

ACUADS
[Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools]

RESEARCH 07/08





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Courtesy the Artist & Sherman Galleries, Sydney

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Immersive interactive environment .
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INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP, IMPACT →

Art, Design and Digital Media in Australian Universities

Contemporary Australian Arts make a special and substantial contribution to the health and wealth of the nation. Their impact is felt at home, in the Asia Pacific region and worldwide across the broad range of innovation in art, design and new media. Australia's art schools are the drivers of this success. Together they have an excellent track record in producing internationally renowned practitioners, many of whom increasingly travel from overseas specifically drawn by the attraction of the leading-edge artist and designer education on offer. A Research Masters is the minimum qualification that most aspire to, with increasing numbers of our brightest artists and designers, theorists and art educators completing Doctorates. This success is testament to the high caliber of students the sector attracts. It is also unthinkable without the central contributions of staff within university art and design departments, schools and faculties who are leaders in their own areas of research practice. As in any other discipline, research-led teaching is crucial to its continued renewal and cultural impact. And now, more than ever, the leadership and innovation of our artist-academics and theorists impacts significantly and, often, directly on the end users of art, design and new media.

In the past the sector has found it difficult to secure broadly based and significant research grants, especially from the Australian Research Council, although there have been notable exceptions, some of which are outlined in this publication. However as the discipline gains further in confidence and experience, an upward trend in the number and scale of funded projects is inevitable. Contrary to popular belief, contemporary arts research is not some side event to 'real' research. University based artists, designers, art historians and art educators are leaders in their fields. They are making a difference, inspiring, altering and moulding the culture of the nation, and contributing to the global economy like any other research community.

This report gives a taste of how the sector's achievement is being shaped across a range of its activities: from substantial

research centres exploring advanced digital media; to innovative individual PhD projects; from relational experiments in space; to the advancement of visualisation materials, techniques and processes; from artists working with history, memory and site; to the role that art and design plays in the formation and representation of identity and culture; and not surprisingly, to an examination of creative practice itself as a research methodology.

The Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) represents all of the nation's leading tertiary Visual Arts education providers, enabling a focus for collegial communication and a high level forum for the ongoing development of best practice in the sector across the areas of research, teaching and service, indeed, providing leadership to our industries.

It might be that we are the custodians of a still maturing research culture, in comparison to the much longer established ones in science, medicine and the humanities. However it is a very vibrant, necessary and fast developing culture whose nurturing is the responsibility of all stakeholders, not just ourselves and the institutions in which we work, but also government and its research support agencies.

Put simply, the nature and quality of our personal and collective experiences, not to mention the underlying strength of the creative economies of the future, will depend increasingly upon the viability and impact, locally and globally, of our artists and designers. The Australian Higher Education sector carries both a lead role and a primary responsibility for guaranteeing the success of this endeavour.

Associate Professor Su Baker

Victorian College of the Arts,
University of Melbourne

Professor Ian Howard

College of Fine Arts,
University of New South Wales

Professor Colin Rhodes

Sydney College of the Arts,
University of Sydney



iCinema Research Centre College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales www.icinema.unsw.edu.au/

Experimental aesthetics and the evolution of interactive narrative: *T_Visionarium* →

"Reality is mobile. There do not exist things made, but only things in the making, not states that remain fixed, but only states in process of change... All reality is, therefore, tendency, if we agree to call tendency a nascent change of direction." Henri Bergson

T_Visionarium is an ARC funded experimental project that transforms cinema into a kind of Platonic cave wall onto which viewers project, then respond to, the episodic shadows of their journey through a vast database of televisual material.

The project forms part of a portfolio of projects undertaken at the iCinema Centre at UNSW. In a broad sense the research program at iCinema focuses on research into immersive digital interactivity for applications across the arts, humanities, sciences and related industries. The program is focused on the following key problem: in what ways can the digital be developed to assist us in imagining new ways of living in the contemporary world?

This problem is addressed through three strands of research.

- The experimental exploration of interactive narrative systems which allow the viewer to interact with digital environments using a new media framework.
- The technical exploration of immersive visualization systems which provide the settings for these interactive narratives using a cognitive science and ICT framework.
- The analytical exploration of interactive narrative as a way of imagining the contemporary world using a socio/cultural theory framework.

In a specific sense the research program at iCinema focuses on a key issue in current global research, namely the search for new levels of integration between the physical and the digital to inform the growing demand for interactivity in public and private domains. Heading this agenda is the development of interactive narratives which allow viewers: (a) to navigate and interact with large-scale immersive settings; (b) to interact with intelligent virtual characters. The success of this agenda hinges on providing compelling landscapes for interaction. On the one hand, this entails developing viewer-generated re-composition of complex digital narratives. On the other hand, this entails developing virtual characters with autonomy so that the virtual characters can respond to human interaction and co-develop the narrative in partnership with human participants. The development of such narratives provides new aesthetic and experimental possibilities in art and cinema, while also satisfying the practical needs in art and industry for aesthetic engagement and social development.

As already noted, iCinema's research into immersive



digital interactivity draws together research from four distinct domains: new media, cognitive science, ICT and socio-cultural theory. This type of research is intrinsically multi-disciplinary, involving collaboration across major disciplinary boundaries. By focusing on trans-disciplinary research projects, these boundaries can be successfully bridged. Put another way, all four domains are interconnected so that experimental (artistic) questions are also technological (ICT, cognitive) and theoretical (socio/cultural) questions.

In *T_Visionarium*, for example, to provide viewers with new ways of artistically interacting with a vast database of narratives requires the development of new technical digital interfaces along with a theoretical understanding of how this narrative operates. *T_Visionarium* has been designed to overcome the disciplinary fragmentation effecting much current research into interactive narrative and anticipates the fundamental change implicit within the history of digital innovation. Central to this undertaking is the development of transcriptive narrative.

T_Visionarium introduces the concept of transcriptive narrative as a model for the production of interactive narrative within digital cinema. Aesthetic transcription refers to the cinematic capture and reconstruction of complex forms of information within digital environments. The value of the project is set against the fact that while narrative is central to conventional cinema, emphasis upon simulation rather than composition has caused the narrative potential of digital media to be overlooked in favour of notions of randomness and free play. *T_Visionarium* addresses the concern that it is limitations in narrative,

as opposed to any technical understanding, which have restricted the aesthetic development of digital cinema. Through its focus on viewer-generated re-composition of digital databases, the project addresses the experimental aesthetics underlying current digital media research.

Transcriptive narrative integrates the multi-temporal qualities of narrative with the multiplicity of modes built into digital information. As an experimental integration of these temporal qualities, *T_Visionarium* aims to test the simple proposition that interactive narrative occurs by means of the transportation of the multiple modalities of digital information across virtual time. In testing the transportation of information within virtual time, however, we anticipate evidence of the previously undescribed multi-temporal qualities of narrative. In this multi-temporal form of narrative viewers not only re-compose complex information into distinct temporal episodes, they also simultaneously experience the unanticipated temporal consequences of these virtual episodes as real events. This dynamic form of engagement with time, involving the emerging and looping intersection between virtual time and real time, produces a mode of narrative that contrasts dramatically with the temporal sterility of the closed narrative menus typically found in computer games and database formations.

Dr Dennis Del Favero, Professor Neil Brown,
Professor Jeffrey Shaw, Professor Peter Weibel



Createc
Faculty of Education and Arts, Edith Cowan University
<http://createc.ea.ecu.edu.au>

Open Bite Australia →

Open Bite Australia was established in 1998 to facilitate and publish a range of printmaking projects by regional and international artists, and to form professional and cultural links to the visual arts curriculum at Edith Cowan University. The workshop fulfils a number of pedagogic, cross-cultural and creative research needs and offers students a unique opportunity to work in collaboration with internationally renowned artists and researchers.

With a focus on the relationship between arts education and its related industries, the workshop has exposed a number of ethical, commercial and cultural issues that serve to frame our philosophy and broaden the parameters of our research and creative practices. The workshop attempts to offer an alternative relationship between artist and agent, particularly in response to cases of exploitation of Australian Indigenous artists in the areas of reproduction and copyright.

Open Bite is taking advantage of its privileged position as part of an educational program to establish an equal and inclusive relationship with its artists. Through an association



Jimmy Pike, *Water Hole Man*
painting produced at Open Bite



Mary McLean
signing *The Seven Sisters*
edition of prints published by Open Bite

with local artist agents Desert Designs, and more recently Indigenart WA, the workshop has developed residency programs for Indigenous artists already involved in the West Australian and international art markets. Artists are invited to work in the studio, in many cases alongside and in collaboration with local artists and students. This unique relationship allows the artists to work in a completely uninhibited way and allows the development of lasting relationships based on trust. Working closely with agencies such as Kurongkurl Katitjin (Centre for Indigenous Studies at Edith Cowan University) the workshop seeks to promote an awareness of Indigenous customs and protocols through its teaching programs and community engagement.

Any profits from publishing activities are fed back into technical research, community workshops or local arts sponsorship. The prints produced by Open Bite are strictly limited and distributed through a number of recognised agencies, such as the Australian Print Network in Sydney.

Open Bite activities are not limited to working with contracted Indigenous artists. The project page of the website acts as an archive for our activities, and demonstrates the breadth of international artists who have worked with us since 1998. Artists from America, Europe, Africa and Asia have undertaken a number of diverse projects, which in many cases, reflect our unique position both geographically and philosophically. The global attraction of Open Bite has fostered a number of collaborative projects in which international artists have worked alongside local Indigenous artists.



The research arm of Open Bite supports projects that advance the discipline of printmaking, such as our extensive technical research into non-toxic printmaking processes for use in the remote desert regions of Western Australia. In conjunction with co-researcher Professor Susan Groce at the University of Maine USA, Open Bite is developing a hybrid acrylic etching process for use in the extreme conditions of the Western Desert. The development of portable synthetic grounds and inks have long term implications for remote arts centres throughout Australia by addressing the problems normally associated with traditional petroleum based chemicals and processes.

This type of technical research and development contributes to a wider project in which the breadth of contemporary printmaking processes and techniques have been mapped. As a result, an on-line technical manual for printmakers has been published as part of the Open Bite website to support both our outreach programs and our studio-based activities. The technical manual has also been adopted by the Printmakers Council of Australia and by a number of local and international institutions.

Open Bite's involvement in both practice led and technical research has influenced the teaching program at both Edith Cowan University and at the Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey USA. Open Bite represents the oceanic region of their on-line Global Education program, where socio-political issues within contemporary arts practices and comparative literatures are discussed. This on-line program centres on the international art market

and the broader implications for synchronic communities such as Aboriginal and North American Indian cultures. The project uses the Open Bite workshop as a case study to encourage dialogue on a number of ethical, social and cultural issues that are common to Australian and American contemporary society. This four-year project has involved research into Indigenous histories in both Australia and America, producing a number of related publications for international conferences and national peak bodies such as The Australian National Gallery and the Australian Council of University Art & Design Schools (ACUADS).

Open Bite has developed an inter-dependent and self-generating position in which educational philosophy works hand in hand with commercial activities, in turn funding industrial research and development projects and community workshops to strengthen its educational base. By its nature, Open Bite produces regular traditional and non-traditional research outputs through exhibitions, publications and critical texts. Its future lies in an ongoing and respectful relationship with its artists, and through maintaining both its ethical and educational focus.

Professor Clive Barstow
Head of School Communications and Contemporary Arts
Edith Cowan University
Director of Open Bite Australia

Open Bite Australia web pages
www.scca.ecu.edu.au/projects/openbite/openbite.htm
Outline paper National Gallery of Australia
www.australianprints.gov.au/Default.cfm?MnuID=Sym1/Barstow

Helena Psotova
*Fortune of Lost Hearts:
 an insight into convict culture*
 Detail 2007
 C-Type photograph



Elizabeth Woods
*I wonder what they
 thought about?* 2007
 Stencilled paint



Alyssa Simone
Archetype, 2007
 Video Still
 Video and sound installation

School of Art University of Tasmania www.artschool.utas.edu.au

Port Arthur Project: Re-interpreting Port Arthur Historic Site through contemporary visual art' →

Co-curated by Noel Frankham and Julia Clark, *Port Arthur Project* aimed to enrich public understanding of Port Arthur and to recognise several of Tasmania's acknowledged strengths: history, environment, tourism and visual arts as a feature of the 2007 Ten Days on the Island arts festival². Equally important, the project sought to demonstrate the quality and impact of art academics' practice-based research³.

More than a century after the last prisoner departed the Port Arthur penal settlement, the site remains an enduring reminder of Australia's fraught beginnings. The iconic ruins, convict artefacts, and even the paradoxical beauty of the place, are rich with stories of despair, loneliness, hope and simply the everyday existences of the prisoners, guards, women and children who lived there.

60 artists were invited to propose art works that would explore one of this country's most visited, researched and recognisable places, through site-specific visual art. Through processes of experimentation, research and negotiation 23 projects came to fruition, comprising the four week exhibition within the 2007 Ten Days on the Island festival⁴.

