’s histories in Aotearoa New Zealand’

BIO:
Jonathan Mane-Wheoki (Ngāpuhi/Te Aupouri/Ngāti Kuri) formerly worked as Senior Lecturer in Art History and Dean of Music and Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury and then as Director of Art and Collection Services at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. He is an art historian, architectural historian, cultural historian and curator. While he has produced professional work encompassing many disciplines, he is especially noted as a pioneer in the development of contemporary Māori and Pacific art and art history. A strong advocate for the Humanities and the creative arts as well as Māori knowledge and education, Jonathan has served on a wide range of national and international bodies, including the Arts Council of Creative New Zealand, the Humanities Panel and Council of the Marsden Fund, and the Advisory Council of the (Renzio Piano-designed) Centre Culturel Tjibaou in Noumea.

Current appointments include:
Member of the Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand, Governor of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand, Member of the Board of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, Member of Hoerewa (Māori Advisory Group), Auckland Art Gallery/Tai o Tāmaki, Member of the Creative New Zealand Venice Biennale selection panel 2000, 2008, 2010, Appointed Honorary Life Member, Friends of the Christchurch Art Gallery, 2004, Appointed Honorary Life Member, Friends of Te Papa, 2009

Professor Ian McLean
University of Western Australia

‘Australian Art Historiography and Globalization’

The central importance of globalization provides unique opportunities for Australian art historians to play a defining role in the current re-thinking of the disciplinary parameters of art history and contemporary art practice. Issues of colonialism and provincialism made Australia artists and critics acutely aware of their place in the world, and Australian artists and critics were quick to recognize the new prospects opened by the centering forces of postmodemism, postcolonialism and the emergence of Indigenous art as a force in the contemporary artworld. This paper will trace a genealogy of globalization as an issue in Australian art history from Bernard Smith’s early writing, to Terry Smith’s essay “The provincialism problem” and the debate that occurred in the early issues of Art & Text.

Professor Peter McNeil
University of Technology Sydney

‘What’s the Matter? The object in Australian visual histories’

When Terry Smith published his historiography of Australian visual culture in the Australian Journal of Art in 1983, neither a general history of craft nor design about this country had been written. The forging of such histories since the early-twentieth century is inseparably bound up with practice; both production and commentary frequently proceeded from the same hands, informed by individualistic agenda. For example, architects played a key role in analysing and popularising aspects of both the built environment and decorative arts which elsewhere might have been explored by art historians. The history of the writing of ‘decorative arts’ studies in Australia also runs parallel with the rise of collecting, firstly by individuals, later by museums. The priorities of connoisseurship and a nostalgic evocation of colonial history dominated the inter-war period in Australia, resulting in a body of largely expository writing. Academic interest in architecture and the ‘decorative arts’ was virtually non-existent until the 1960s, when the growth in tertiary art-hisory departments and increasing demands for a new ‘social history’ combined with an expansion of the museum sector and art market to raise standards of analysis. How, and in what ways, has the obsession with object-based histories, which are often the concern of the museum and nearly always of the art-market and the collector, been modulated or challenged in recent Australian art histories? What are the implications of introducing a range of visual cultures, from ceramics to dress fashions, into the narratives of Australian art history?

BIO:
Peter McNeil is Professor of Design History at UTS. Trained as an art and design historian, his research crosses disciplines, chronologies and geographies from the early-modern (c1500-1800) to the late-20th century. In 2008 he was appointed concurrently as Foundation Chair of Fashion Studies at Stockholm University, where he leads its ambitious research agenda within the EU, including his aim to connect historical findings with contemporary design practices.