Artists' responses were inspired by the discovery of concealed histories, untold stories, imagined lives and spaces, architectural remains and physical traces in the natural world⁵. Exhibited within the grounds and

historic buildings, the work challenged and embraced the complexity and richness of Port Arthur. While most artists created work drawing on aspects of the convict period, 1830-1877, dislocation, incarceration and freedom, isolation and loneliness, hardship and pain, loss of identity and individuality are timeless concepts.

Several artists considered incarceration and the desire for freedom. Elizabeth Woods' work for the Church represented the confused emotions and contradictions of religious assembly for convicts. Anne Mestitz, Karen Lunn and Milan Milojevic, Colin Langridge and Brigita Ozolins presented work that considered liberation from different perspectives: Mestitz and Langridge through dream and fantasy; Lunn and Milojevic through reform and education; and Ozolins metaphorically freed convict novelist, Henry Savery.

Linda Fredheim and Anne MacDonald explored often futile efforts to remember lost loved ones; Fredheim through references to convict love tokens and MacDonald by photographing memorial head stones.

Helena Psotova researched acts of affection and love within convict life. Despite the brutality of prison life, significant relationships developed between convicts. However, these were discouraged and are under-recognised within official records. Helena constructed a hypothetical visual reference to an actual love letter written by a convict to his male lover.

Christl Berg, Fiona Hall and Justy Phillips explored dislocation by utilising references to exotic plants to draw

parallels with human transportation and efforts to establish new lives in a foreign place. Hall explained that plants now taken for granted (e.g. carrots, onion, parsley, strawberries) were both exotic, transported as were convicts, and items of trade, often from places with histories of conflict. Phillips employed the oak tree as symbolic of England and home, as did Nicole Ellis with an English marble mantelpiece; all three recognised that loss and dislocation were supplanted by nostalgia and aspirations for building a new home in the colony.

Berg's representations of plants grown for food focused on the role of the relatively few women at Port Arthur. Fiona Lee also considered the role of women in establishing and shaping the colony by 'feminising' the support structures of Government Cottage. Ruth Frost recalled the place of families, children and women, and their uncomfortable co-existence with penal life. This discomfort was further represented by Anne Ferran's sad but beautiful account of the babies lost to women in the female factories at Ross and South Hobart.

Several artists considered contemporary aspects of Port Arthur; its role as a museum and archaeological site, a tourist attraction, home to indigenous and exotic plants and as a focus for the wider Tasman community. Lucy Bleach, Tracey Cockburn and Lucia Usmiani explored the site's role as a museum and tourist attraction by referencing typical elements of a contemporary museum or historic site. Each created 'fakes' placed within the museum environment that asked visitors to reflect on how experiences and artefacts are valued, preserved and interpreted.

Leigh Hobba worked with four composers to create sound pieces using the remaining bells from the Church, which suffered a life of dislocation and neglect before a restoration process. Compositions for the bells excluded digital enhancement, creating an 'honest', if dissonant, representation of the bells' histories as reflected in their chipped and cracked imperfections.

Alyssa Simone also considered perceptions of reality; creating a work that emulated the images and sounds reflected in 'ghost' photographs and unnerving experiences reported by visitors. Jung's theories on synchronicity and archetypes support her contention that the discovery of a 'ghost' photograph within images recorded at Port Arthur can have a significant and transformative affect on the visitor.

Lola Greeno and Vicki West presented an elegant homage to the 10 Aboriginal bands that comprised the Oyster Bay people. Also addressing an acutely felt and tragic aspect of the area's history, Matt Warren used harmonic sound to assuage some of the pain people throughout the world felt on hearing newscasts of gunshots, and imagining the horror of the 1996 massacre.

James Newitt worked directly with the wider Tasman Peninsula community after reading records of oral histories that describe the significance of local social events. His video work presented the country dance as a key and enduring means through which a community establishes and maintains its identity.

Thirteen of the 25 artists teach at the school of art, two were research masters and four PhD candidates at the time of the project. The PhD candidates produced work that will be major elements within their thesis submissions.

All but the three non-academic artists produced work that will feature within respective school research reports. The designer, Helen Bordeaux, and the curatorial assistant, Delia Nicholls, were both coursework masters students undertaking work on the project within their courses.

The complex and comprehensive exhibition included sculpture, photographs, sound sculpture, video, printmaking and performance. A free 16-page catalogue, site map locating each work and individual explanatory labels assisted 29,817 visitors navigate the exhibition, within the context of their primary interest, the information-rich historic site itself; the interpretation of the art works for a non-art tourist audience was very carefully considered⁶. A family-oriented picnic day was held with specially reduced entry fees and entertainment, artist talks and guided tours of the exhibition by the curators.

The exhibition was complemented by a two-day national symposium, at which 22 papers (18 were peer-reviewed) extended the theme of revelation, history and site-specific art. The keynote speaker was Chicago Art Institute sculptor and curator, Professor Mary Jane Jacob. A comprehensive project website will include exhibition catalogue, documentation of the exhibition, critical feedback and papers from the symposium⁷.

The media responded well to the exhibition: ABC television produced a 10 minute piece for *Sunday Arts*, Radio National's *Artworks* interviewed Mary Jane Jacob, and Peter Timms reviewed the exhibition in *The Age*. Tasmanian television news casts, ABC local radio and *The Mercury* also reviewed and discussed the exhibition.

The exhibition fused art and history through the creativity, talent and commitment of a large and generous-spirited community of participants: artists and technicians, historians, archaeologists, conservators and horticulturists, and residents of Tasman Peninsula. The curatorial underpinnings of *Port Arthur Project* were grounded in community consultation, collaborative decision-making and a commitment to the development of genuinely site-specific art work that reflected, interpreted and elaborated on the Port Arthur Historic Site. But most significantly, many of the artists involved produced some of their best work to date and the exhibition was seen by a large audience rarely, if ever, exposed to contemporary art.

Professor Noel Frankham

¹ Presented at Port Arthur Historic Site, 16 March to 15 April 2007

² *Port Arthur Project* was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. The Australia Council provided \$60,000 grant funding. The total budget was just over \$230,000.

³ Noel Frankham is Professor of Art and Head of School, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania. Julia Clark is Manager, Manager - Interpretation & Collections, Port Arthur Historic Site.

⁴ The project partners comprised Ten Days on the Island, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania in association with Tasman Council.

⁵ The 25 artists in the exhibition included: Dr Christl Berg, Lucy Bleach, Tracey Cockburn, Nicole Ellis, Anne Ferran, Linda Fredheim, Dr Ruth Frost, Lola Greeno and Vicki West, Fiona Hall, Leigh Hobba, Dr Colin Langridge, Fiona Lee, Dr Karen Lunn and Milan Milojevic, Anne MacDonald, Anne Mestitz, James Newitt, Dr Brigita Ozolins, Justy Phillips, Dr Helena Psotova, Alyssa Simone, Dr Lucia Usmiani, Matt Warren, and Elizabeth Woods.

⁶ Frankham, N., Clark, J. & Nicholls, D. *Port Arthur Project: Re-interpreting Port Arthur Historic Site through contemporary visual art*, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 2007.

⁷ <http://www.artschool.utas.edu.au/>

VCA Graduate School
Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne
www.vca.unimelb.edu.au/graduateschool/



Chantal Faust
Blue Svetlana
type C print
(face mounted on aluminium)
92 x 70 cm



Kate Daw
The Between Space (cups and saucers), 2005, [detail]
photograph by John Brash

VCA Graduate School – For The Next Generation →

The establishment of the VCA Graduate School, to be fully operational in 2008, will provide an exciting focus for graduate arts education. Providing excellent graduate experience and research outcomes is a form of “future-proofing” the sector and providing a focus for the next generation of contemporary art academics. This will lead to greater innovation and research productivity in the sector and address the current imbalance in the perception and recognition of creative arts research. By creating high standards and best practice models the graduate school program will enhance the capacity of the sector to grow and develop a high quality, internationally competitive research culture.

Locating an array of arts disciplines on one campus, within a single organisational structure, the VCA Graduate School is ideally positioned to present a new and innovative model for research in the arts for the 21st century.

The VCA Graduate School has a role in generating cultural, intellectual, and creative capital in the broadest sense of the term. In our highly pluralist culture there is increasing circulation of artistic forms and ideas and much of the dynamism in contemporary art can be seen in this exchange between and within the works, like one big cultural think tank. A good graduate school creates a milieu, an atmosphere, a critical context, an occasion for these explorations and opportunities, and takes a leadership role into the future. We hope that it will be a place to mix it with other highly focussed people, explore and produce, and act as a launching pad for cultural experiments.

We at the VCA would expect that the artistic imperatives of a graduate school would *enable* participants, *enact* new forms of knowledge and more directly *engage* with the imperatives of an unknown but future-oriented cultural economy.

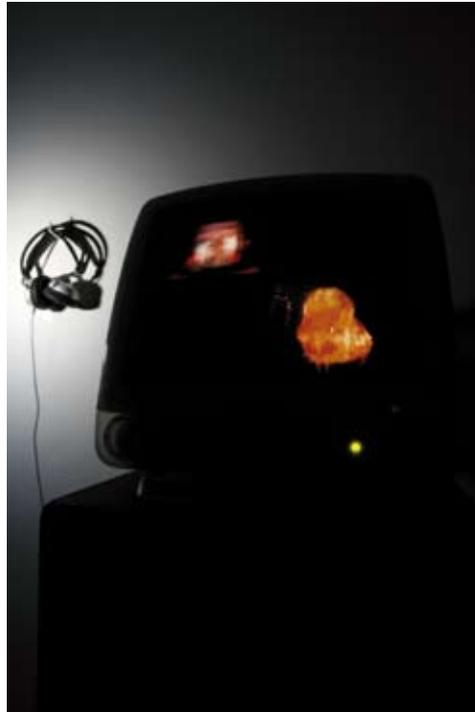
Within the VCA Graduate School, the *Centre for Contemporary Art Research (CCAR)* has been established to provide a framework for – as well as increased scale, focus and understanding of – the contemporary art research activity being undertaken at the VCA School of Art.

The programs of CCAR form the basis of an experimental culture that values challenge and innovation. This cultural laboratory approach is consistent with the leading theory and discourse surrounding contemporary art practice. The model will provide opportunities for both students and staff researchers to explore material and creative limits, and to question the artistic and intellectual relationships that might emerge through open inquiry and robust critique.

The activities of the CCAR include the Studio Research Program, incorporating the Research Higher Degree programs, and the VCA Gallery as the site of publication and public presentation. These loci provide the platform for highly motivated and talented artists/academics to consolidate their particular areas of research and collaborate with other practitioners.

Participation in the CCAR is based on theoretical, applied and practical research into contemporary art practice. Through the broad scope of its research activity, the CCAR aims to both analyse and redefine the parameters of contemporary art practice.

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Alex Gibson
A still from *Five String Theories*
(Dune 2001),
Video Installation,
G3 Computer, 2007



Bill Sampson
*Sunny Day Twixt
Heaven and Earth*, 2007
acrylic on paper



SPATIAL RESEARCH GROUP



Spatial Research Group Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University

www.artdes.monash.edu.au/research/strengths/spatial.html

In 2004 the Spatial Research Group was formed as an interdisciplinary body, dedicated to the development of research-based practice. The group has evolved from the disciplines of art and architecture, design and multimedia with emerging involvement from researchers in the cognitive and behavioural sciences.

The principle aim of the group is to explore the diverse ways in which human beings transact with their environment, and how this transaction might shape our social and cultural development.

Research Interests are:

- Public space and infrastructure
- Cultural space
- Education environments
- Consumer environments
- Experimental projects
- Theory
- Health
- Residential

The Solivoid Project → *The Solivoid Project* sought to operate beyond function, beyond aesthetic; to study the specific role of the interior environment in the framing and formation of human response. In April 2006, *The Solivoid Project* received four awards from the Design Institute of Australia, including the overall award for excellence and innovation. The project has subsequently received the APSDA Award.

The Solivoid Project was a response from the Spatial Research Group to a request from DMG World Media to create a 'Lounge' space for *Designex 2005* at The Melbourne Exhibition Centre; an event that attracted over 20,976 design industry visitors. Designed as a respite from the inevitability of event overload, the project sought to operate beyond function, beyond aesthetic; to study the specific role of the interior environment in the framing and formation of human response. A unique combination of analogue and digital processes were used for the design and fabrication of the space defining elements.

The research challenge was to encourage visitors to respond, not as passive subjects in a simulated environment, but as active participants in a blended reality; a hybrid space that communicates through both digital and physical signifiers. The outcomes for the development of generative theory continue to emerge from analysis of video footage of visitors, ethically recorded over a period of three days. Researchers from the Department of Psychology are participating in this stage of the experiment.

Dark Matter Project → *Dark Matter* was part of our experimental practice activity and the title of an experiment held at the Faculty Galleries of Monash University in November 2006 as part of the State of Design Festival for that year.

In astrophysics, the term dark matter refers to matter whose presence may only be inferred due to its gravitational effects on the shape and form of visible matter. It is an admission of ignorance and ambition in uncharted territory, much as the marking of early maps with terra incognita.

Dark matter became the linguistic tool used during this collaborative design process to describe the latent forces that shape both form and space. As matter takes shape, intentions also mutate in an iterative, symbiotic process that being generative in nature, confronts us all with a 'stopping problem'.

Dark matter is the absence that is exposed through the making of work and through the structure of the exhibition. The outputs of this process are ambiguously located in the coterminous territories of the explicit and the implicit, the real and the virtual. This research attempts to reclaim what De Kerckhove refers to as the "invisible truth of bodies" in an increasingly supple, post-digital world obsessed with information and the overexposure of detail.

A cross-disciplinary team of designers, artists and architects considered fundamental questions about the nature of inaccessible, but seductive, space. Using the Monash Faculty Gallery as a site of continuing exploration, three experimental installations were used to provoke curiosity, and record visitor response. Through the medium of exhibition space, a dialogue becomes possible between the academic investigation and professional applications.

The inflatable installations were made possible through the significant contribution of Inflatable Image Technologies P/L. Early conceptual sketches were translated as clay models that were then scanned to create 3D computer versions of the design. The inflatable fabricator translated the digital models into 2D patterns that were then used to drive computer controlled cutting tools. The final forms were meticulously assembled by hand, appropriately book-ending a process that began with hand craft but was only made possible through the use of contemporary software technology.

Fabrication of the inflatable forms pushed the envelope in the use of analogue and digital tools; generated new knowledge on the relationship between the physical and the digital and developed new applications for electro-luminescent technology.

Because of the diversity of disciplines involved, each individual brought a unique perception to the concept. The outcomes were truly a cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Solivoid Design Team

Design Direction:

Darragh O'Brien

Design Coordination:

Jo Dane

Inflatable Form Design:

Darragh O'Brien

Trinh Vu

Multimedia Design:

Matt Perkins

Trinh Vu

Troy Innocent

Vince Dziekan

Furniture Design:

Darragh O'Brien

Software Development:

Casey Rice

Graphic Design:

Gene Bawden

Saffron Newey

IT Management:

Martin Taylor

Matthew Bushby

Design Assistant:

Gina Skoutas

Dark Matter Design Team

Dr Jon Allen

(industrial designer);

Gene Bawden

(graphic designer);

Sarah Stubbs,

(artist);

Saffron Newey

(artist);

Darragh O'Brien

(architect); and

Mark Richardson

(industrial designer),

all contributed to the

significant decisions that

emerged from a series of

collaborative laboratory

sessions. The following

specific activities are also

acknowledged:

Creative Direction:

Darragh O'Brien

Graphic Design Direction:

Gene Bawden

Catalogue Design:

Sarah Stubbs

Concept Development DM01:

Darragh O'Brien

Concept Development DM02:

Mark Richardson

Concept Development DM03:

Saffron Newey

Materials Research:

Dr Jon Allen.

CG Modelling DM01:

Trinh Vu

Darragh O'Brien

CG Animation DM02:

Luke Richardson

Research Supervision:

Associate Professor

Arthur de Bono



Dark Matter
Photograph courtesy of Darragh O'Brien



Dark Matter
Photograph courtesy of Darragh O'Brien



Centre for Contemporary Art & Politics
 College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales
www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/research/researchcentres/ccap/



top to bottom

Phil George,
Borderlands-Bondi (2005),
 On border patrol in
 John Howard's Australia:
 keeping an eye out
 for transgressors

Phil George,
Balgo Night Vision (2005)

Lajamanu Warlpiri women
 artists with Dean Ian Howard,
 Associate Professor Jill Bennett,
 and COFA students.
 L- R: Myra Nungarrayi Herbert,
 Rosie Napurrurla Tasman,
 Lily Nungarrayi Hargraves and
 Molly Napurrurla Tasman

The Centre for Contemporary Art & Politics is a research centre of the College of Fine Arts, at the University of New South Wales. The Centre was formed in 2003 to promote research by visual culture theorists, artists and curators contributing to debates on current political themes and issues. CCAP research has a strong focus on community relations and processes of community formation, encompassing work with particular migrant communities (such as the *African Marketplace* exhibition project, 2003), Indigenous communities (such as the Lajamanu workshop, 2007), and post-conflict communities. The Centre also undertakes research into online and dynamic media communities, and into visual strategies for AIDS prevention in Asia. It thus combines theoretical and creative work with practical, social applications. A new project in 2008 will develop this in terms of the theme *practical aesthetics*.

CCAP's principal research domains are:

- Conflict and trauma
- Globalisation, postcoloniality, migration
- New media art and politics
- Visual anthropology, Indigenous art and politics

Within each domain, teams of researchers are undertaking major funded research projects with international collaborators, and running a program of exhibitions, conferences and publications. The program for the last quarter of 2007 includes the *New Mobilities* workshop and symposium the *Resilient Landscape*, an exhibition/symposium and film screening relating to the 2005 Cronulla riots and the 2006 bombardment of Lebanon; and a symposium on German film.

Current ARC funded projects include:

Construction, Connection, Community: Measuring Asian Arts Contribution to Contemporary Culture in Australia →

[a Linkage project with Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and Zendai Museum of Modern Art in Shanghai]

This project evaluates the role of arts centres, cultural policy and specific curatorial strategies in furthering cultural understanding, inter-cultural relations and the construction of a 'multicultural' Australia. Constructing a series of experimental collaborations involving artists, architects and cultural analysts, it focuses on the way that spaces are constituted, transformed and inhabited under the impact of immigration/migration, displacement, and certain forms of conflict or upheaval. The project, which involves the *Concrete Culture* exhibition/workshop in 2008, also supports a PhD in curating Asian art and multicultural programming.

Dynamic Media: Innovative Social and Artistic Development in New Media in Australia, Britain, Canada and Scandinavia since 1990 →

[ARC Discovery project]

A collaboration between Anna Munster (COFA/CCAP), Andrew Murphie (Media, Film & Theatre/CCAP), Brian Massumi (University of Montreal) and Adrian MacKenzie (Lancaster University), the project focuses on international strategies for social use of dynamic media, and forms the basis of an online database that will profile and be accessible to Australian artists, arts organisations, new media researchers and social innovators. This study highlights

the innovation of Australian artists and researchers in the development of dynamic media and positions these globally.

Ethical Globalism →

[ARC Discovery, in association with the Universities of Leiden and Witswatersrand]

The aim of this project is to produce a new account of the relationship of art to politics, along with substantive studies of artwork and key exhibitions. It entails theoretical analysis of the way in which cultural and political relationships are constituted in an aesthetic domain, and of the significance of affect, emotion and sense perception in politics. It has incorporated conference and workshop projects in Sydney, Leiden (2006), Belfast (2005) and Cape Town (to come). *Prepossession*, the first exhibition that resulted from the project (Sydney and Belfast 2005), explored the inhabitation of contested territory through art from Northern Ireland, Indigenous Australia and South Africa, developing new theoretical models for understanding cultural interaction. A second exhibition, *Disobedience* (2005) focused directly on modes of political intervention, incorporating work from many areas, including Russia, South Africa, and South East Asia.

Feminist Aesthetics Meets Indigenous Art →

[ARC Discovery]

This project, which is a collaboration between the CCAP's Senior Research Fellow Dr Jennifer Biddle and A/Prof Robyn Ferrell of the University of Melbourne, investigates Indigenous communities' use of art to depict their traditional Dreamings. The philosophy underlying these depictions is that art is the knowledge it portrays, which in turn evokes title to land through the law of Dreaming, of belonging to 'country'. To better understand this negotiation advances debate on issues surrounding Aboriginal reconciliation.

One of the outcomes of Dr Biddle's research was the Lajamanu Women's Painting Workshop/Residency, hosted by the CCAP at COFA in 2007. The residency culminated in an exhibition of the women's paintings produced during the workshop, and their performance of Yawulyu (Women's Dreaming Ceremony).

CCAP's projects are conceived to promote experimental interdisciplinary and collaborative work with both theoretical and practical outcomes. Recent exhibitions by CCAP artists include Anna Munster and Michele Barker's *Struck* (AGNSW 2006), which won the Harries Digital Art Prize; and Susan Norrie's *Black Wind* and *Havoc* (Australian Pavilion, Venice biennale 2007).

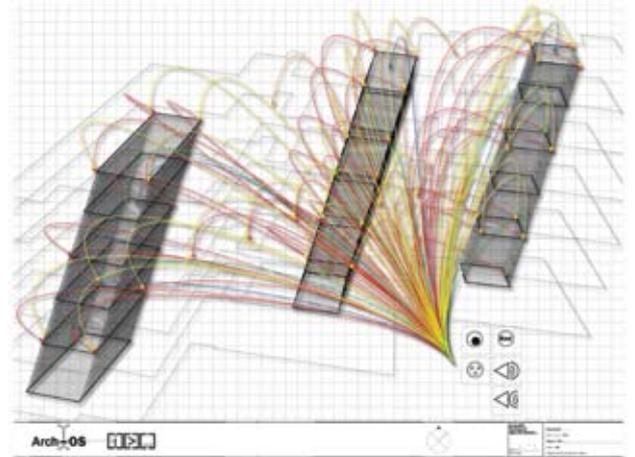
Recent book publications at CCAP include →

- Jill Bennett *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, Stanford University Press, 2005
- Anna Munster *Materialising New Media*, UPNE, 2006
- Jennifer Biddle, *Breasts, Bodies, Canvases: Central Desert Art as Experience*, UNSW Press, 2007

Associate Professor Jill Bennett, Director Visual Theory
Felicity Fenner, Deputy Director, Curatorial Studies
Dr David McNeill, Deputy Director, Art History & Theory
Dr Anna Munster, Deputy Director, New Media Practice & Theory.

i-500

Archos network system
sensor and node illustration



School of Built Environment, Art and Design,
Department of Art, Curtin University of Technology
www.i-500.org



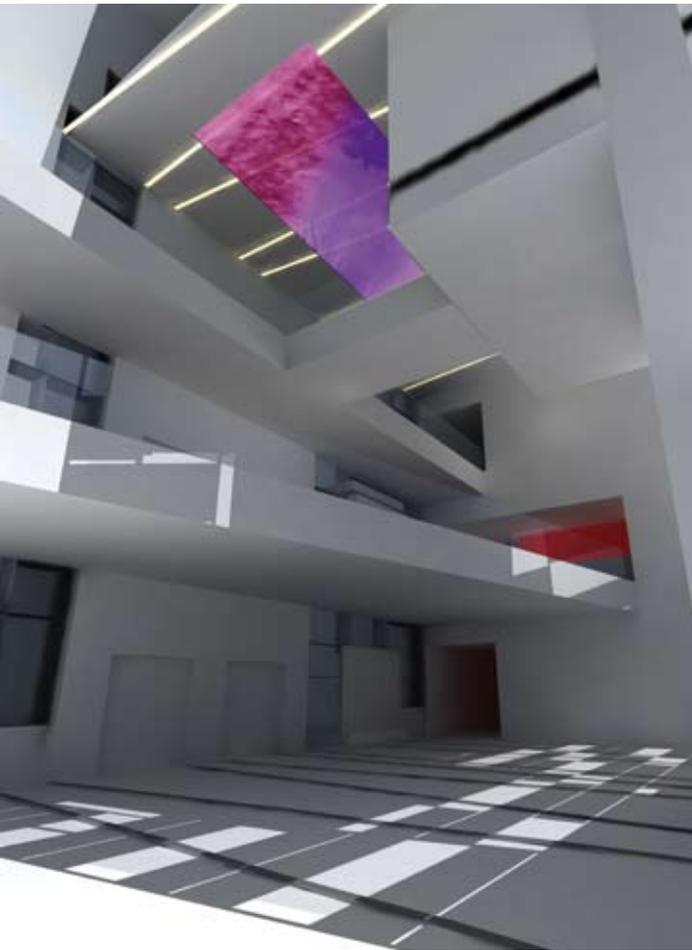
i-500 working drawings on architectural plans

i-500 Intelligent Architecture project →

"They argued that mathematical physics obliterated knowledge of nature's heterogeneous richness as it ignored first-hand experience of natural process in favour of mathematical calculation."
(Roberts 2004)

The Department of Art at Curtin University of Technology promotes a trans-disciplinary approach to research. An example of this approach is demonstrated in the i-500 project, an interactive media installation in Curtin University of Technology's new Minerals and Chemistry Research and Education Buildings. The project team was convened by Dr Paul Thomas, co-ordinator of the Studio of Electronic Art, in the Department of Art at Curtin University in collaboration with Christopher Malcolm, installation co-ordinator at the John Curtin Gallery and Mike Phillips, director of the Institute of Digital Art and Technology (i-Dat) at the University of Plymouth.