McNeil’s research has engaged with different ways in which visual imagery and materiality shaped lives from the eighteenth century to the present day. His research considers in particular methodological and thematic areas of research that stretch across design, art, architectural and garden history, underpinned by a wide range of aesthetic and cultural theories. His research strengths are in relationships between ‘high’ and ‘low’ aesthetic forms, the historical representation of fashion goods ranging from clothing to furnishings; ephemera and nascent design of the 18th to 20th centuries, and the commercial art and other visual culture of the 19th and 20th centuries. McNeil’s co-edited Shoes (2006, with G.Riello) was widely praised for its integration of artefacts and images as central to a way of making arguments. William J. Keenan, reviewing in Cultural Sociology (2007:1) wrote that the work established a new benchmark in terms of intellectual scope and production for all such object-based study. Other recently completed projects include The Men’s Fashion Reader; Fashion in Fiction; Fashion: Critical and Primary Sources (4 volumes, Berg) and The Fashion History Reader (Routledge, with G.Riello). ‘History has never been more alive than in the pages of this Reader’ writes Patricia Colefato (University of Bari). His writing has been translated into Russian, Italian, Chinese and German.

Associate Professor Jennifer Milam
University of Sydney

‘Art History and the Rococo Perspectives from Australia’

What is the Rococo in the context of Australian Art History? Pursued as a style, the Rococo resists rational schemas and thwarts simple classifications. Defined as a period in the history of art, it encompasses such a diverse range of media, stylistic variations and genres that attempts at broad characterizations of forms and themes are invariably subject to exception and continual reconfiguration. In presenting Rococo art to Australian audiences, whether in museums or university lecture theatres, this very instability of art genres that attempts at broad characterizations of forms and themes is what makes the Rococo appear ‘modern’ and comprehensible. Rather than isolating the Rococo as a period style, linking it to the modern presents new opportunities for understanding and theoretical analysis. At the same time, this more interpretive approach has the potential to undermine conventional art historical methodologies. There are, nevertheless, distinct connections between the Rococo and modernity that have been observed since the early eighteenth century.

In recent British and American studies of French eighteenth-century art, the catch-all ‘Rococo’ has given way to the more historically precise, yet equally vague grouping together of works through their appeal to the goût moderne—a phrase used in the period to refer to the modern taste of contemporary society, namely that of the first half of the eighteenth century in France. Even so, there was no contemporary theoretical exposition of the goût moderne in defense of its forms and themes. Hogarth’s celebration of serpentine and sinuous lines as the ultimate formal expression of beauty came close, but it was not a theory he put into practice. The first extended characterizations of Rococo art were critiques of its forms and themes by artists and writers largely antagonistic to its proliferation. Looking backwards, these authors referred to the taste for such art as le goût moderne, le goût nouveau or le goût de ce siècle. It is through the use of these words that the Rococo comes into focus and Australian perspectives gain momentum.
This paper considers how the Rococo is understood in Australian pedagogy and higher research training, specifically as a field taught within a department largely focused on modern and post-modern theories of art and film. It explores the relationship between contemporary theoretical perspectives and traditional art historical methodologies in the study of Rococo art in Australia. It proposes that there is historical value in ideas that arise in response to the Australian researcher’s geographical isolation from original works of art, at the same time that it asserts the need to test those ideas through the ocular examination of physical objects.

BIO:
Jennifer Milam is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art History and Film Studies at the University of Sydney. She has published widely on eighteenth-century art in edited volumes and such journals as Eighteenth-Century Studies, Art History and Burlington Magazine. Her books include Fragonard’s Playful Paintings, Visual Games in Rococo Art (University of Manchester Press, 2006) and Women, Art and The Politics Of Identity In Eighteenth-Century Europe (co-edited with Melissa Hyde, Ashgate, 2003). She is currently completing a Historical Dictionary of Rococo Art (under contract with Scarecrow Press).