The i-500 is an artwork that will perform a vital and integral role in the development of scientific research in the fields of nanochemistry, atomic microscopy and computer modelling, applied chemistry, environmental science, biotechnology, and forensic science. The artwork's potential is to represent the visualisation of quantitative scientific research as part of the architectural environment. The large scale visual projections and the multiple auditory function of the artwork reveal to the scientists and other occupants a



i-500 computer visualisation of ceiling projection

dialogue between their research community and an artistic translation of the dynamic data from physical and social interactions within the building into a volatile and evolving interactive art work. It takes the simple 'narrative' of the litmus test as a source for the interactive visualisation of research data. The artwork will be a real time visualisation of the functions within building 500. An enriching experience can be gained over time through cumulative exposure to the artwork in the central foyer and several strategically located echo stations. The work also has the potential to filter through individual computer screensavers and mobile phones, creating an audiovisual reverberation of the work that can spread between buildings.

Data information gathered from the Building Management System (BMS), the Nano Research Institute (NRI) super computer and other accessible sources will be translated and transposed through customised forms of pattern recognition software to become 'substance' generating the real-time artwork. The artwork explores a sense of scale encouraging the user to reconsider their perceptions.

The conceptual underpinning the artwork's presentation, centres on the revelation of the dynamic generative data-rich research environment that would otherwise be invisible. With this approach, we aim to convey the sense that the artwork is physically revealed by peeling back the skin of the architectural surfaces. The visual dynamic of the artwork will be to turn a set of data into visual insight. It aims to give the data a meaningful

representation by exploiting the powerful discerning capabilities of the human eye. The data is displayed as 2D or 3D images using techniques such as colorization, 3D imaging, animation and spatial annotation to create an understanding from multi-variable data.

The *CORE* for the i-500 project processes and manipulates the dynamic data, as well as information provided by the BMS, network hubs and the NRI's super computer. This is essentially single server networked to the echo nodes and potentially a cluster of small specific function computers that are networked together. The *CORE* will also generate the visual material for the echo nodes and a hub ceiling projection system, as well as provide the majority of the audio for the hub sound system. The Hub Ceiling Projection System (HCPS) will be comprised of two HD digital video projectors. The echo nodes will be comprised of 15 discrete LCD screens with integrated stereo sound. They will be installed remote from the HCPS but critically positioned throughout the building to directly face the virtual centre point of the HCPS.

The visual content will be available for users to download to their personal computers or PDAs. This will enable the work to further 'infest' or infiltrate the fabric of the building and peripheral vision of its inhabitants. Such systems will encourage individuals to engage with the work through casual interactions, reinforcing the sense of an evolving dialogue, without creating the feeling that the work is an imposition on their daily lives. The Hub Sound System will be comprised of 16 full-range drivers actively coupled to their own discrete amplifier, integrated to form an Active Speaker Module (ASM).

The i-500 system feeds off the activities of the research community, interpreting social flows of the occupants, of the building and the technological infrastructure of the Curtin University Minerals and Chemistry Precinct. The work itself will exist independent of the technologies used to make it seen and heard. As an evolving, dynamic and interactive software and network, the project team anticipate the i-500 generating subtle and emotive experiences which will transcend this text.

Dr Paul Thomas
Senior Lecturer
Co-ordinator Studio for Electronic Arts (SEA)
Co-ordinator Master of Electronic Art
Curtin University of Technology
www.studioelectronicart.net

Roberts, L. (2004). *The Death of the Sensuous Chemist: The 'New' Chemistry and the Transformation of Sensuous Technology. Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader.* D. Howes. Oxford, Berg Pres.

Rugs of War School of Arts, Australian National University www.anu.edu.au/ITA/CSA/publications/trow.html



Beauty and Horror in the 'War Rugs' of Afghanistan →

The Rugs of War is a project which investigates the history, iconography, production and distribution of the 'war carpets' of Afghanistan. The traditional knotted rugs made by the semi-nomadic Baluch people of western and northern Afghanistan are famous for their distinctive designs, their rich yet subdued palette, the quality of their construction and materials and their receptiveness to innovation. While these Baluch rugs traditionally featured symmetrical and geometric patterns, significant changes became apparent almost immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, when rug makers began incorporating complex imagery of war planes, helicopters, machine guns, maps and texts into their designs.

The production of these war rugs continued throughout the decade of Soviet occupation and has persisted through subsequent military, political and social conflicts to the present. War related imagery continues to be used in rug making today, including such themes as the hijacked planes crashing into the World Trade Centre, the 'War against Terror', the bombing of Tora Bora and motifs taken from American propaganda leaflets.

The circumstances of Soviet occupation and the subsequent (and ongoing) civil war have caused profound disruption to the rug-maker's way of life and their access to materials and markets. In many cases the continuing conflict and disruption in the region has forced the rug makers to flee their traditional lands. This diaspora has



resulted in the hybridisation of previously distinctive techniques of rug manufacture and the motifs employed by makers. Thus traditional forms of analysis which rely on ethnic or geographical attribution can no longer be trusted. As a consequence, it is often difficult or impossible to determine a given rug's origins, the locality or circumstances of its production and distribution, or the identity or even gender of its maker.

While the rugs produced in response to these events may well constitute the world's richest tradition of war art from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as yet there are no substantial holdings of war rugs in institutional art collections. However, there are a number of significant private collections dating from the mid-eighties which provide a reference point for the study of subsequent developments and innovations.

The Rugs of War (an Australian Research Council Discovery Project) aims to produce significant new texts, exhibitions and web publications. Networking and the analysis of the rugs has been facilitated by the use of new tools, including the research weblog *RugsofWar* at <http://sts-dev.edu.anu.edu.au/rugsofwar/>

Through the use of the blog, we have attracted the participation of major private collectors and institutions worldwide who have provided unique images from their collections and generously shared their expertise. With their assistance, our research has begun to indicate ways of solving some of the dilemmas in the interpretation and understanding of these extraordinary works of art.

Professor Tim Bonyhady is the Director of the ANU Centre for Environmental Law, College of Law, at the Australian National University.

Professor Nigel Lendon is Associate Head, School of Art, College of Arts and Social Science, at the Australian National University.

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Online Catalogue:

www.anu.edu.au/ITA/CSA/publications/trow.html

left to right

The hanging of Najibullah, Baluch style, early 1990s: knotted woolen carpet, woollen warp, collection Ray Hughes, Sydney, size 1615 x 955 mm

The Story of Jahan Bahksh (Rustem and the White Div), Baluch style, c.1990s: knotted woolen carpet, woollen warp, collection Peter Bellas, Brisbane, size 2070 x 2820 mm

Najibullah as Soviet puppet, Baluch style, probably first made in Pakistan refugee camps, late 1980s or early 1990s: knotted woolen carpet, wool on cotton warp, private collection, Canberra, size 930 x 1900 mm

Figure of a horseman wielding a sword, surrounded by armaments, figures firing machine guns, and framed by four Kalashnikovs, Baluch style, early 1990s: knotted woolen carpet, woollen warp, private collection, Sydney, size 970 x 1635 mm



View of *Sonic Architectures*, with digital map of Paphos theatre excavation by Diane Epoff, standing in the gallery

Faculty of Creative Arts University of Wollongong

www.uow.edu.au/crearts/GalleryFCA/sonicarchitectures.html

The Sonic Architectures project: Mapping the ancient theatre in image and sound →

The *Sonic Architectures* project asked: How might an understanding of the ancient theatre give contemporary artists new imaginative insights into working with electronic technologies?

With staff and students of the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong I have contributed since 1996 to the University of Sydney's *Paphos Theatre Expedition* in Cyprus. The disciplines of art and archaeology came together through the leadership of Professor Richard Green, director of the excavation in more than a decade of excavation. Artists from the School of Art and Design, and Dr Ian McGrath from the School of Performance participated in fieldwork at the theatre in Paphos in April–May 2006.

The theatre in antiquity brought together all the arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, music, song, drama) as the central point of communication and ritual.¹ By investigating aspects of visual and sonic mapping of the ancient theatre, the five artists in *Sonic Architectures* constructed a parallel cross-disciplinary exhibition across the senses of touch, sound and sight, in the 21st century.

"The object brought forth from the depths of forgetfulness and history burns with the memory of the senses" wrote Nadia Seremetakis.² Making graphite rubbings of the textures of the ancient theatre related to my work as a textile artist with a long preoccupation with

the 'haptic' or tactile qualities of materials. The sense of touch is of primal importance in the understanding of space and may be overlooked through the dominance of the sense of sight, especially in the virtual realm. The nuanced markings of the surfaces have their own visual 'grammar' of expression, especially the newly discovered inscriptions unearthed in 2006, creating a visual and sonic pattern of light and dark, with 'touching' emotional overtones.

Ian McGrath investigated the resonant sound signature of the Greco Roman theatre, formed by the innate hardness, density and even crystalline structures of its architecture. Sandy limestone (as bedrock and cut blocks), marble, granite, at least three distinct grades of plaster for seating and walls, pebble and marble mosaic floors combine in the curved architecture of the semicircular theatre. Every element in a theatre, either ancient or modern - from plastic to plaster, concrete to stone, plywood to solid timber - provides a specific affinity for sound. The theatre and its material surfaces is itself the instrument upon which the actor or musician plays.³

Taking the various rubbings of the theatre textures as a starting point, Stephen Ingham (composer) created sound textures from the scanned rubbings through merging innovative computer programs with musical thinking. While the fields of electroacoustic composition and spatialised sound diffusion are not in themselves new, the composer's ability to harness recent digital technologies to generate and spatially diffuse sound output from vast quantities of scanned (or otherwise derived) data - sonification - is

an exciting new field of creative investigation. The twelve minute soundscape Akou played continuously in the exhibition.⁴

To map the topology of the Paphos Theatre site in Cyprus, Diane Epoff, doctoral candidate, held her digital camera close to her body. She wrote: "The process of photographic map-making was a journey of understanding the site as a 'work-in-progress'. Over two days I moved up and across the whole area of the theatre, fifty metres by eighty metres of uneven ground, taking more than two thousand photographs. I stayed aligned to the theodolite's position held by the excavation surveyor. The map is informed by the archaeological grid of the site, and the camera frame. The mapped textures reveal multiple histories in the physical matter of the earth."⁵

Brogan Bunt, media artist, made a set of twenty temporal studies at the margins of the excavation of the theatre in Paphos. He described the work as exploring the coincidence of the mythological, the historical and the contemporary in Paphos, focusing on small scenes in which time becomes space, and space shimmers in time. The set of Quicktime VR panoramas of two closely related sites in Paphos show the variety and complexity of the ruins. One cluster of 360 degree panoramas came from the theatre (in mid-excavation) and another from the Early Christian basilica known as Aya Chryssopolitissa, less than a kilometre south of the theatre.⁶

To conclude, I had been influenced to form this cross-disciplinary alliance by discovering the drawings of Iannis Xenakis, a Greek composer, who worked with Le Corbusier as an architectural engineer in the 1950s and 60s. He often visualised a model in mathematical forms, animated it, and then fitted different sound components to recreate essential characteristics of the structure.⁷

In continuing research through the Sonic Arts Research Network we are exploring the overlaps between texture, sound, sight and touch through new tools, as well as freshly perceived traditional craft processes.

Professor Diana Wood Conroy, Visual Arts
with Dr Brogan Bunt, Senior Lecturer, Media Arts
and Ms Diane Epoff, Doctor of Creative Arts candidate

* This research was funded by a Vice-Chancellor's Challenge Grant and the Sonic Arts Research Network, University of Wollongong.

¹ Green J.R. and Handley, Eric: *Images of the Greek Theatre*. British Museum Press, London, 1995.

Diana Wood Conroy: *The Fabric of the Ancient Theatre*. Moufflon Publishing, Nicosia, Cyprus, 2007

² Nadia Seremetakis [ed] *The Senses Still: perception and memory as Material Culture in Modernity*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1996, 144.

³ Ian McGrath. *Echoes in Stone*. Unpublished research paper, Sonic Arts Research Network 2006

⁴ 'Akou' is being developed for performance by Stephen Ingham as an instrumental as well as a digital piece.

⁵ Diane Epoff. Research presentation for Doctor of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong 2006.

⁶ Brogan Bunt. *Risking code [manuscript] : software art : dilemmas and possibilities*. PhD thesis 2007

⁷ Nouritsa Matossian. *Biography of Xenakis*. Moufflon Publishing, Nicosia, second edition, 2005.