Professor Howard Morphy
Director, Research School of Humanities
College of Arts and Social Sciences, ANU

‘Moving the body into the art gallery — knowing about and appreciating aesthetically works of art’

Western art history has developed with two complementary sides a history of art objects in their own right and art as a source of information about people’s lives and worlds — artworks as sources of historical information. The former history is linked to the value creation processes that elevate certain objects to the category of fine art, evaluates them according to qualitative criteria and provides the basis for connoisseurship. The latter can leave the object, and the art in the object, far behind, focussing on its evidential value or even morphing into social theory. Similar arguments can be made for the anthropology and the archaeology of art. These different approaches to art are loosely associated with a division between art galleries and museums of ethnography or social history. The former create privileged viewing places for celebrating the formal dimension of the objects, the later embed the objects in documentation or order them in narrative sequences — they are present to tell a story or provide a source of evidence. The distinction between the art gallery and the museum can be summarised as a difference of emphasis between appreciating and ‘knowing about’ the work of art. Art historians, archaeologists and anthropologists work between these two institutional frameworks often taking advantage of both, and contributing equally to the appreciation of the artwork in all its diversity and using art as a source of information about the world. None the less the frameworks have provided a powerful underlying dialectic in which the categories of the artworld have been contested and the lives of objects have been changed. Introducing new objects into these arenas both requires and stimulates change. In this paper I will argue that Aboriginal art has been an agent of change in Australian art discourse and has stimulated new approaches to the exhibition of art objects and influenced the categorical distinctions made between them. Museums and art galleries provide experimental situations for the inclusion of Aboriginal art — works for so long excluded from the category of fine art. In some exhibitionary contexts the Aboriginal artworks are positioned as exemplars of fine art in other cases Aboriginal artworks are exhibited in ways that threaten to breakdown the categorical distinctions associated with fine art galleries and museum. The changes that are occurring are not restricted to Aboriginal art but are also a response to a more general performative turn in contemporary art practice. In this paper I will focus my argument on a so-far unexhibited artwork as a rhetorical device for demonstrating that knowing about and appreciating works of art are two sides of the same coin. However the example will also show the ways in which Yolngu artists have played on the dialogical edge between the museum and the art gallery in acting through art over time and created new works for new contexts.

BIO:
Howard Morphy (BSc, MPhil London, PhD ANU, FASSA, FAAH, CIHA) is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Research School of Humanities at the Australian National University. Prior to returning to the Australian National University in 1997, he held the chair in Anthropology at University College London. Before that he spent ten years as a curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. He is an anthropologist of art and visual anthropologist having co-edited two of the main source books in the respective fields The Anthropology of Art: a Reader (2006; Blackwell’s, with Morgan Perkins) and Rethinking Visual Anthropology (1997, Yale University Press, with Marcus Banks). He has written extensively on Australian Aboriginal art with a monograph of Yolngu Art, Ancestral Connections (Chicago 1991), a general survey Aboriginal Art (Phaidon, 1998) and most recently Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories (Berg, 2007). He has also produced a pioneering multimedia biography The Art of Namrtn Maymuru with Pip Deveson and Katie Hayne (ANU epress 2005). He has conducted extensive fieldwork with the Yolngu people of Northern Australia, and collaborated on many films with Ian Dunlop of Film Australia and has curated many exhibitions including Yangapungapu at the National Museum of Australia. With Frances Morphy he helped prepare the Blue Mud Bay Native Title Claim which as a result of the 2008 High Court judgement recognised Indigenous ownership of the waters over the intertidal zone under the Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. His involvement in research and in the development of museum exhibitions reflects his determination to make humanities research as accessible as possible to wider publics and to close the distance between the research process and research outcomes. In 2008 he was one of the organising committee of the major CIHA conference in Melbourne, Crossing Cultures: conflict, migration, convergence.
‘The Canon and its Discontents: Feminism as cross generational case study in the making and interpretation of Australian visual culture’