View of Greco-Roman theatre, Paphos, Cyprus.
Interactive Panofile by Brogan Bunt,
Senior Lecturer, Media Arts



View of Sonic Architectures
with wall of rubbings by Dr Diana Wood Conroy
Faculty of Creative Arts Gallery,
University of Wollongong

Identifying place through personal and public artefact →

The primary concern for investigation in this research project is the role and impact of the personal and public artefact in contemporary culture. The research is situated in the School of Art in association with the Design Institute at RMIT. It investigates the ways the designed and crafted artefact acts as a bearer of cultural and historical meaning and memory. In particular, it is concerned with the relations of those meanings with personal and urban settings, and how such meanings act as a way of defining 'topos' (which means 'of place', Greek). Thus, the concern of this research is to recognise and explore the ways the crafted or designed artefact opens our engagement with, and understanding of the personal and public places we inhabit. The object relates to settings of human identity and presence as well

as external settings of constructed and environmental spaces; thus, the notion of 'topos' takes on a broader significance to encompass the body of human presence as well as the civic body of urban space.

The project has a particular focus on designed and crafted artefacts in two historical categories: gold and silversmithing, and ceramics. It is concerned to trace these categories of object-making over time as bearers of personal and historical meanings in different cultural settings, and look to the future where expanded horizons of technology open new possibilities of engagement. We wear adornments and brooches, carry personal objects from place to place, identify with designed and functional objects in homes or transit, exchange objects, and explore identities through virtual artefacts as ways of identifying ourselves, each other, and place. Through the artefact our locations become familiar territories. The making of such

School of Art in association with the RMIT Design Institute Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology www.rmit.edu.au/art



Prue Venables
Bowl and sieve (2006),
hand thrown and altered porcelain

artefacts has a long history in the art academy. For example, at RMIT such making dates back to the late nineteenth century when applied art was seen as significant for the development of skills for cultural education of artisans and the general populace, as well as for the enhancement of industry in the city of Melbourne. This is consistent with many early educational institutes in Australian urban centres with the influences of the South Kensington art school system and its emphasis on applied art and science. With changing social, cultural and economic forces over time the position of the artefact has also changed bringing with it new impacts and implications on our social, cultural and economic lives.

The project is concerned with identifying and mapping such changes and impacts through the ways the artefact is made, located, viewed, considered, interpreted and valued; and is focused on finding evidence for the impact of crafted and designed artefacts in personal and urban settings. Four categories of agency are crucial in identifying the impact of artefacts in our lives. Firstly, there is the artist who is the designer or maker of the object or artefact; secondly, the viewer of this object who makes meaning from a range of perspectives; thirdly, there is the place or setting in which this artefact is situated; and fourth, there is the artefact itself with its material and technological components, and the evidence of meanings they evoke, suggest and carry.

The research of artefacts and topos is placed within the broader economic, social and cultural conditions of urban settings and globalisation. One of the tasks is to understand



Exhibition Installation,
RMIT Gold and Silversmithing Post Graduate and Alumni Award Exhibition 2007.
It's Got Legs. Yes it's true. Research at RMIT Gold and Silversmithing,
RMIT School of Art Gallery 2007

the relevance of the 'local' via crafted and designed artefacts in context of wider global forces of mass-production and fast exchange of capital and ideas. Can the designed and crafted object carry, suggest or expose something meaningful by way of memory or relationships that may lend further understandings to personal and urban identities when such identities may be fragmented and displaced? How can the designed and crafted personal or public artefact act as a medium for a richer, multi-faceted knowledge of personal and civic meanings and values? The research suggests that the idea of 'topos' can be opened through an expanded understanding of the artefact, fostering the nexus between material practice and knowledge generation in our understandings of location and identity.

The project is committed to bringing together researchers across fields of art, design, science, technology and business. These associations will open the idea of the artefact to inform cultural topology in context of constructed and architectural space, as well as social spaces of everyday personal and civic lives in urban settings. The overall aim is to investigate how the crafted and designed object or artefact relates to human presence and place; and how it locates, communicates and transforms knowledge of place and identity.

Professor Elizabeth Grierson and
Associate Professor Robert Baines
RMIT University School of Art, Melbourne, Victoria

Professor Elizabeth Grierson
PhD, FRSA

Elizabeth Grierson is Professor of Art and Philosophy, and Head of the School of Art at RMIT University, Australia, and Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies at AUT University in New Zealand. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce (UK); World Councillor, Asia-Pacific Region InSEA International Society for Education Through Art; executive member of ACUADS and Australian Art Education; International committee member of the Global Studies Association (UK); and past-president of ANZAAE Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators. Her experience in the field of studio art and design, as well as history, theory and philosophy of art, led to a PhD on the politics of knowledge in visual arts concerning questions of art as a site of knowledge within the academy. She is Executive Editor of refereed journal, *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies*; editorial board member of *EPAT Educational Philosophy and Theory*; *Australian Art Education*; and *International Journal of Education Through Art*. Book publications include, *The Arts in Education: Critical Perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand*; *The Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: Art, Architecture and Artefacts* (forthcoming); *Narratives of Creative Arts Research: Methodologies and Practices* (forthcoming).

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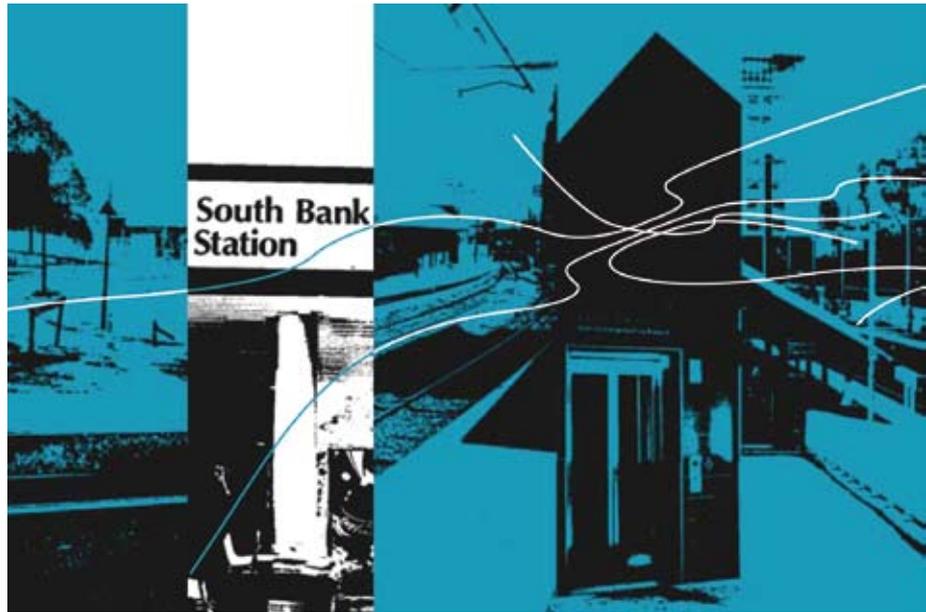
Associate Professor Robert Baines
PhD

Associate Professor and the Coordinator of Gold and Silversmithing at the School of Art, RMIT University. His PhD was entitled, *The Reconstruction of Historical Jewellery and its Relevance as Contemporary Artefact*. He is an artist goldsmith and a published researcher and speaker on jewellery history and archaeometallurgy. In 1979, he received a Winston Churchill Study Grant, which was followed by Senior Fulbright and three Senior Andrew Mellon Conservation Fellowships at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. His work is collected in prestigious public collections in Great Britain, Germany, France, USA, New Zealand, and Australia. Exhibiting internationally he is the winner of major international and national prizes such as *Bayerischer Staatspreis 2005* gold medal at the 57 Internationale Handwerksmesse, München and in Australia the *Cicely and Colin Rigg Craft Award*, 1997 at the National Gallery of Victoria; and The *Seppelt Contemporary Art Award*, 1998 Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Most recent books published are *Bracelet 'Java-la-Grande'* (2006), and *Partyline* (2004). For his work in gold and silversmithing over thirty years Robert Baines has been distinguished in 2007 with the award of Australian *Living Treasure: Master of Australian Craft*, culminating in a major exhibition in 2010.

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RAMP IT UP



Ramp it up @ South Bank Station
Exhibition Invitation

Belonging by Design Queensland College of Art, Griffith University

www.griffith.edu.au/faculty/qca/

Belonging by Design →

*"Belonging is about how we define ourselves and situate ourselves in space and time. It is about how we relate to others, how we perceive others, include or exclude them, identify them as one of 'them' or 'us'. Belonging is about a spiritual home or state of mind."*¹

One of the major goals of the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University is to formalise the activities associated with community engagement in the areas of professional development. Involvement in authentic design projects helps them feel that they belong to the design profession. I endeavour to provide a bridge between the University and the community by involving students in my own research projects, for example: *Adopt a Station Brisbane*, *Music Walk Brisbane*, and *Ulysses Link Mission Beach Nth Qld*.

My model is based on the mantra 'inclusion of all aspects of place and culture' and fits well with the Queensland Government's Art Built-in Policy 8 that states: *"The preferred approach to integrated public art is to include artists in project development teams at the outset of the capital works planning and delivery. Artists working in this context can create meaningful and appropriate work that has a direct relationship to the local environment and the culture of community."*

Ramp it Up at South Bank Station was a project which evolved from a request by Queensland Rail (QR) to assist in giving a stronger meaning to this inner city station; to

embellish it in some way in light of its proximity to the Queensland College of Art and the Griffith University campus and to imbue it with a more powerful sense of place.

The project began with archival research into the district. This body of information formed the foundation of a 'work in progress' exhibition, which evolved over a period of five weeks at the Queensland College of Art Project Gallery. To complement the archival research, demographic research was needed in order to identify the users of this station over the past decades with some consideration to future needs.

"The quality which distinguishes the work of Sal Di Mauro, is the level of community consultation and the building of collaborative teams that bring different media together. This attention to community opinions, attitudes, needs and skills means that work is created that truly reflects a sense of place and carries a significant meaning for the community concerned". Dr Judy Pippen, Program Manager, Regional Arts Development Fund.

A press release generated public interest and invited the community to an informal, 'lets talk about our experiences of South Bank station', evening in the gallery. The evening was a great success, about seventy people were present and the gallery was alive with story telling.

These stories were recorded, transcribed and installed as a subsequent layer of information in the gallery. With most of the information collected, it was time to begin the visual interpretation of place. To this end I invited my students to reflect on the references on display and respond



Two of the panels installed on the station lift towers,
15:30 At last and Lifesaver
Artist John Francia

with a collection of visual inspiration boards which were added as the next layer in the gallery.

QR representatives were present throughout the process, giving them a stronger sense of ownership. With the imagery installed, six early career and mid-career artists were invited to respond to the research and inspiration boards. Their proposals for public artwork for the South Bank Station were added as the final layer in the gallery. QR were invited back to view the artist's concepts and select their preferred artwork. An exhibition closing was used to broadcast the artwork and commission the artist. A final year design student was employed to project manage the fabrication and installation process of the four figurative panels relating to the rituals of place.

This project and similar projects work well to give the students real world experiences. They provide the opportunity to work alongside, and with, the community to identify and relate to their needs.

A major focus of my teaching is to ensure that undergraduate students consider the opportunities in developing their potential further by identifying with specific areas of interest. The planning of the content of the Special Studies Course is carried out by the student and the Course Convenor and ratified by Deputy Director (Academic).

Within the educational process, economic and other constraints are imposed and as a result many great ideas seldom go beyond their virtual context. However, I endeavour to demonstrate a pedagogy that incorporates nurturing of students to achieve their potential and by doing

so empowering them to develop their learning. To this end, I have been able to give those students who have special interests an opportunity to pursue them with the hope of identifying if these interests have the possibility of directing their future careers.

Some examples of such courses are as follows:

Sarah Hall 3rd Yr Interior Design

Sarah Hall, was born in Malawi, and moved to Australia with her family in 1985. She returned in November 2005, deferring from her design studies, to spend 15 months in Africa.

In Malawi, Sarah was commissioned to design an entrance gate and a tourist information/heritage centre for Majete National Park Reserve. This project formed the basis of an exhibition in the QCA Project Gallery. It addressed issues of family history, place and belonging and allowed Sarah to revisit her time in Africa and reflect on these experiences in relation to her design degree. The opportunity to research, reflect and compile her journey ultimately helped to reconcile the directions which she had taken in her decision to return to Africa. The exhibition will no doubt encourage her peers to reflect in order to move forward.

Michelle Walker 3rd Year Fine Art

To develop a range of exhibition production and curatorial skills which are critical to fine art practice. The subject will culminate in a joint exhibition by the student and a Brisbane based Aboriginal artist.

Collaborative approaches are an increasingly common aspect of contemporary fine art practice. One area in which collaborative approaches are relevant is in the design and organization of exhibitions around a central, coordinating theme.

This course/project will allow the student to investigate all stages in the production of an exhibition, including the theory and practice of curating, concept development and production of a resolved body of work suitable for exhibition. The project will also allow the student to investigate the key aspects of collaborative work in contemporary creative art practice.