Interpretations and historical overviews of women artists in Australia have existed for over a century and have often been closely linked to periods when high profiled women artists were active. Whilst historians can consolidate a presence of women artists back to the colonial period, clear identifications of a narrative interpretation of the nature of women artists careers and the range of their achievements emerge at the time of the first wave feminist movement at the Federation era. Violet Teague both wrote women centric art histories and performed a woman centric vision of history via tableaux vivants from at least 1907 to the First World War and in at least two Australian capital cities. In the generation of modernism, feminist narratives were consolidated in print and in lectures by artists such as Mary Cecil Allen and Eveline Syme during the 1930s. Women were relatively invisible in the postwar expansion of the art critical and curating system in Australia, which centred upon towering masculine figures such as Arthur Boyd, Sidney Nolan and Russell Drysdale and equally monolithic historic figures such as Roberts. Activism of the 1970s constituted a visible second wave of feminism, whilst the consolidation of the women artists’ presence through both institutional development and the uptake of art theory represents a third wave that has commenced in the 1980s and continues to the present day. Acceptance of “performativity” and sexuality, and diversities of gender and cultural positionings in the 1990s consolidated the position of women in contemporary art. As seen in the forum of art history, particularly in the sphere of public gallery display, the position of the female practitioner – notably before the accepted entry point into the canon of women via Preston and Proctor - remains far less resolved. There is currently an incipient fourth wave of feminist practice with the current interest amongst very young practitioners in craftivism and craft nostalgia which curiously crosses the political spectrum from guerilla knitting to “madmen inspired retro”, wearing and retailing vintage clothes to the extreme capitalist banality of the over-iced cupcake explosion. This new emerging fourth wave is linked to grass roots and subcultural expressions such as the slow movement, green and sustainability community activism, anti technological interventions and urban cultural jamming. The emphasis on making, on opting in, on developing sometimes selective historical narratives to justify precedence that are strongly female centric, indicates that this potential fourth wave of feminism is linked to the flattening and broadening of cultural narratives under the fixed hierarchies of the canon.

Dr Juliette Peers is a Lecturer at the Frances Burke Textile Resource Centre at RMIT and works at SIAL as a secondary supervisor for a number of the postgraduate students. She taught an interdisciplinary design studio with Alison Fairley in Semester 1. 2007 and recently worked on Homo Faber, contributing essays and text panels to the catalogue and exhibitions.

Juliette is a cultural historian actively interested in and engaged with a wide range of both high and popular artforms, including the pre histories, back stories and precursors of new media, technologies and artforms, as well as the social histories of the reception and uptake of new technologies. The role of gender, mythologies and symbolism in shaping and brokering knowledge systems and the often unacknowledged life of the past within present and incipient practices and technologies is a particular fascination.

Andrew Sayers AM
Director, National Museum of Australia

‘Curators and Australian art history’

Most Australians do not read art history, but they do look at art in museums. There, visitors experience displays that embody art histories. The enthusiasm and research interests of curators combine with collection strengths to create these art histories. In this process, particular artists, ideas and mediums are privileged. In this paper I will look at some examples of influential displays, exhibitions and collecting programs over the last thirty years which reveal the role of curators in making Australian art history. I will examine the way in which the demands of objects have led to new shapes for art history, have broken up or cemented orthodoxies and created stimulating juxtapositions.

Andrew Sayers is the Director of the National Museum of Australia, Canberra. He graduated from Sydney University in 1980 (Fine Arts) and worked at the Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1979 until 1981. From 1981 until 1985 he was Assistant Director of the Newcastle Region Art Gallery. He joined the National Gallery of Australia in 1985 as Curator of Australian Drawings. By the time he left the NGA he was Assistant Director (Collections). Between 1998 and 2010 he was Director of the National Portrait Gallery. He has curated many exhibitions, particularly in the areas of drawings, Australian painting and portraiture. He is the author of Drawing in Australia (1989); Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century (1994) and the Australian Art volume of the Oxford History of Art (2001).