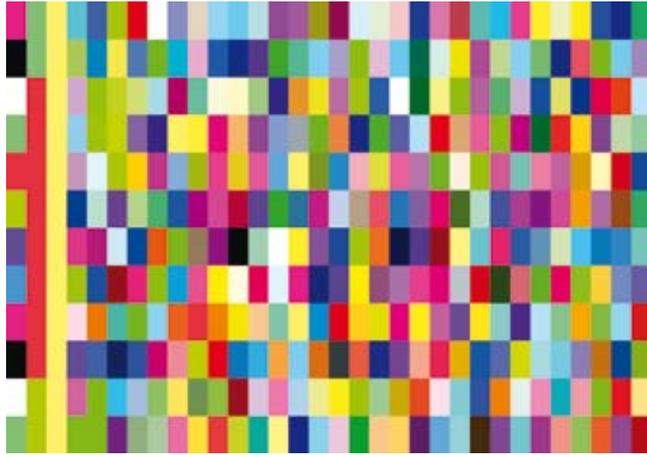
In Conclusion →

Community projects continue to form a major part of many QCA programs and are used to link my art practice and my research with my teaching. My ongoing research into public spaces, their ownership, use and place in contemporary life in both city and regional areas include these current projects:

- *The Music Walk* an initiative of Griffith University and South Bank Corporation to generate a stronger sense of place for the Conservatorium of Music in its 50th anniversary celebrations.
- The QCA access project linking the South Bank Arbour and the QCA campus.
- *The 125 years of QCA Sculpture* for the South Bank campus.

Salvatore Di Mauro
Senior Lecturer Design
Queensland College of Art
Griffith University

¹ *Belonging – A Century Celebrated* www.belonging.org/ - retrieved 4 June 2005.



Colour patches (modified)

Three colour carbon print, 'Landscape',
by Louis Ducos du Hauron, 1877

Digital Print Research Group
Sydney College of The Arts, University of Sydney
www.usyd.edu.au/sca/Research_proj.htm



The d'Vinci Kiosk: some thoughts on the research potential created by the spaces between analogue and digital photography →

It is a good time right now for a reassessment and analysis of analogue and digital photographic practices because both are viable, productive and can be used together in a variety of ways for successful output. Output is often that part of the digital imaging process with which institutions struggle for reasons such as high cost, fear of the constantly changing nature of technologies, the amount of new learning needed, and the ability to adequately service a fully functioning system of digital technologies. The move to digital from analogue methods is not a matter of simple substitution of one machine for another or the replacement of one set of procedures for another, or of translating concepts from one form to another. As many photographers have discovered, working with digital printing technologies is nothing like working in a darkroom, it is a completely different experience, physically and intellectually. As new digital technologies replace analogue processes, techniques and actions, 'photographic' values are being replaced and new value systems substituted. The new technologies have to be learned and also have to be practised.

Analogue photography, or photography-as-we-know-it, was shaped by its own parts. What photography became is embedded in its own apparatus, procedures, materials and processes, and developed by human usage, manipulation and refinement. It is how all the elements of analogue

photography, both its objects and processes, become articulated and condensed into a useable structure, and developed a dynamic that is not inherent in each of its parts that is of significance for a contemporary analysis of analogue and digital photographic technologies (Hagner and Rheinberger 1995:362).¹ Analogue photography has a completely different dynamic than digital photography. The objects, tools and procedures of analogue photography bear little resemblance to the technologies and human actions of digital photography.

Technologies feature standardisation, measurement, precision, accuracy, exactitude and speed. These concepts are bound up with ideas of progress. The question of whether contemporary digital imaging methods are any more exact or accurate and therefore 'better' than analogue methods is a challenging one. Digital imaging technologies do not 'see', respond to or use the light spectrum in the same way analogue photographic film and paper does with its particular sensitivity to ultra violet light. A digital world is one of pixels and numerical colour values which has little to do with the light spectrum as it is recorded through the chemical and optical bodily experience of the analogue world. The differing image origins of analogue and digital images questions image meaning, value and the extent to which precision and accuracy might be a critical measure of a fine photograph.

The Digital Print Research Group (DPRG), Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, was established to explore practical and theoretical questions about digital and analogue photography, the intersection of both forms and the spaces between. Paul Ogier and Dr Catherine Rogers, an Adjunct Associate Professor, are working under the supervision of Steven Lojewski. The research work is predominately being done in our own time aided by equipment funding from SCA and further assistance from Roland Australia, whose contribution and interest in our project has been invaluable.

Our enquiry concerns the nature of digital image making while also closely considering analogue methods and processes, and older digital technologies. Our aim is to interrogate digital print technologies and 'photographic' methodologies and consider new ways of conceptualising a field which is often seen as purely practical, technologically driven and, paradoxically, also craft based. The contradictions of craft based digital technologies presents a double bind for many photographers already confounded by rapidly changing digital imaging technologies and also nervous of craft values.

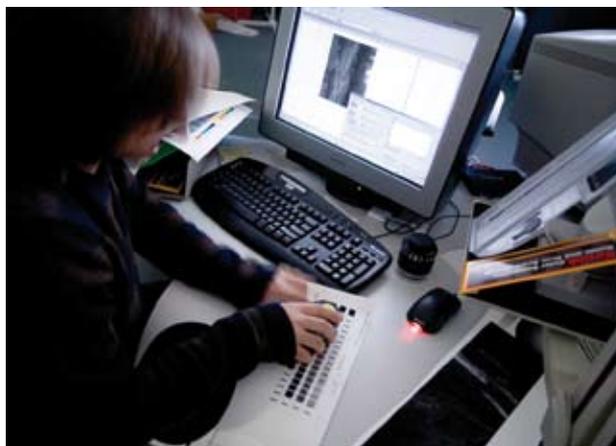
Outcomes through DPRG include high-end photographic image making on paper, the development and production of digital negatives suitable for a range of printmaking and alternative photographic processes, and the development of new ways for doing things in a digital environment, such as experimentation with high-end digital printers, inks, new media and image processing software. We are working with the assumption that hardware and software are not fixed or limited technologies. The ever-expanding range of both high-end and low-end digital applications and developments are something that art schools can take advantage of. There is an extraordinary range of amateur or home-user digital technologies,

many of which have been sampled and adapted from the workroom floor of the exacting environment of the print industry, which can be useful in the university and research environment. Relatively low cost, and easy to use, technologies such as: the Sony photo kiosk; Roy Harrington's \$50 'RIP' software, available on the net; and even John Cone's high-end carbon peizo K6/7 systems, are available for small Epson printers. All are wonderfully productive tools.

The old boundary between photographic print making and traditional printmaking has been radically altered by the digital printer. Understood, traditionally based distinctions about how images are made, which has differentiated printmaking and photography, are now well and truly blurred. With digital printers, the crafting of an image on fine paper with fine inks is now a feature of photography. At the same time the new skills which digital printers and image software demand have also changed photographers' attitudes to their own field. Questions about the value of digitally based print crafting and the appearance of the image, and the role of human input in technological outcome, arise. Digital print technologies have problematised the place, role and value of human action and human senses in photographic image making.

Dr Catherine Rogers
Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney
August 2007

¹Hagner, M. and Rheinberger, H-J., (1998). 'Experimental systems, objects of investigation, and spaces for representation', in M. Heidelberger and H. Steinle (Eds.) *Experimental essays*, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.



Digital Print Research Group workroom.
Spot checking densities in Studio Print



PUBLIC
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Public Memory Research Centre Faculty of Arts, University of Southern Queensland

www.usq.edu.au/research/centres/pmrc.htm

Postgraduate Studies in Creative Arts at the University of Southern Queensland [USQ] →

has developed an approach to practice-led research which positions the creative practitioner within a paradigm of methodological inventiveness where new forms and patterns of research and practice are spawned. Here practice-led research is a mix of artistic, cultural, scholarly and industrial concerns where the studio becomes an experimental arena for creative interactions, a space for critical analysis and renewal that enables a deeper understanding of artists' work processes. A number of students studying at Masters and PhD levels in the Visual Arts are exploring this paradigm. Jill Kinnear is a fine example of this process and her story is featured below.

Associate Professor Robyn Stewart PhD
Faculty of Arts, Public Memory Research Centre,
University of Southern Queensland.
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Jill Kinnear, *Veil*
Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane, 2002.
Screen-printed onto 96
individual panes of laminated glass, each 2.4m x 1.5m
Photo: Don Hildred

Jill Kinnear, *Gibber* collection (red)
jacquard upholstery weave, design from Masters degree folio
available from Loop Textiles, Brisbane
Photo: Don Hildred

Jill Kinnear, *Workshop of the Empire* dress, 2006
with Steel tartan textile design.
Dress designed by Jill Kinnear, drafted and constructed
by couturier Carolyn Taylor-Smith
Photo: Don Hildred

Jill Kinnear, *Diaspora tartan 3*, 2005, baggage X-ray design
digitally printed onto silk satin and cotton sateen
Photo: Don Hildred



Featured Artist: Jill Kinnear, PhD candidate →
The Familiar Stranger: mapping migration through textiles

Further to my initial four year training in the 70s as a printed textile designer at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Scotland, and tertiary teaching positions both in Scotland and Papua New Guinea, I have run my own full-time art and design practice in Queensland since the early 90s. My practice includes a diversity of public art and textile design commissions for clients in both the public and private sectors; in 2005 I was awarded the overall Design Excellence Award by the Design Institute of Australia for my memorial artworks at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane. I have also regularly contributed to exhibitions nationally and overseas, and my work is held in collections both in Australia and Scotland.

Art imitates life; my work reflects the importance of textiles as a cultural signifier of history, place and identity, and the discipline of textiles is the cornerstone of my practice. It also reflects my personal experience of migration, and it is this experience that has been the catalyst for my research study at the University of Southern Queensland, firstly in the form of a Research Masters Degree in 2001, and now as the final stages of a PhD in Visual Arts. These research studies have enabled me not only to define and articulate my art and design practice, but, importantly, to also define and understand my experience of emigration, which in turn affects my work. Ethnographer Michael Jackson (1989, p 6) has identified a plethora of words in our Western epistemological vocabulary that evoke the notion of knowledge as seeing, or refer to optics as a metaphor of understanding. Research, therefore, as visual arts practice - as thoughtful practice - has helped me to see.

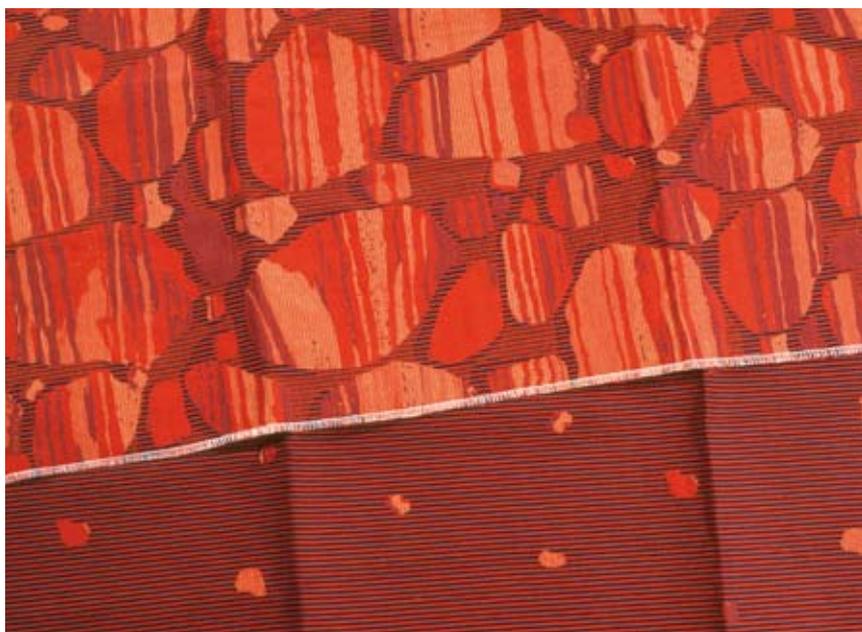
My Masters study dealt with the links between Western Queensland and Central Australian landscapes and my practice of printed textile design. The study examined Australian identity through aspects of geographical exploration, perception of landscape, historical and contemporary art, colonisation, and 'sense of place'. In the process, I constructed a solo textile exhibition that

travelled throughout Queensland and Northern New South Wales in 1999–2001. Since then the folio of designs has been utilised by industry and State Government for interior fit-outs and public commissions. A book of the work, published by USQ and partly funded by Arts Queensland, has sold nationally and internationally.

My PhD study extends these explorations; it considers the experience of migrant dislocation and draws on my own experience of migration from Scotland to Australia. Using my heritage of Scottish textiles - paisleys and in particular tartans - to investigate issues of identity, mythology, history, paradox and cultural transference, I access the baggage X-ray machine at Brisbane International Airport to construct new collections of tartans and paisleys on silk and wool. The designs, physically transformed by the process of present day travel, are traces of transition, fragile maps of a place between two points. This body of work will travel to interstate venues in 2008/2009, and items have already been acquired by the National Museum of Scotland for their textile collection. Work has also been shown at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, and items will be exhibited at the Collins Gallery in Glasgow in 2008.

My research experience with the University of Southern Queensland has been pivotal in my development as an artist, providing an epistemological infrastructure as a philosophical, informing methodology and foundation for my practice, and presenting important new avenues of opportunity for my work such as overseas exhibitions, acquisitions and presentations. In addition, my technical knowledge and contacts have greatly increased, and full-time study, with the benefit of a scholarship, has allowed me the time and concentration to experiment with new visual concepts. I am immensely grateful to the University for excellent supervision, guidance, facilities and unstinting support, and finally, for affording me some of the happiest and most rewarding years of my career to date.

Jill Kinnear, August 2007
E: jillkinnear@bigpond.com



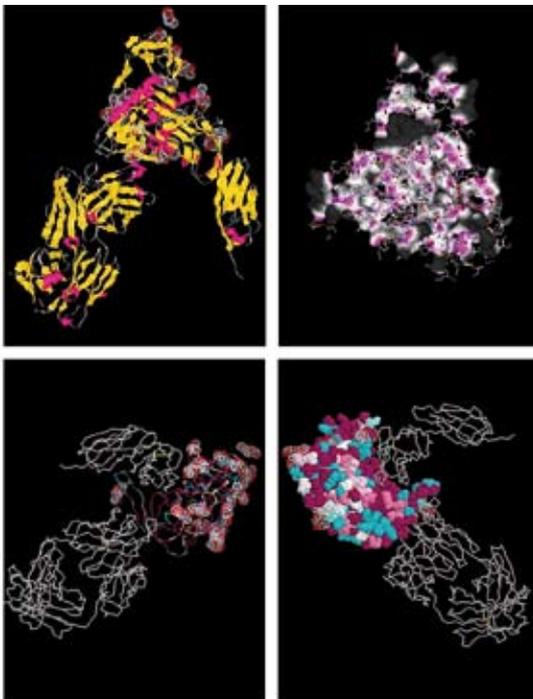


Omnium Research Group College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales www.omnium.net.au

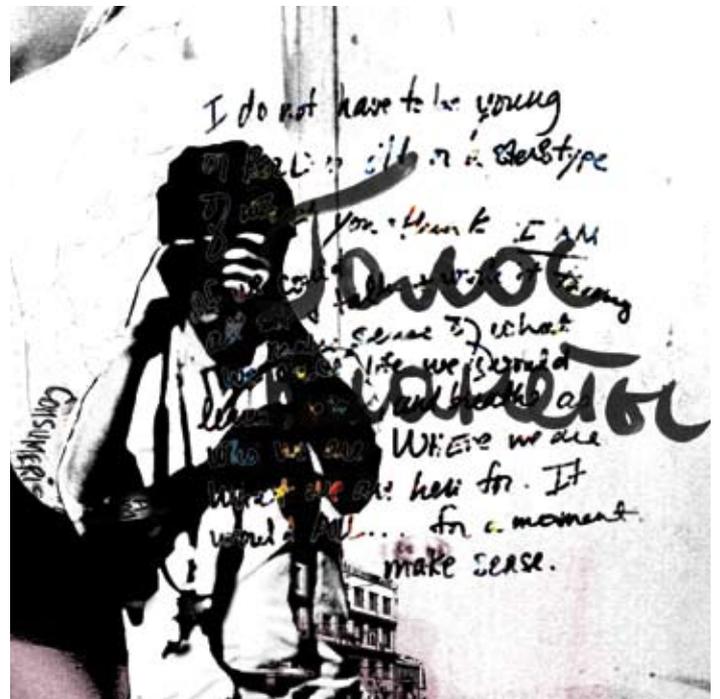
Online Creative and Educational Communities →

Initially founded as an individual research project in 1998, *Omnium* has since grown considerably through its ongoing creative initiatives and online activities to become a well-established and recognised faculty research group based at the College of Fine Arts (COFA), the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

Omnium's ongoing research focuses on exploring the notion of *online collaborative creativity* (OCC) and how the Internet can be best used to help geographically distanced individuals interact and work creatively together from any location worldwide. Omnium has since formed a series of fully-online creative communities, facilitated major global and fully-online collaborative projects as well as designed and written ground breaking e-learning courses. In addition, by providing the unique Omnium® Software for online creative collaboration to other institutions around the world, Omnium has to date linked over 8,000 creative students, educators, professional practitioners, theorists and writers from over 50 countries worldwide.



from Omnium's Visualising the Science of Genomics project, 2003
Computer imagery produced online by collaborative team of science researchers in five countries from DNA sequences of HIV+ patients



from Omnium's Creative Waves '05 project, 2005
Graphic imagery produced by collaborative team of photomedia and graphic design students working solely online between five countries.

Omnium bases its research investigations upon a changing paradigm for creativity: from predominantly individual production, through to more collaborative and collective approaches that have emerged strongly over the last decade within the creative industries.

Omnium has always maintained two underlying aims through all its online projects and e-learning courses: to design, produce, test and evaluate:

- a revised *online creative process* through exploration into the generation of creative ideas and concepts, collaboratively, digitally, and across distance by individuals in collaboration via the Internet.
- a unique *technical platform* that enables the application of such a revised online creative process within a technical interface that uses 'virtual' space for its classrooms and studios.

Despite its own activities being focused within the visual arts, Omnium's online creative process and approaches to working collaboratively, together with its unique technical platform (software), have also attracted interest from other disciplines, notably sciences, with invitations to collaborate on projects involving researchers in genetics, pharmacy and microbiology.

In 1999, the initial Omnium 'virtual design studio' project was created as the first major global creative project of such a scale that allowed interaction and process within design education to take place online. In retrospect, it was naive, crude and experimental, yet it produced the most unpredicted and highly successful graphic outcomes from over 50 design students in 11 countries around the globe.

Omnium's research progressed steadily between 1999 - 2004, funded by a series of smaller research grants, until being awarded a significant three-year ARC Discovery Project grant (2004-2006). The ARC grant was to support a project titled: *The Omnium Project: Formalising a System and Approach for an Effective Online Collaborative Design Process in Visual Communication*.

Throughout the three-year period funded by the ARC, Omnium further developed its own software, designed specifically to enable online collaborative creativity, via two large-scale global online projects in collaboration with the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (Icograda). The two projects (Creative Waves '05 and Creative Waves '07) involved over 400 individuals from over 50 countries and progressed the basis of Omnium's research to involve collaboration on more socially aware creative projects to aid people in less fortunate settings around the world.

Projects have since been undertaken through the formation of online creative communities to assist local communities facing hardship in countries such as: Kenya, East Timor, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. These projects, and the development of further work through additional online communities, is the direction that Omnium is beginning to take more and more, funded by profits attracted by an increasing number of external clients both in Australia and overseas for the Omnium® Software range (including an open-source option).

One of the most important applications from a steadily accumulating series of research findings and outcomes, derived from Omnium's investigation of *online collaborative*

creativity (OCC), has been the flow-on effect that has been able to contribute to online learning and teaching. In 2003, the College of Fine Arts established a new academic unit called COFA Online to begin developing a range of fully-online and accredited art and design courses at UNSW. The success and popularity of these courses has been phenomenal and further emphasises that demand for such new ways of learning and teaching is very real from both students and teachers. COFA Online utilises Omnium's software for all its courses and now offers an impressive suite of over 25 online courses at COFA.

Much of the research and many of the outcomes from a decade of creative projects exploring OCC are to be published in two books in 2008. The first, *Creative Waves - the online design studio*, will feature a full and visual account of both the global Creative Waves design projects hosted in association with Icograda; whilst the second, titled *e-Creativity*, will consist of full accounts from a learning and teaching perspective of a collection of case studies from e-learning scenarios and will form one of the first of a series of eight books on 'learning futures' to be produced by a selection of e-learning experts around the world throughout 2008-2009.

Rick Bennett
 Founder & Director, Omnium Research Group
 College of Fine Arts, The University of New South Wales



from Omnium's Creative Waves '07 project (2007)
 Designs for a soccer uniform to raise public awareness of HIV issues facing rural communities in Kenya - produced by collaborative team of graphic design students working solely online between four countries.



Participatory Communication Design for Safe and Sustainable Indoor Cleaning →

Dr Carolyn Barnes and Simone Taffe, supported by Dr Gavin Melles and staff and students from the Faculty of Design's Design Centre (internal design consultancy), are currently undertaking an action research project in participatory communication design. The project involves the communication of information on low-harm cleaning practices to childcare workers and is an adjunct to the larger, government-funded *SASI-Cleaning Project*, which addresses the many perceived and real barriers that currently exist to the wide acceptance of 'green' or low-harm cleaning methods in the Victorian childcare sector.

The aim of low-harm cleaning is to reduce environmental impact and risk to public health by using safer cleaning products and low-chemical practices. Significant reductions in toxins, pollution, waste, embodied energy, sodium in waste water and water consumption can be

National Institute for Design Research
Swinburne University of Technology
www.hed.swinburne.edu.au/design/nidr/



SASI Cleaning Project Workshop

achieved without compromising efficacy or hygiene. Yet despite Department of Health Infection Control Guidelines that encourage low-chemical cleaning practices, a veritable cocktail of surface sprays, disinfectants, harsh detergents and air-fresheners are being used freely in many of Victoria's 2,700 early childhood centres.

Working with a small number of inner Melbourne childcare centres as case studies, the *SASI-Cleaning Project* will identify these barriers, then gather scientific evidence and develop practical implementation solutions designed to overcome them. The role of design within the project is to identify the messages that resonate with childcare workers on the subject of low-harm cleaning and develop an information delivery system that is suited to the hectic and visually busy daily work environment of childcare centres. Test results, research and prototype design work derived from the case studies will be used in a community education program across the Victorian early childhood services sector. The program of participatory design workshops is the basis for Simone Taffe's PhD.

What will the SASI-Cleaning Project achieve?

- Quantifiable reduction of environmental and health impacts from cleaning in trial participant childcare centres. For example:
 - Reduced levels of VOCs and improved air quality
 - Reduced environmental impacts via packaging, chemical pollutants and salt in waste water.
- A user-centred guide and educational program for the implementation of safer products and practices, recording the results of the pilot project and directly answering the concerns and attitudes of parents and childcare service providers. Including:
 - Evidence of the efficacy of low-chemical cleaning methods
 - Safer product purchasing guide
 - Qualitative evidence of environmental and financial benefits
 - Anecdotal evidence of effectiveness of products and implementation process
 - Design materials developed from the users' perspective and through their direct participation.
- Publicly accessible web-guide for purchasing safer cleaning products and implementing safer practices.
 - Raised public awareness regarding the risk, exposure to chemicals poses to the health of young children, and the environmental impact from over-consumption, waste and salts.
 - Improved awareness, knowledge and acceptance of safe and sustainable cleaning methods in childcare services and the general public.
 - Improved environmental health for children in childcare centres.

How will the SASI-Cleaning Project achieve its aims?

The SASI-Cleaning Project will take an action-research approach by building strong, active partnerships with pilot case-study participants. The pilot will be developed in four stages:

- Consultation and assessment of stakeholder positions, involves the identification of existing barriers from childcare management, staff and parents, which will inform the development of simple tests and educational tools designed to refute misconceptions.
- Pilot trial involves establishing trials in case study childcare centres to measure environmental and health impacts, develop practical implementation solutions, and test the efficacy of low-chemical methods.
- Measure performance involves quantifying the environmental and health benefits of implementing safer products and practices, then developing a promotional and educational guide/program based upon the results of pilot.
- Participatory design processes that involve childcare workers and young designers from the Faculty of Design's Design Centre in the development of an information/education package that encapsulates and delivers knowledge on low-harm cleaning in a form that can be replicated for childcare centres operating across Victoria.

The *SASI-Cleaning Project* is steered by an advisory panel comprised of the following institutions and peak bodies:

- City West Water
- Swinburne Department of Environmental Health,
- National Centre of Sustainability (Swinburne)
- Swinburne Department of Child and Family Services
- Community Child Care
- ECO-Buy (MAV),
- Environmental Education Early Childhood (EEEC)
- National Centre for Design Research (NCDR)
- Asthma Foundation.

Funding for this project is derived from the Victorian Government Sustainability fund.

Associate Professor Lyndon Anderson
Acting Dean
Faculty of Design
Swinburne University of Technology



Office of Regional Engagement
 School of Arts and Social Sciences, Southern Cross University
www.scu.edu.au/schools/sass/

Wilson's River Experience Walk: community collaboration and visual translation →

Visually translating stories about 'place' in public art sites aids in the development of a sense of belonging in the image of the storytellers. As in all communities, there is never one true history but many stories that sit layer upon layer, re-presenting what is a rich and diverse community portrait or narrative. This paper will explore the collaborative process between historians, indigenous and non-indigenous custodians and myself – the visual translator or graphic designer, as we represent stories in a public park in regional NSW.