Professor Terry Smith
University of Pittsburgh
‘Objects, Topics, Mediums, Subjects: Nationalism, Internationalism and Indigeneity in the Historiography of Australian Art since the 1980s’

This paper will focus on the changing array of core concerns of those writing histories of Australian art since the 1980s, with a primary focus on how these are calibrated by the constantly shifting exchange between indigenous, national and international perspectives in our art world.

BIO:
Terry Smith, FAHA, CIHA, is Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh. He is also a Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney. During 2001-2002 he was a Getty Scholar at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, and in 2007-8 the GlaxoSmithKlein Senior Fellow at the National Humanities Research Centre, Raleigh-Durham. From 1994-2001 he was Power Professor of Contemporary Art and Director of the Power Institute, Foundation for Art and Visual Culture, University of Sydney. He was a member of the Art & Language group (New York) and a founder of Union Media Services (Sydney). He is the author of a number of books, notably Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America (University of Chicago Press, 1993); Transformations in Australian Art, volume 1, The Nineteenth Century: Landscape, Colony and Nation, volume 2, The Twentieth Century: Modernism and Aboriginality (Craftsman House, Sydney, 2002); and The Architecture of Aftermath (University of Chicago Press, 2006). He is editor of many others including In Visible Touch: Modernism and Masculinity (Power Publications and the University of Chicago Press, 1997). First People, Second Chance: The Humanities and Aboriginal Australia (Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1999), Impossible Presence: Surface and Screen in the Photogenic Era (Power Publications and the University of Chicago Press, 2001), with Paul Patton, Jacques Derrida, Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars (Power Publications, 2001, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), Contemporary Art + Philanthropy (University of NSW Press, 2007), and Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, postmodernity and contemporaneity (with Nancy Condee and Okwu Enwezor, Duke University Press, 2008). He has recently completed What is Contemporary Art? (University of Chicago Press, 2009); Contemporaneity and Contemporary Art: World Currents (Laurence King and Prentice-Hall, 2010). A foundation Board member of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, he is currently a Board member of the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh. See www.terryesmith.net

Dr Ben Thomas
Dr Joseph Brown AO Fellow, State Library of Victoria

‘No mere collection of interesting curiosities: Lindsay and the appreciation of Australian Indigenous art’

In an era when the acceptance of indigenous art within our galleries is assumed confidently as self-evident, it is easy to overlook how such a remarkable transformation occurred almost within the space of a decade. Even more misunderstood is the prominent role Daryl Lindsay played in the early acceptance and legitimisation of Australian indigenous art.

Within months of becoming director of the NGV, Lindsay prepared a major exhibition of primitive art, including Australian indigenous works, an event that became the defining catalyst for a cultural shift towards indigenous art. In the early 1960s, in the influential role of chair of the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board, Lindsay advocated for the inclusion of ‘Australian Aboriginal art, chosen for aesthetic merit’ as a dedicated collecting stream in the future NGA. It was a decisive objective, and one that was a central tenet of his vision for Australian art.

Yet it is clear that Lindsay’s role in encouraging the re-evaluation of Australian Indigenous art remains poorly understood within the field of Australian gallery practice. Even within recent years, art historians have misattributed later events as being the catalyst for change, either positioning Lindsay as a reactionary late in his term as director, or placing him outside the formative years of the shift in attitude altogether.

This paper explores Lindsay’s young adult experiences in Central Australia, the backdrop for his empathy with Australian Indigenous culture, and the remarkable shift in Australian Art Museum practice undertaken during his directorship that saw Indigenous artefacts exhibited and appreciated for their artistic merit.

BIO:
Benjamin Thomas completed his doctoral dissertation on the Australian artist and arts administrator, Sir Daryl Lindsay, at the University of Melbourne in 2008. He previously completed a Masters of Museum and Gallery Curatorship through the University. As well as being a former assistant curator and current honorary associate of Museum Victoria, he is the 2009-10 recipient of the Dr Joseph Brown AO Fellowship at the State Library of Victoria. His fellowship research explored the business of W.R. Sedon and Melbourne’s inter-war commercial art market.