In 2005, I presented a paper at the ACUADS conference in Perth that described two very different but parallel projects based on the same local river in Northern NSW – the Wilsons. One was my MA project – a reflexive journey via a canoe charting recollections and reverie about the place of my upbringing through an installation of digital imagery and collected ephemera. The other, the *Wilson's River Experience Walk (WREW)* – described the process of designing the first Story Site in this large-scale public art project based in Lismore. While each project had different motives and outcomes, one informed the other.



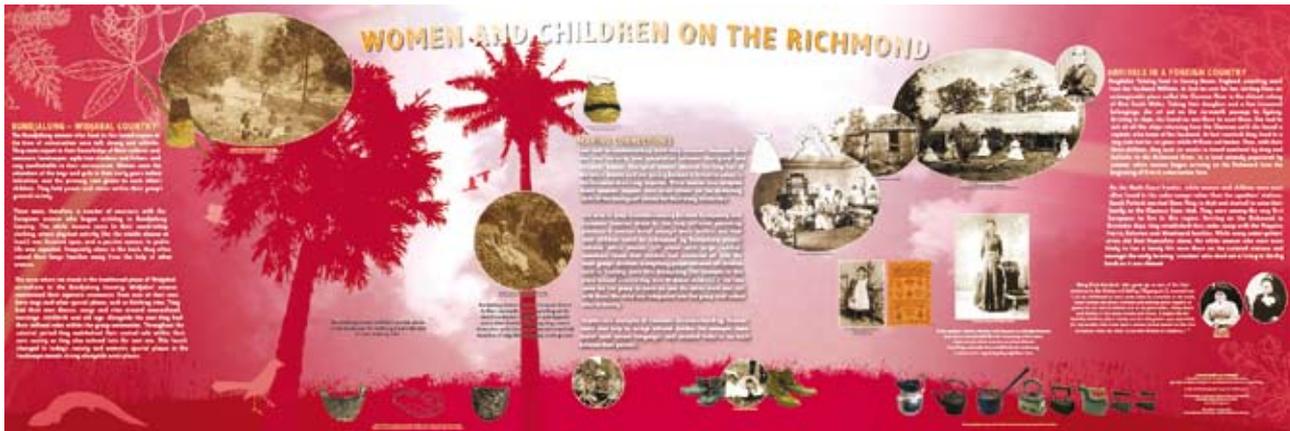
Dilly Bag – matrush with black velvet ribbon
 A post contact artifact–Ballina circa 1880s featured on the panel:
Women and Children on the Richmond from the Wilsons River Experience Walk
 Story Site, Living Together - Galamah,
 Courtesy of the Richmond River Historical Society
 Photograph: Leonie Lane

While the MA project has evolved across digital media into other investigations into landscape, the *WREW* project now boasts not one but three different Story Sites in Riverside Park. These three sites follow stories of pre-colonial life and post-contact settlement in the region. Following the original plan, a total of six sites have been identified and themed. The next three sites will move beyond Riverside Park through the CBD upstream developing stories of more recent migrations, social change and cultural mix.

The *Wilson's River Walk Experience* is a joint initiative of Southern Cross University and Lismore City Council and is based on a series of billboard-sized installations. Through words and pictures, these giant storyboards share the history of the European and Asian settlement of the region and depict the Bundjalung stories while celebrating Widjabul culture. The two recently installed Sites, '*Galamah – Living Together*' and '*Mirring – River Crossings*' link the walk through the park to the existing site '*Burbang Mah – Gathering Place*'.

Each Site has been carefully situated and designed to tell stories related to a particular location. The *Galamah* Story Site tells some of the stories of pre and post-European settlement. It is installed near where the first European homestead was built in the area, and near a former permanent campsite of the Widjabul people. *Mirring* focuses on the river and how it has been used by both cultures over time.

The public has responded enthusiastically to the first three Story Sites. The park precinct has become a focus for



many residents and tourists. Local schools, the Elders Council and Landcare groups are just some of the groups who use the Story Sites as outdoor classrooms or meeting places.

Key to the project's success has been the passionate collaborative work, patience and persistence of the core project team. I have worked in close collaboration with consultant historian Dr Jo Kijas and the Widjabal consultant Roy C. Gordon. Anne Hart provided the essential co-ordination, the glue that has kept it all together. Our team consulted closely with local Indigenous custodians and Elders Aunty Irene Harrington, Aunty June Gordon and Sheldon Harrington. Much support has been given by the Richmond River Historical Society for use of archival photographs and stories that are included on the panels.

This project possesses at its developed core, an active history element where a register of 'river conversations' has been, and continues to be, captured on video and sound recordings. Stories are collected and photographs scanned for ongoing project outcomes. Southern Cross University historians and oral history students, record a written register of stories to add to future story sites.

The permanent public art project needs to offer an experience that is inclusive, complex and enduring as well as aesthetically pleasing to funding bodies, the Council and the public. Gareth Powell, project officer with the Indigenous Heritage Management section of the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Water Resources, who partly funded the project, described the project as a benchmark which he would love to see taken up by other councils across Australia.

The joy of working in a public art sense is being able to engage in a borderless practice. Techniques and processes I have evolved in my own art practice are used within the WREW project. A real challenge takes place in civic spaces like this council owned land with huge potential to affect the public. I enjoy being able to move outside the mainstream public or commercial gallery system to work in spaces where people go about their daily life.

To describe the design processes undertaken, I will concentrate on one of the panels from the Galamah – Living Together Story Site. *The Women and Children on the Richmond* panel describes the lives of post contact indigenous and non-indigenous women and children and their lifestyles. The 3.6 x 1.2 metre panel can be described in thirds. The far left is dedicated to Widjabal women and children while the far right to European women and

children. The centre tells of first contact suspicions and collaborations. The dominant colour is an unusual rose red. Widjabal women found the red fabric and adornment of European women particularly attractive and when exchanging gifts would usually choose a red item.

On the panel there are many examples of domestic ware used by both cultures. One particular item which is housed in the Bundjalung Yanha room at the Richmond River Historical Society Museum that captures the imagination, is a finely woven dilly bag, made from dried lomandra found near the riverbanks, in a style traditionally used by Widjabal women. It features the additional adornment of black velvet ribbons, carefully tacked to the outside and to the rim. This collage of material and technique could suggest a dialogue that has occurred between a Widjabal woman and an early colonial white woman. Was the dilly bag a gift? Was it stolen? Was it a collaboration? What was the exchange?

Ross Gibson describes 'exchanges' as the '*commingling of various voice and styles of expression ... These encounters do not necessarily imply equality ... we need to understand the array of things, feelings, beliefs and ordinances that passed back and forth on the colonial ground.*' (Gibson, R., *Exchanges: cross cultural encounters in Australia and the Pacific*. 1996: Historic Houses Trust)

As it happens, like so many of the stories within the story sites, there is a personal resonance experienced. My great, great aunt was said to be the first white woman to live in the Booyong area (outside Lismore) near where I now live. I wonder about her interactions with indigenous women who would have lived near her. They would have been her only human contact while her husband acquired and cleared land. In her isolation she would have experienced exile in a strange new country while her indigenous counterpart was now an exile in her own country.

The dilly bag and Gibson's quote seem to embody the dynamics of the time described within this part of the project.

Working on this rich and challenging project, in the place of my upbringing, has a particularly deep satisfaction - personally, professionally and as a member of the community. It has been and continues to be a wonderful collaborative experience.

Leonie Lane
 Visual Arts Program
 School of Arts and Social Sciences, Southern Cross University



Visual Art and Design Research Group South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia www.unisa.edu.au/art/research/default.asp#researchgroupings

Critical difference: cultural diversity and regionality →

Initiated in 2007, *Critical difference: cultural diversity and regionality* is a new research cluster that brings together the scholarly and artistic activities of four academic staff members at the South Australian School of Art (SASA). While Nici Cumpston, Dr. Kathleen Connellan, Professor Kay Lawrence and Dr. Pamela Zeplin have each undertaken collaborative research, this cluster has been initiated to enable them to work together with research degree candidates to develop cultural diversity and regionality as an area of research strength in the School. As researchers, they share a number of common and overlapping interests that address diversities and disparities within the representation and interpretation of visual and material cultures. Their work embraces a range of methodologies, from post-colonialism to intercultural-cultural, art historical and grounded theory approaches. In examining issues of inter-cultural exchange and diversity amongst craft, design and art practitioners, the research cluster will enable them to build upon relationships established with previous educational and professional partners across Australia. Prior collaborative research includes the following two projects.

In 2001 Kay Lawrence and Nici Cumpston worked with five other Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to create the Centenary of Federation project *Weaving the Murray* that explored the meaning of the Murray River

for communities from Corryong to Goolwa. The final installation was shown at the Art Gallery of South Australia in January 2002 and toured to regional River communities before being accessioned into the collection of the South Australian Museum. Their joint paper on this project *A Story is like a River* was published in *Fresh Water: New Perspectives on Water in Australia*, by Melbourne University Press in August 2007.

In 2007 Pamela Zeplin curated a major project with renowned Indonesian artist, Heri Dono, the culmination of a series of seminars on art in the Asia Pacific region developed in partnership with Nexus Multicultural Arts Centre. The project included an artist's residency (co-convened with Olga Sankey) at the South Australian School of Art, and the exhibition, *The Dream Republic* at the SASA Gallery, a collaborative program involving three art schools and thirty artists.

In 2007 the emerging focus of the cluster is 'water', in both symbolic and literal form. 'Water' will be the subject of a panel discussion incorporating visual art, writing and performance by the researchers at the *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness (ACRAWSA)* conference in Adelaide in December 2007.

Professor Kay Lawrence AM
Dr Pamela Zeplin
South Australian School of Art
University of South Australia



opposite page
Weaving the Murray, Rhonda Agius, Nici Cumpston, Kirsty Darlaston, Chrissie Houston, Sandy Elverd, Kay Lawrence, Karen Russell, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2002
 Photograph: Michal Klivanek

left
 Heri Dono and collaborating artists constructing the 'Trojan Horse', *The Dream Republic*, 2007, SASA Gallery, Adelaide South Australia.
 Photograph: Tok Basuki

The Researchers →

Nici Cumpston

Nici Cumpston, recently appointed to a joint lecturing position in the David Uniapon College of Indigenous Education and Research (DUCIER) and SASA is a practising photographer and emerging researcher of Aboriginal and Afghan/Irish descent. Her work has been widely exhibited and commissioned throughout Australia and focuses upon relationships between place, country and family. Her current research focuses on the environmental impact of managed water flow on the Murray River and its surrounding trees. She is currently researching Lake Bonney in the Riverland, creating work for the exhibition *Power and Beauty*, curated by Judith Ryan and Zara Stanhope for the Heide Museum of Art.

Professor Kay Lawrence AM

Kay Lawrence, currently Head of the South Australian School of Art maintains a visual art and writing practice engaged with textile processes and their meanings. She has exhibited internationally, received national commissions and published widely. Of Welsh descent and brought up in Papua New Guinea, her research engages with the colonial history of settler groups with particular emphasis upon material culture. She is concerned with negotiating the 'uneasy spaces' between cultures and the relationship of communities to place. Her most recent work explores the use and meanings of pearl shell from northwest Western Australia, and will be shown in the exhibition *This Everything Water* at the SASA Gallery during the 2008 Adelaide Festival.

Dr Kathleen Connellan

Kathleen Connellan, originally from South Africa and of Irish descent, lectures in design history and theory at the South Australian School of Art. Between 2001 and 2002 she undertook research that mapped the history and theory of design curriculum in Australian Universities. Her findings were presented to the discipline through a series of national seminars and the online publication, *Opening Pandora's Paintbox*. Her areas of specialisation also include colour theory and critical race theory and she has presented papers and written articles on whiteness and hierarchies in design and craft in Australia and overseas. She is co-convening the 2007 ACRAWSA conference with the theme *Transforming bodies, nations, knowledges*. Her current research is focused on investigating displacement, gender/race/class boundaries and how these are entwined in aspects of domesticity and fixations about cleanliness.

Dr Pamela Zeplin

Senior Lecturer and Head of Art & Design History & Theory, Pamela Zeplin is a writer, curator and artist whose writing on contemporary visual craft and art is published widely. Born in Australia of English and German descent, her current research focuses on cultural diversity, cross-cultural exchanges and issues around regionality and artist-run initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region and the wider Southern Hemisphere. She has embedded her research in undergraduate and postgraduate programs through the development of innovative courses that engage, including *Aboriginal art and visual culture*, *Cross cultural studies*, *Asia-Pacific art*, and *Race, place and art history*. Pamela has been invited to *South Project* gatherings in Melbourne, Wellington and Santiago and is concerned with issues of marginalised and potentially transformative spaces and places, including the often overlooked space of bathrooms.



Kate Daw, *The Between Space (cups and saucers)*, 2005, (detail) photograph by John Brash

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